

ProtoSociology

An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research

Volume 30, 2013

Concepts—Contemporary and Historical Perspectives

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WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SENSE OF A CONCEPT-WORD?

Carlo Penco

Abstract

In this paper I shall outline a short history of the ideas concerning sense and reference of a concept-word from Frege to model theoretic semantics. I claim that, contrary to what is normally supposed, a procedural view of sense may be compatible with model theoretic semantics, especially in dealing with problems at the boundary between semantics and pragmatics. A first paragraph on the paradox of the concept horse will clarify the attitude concerning the history of ideas that I assume in this paper. In the second paragraph I will discuss some misunderstandings in the shift from the sense/reference distinction in Frege to the intension/extension distinction in model theoretic semantics. In the third I will show how a particular interpretation of the Fregean sense of a concept word (and of cognitive sense in general) may be of interest for model theoretic semantics.

Introduction

Discussion on concepts both in philosophy and psychology have produced so many new ideas on the topic, that it becomes difficult to make any comparison between contemporary debates and the Fregean worries. After recent criticism of concepts as natural kinds (Frixione 2007, Macherie 2009) cognitive scientists, philosophers and psychologists are proposing new ways of treating different aspects of cognition in humans and other animals; are concepts developed from a prelinguistic ability to classify? How do they develop in children? If we do not define concepts as natural kinds, shall we define them as functional kinds? shall we define them epistemically, semantically or by their origin? (see for instance Sainsbury-Tye 2011). Although some Fregean “problems” are still confronted, the contemporary debate on concepts seems to go far away from the original terminology used by Frege, that attracts mainly exegetic confrontation (we have excellent examples in Künne 2010 and Textor 2011). A possibility to find new suggestions in Frege’s analysis of concepts may take two trends: on the one hand we may work on how his complex distinction of “levels” of concepts present psychologists and computer scientists with new problems (cf. Brandom 2009); on the other hand we may work on the history of ideas¹ and

1 Following Dummett’s distinction between history of ideas and history of thinkers given in Dummett’s *Origins of Analytic Philosophy*.

SENSE, MENTALESE, AND ONTOLOGY

Jacob Beck

Abstract

Modes of presentation are often posited to accommodate Frege's puzzle. Philosophers differ, however, in whether they follow Frege in identifying modes of presentation with Fregean senses, or instead take them to be formally individuated symbols of "Mentalese". Building on Fodor (1990; 1998), Margolis and Laurence (2007) defend the latter view by arguing that the mind-independence of Fregean senses renders them ontologically suspect in a way that Mentalese symbols are not. This paper shows how Fregeans can withstand this objection. Along the way, a clearer understanding emerges of what senses must be to serve as an ontologically benign alternative to symbols of Mentalese.

When Woodward and Bernstein published details of the Watergate scandal in *The Washington Post*, they called their source "Deep Throat". Upon learning of the leak, Richard Nixon surmised that Deep Throat was a traitor from within his administration. However, Nixon did not suspect that his Deputy Director of the FBI, Mark Felt, was the traitor. In fact, Nixon sent Felt a bottle of champagne several years later when he was pardoned by Ronald Reagan for authorizing illegal searches of the homes of members of the Weather Underground. Obviously, Nixon would never have intentionally done the same for Deep Throat. But Nixon didn't know that Mark Felt was Deep Throat, and neither did the public until 2005, eleven years after Nixon passed away.

Explaining Nixon's propositional attitudes requires an appeal to *modes of presentation*, which stand in a many-to-one relation to their referents. Deep Throat *was* Mark Felt, but Nixon had two modes of presentation of him. That's why Nixon was able to rationally believe both that Deep Throat is a traitor and that Mark Felt is not a traitor. This much I take to be fairly uncontroversial. The *nature* of these modes of presentation, however, is more contentious.

The traditional view traces to Frege (1892; 1918) and is systematically developed by such thinkers as Dummett (1981), Evans (1982), Peacocke (1992), and Burge (2005). It identifies modes of presentation with *senses*, abstract semantic entities that serve as the constituents of the contents of propositional attitudes, which Frege calls "thoughts" (*Gedanken*). Because thoughts are composed from senses, and the senses *Mark Felt* and *Deep Throat* are distinct, the thoughts *Mark Felt is a traitor* and *Deep Throat is a traitor* are also distinct. It was thus

CONCEPTS WITHIN THE MODEL OF TRIANGULATION

Maria Cristina Amoretti

Abstract

In Davidson's opinion, the model of triangulation, which is a situation where two or more sufficiently similar interacting creatures respond to one another within a shared external environment, can give explanation to how concepts and mental contents are acquired and also clarify their very nature. In this paper, I will explore the model of triangulation, its various levels, and its specific role in concept acquisition. I will then assess the plausibility of Davidson's account and suggest a few possible amendments to the model of triangulation, in order to make it effective in explaining the process of concept acquisition. Finally, I will argue that the model of triangulation cannot be disconnected from holism and will briefly sketch some consequences of this claim.

In philosophy, concepts are often roughly regarded as the constituents of mental contents. In Davidson's opinion, the model of triangulation, which is a situation where two (or more) sufficiently similar interacting creatures respond to one another within a shared external environment, can give explanation to how concepts and mental contents are acquired and also clarify their very nature. In section one, I will start by exploring the model of triangulation, its various levels, and its specific role in concept acquisition. Then, in section two, I will assess the plausibility and the efficacy of Davidson's account and summarise some of its problems; those related not only to the very notion of triangulation but also to the prerequisites of thought that he identifies. In section three, I will suggest a few possible amendments to the model of triangulation, in order to make it effective in explaining the processes of concept acquisition. Finally, in section four, I will argue that the model of triangulation cannot be disconnected from holism and briefly sketch some consequences of this claim in regard to concepts.

I. Triangulation and Concept Acquisition

Davidson describes triangulation as 'a triangle, one apex of which is oneself, another a creature similar to oneself, and the third an object [...] located in

A CRITIQUE OF DAVID CHALMERS' AND FRANK JACKSON'S ACCOUNT OF CONCEPTS

Ingo Brigandt

Abstract

David Chalmers and Frank Jackson have promoted a strong program of conceptual analysis, which accords a significant philosophical role to the a priori analysis of (empirical) concepts. They found this methodological program on an account of concepts using two-dimensional semantics. This paper argues that Chalmers and Jackson's account of concepts, and the related approach by David Braddon-Mitchell, is inadequate for natural kind concepts as found in biology. Two-dimensional semantics is metaphysically faulty as an account of the nature of concepts and concept possession. It is also methodologically flawed as a guideline for how to study scientific concepts. Proponents of two-dimensional semantics are criticized for not taking seriously semantic variation between persons and for failing to adequately account for the rationality of semantic change. I suggest a more pragmatic approach to natural kind term meaning, arguing that the epistemic goal pursued by a term's use is an additional semantic property.

David Chalmers and Frank Jackson have prominently defended a strong program of conceptual analysis that accords the armchair analysis of concepts without the use of empirical knowledge a central philosophical role (Chalmers 1996, Jackson 1994, 1998). In the case of the empirical concept of consciousness, they have even argued that a priori philosophical analysis shows that consciousness cannot be scientifically reduced to any material features (Chalmers 1996, Chalmers and Jackson 2001). They have based this on an account of concepts and concept possession using two-dimensional semantics (Chalmers 2002a, 2002b, 2004, 2006, Jackson 1998). This essay criticizes Chalmers and Jackson's account of concepts, but my criticism also holds for other proponents of two-dimensional semantics (e.g., Haas-Spohn and Spohn 2001), in particular David Braddon-Mitchell (2004, 2005a, 2005b), who does not make bold claims about a reductive explanation of consciousness but attempts to apply 2D semantics to scientific concepts and their historical change. My contention is first that 2D semantics is *metaphysically* flawed as an account of what it is to possess an empirical concept. 2D semantics makes faulty assumptions about how concept possession relates to the ability to imagine possible scenarios; and by erroneously assuming that concept possession is an a priori ability,

THE INFLUENCE OF LANGUAGE ON CONCEPTUALIZATION: THREE VIEWS

Agustin Vicente, Fernando Martinez-Manrique

Abstract

Different languages carve the world in different categories. They also encode events in different ways, conventionalize different metaphorical mappings, and differ in their rule-based metonymies and patterns of meaning extensions. A long-standing, and controversial, question is whether this variability in the languages generates a corresponding variability in the conceptual structure of the speakers of those languages. Here we will present and discuss three interesting general proposals by focusing on representative authors of such proposals. The proposals are the following: first, that the effect of language in conceptualization is general and deep; second, that the effect is local, transient, shallow and easily revisable; and third, that there is no proper effect of language on conceptualization, although there is surely some cognitive impact of language: many conceptual tasks engage language one way or another.

“In the fields of the lord, stood Abel and Cain
Cain slew Abel ‘neath the black rain
At night he couldn’t stand the guilt or the blame
So he gave it a name
So he gave it a name
So he gave it a name”
Gave it a name
Bruce Springsteen

Introduction

Many authors have held that language is necessary for thought: without language, there are no concepts. This language-first thesis is typically associated with German romantics, but it is by no means exclusive of them. Many philosophers of the analytic tradition have endorsed it, and it has even been claimed that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis was inspired less by the romantics than by early analytic philosophers (Joseph 1996).

However, the hypothesis that language somehow shapes thought, or our conceptual structure, does not require a thesis as strong as the language-first

VIEWS OF CONCEPTS AND OF PHILOSOPHY OF MIND—FROM REPRESENTATIONALISM TO CONTEXTUALISM

Sofia Miguens

Abstract

My main purpose in this article is to explore the connections between views of concepts and of philosophy of mind. My analysis focuses on recent work on concepts and on the conceptual-non conceptual distinction by French philosopher Jocelyn Benoist (Benoist 2005, 2010, 2011). While tracing back Benoist's contextualist counterproposal to representationalism in the philosophy of mind to converging influences ranging from phenomenology (Husserl 1994) to philosophy of language (Travis 2008), I spell out some of the problems posed by viewing concepts as representations in a mental repository (a conception which has survived all attacks to the classic necessary and sufficient conditions view in the last half century (Murphy 2002, Prinz 2002)).

I. Concepts and Minds

Let us suppose I say to Ulysse: “I will show you a skyscraper” and I show him the Reliance Building. He tells me “No, that is not a skyscraper. It is shabby, and plus it is only fourteen storeys high”. He is obviously thinking of the imperial monsters of Michigan Avenue.¹

One might say, in some sense, that Hector, who confronts Achilles and so is heading for a certain death, is an example of courage. One might say, in some (other?) sense, that Andromache who accepts his leaving and suffers it, keeping her strength to protect their son, is another. Now, a friend of instantiation would say that, in Hector, there is an abstract particular (a particular moral property by the way) that is an instance of courage, and that, in Andromache there is another abstract particular that is another instance of courage. Of course, the abstract particular that makes Hector courageous

- I Benoist 2010, 156. My translation. It is Chicago's *gratte-ciel* that are being discussed. One might want to say that Ulysse is 'linguistically' wrong, since the Reliance Building was built (in 1890) respecting the building techniques for a skyscraper (and thus, in a way, respecting the 'concept' of a skyscraper). Yet the fact is, it is currently dwarfed by much higher buildings. So, one understands perfectly well what Ulysse means by saying that *that building* is not a skyscraper. Benoist's main point here is that a concept is never necessarily attached to a natural language word (Benoist 2010, 159).

CHANGES IN VIEW: CONCEPTS IN EXPERIENCE

Richard Manning

Abstract

In this paper, I assume that a satisfactory account of our thinking requires a conception of perceptual experience on which it provides reasons for judgment, and also that the Myth of the Given—the myth of episodes whose contents can provide reasons without the involvement of concepts—must be avoided. From these assumptions it follows that the content of perceptual experience must be conceived as concept-involving. The question I address is whether, given that it involves concepts, the content of perceptual experience is best conceived as propositional, or as non-propositional. I focus my discussion around John McDowell's shift from the former to the latter sort of view. After explicating his new, non-propositional view, I raise inconclusive doubts as to whether the contents of experience, on that view, can really function as reasons. I then address broadly phenomenological considerations, arguing that the appearance that the non-propositional view has the upper hand here is superficial, and that in fact, there are strong phenomenological grounds for preferring a propositional view. Though these considerations hardly settle the matter, they do place the propositional view in a comparatively favorable light.

“[T]hose who think that ideas consist of images ... look on ideas ... as mute pictures on a panel, and preoccupied with this prejudice, do not see that an idea, insofar as it is an idea, involves an affirmation or negation.”

Spinoza, *Ethics* II, P49SII.

I. The topic of my discussion is the relation between concepts and perceptual experience, and, more specifically, the way concepts must be conceived to be involved in perceptual experience if we are to have satisfactory account of the relationship between thought and the world we think about. The main question I shall explore is whether the contents of experience are best conceived as propositional in form, or whether a conception on which experiential contents are non-propositional, yet still concept-involving, is to be preferred. John McDowell used to advocate a propositional conception, but has changed his view; I will orient my discussion in significant measure around this change and some of the grounds McDowell gives for having made it. After some stage setting, I explicate McDowell's new view, and then ask whether it can sustain the claim

CONCEPTS AND FAT PLANTS: NON-CLASSICAL CATEGORIES, TYPICALITY EFFECTS, ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS

Marcello Frixione

Abstract

During the last decades it has emerged that concepts probably do not constitute a homogeneous set of entities from a psychological point of view. Various divides can be drawn between different types of concepts. Probably, the main empirical achievement in this field has been the inadequacy of the so-called “classical view”: most concepts cannot be characterised in terms of sets of necessary and sufficient conditions; rather, they exhibit typicality effects. In this chapter I will suggest that typicality effects, far from being a symptom of some homogeneous underlying cognitive structure, are more plausibly the consequence of some “ecological constraints” acting on the mind. In other words, typicality effects could be the effect of some form of “convergent evolution” between heterogeneous mental structures. This should have important consequences on the role of the notion of “concept” itself: the status of the concept of “concept” in cognitive science should be similar to that of the concept of “fat plant” in botany, which can be of some utility in certain cases, but does not correspond to a genuine botanical kind.

I. Against Classical Concepts

In the cognitive science literature, sometimes one happens to read that concepts are “the most fundamental constructs in theories of mind” (Laurence and Margolis, 1999, p. 3), or that they are “the glue that holds our mental world together” (Murphy, 2002, p. 1). However, in spite of similar enthusiastic claims, a unitary notion of concept did not emerge, and there are good reasons to suspect that, from the standpoint of an empirical science of the mind, the notion of *concept* could turn out to be spurious: as we shall see, the idea that within the mind a collection of more or less homogenous structures exists, corresponding to our common-sense notion of “concept” is likely to be wrong.

The research on concepts has been sometimes considered to be a successful example of the interdisciplinary approach of cognitive science. However, when we try to single out which results have been achieved, we realise that the main (perhaps the only) ascertained fact is the inadequacy of the so called “classical theory” of concepts. The central claim of the classical theory is that

CONCEPTS IN THE BRAIN: NEUROSCIENCE, EMBODIMENT, AND CATEGORIZATION

Joseph B. McCaffrey

Abstract

What does cognitive neuroscience contribute to our philosophical understanding of concepts? Over the past several decades, brain researchers have employed the tools of cognitive neuroscience (e.g. neuroimaging techniques such as fMRI) and neuropsychology (i.e. studying patterns of cognitive deficits resulting from brain injury) to probe the structure and function of the conceptual system. The results of this effort, which are often extremely surprising, raise more questions than they resolve. Brain research has invigorated age-old philosophical debates about the nature of concepts—such as whether concepts are perceptual representations—and generated new controversies about how conceptual knowledge is organized. In this essay, I examine three debates in the neuroscience of conceptual knowledge: whether concepts are embodied or couched in amodal representations, whether conceptual knowledge is organized according to evolved categories, and whether the brain has multiple conceptual systems. My purpose is not to resolve these debates—rather, I intend to show how many of the proposed solutions fail to accommodate the diverse range of data emerging from cognitive neuroscience. I am therefore skeptical that brain data alone will resolve these issues, but remain optimistic that neuroscience has much to contribute to philosophical accounts of concepts.

1. Introduction

In this article, I explore how cognitive neuroscience bears on philosophical debates about concepts. First, I lay the groundwork for my discussion by examining which debates about concepts are most likely to benefit from contact with cognitive neuroscience, broadly construed as the use of brain data to test hypotheses about human cognition. I propose that debates about the nature and acquisition of *conceptual knowledge*—e.g. debates about whether certain concepts are innate—are most amenable to data from cognitive neuroscience. I also introduce two of the tools by which cognitive neuroscientists study conceptual knowledge—functional neuroimaging studies and neuropsychology studies—and illustrate some important findings to date (section 2). Then (sections 3–5) I evaluate three debates about the nature and organization of conceptual knowledge: whether concepts are amodal or perceptual representations, whether the brain contains a unitary “semantic” or “conceptual” system,

CONCEPTUAL DISTINCTIONS AND THE CONCEPT OF SUBSTANCE IN DESCARTES

Alan Nelson

Abstract

Descartes's interrelated theories of attributes and conceptual distinction (or rational distinction) are developed. This follows Nolan (1997) in identifying substances and their attributes as they exist apart from the mind's concepts. This resource is then used to articulate a solution to a famous problem about Descartes's concept of substance. The key is that the concept of substance is itself to be regarded as an attribute of independently existing things.

At the core of Descartes's system of philosophy lies his tripartite theory of distinctions. Substances are individuated by the famous *real distinction*. The *modal distinction* obtains between a mode of a substance and another mode of the same substance or between two modes of the same substance. The conceptual distinction or *rational distinction* (*distinctio rationis*) is the most subtle and, I think, of paramount importance for Descartes.¹ This article illustrates that importance by showing how the rational distinction illuminates some difficult problems in Descartes's theory of substance.

Descartes's characterization of rational distinction is unfortunately terse, so our first task is to make it clear enough to be a serviceable too. We can then proceed to use it to articulate the concept of substance. Descartes's official statement of his understanding of rational distinction in the *Principles* at Part I, article 62:

Finally, a *conceptual distinction* is a distinction between a substance and some attribute of that substance without which the substance is unintelligible; alternatively, it is a distinction between two such attributes of a single substance. (VIII A 30; I 214)²

- 1 In this article, the terms 'rational distinction' and 'distinction of reason' will be used, but 'conceptual distinction,' Cottingham's translation, is quite justifiable insofar as it constitutes an important part of Descartes's theory of conception.
- 2 Descartes's writings are cited first by the volume and page numbers of Adam and Tannery (1964–86) followed by the volume and page number of the translation in Cottingham, et al. (1984–91).

THE CONCEPT OF BODY IN HUME'S TREATISE

Miren Boehm

Abstract

Hume's views concerning the existence of body or external objects are notoriously difficult and intractable. The paper sheds light on the concept of body in Hume's Treatise by defending three theses. First, that Hume's fundamental tenet that the only objects that are present to the mind are perceptions must be understood as methodological, rather than metaphysical or epistemological. Second, that Hume considers legitimate the fundamental assumption of natural philosophy that through experience and empirical observation we know body. Third, that many of the contradictions and difficulties that interpreters attribute to Hume's concept of body should be attributed instead, as Hume does, to every system of philosophy.

Hume is notoriously difficult to pin down on fundamental questions, and this is specially the case of his position with regard to external objects or bodies in the *Treatise*. Although he insists that “nothing is ever really present with the mind but its perceptions or impressions and ideas ...” (T 1.2.6.7)¹, throughout the *Treatise* Hume appeals to *bodies* and *external objects* as such. In her influential paper, “The Objects of Hume's *Treatise*,” Marjorie Grene painstakingly documents the different senses of ‘objects,’ and she convincingly argues that ‘object’ as *external existence* dominates the *Treatise* (Grene 1994). Despite Hume's firm commitment to the thesis that the only objects that can be present to the mind are *perceptions*, the objects most present in the *Treatise* do *not* seem to be perceptions.

Interpretations vary widely. Some argue that perceptions are only the *immediate* objects of the mind, that Hume's “approach to the external world is inside-out” (D. Norton 2004). Others maintain that Hume, like Berkeley, whose self-proclaimed idealism does not prevent him from speaking with the vulgar about *quads* and *trees*, merely engages in the facile discourse of the common man, *endorsing* only the existence of perceptions. For Hume, external objects or bodies are nothing but collections of perceptions. Others find greater significance in Hume's vulgar attitude; Hume appears to be not just *speaking*, but also *thinking* with the vulgar. These interpreters draw a distinction

1 References to the *Treatise* are to David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), hereafter cited as “T” followed by Book, part, section, and paragraph numbers. See, for instance, also T 1.4.2.21, 47; T 2.2.2.22; T 3.1.1.2.

CONCEIVING WITHOUT CONCEPTS: REID VS. THE WAY OF IDEAS

Lewis Powell

Abstract

Thomas Reid is notorious for rejecting the orthodox theory of conception (OTC), according to which conceiving of an object involves a mental relationship to an idea of that object. In this paper, I examine the question of what this rejection amounts to, when we limit our attention to bare conception (rather than the more widely discussed case of perception). I present some of the purported advantages of OTC, and assess whether they provide a genuine basis for preferring OTC to a Reidian alternative. I argue that Reid's approach is no worse off than OTC at explaining intentionality of our conceptions, and suggest that OTC diverges less from Reid's view than it would at first seem.

The Philosopher says, I cannot conceive a centaur without having an idea of it in my mind. I am at a loss to understand what he means. He surely does not mean that I cannot conceive it without conceiving it. This would make me no wiser. What then is this idea? Is it an animal, half horse and half man? No. Then I am certain it is not the thing I conceive.

Thomas Reid, *EIP IV.2*, p. 321

Introduction

One of the most striking views held by Thomas Reid was his rejection of what I'll call the *Orthodox Theory of Conception*. The Orthodox Theory of Conception (OTC) maintains that what it is to conceive of X is to possess an idea of X (or, perhaps, to have the idea of X present to the understanding in the right way). Reid's explicit discussions of why he rejects OTC suggest dual motivations: First, Reid claims an inability to understand what these ideas are actually supposed to be, and views them as unfounded theoretical postulates (which he abhors). Second, Reid believes that accepting OTC leads us down a path to radical skepticism (which he also abhors).¹ Reid's proposal, instead, is that

1 This second motivation is actually more focused on idea-based accounts of perception or memory, since the deliverances of those faculties, unlike mere conception, are connected to

certainly doesn't seem that experience itself is in language.⁷ But this is too quick. Things do not wear their logical forms on their sleeves. Propositional form, even linguistic propositional form, needs not look like writing or sound like speech. Braille may not look like language (except to one who can understand it), but it is. And think here also of the *Tratatus*: P. 1: "The world is all that is the case." P. 1.1 "The world is the totality of facts, not of things." Facts are propositional, so on a Tractarian view of the world, we must say either that the world is linguistic, or that not all propositions are linguistic. And you can no more refute the Tractarian picture by pointing at the world and saying, "See? Not propositional!" than you can refute idealism by kicking a stone.⁸ Moreover McDowell does assert, in *Mind and World*, that it is a *Tractarian* world, composed of facts, and continues to hold that view.⁹ He also believes that we have the world itself in view in experience. In any event, it is a simple-minded phenomenology that would deny propositionality to experience so quickly, and not one McDowell would accept.

But the phenomenological worries for propositionalism are not over. Part of the impetus for distinguishing experiential from propositional content is the richness of experiential content. What is implicit in it is always more than what is made explicit in any discursive judgments one might make on its basis. There is already more together in the content of an intuition than one can carve out and put together with other contents in a judgment. In Dretske's terms, we might say that intuitional content is analog, while discursive, propositional content—like the content of a belief based on intuited content—is digital. But this is neutral between propositional and non-propositional accounts of the content of experience. First, note that McDowell explicitly rejected the idea

to truth values.

- 7 Moreover, one might worry that, if experience is propositional, then, given the connection between propositionality and language, only language users could have experience. Whatever its merit, this worry has no place in the dispute between the propositional and McDowell's intuitional views of experiential content. McDowell agrees with the Sellars of EPM that only linguistic beings have experience, at least of the sort relevant to human cognition. What we enjoy is not brute animal sensibility with something more added, but rather something that is at best generically of the same sort, but specifically different.
- 8 Spinoza, in defense of his thesis that the will and the intellect are one and the same, insists that ideas are essentially affirmations or negations. To repeat my epigraph, "those who think that ideas consist of images ... look on ideas ... as mute pictures on a panel, and preoccupied with this prejudice, do not see that an idea, insofar as it is an idea, involves an affirmation or negation." *Ethics* II, P49SII. McDowell's view of experiential contents as concept involving certainly aligns experience with thinkings, as ideas and not mere images. But to Spinoza, this suffices to make experiences affirmations or denials, which can only be propositional.
- 9 Private communication (August 13, 2013).

OCKHAM ON CONCEPTS OF BEINGS

Sonja Schierbaum

Abstract

*In this paper I want to show that Ockham seeks to account for our knowledge of what there is and of what there can be in terms of the possession of a certain type of concepts. These concepts are based on a kind of singular cognition of things that are present to the subject. It should become clear that although Ockham's sketchy account of concepts of beings in the *Summa Logicae* is open to various objections it is not open to objections raised by Geach against "abstractionist" accounts of concept acquisition: the point is simply that Ockham does not want to account for the correct application of concepts to things, that is, for the recognition of things as being of a certain kind in the first place.*

I. Introduction

William of Ockham's (ca. 1287–1347) theory of concepts of beings seems to be open to objections raised by Geach against "abstractionist" accounts of concept acquisition (Geach 1957, 18–44), where abstraction is understood as the process of "singling out in attention some one feature given in direct experience—*abstracting* it—and ignoring the other features simultaneously given—*abstracting from* them." (ibid., 18). It might indeed be difficult to flesh out Ockham's sketchy account of the process of concept acquisition of (kind of) things in a way that is not open to various objections. According to him, there is a kind of singular cognition, namely intuitive cognition. To be more exact, intuitive cognition is a kind of non-propositional intellectual cognition of particular things that are present to the subject.¹ Intuitive cognition plays a central role for Ockham's account of concepts of beings: a subject can acquire a concept of (a kind of) things on the basis of intuition of a particular thing by some process of abstraction.²

The theoretically interesting point is that Ockham does not attempt to explain recognitional abilities in terms of the possession of concepts such as *cat*

1 For a presentation of Ockham's account of intuitive cognition compare Panaccio, 2004: 5–8, 11–15, Panaccio, 2010, McCord Adams, 1987: 501–15 and Scott, 1969.

2 Compare *Ordinatio* [hereafter *Ord.*] I, dist. 3, q. V (OT II, 475).

NOTE ON ZENO'S DICHOTOMY

I. M. R. Pinheiro

Abstract

We here solve one of the paradoxes of Zeno, The Dichotomy. We prove that the foundation of this paradox is the same as that of The Sorites and The Liar. Basically, the extraordinary difference between exclusively human and computer language seems to never be acknowledged by the people proposing the mentioned paradoxes. Yet, if such a difference had ever been acknowledged by them, their paradoxes would have been presented as simple allurements to illustrate scientific truths.

Introduction

We read in [Nick Huggett, 2010] that little is known about the original writings of Zeno of Elea, but his paradoxes became famous because people like Simplicius found ways of eternizing them.

The paradox we deal with here is interesting to us because it connects directly to Mathematics (like The Sorites). The Dichotomy, which is considered a paradox of motion, is about describing the world objects through the real numbers.

Even though there seems to be clarity in a common person's mind regarding the extraordinary differences between the machine world (Logic) and the exclusively human world (whatever does not fit in there), there seems to be some degree of difficulty in understanding this difference in a researcher's mind, as incredible as it may seem.

It seems that if one starts to worry too much about abstract things, then one loses touch with the concrete world. It is also possible that those who learn the scientific truths love to have the entire world, with all that there is in it, fitting inside of them in order to feel as if they are God and can control all.

The Sorites is about human beings believing that the human language is, or should be, something mechanical, not exclusively human at least sometimes. It is perhaps founded in the nonacceptance of the human freedom, which not just sometimes leads to confusion in people's understanding of others. Knowing other human beings is not an easy task. The effort to get to know a single other human being to the level that one knows oneself is so huge that it is very likely that only human beings who are faithful and loyal to their sexual partner,

THE EPIGENIC PARADOX WITHIN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Robert Kowalski

Abstract

The paper explores the Epigenic Paradox wherein agents of development are inextricable tangled up in the social systems that they both inhabit and co-create. Furthermore, Paulo Freire had maintained that the oppressed should be self-emancipated, which generates a most perplexing paradox of development; the primacy of the individual agent or the social structure? Thus an individual or agent is momentarily able to act in ways that maintain the social structures or indeed that call their existence into question, but then has been and is subject to the influence of those very social structures. This paradox finds further expression in the concepts of identity, labeling and stigma. The latter two become substantial issues in regard to the impact that the protagonists of development can have on the marginalized. This management of stigma is further complicated by the imposed requirement on the labeled to respond to their situation and to interact with the agents of 'benevolence' and yet strive to avoid giving endorsement thereby to the labeling bestowed by those significant others. The link between self-emancipation and the definition of development as the promotion of autonomy and self-determination is discussed. The concept of a 'developed' country is becoming synonymous with a 'democratic' country, and 'development' has been supplanted by 'democratization'. However, the true paradox of democracy is that a democracy can only be sustained in the face of alternative social configurations by the willingness of individuals to forego their individual interest in favour of the group interest.

Introduction

Amongst the various paradoxes that bedevil the development assistance (DA) business Kowalski (2010; 2012b) drew attention to what he named the Epigenic Paradox. This paper seeks to elucidate that paradox and the various issues that relate to it.

In addition to those considerations surrounding the moral hazard of receiving aid there is also a corresponding hazard for the giver. When the helper has an interest in finding opportunities to be helpful it can generate imprudent behaviour leading to increases in the number of cases necessitating assistance, a manifestation of Say's Law applied to development assistance, where: "the presence of the offer of aid then creates a new scenario where the problematic situations are partly incentivized by the aid offer. The order of causality is reversed."

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