

"Remedial Philosophy at Eleven
through Puzzles, Jokes, Questions and Illusions"

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14-7-91

The basic orientation can be given by the question, What am I? especially if this arises from the students. It can lead on to, or precede, What can I do? Lists of activities can be made, and those connected with learning selected from these. After exercises which give live experiences of these, classifications can be attempted and selections made, searching for landmarks that can be recognized securely. Puzzles highlight inquiry, and (eventually) discovery, while allowing also for sensation.

The relation of expression to understanding can be clarified, and the demand for verification developed, while opportunities for assent are noted. Illusions lead to confirmation of the need for and value of verification, so that the illusions can be overcome while at the same time scientific progress is being made.

An invitation to ask questions leads to a reflection on the nature of inquiry, and a distinction of types of inquiry, initially through diversity in interrogatory words and in types of answer sought.

The claim is thus made that inquiry is the basic a priori, and that there is a stable structure of discovery composed of dissimilar but interrelated landmarks: experience, inquiry, understanding, formulation, verification and assent.

With a finite number of landmarks in the acquisition of knowledge, and fresh instances of their use, criteria for their sound application can be set up. This leads to questions on objectivity and subjectivity, and to an operational definition of reality. This can be related to the notion of being, also approached operationally.

All this gives access to some of the traditional notions in metaphysics, to some of its traditional problems, and to indications of their solution. The notion of an ultimate intelligibility may also arise, and the conditions of its validity can be examined.

The term "Remedial" in the title of the workshop allows for the fact that, while I have not held formal classes with children under eleven, I have some evidence that this approach could be applied with profit at an earlier stage. The success of this approach with children suggests the other possible meaning of "remedial", namely that academic philosophy might benefit by more explicit attention to the nature of inquiry, of understanding, and of the puzzles that force us to admit that the passage from one to the other is important but by no means automatic.

REFERENCES

- T.V. Daly, "Learning from Lonergan at eleven", Method: journal of Lonergan studies, 9 (1991) 44-62.
- Bernard J.F. Lonergan, Insight: A study of human understanding, London: Longmans, 1957 (1992 Univ. Toronto Press)
- Hugo A. Meynell, An introduction to the philosophy of Bernard Lonergan, London: Macmillan, 1976, & other books, etc.

SOME PUZZLES FOR PHILOSOPHICAL USE

(The aim is to identify understanding,
by experiencing a fresh instance for oneself.)

Please do not spoil any of these for others.

What does spoil a puzzle?

How can I help another without spoiling the puzzle?)

1. A bear goes for a walk, one kilometre south, one kilometre east, and one kilometre north, thus arriving at its starting point. What is the colour of the bear?

2. What are the various rules that give these sets of numbers?

(a) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

(b) 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

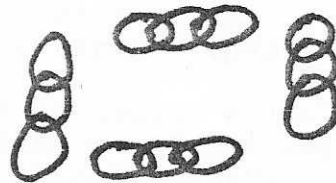
(c) 9 6 4 7 5 2 1 3 8

(d) 5 2 8 9 4 7 6 3 1

(e) 8 5 4 9 1 7 6 3 2

Concentrate mainly on this one

3. A welder charges a dollar to open a link of a chain and close it again. What is the cheapest way of connecting these four pieces of chain into a single circular chain (like a necklace)?



4. Add the next two figures in this series:



5. Cut a hole in a postcard and put your head through it. (Another closed necklace)

6. How can you move at all on skates?