

## *Accidents*

The Dewey lectures are supposed to be autobiographical and also reflective about our profession hence, I guess the hope is, somewhat instructive. I don't think my own history very instructive, but it did have some amusing twists, and I do have some concerns about the current state of the profession that I would like to share. So I thank the Dewey Society very much indeed for inviting me to give this lecture. It is an unexpected and a very pleasant honor!

Current research has it that women generally think their achievements a result of accident whereas men think they did it all by themselves. I suspect the women are more often right. Certainly my own career was full of accidents, and reading over the Dewey lectures so far — there have been a dozen — not one writer seems purposively to have sought out philosophy as a profession. By contrast, at the University of Bonn, perhaps fifteen years ago, I was told that half of the entering students declared philosophy as the field of their choice. The faculty's most urgent concern was how to discourage students from this prior to their first formal examinations, which were not until after the second year. I had never even *heard* of philosophy when I entered college. Almost everyone in my family, including my mother and sister, was a scientist. My father was very suspicious of my interest in philosophy. But when I was in graduate school, he retired early from teaching physics at Swarthmore to be a consultant at the Oak Ridge Laboratories, where his unit was headed by a German physicist whom he greatly admired. "Your daughter is studying philosophy? How perfectly wonderful. You must be very proud!" My father came about face. My thanks to this accident, and to the Germans!

I was born in December 1933. All four of my grandparents came off the farm — Montana and Wisconsin — all taught one room school at first, and all believed passionately in education. My mother was the first woman Ph.D. in geology at the University of Minnesota. My father became a Rhodes Scholar, then a physics professor at Swarthmore. My sister was valedictorian of her High School class and phi beta kappa and sigma xi at Oberlin in biochemistry. At the end of my fourth grade year, I was in the

bottom quarter of my class. My mother tried to persuade the school to fail me (I was the youngest and I had been ill) but was advised that I would certainly remain in that quarter. The family just needed to accept it.

The next year my mother drilled me on twenty new spelling words every school night, spelling out loud, the way they had done in her grammar school. So-called "reasoning problems" were also introduced that year in arithmetic, and I began to look somewhat better. Better enough, anyway, to be admitted to Oberlin College in 1951. The vague thought was to major in music in the college (not the conservatory). That was probably my mother's idea. It had never occurred to me to take a hand in my life. Girls weren't generally put in charge of their lives at that time. You did what your parents said and then someone married you. (My mother had never been able to use her geology.) I duly became engaged before Christmas that year to Bob Miller, who immediately graduated and went off to Harvard Grad in chemistry, leaving me, as my friends put it "a widow."

Philosophy was a requirement. I took it my sophomore year from Paul Schmidt (later chairman at the University of New Mexico for many years). He taught entirely by Socratic method. He made us feel that if we just thought hard enough over the weekend we might be able to solve this or that philosophical problem that had been lying around for 2000 years. We didn't read philosophy, we *did* philosophy, as people say. I got a D on my first paper (luckily it was a short one). I snuck out and then back into Browning House, the college infirmary, so as not to miss Schmidt's class when I had the flu. Some years later, after my roommate Bonnie Huddart and I had finished TA-ing in a big introductory class at Yale, Bonnie said "If I had had that as my introductory course I would have majored in philosophy instead of physics." I replied, "If I had had that course as my introductory course I would never have gone near philosophy again." So much for there being a right way to teach introductory philosophy!

I was badly bitten by philosophy and I happily majored in it, in part, because

philosophy required so few hours, leaving me free to take what I pleased, especially a great deal of science. One summer Bob Miller and I audited together a class in philosophy of science that Max Black gave at Harvard. It was exciting. I especially remember the day we took my hamster along and it chewed a dozen holes in Bob's undershirt trying to get out before Black's lecture was over.

In December of my senior year, Bob was sent by his doctors to Oberlin for a visit, the College allowing him to stay in one of the dorms. A week later he died there, in his sleep, of heart failure. He was twenty four. In those days, if you were dying, nobody told you or your family. Others would be told ... his advisor, the Oberlin college administration. You yourself actually knew it, of course, but nobody would talk with you about it.

So there was my life, staring straight at me, requiring me to do something about it. I joined a volunteer community project with the American Friends Service Committee in Berkeley for a year, then was a camera girl at the Claremont Hotel in Oakland and taught little kids to play violin and viola. And I took several courses in philosophy and political science in the graduate school at UC Berkeley. (There was no tuition if you had lived in California for a year and medical was \$60.00 a year and available to part-timers.) I audited Thomas Kuhn's lectures on the Copernican revolution, struggled with the first and second Critiques under Ashenbrenner, and took a course with Stanley Cavell on the new and exciting linguistic turn that had begun to overrun England. One evening my friend Ernie Hook — political philosopher Sydney Hook's son — showed up unexpectedly at my place with a portable typewriter under his arm and an application to Yale Graduate School in his hand, set it all down and began typing my hesitant answers to his questions as he filled in the blanks. (*Who* was in charge of my life?) Ernie — a mathematics major, later a physician — and I had spent a term at Oberlin teaching symbolic logic to one another, out of Copi's and then Langer's texts. Schmidt was right, of course, that the way to learn logic was to teach it, so he made us two do the work, a chapter each per week, and just watched, wearing a mischievous grin.

Now that meant I had to take the GREs, and that I should try to do well in Cavell's course. My great luck — I found this out afterwards — was that at that time Yale was simply throwing the graduate record information into a safe waiting to see if it correlated with anything in thirty years. (I wonder if it did?) Then the night before Cavell's final examination, my best friend presented at my house with a nervous breakdown. He had to be taken to the hospital, and soon after legally "committed," and I was the one who had to do this. Cavell let me postpone the examination for a week, after which he had forgotten to make it up. One more week and I took it, but when I got to the fourth question — it was on Wisdom on "Gods," which I had indeed studied carefully — I was too exhausted and sick to sit there another minute. I apologized in the exam book, left it and fled. When I went to collect the exam Cavell said he wasn't sure what he had done with it. Eventually an A appeared on my record, and I was admitted to Yale — I strongly suspect because Cavell never found the exam! Brand Blanshard, who had been a fellow Rhodes Scholar and tennis partner of my father's, was chair of the Yale department, which might, in those days, have had something to do with it too.

The night before I left Berkeley, my roommate dreamed that it was ten years later, I was sitting on my bunk in the Yale Graduate Women's dorm with the *Critique of Pure Reason* open in my lap, crying because I *still* couldn't understand it. Prophetic!!

On the way east I visited my Oberlin friend Donald Shankweiler, then studying experimental psychology at Iowa. He was taking a seminar on Philosophical Problems in the Social Sciences with Gustav Bergmann (once a "Vienna Circle" member) and Don asked Bergmann politely whether it would be all right if I sat in that day. Bergmann said no it would not be all right; it might disturb the atmosphere of the class. Some years later, however, I married Don.

I entered Yale in a class of twenty-two, one of only two without an entering fellowship — mostly Woodrow Wilson fellows — and one of only two girls. (We were "girls" in those days, not "women," though the boys had long since become "men.") My first experience was the German language exam, which had to be passed before we

could enter. Half an hour in, Carsten Harries confidently handed in his exam. Not knowing that Carsten was German-born, I very nearly turned mine in too! Next was a reading speed test required of all entering graduate students, I suppose because someone was doing a study. My reading speed was impossibly slow, I was told. No way would I get through graduate school.

Two of my first courses were on Pierce and Whitehead. I was wide-eyed and excited! In philosophy you really were allowed to stretch and to break all the rules! There was also logic, of course, modal logic before Kripke, with Anderson and Belnap. And there was more Kant. George Schrader called our class of 40(!) to order and, slowly disappearing behind a dense cloud of pipe smoke, asked for someone to explain, in terms his ten-year-old daughter could understand, please, what the unity of apperception was. Those were the last words I understood. There was also "Existence" — Sartre, Kierkegaard — and a seminar on Husserl and there was Epistemology and Metaphysics (up to, say, 1940) with Brand Blanshard, and there was Aristotle with Rulon Wells. But mostly there was, to my great good fortune, Wilfrid Sellars: a whole year on Wittgenstein and another whole year on the philosophy of mind. (For philosophy of mind, I wanted to write a paper saying what intentionality really is. Sellars suggested that I write on intentionality in Hume.)

Sellars became my dissertation advisor. Indeed, when I took my prospectus to him (it only had to be a page or two) he laid it carefully to one side, took his own pen in his hand (yes, in those days it was a pen), and wrote out an entirely new one for me.<sup>1</sup> But Sellars left Yale for Pittsburgh before I had made much progress and, having married another philosopher, Jimmy Millikan, who was not finished either, I began to teach at the University of Connecticut -- two years, four courses a term. Five years, a serious back injury, a summer in a mental hospital, two babies and a divorce later, I emerged

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<sup>1</sup> On Sellars's influence, see my "Confessions of a Renegade Daughter," James O'Shea ed., forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

with a self-supervised dissertation called "Empirical Identity" (on the epistemology, ontology and philosophy of mind of "empirical concepts," called "unicepts" below) that Paul Weiss signed off on. Weiss was kind, and a wonderful editor, but I am sure he did not believe a word I had written. A friend, however, urged Charles Morris, then retired to the University of Florida where I found myself at that time, to read it. In an hour, Morris took aim with my life. I had carved out a lifetime of work and I was to finish it. Philosophy was important and I was supposed to do it. I realized that Morris was right; I really did want, eventually, to say some of those things loud enough to be heard.

I picked up my babies (Aino and Natasha) and went to teach, first, at Berea College, then at Western Michigan, then I married Don Shankweiler, acquiring his little girls too for much of the time. Don had recently come (quite coincidentally) to the University of Connecticut, where I soon became an adjunct lecturer teaching "Ethics: Woman-man Issues" for Women's Studies — not because I had any academic background on women, but because I was one!

For many years the linguistics department and the experimental and developmental branches in the psychology department at Connecticut were very closely tied intellectually and socially, partly through research nearly everybody was doing at Haskins Laboratories in New Haven. Don is an experimental psychologist, so I found myself in close proximity with members of those departments, an enormous help to me as a developing "cognitive scientist." The science I had imbibed as a child and studied at Oberlin was also a help, enough that I could read the scientific literature with fair understanding and a somewhat critical eye. And I did keep working, slowly, on what I really wanted to say — about language, about "empirical concepts," about — yes, Mr. Sellars— about intentionality. The training at Yale had been entirely in the history of philosophy. Current friends find it hard to believe, but it really is true that I was never assigned a single current journal article during my study at Yale (though Sellars did give me some of his papers that were in press). My dissertation had cited only classical texts and some Wittgenstein. So I had a huge amount of catching up to do to connect

with the then-current philosophical scene on the issues I wanted to talk about.

Papers were written and duly rejected. They also kept expanding, from the inside, until they were much too long for a journal paper. So very slowly and fearfully, I began to write what was to become *Language, Thought and Other Biological Categories*. Then, very slowly, I turned it around and rewrote it backwards. (The biological theme was always secondary in my own mind, but seemed to need to be discussed first.) I had sent an earlier paper attempt to Dan Dennett, whom I didn't know but who seemed to be like-minded. He was encouraging, so later I sent a draft of the hopeful book. He showed it to Harry Stanton, editor of Bradford Books (The MIT Press). More miraculous. he volunteered an introduction! Poof...I had become a philosopher! It was 1984 and I had just turned fifty.

Later, of course, I met Dan Dennett, finding him as generous and friendly in person as by mail. He has been supporting me in helpful ways ever since, indeed, he has now written *another* introduction, to the *Millikan and Her Critics* volume that Dan Ryder is editing, coming out soon from Blackwells. So many thanks to both Dans!!

At the University of Connecticut, the number of full-time faculty was strictly limited by the board of trustees, and only full-time faculty could be tenured. In 1983, the philosophy department gave up a full-time slot in return for permission to hire Margaret Gilbert and me each part-time. They didn't manage to get the regular position back again for thirteen years! I eventually took the other half of myself to the University of Michigan where, ironically, this other half *was* tenured. Connecticut's provost was scandalized: "You can't be married to two institutions" he said." I refrained from reminding him that Connecticut hadn't proposed! In 1996, Connecticut threatened to dismiss me if I stayed at Michigan, but they also offered both Margaret and me regular tenured positions, which we gladly accepted. I do want to be clear, however, that my own department had been wonderfully supportive during all of this time. Crawford (Tim) Elder, especially, helped in every way he possibly could. Nor do I regret the years I was only half time. I am a very slow worker, and the part time appointment enabled me to

do a lot of work I could never have done otherwise.

Becoming a real philosopher was very exciting, becoming acquainted with people I had only heard of before, traveling to many places and talking with many new people, meeting eager graduate students. For reasons I don't know, interest in my work has always been strongest outside of this country. Very nearly half of my speaking engagements over the years have been abroad, which I certainly haven't minded. Philosophy has treated me to a surprisingly wide span of the world. I retired formally in 2003 but a wonderful feature of the academic world is that you can leave it gradually, and I am still very busy, occasionally teaching, mostly writing and speaking.

Many, in recent years, have asked me to comment on what it has been like to be a woman in philosophy. I had an unusual upbringing, I think. My father had had enormous respect for his mother's intellect and teaching abilities. She was, I'm told, a Darwinian — in the 19th century, right off the farm in Montana! My father was an instinctive and dedicated teacher himself, and his emphasis was always on *understanding* things, *thoroughly understanding*. He married a Ph.D. in paleontology. It never crossed my mind that a girl was any less obliged to learn and to understand than a boy. It was just part of being a good person.

Our family spent summers in the middle of a very big lake on the Canadian border, on my grandfather's rocky three-acre island, fifteen miles by water from public utilities. (This distance was traversed in a locally-built wooden work-boat powered by a model A Ford motor.) Absolutely everything — cabin-building, cabinet-making, dock-building, repairs on whatever was broken, was done by the family, without power tools, of course. I had no brothers, so I very happily took on the role of a son, helping to build and repair, to tell a six penny common nail from an eight penny box, to appreciate all the wonderful things made possible if you just have a good vice. (I once hit myself hard in the head with a twenty-four ounce hammer, hammering up under a joist. Significance?) An uncle and his family owned the next island a mile east, and other branches of the family visited often. At table, I liked to sit in the middle where I could hear the men's

conversation, about construction projects, repairing motors, mooring boats off rocky shores, transporting heavy things on small crafts, why the waves crossed each other the way they did, work with the National Geological survey, fighting local forest fires. Though we're talking 1940s, no one suggested there was anything unusual in my interests or activities as a girl.

I went to Oberlin, the first coeducational college in the country. I was not aware of any difference in the way men and women were treated there academically, though it certainly is true that no one was suggesting that we women should be looking forward to careers. (On the other hand, notice the healthy assumption that education was for more than getting a good job.) At Yale — then a men's undergraduate school with a totally male faculty — I remained unaware of any discrimination. Talking to others, and looking back on it later, I realize that I was extraordinarily naive! What you have no idea could exist you don't see, or at least you don't understand. Obvious things, like not being allowed in the (only) gym, or in Mory's, or in the elegant downstairs Sterling Library reading room, having to pay for physical therapy myself because that was "in the basement and the men run around naked down there" — these things really didn't bother me much. What did bother me, however — and it both hurt a lot and mystified me — was being quietly rebuked by Sellars as director of graduate studies because some of the faculty thought me too aggressive in my questioning. I was, in fact, completely in awe of the faculty; to challenge one of them was unthinkable. Nor did it ever occur to me that if I didn't understand something, it might be that it was actually unclear. My innocence was surely a very great blessing. Had I been aware of some of the attitudes present then, of things I thought back about or that other people told me about later, I doubt that I would have come through.

At the University of Connecticut there were certainly some odd attitudes on the part of the administration, but my own department has been awfully good to it's women. As for the profession as a whole, who can tell why things happen, why your work is read or why it is not? I think that awareness of the need for women in the profession has

probably opened some paths for me. It is interesting, for instance, that every third John Dewey lecture so far has been by a woman. People have been thinking of us. But few women seem to be in the fields I myself have worked in — philosophy of mind, of language, natural epistemology, ontology — and that is a puzzle to me. Nearly all of the women I have had in my graduate seminars have ended up in ethics, or social and political, or in women's studies, and this seems to be true too at other universities. Why?

I said I had some thoughts about the current state of philosophy. I am worried about it. The pressures that have been building up over the last thirty years, due to misguided calls for accountability, financial pressures, the narrow business-model increasingly adopted by administrations in our colleges and universities, resulting losses of effective faculty governance, the unabashed attitude that the primary goal of an educational institution is to win competitions for prestige — these pressures, resulting in the demand for teachers to be committed, first, to helping with PR by publishing early and lots, are extremely dangerous to philosophy. I very much fear that this serious accident in academia could be fatal for philosophy as we have known it. There are other disciplines that these policies, indifferent to the differences among fields, have damaged, but philosophy may be the most fragile. I think that our very first priority at the moment should be to join forces against these pressures.

Philosophy is not a field in which piles of small findings later help to secure fundamental advances. Little philosophical puzzles do not usually need to be solved but rather dissolved by examining the wider framework within which they occur. This often involves determinedly seeking out and exposing deeply entrenched underlying assumptions, working out what their diverse and far-ranging effects have been, constructing and evaluating alternatives, trying to foresee distant implications. It often involves trying to view quite large areas in new ways, ways that may cut across usual distinctions both within philosophy and outside and that may require a broad knowledge across disciplines. Add that to acquire the flexibility of mind and the feel for the

possibility of fundamental change in outlook that may be needed, a serious immersion for a considerable time in the history of philosophy is a near necessity. This kind of work takes a great deal of patience and it takes time. Nor can it be done in small pieces, first this little puzzle then that. Kant published the *Critique of Pure Reason* at age fifty-seven and the other critiques came later. Closer to our time, Wilfrid Sellars published his first paper at thirty-five, having lived and worked with philosophy all his life up to then. I have never tried to research the matter but I have no reason to think these cases unique. (Dan Ryder suggests surfing

<http://schwitzsplinters.blogspot.com/2010/05/at-what-age-do-philosophers-do-their.html> and

<http://schwitzsplinters.blogspot.com/2010/05/55-year-old-philosophers-vs-55-year-old.html> . Very

interesting.) Further, because a serious understanding of the historical tradition is both essential and quite difficult to acquire by oneself, helping to pass on this tradition with care and respect should always be the first obligation of a professional philosopher.

Given all this, it has always struck me as a no-brainer that forcing early and continuous publication in philosophy is, simply, genocidal. Forcing publication *at all* is not necessarily good.

In philosophy there are no hard data. And there are no proofs. Both in the writing and in the reviewing, deep intellectual honesty and integrity are the only checks on quality. This cannot be hurried. Authors who discover their errors must be free sometimes just to start over. They need time to be sure that their use of sources is accurate. Reviewers need time to digest and to check sources themselves when not already familiar with them, nor should they feel under pressure to pass on essays out of sympathy for the impossible position of young people seeking jobs or tenure. Unread journals should not be proliferating to accommodate, mainly, the perceived needs of administrators to keep their institutions competitive. What we philosophers are after is not something one needs to compete for, nor will more philosophical publications result in more jobs for philosophers. Necessarily, carrots and sticks produce cheapened philosophy.

Perhaps you will hear me as both overdramatic and unrealistic. Certainly my keen sensitivity to these issues results from my certainty that no matter how lucky and how determined, I myself could never have become a philosopher in the current environment. But we have not yet even tested the waters to see what kind of changes we might force if we banded together and, as a national unit, loudly and insistently made our case for more reasonable policies toward philosophy. I think we ought, at least, to be seriously discussing whether there is a way to implement an effective protest.

It may be, of course, that my vision of how philosophers should be working is colored by my own philosophical position. Let me end by saying something about that.

Starting with my dissertation, I have been resisting the theories of mind and language that positioned conceptual analysis — the antithesis, as I see it, of philosophical innovation and synthesis — at the center of philosophy. The idea that this kind of analysis is important, even possible, rests on deeply entwined philosophical, psychological and linguistic theories, developed mainly in the twentieth century (Sellars too was involved, sigh) and that are, I believe, importantly wrong. Instead of talking about what I think was wrong, however, let me say a word about what I think is right, for I have recently been reworking this issue.

Consider an extraordinary ability that we all have, the ability to recognize, for example, one's mother, or a sibling, one's spouse, one's best friend. Suppose one of these persons in your life is named Bert. Here are some of the ways that you can probably recognize Bert. You can do this by seeing Bert in the flesh, 20 meters up the street, perhaps at 1000 meters by his or her walk, certainly at 30 centimeters, from the front, from the back, from the left side or the right or most any other angle, half hidden behind another person or a chair or a table or a book, sitting, standing, lying down, yawning, stretching, running, eating, holding still or moving in any of various ways, in daylight or moonlight, under a street lamp, by candlelight, through a fog, in a photograph, on TV, through binoculars, by hearing Bert's voice from any of many

distances or as it passes through a variety of media such as lightweight walls, under water, over the phone, despite many kinds of masking sounds such as wind, or rain, or other people talking, and so forth.

Now generalize the ordinary notion of recognizing a person just a bit so that it encompasses your wider ability to keep track of when natural information is arriving at any of your various senses about Bert. You may recognize Bert, or signs of Bert that enable you to gather information about Bert, by recognizing Bert's signature or handwriting, by recognizing Bert's style of prose or humor or, perhaps, of musical interpretation or of some other activity, by the sound of the instrument Bert plays coming from the next room or the hammering that accompanies Bert's current home project, by recognizing Bert's name when someone speaks it, or when it is written, by hand or in any of a hundred fonts, and so forth. Also, surely, you can recognize that the information arriving is about Bert through many hundreds of descriptions of Bert, the person who was or did this or that, about whom this or that is true, or you may recognize whom the information is about using various kinds of inference, induction or abduction. If these latter ways of "recognizing Bert" seem to you to divide off rather sharply from recognizing Bert "in the flesh," recall that seeing a person or recognizing them by their voice is also gathering information about them through signs. The light that strikes your eyes, the vibrations that strike your ears, are signs of Bert. It may also help to consider intermediate cases, such as seeing in the mirror, hearing over the telephone, recognizing through a telescope.

You possess then a complex, extraordinarily versatile, skill — the ability to bring to one focus innumerable small bits of natural information arriving in the form of a hugely diverse set of proximal stimulations impinging on your various sensory surfaces, all of which happen to carry natural information about just one thing, Bert. Thus you are enabled to put these various bits of information together, using mediate inference and practical learning over time, and to use the results during later encounters with Bert. You are able to accumulate knowledge of and practical skills that involve getting on with

Bert. And you are able to do this as well, of course, with very many other individual persons and things, bringing to a single focus information about the same that has been widely dispersed over time and space through diverse media and that has affected your senses in widely diverse ways.

Our remarkable abilities to coidentify are not, of course, restricted to individual objects. Consider our abilities to recognize various properties, say, shapes or colors or distances, under various external conditions. Think of the variety of proximal visual stimulations — what actually hits the eye — to which a given shape may give rise when viewed from various angles, from different distances, under different lighting conditions, through various media such as mist or water, when colored different ways, when partially occluded. How shape constancy is achieved by the visual system, the capacity to recognize the same shape as the same under a wide range of conditions — how the same distal shape property can be reidentified through the myriad proximal stimulations that may manifest it — is a problem of enormous complexity on which psychologists of perception are still hard at work. And shape is coidentified by the haptic systems. (Eye-hand coordination is a nice example of coidentification through concurrent rather than serial sources of information.) You can feel the shape of a small object in your hand in a variety of ways, for example, with these fingers or those, when the object is turned this way or that way, perhaps by using two hands, by merely holding the object or by actively feeling or stroking it. You can perceive larger shapes (say, in the dark) by exploring with larger motions that involve your arms, body and perhaps legs, and by employing the touching surfaces of a wide variety of your body parts. This kind of perception of shape, which involves the coordination of information about the exact positions of one's body parts with information about what touches these parts, is of such a complex nature that, psychologists have hardly begun to study it.

Similarly, how color constancy, texture constancy, size constancy, distance constancy and sound constancy are achieved are enormously complicated matters. We are adept, for example, at identifying the origins of sounds, especially speech sounds —

phonemes, vocal gestures — as the same whether from near or far, filtered through air or through water, muffled or distorted, over the telephone, pronounced by a deep voiced man or a piping child. Depth is perceived with the help at least of binocular disparity, tension in the focusing muscles, motion-parallax, occlusion of one object by another, perspective, texture gradients, shading and reflections, atmospheric haze, as well as "top-down" knowledge of object geometry and of the size of objects viewed. We also recognize distances by touch and stretch using many different parts of the body, and by ear we recognize fairly well the distances from ourselves of things that make sounds. And there are more explicit ways of determining distance, of course, such as measuring with a ruler or a tape measure or dividers, or measuring as a surveyor does by triangulation, or measuring with an odometer or a micrometer or by timing the return of light.

I have recently coined the term "unicept" for the coordinated coidentification methods that gather information together into a single repository, taking it all to be about a single thing. (The predecessors of unicepts in my writing were called "empirical concepts." The next paragraphs make clear why I have withdrawn that term in favor of "unicepts.") "Uni" is for one, of course, and "cept" is from Latin *capera*, to take or to hold. A unicept takes in proximal stimulations and holds them as one distal object, property or kind. It collects and brings to a focus information about one thing that has been widely scattered through diverse media. Unicepts, I believe, are the fundamental units of cognition.

Unicepts, however, are not things that people share. Each of us has our own private unicepts, though our unicepts often do, of course, succeed in gathering information about the same things in the world. Many of our unicepts involve abilities to coidentify through prior recognition of words, these words (in context) indicating to us what we are receiving information about. But that you and I have unicepts of the same thing, and that both these unicepts include abilities to recognize that thing when manifested through a certain word, does not imply any other similarities between our

two unicepts. Words do not necessarily correspond, across people who use them competently, to psychological similarities.

A way to put this rudely would be to say that there is no such thing as a concept; if a concept is supposed to be something common to the psychologies of the competent users of a word. Hence, of course, there is no such thing as conceptual analysis. (That is too strong, of course, since some words do not concern anything that is eventually evidenced in experience, and the complaint, so far, is about those that do.) Thus it is that examining concepts appears to me to be a much more problematic and far less central business than is often supposed. What need examining are the phenomena, the world, how its ontology manages to support unicepts, how unicepts of various kinds are developed and tuned.<sup>2</sup>

Philosophy cannot be done piecemeal, a little cottage industry in charge of each baffling puzzle and each important "concept," one at a time. Too much division of labor is very bad for philosophy.

The program for the Central Division APA meeting at which this lecture was presented mistakenly printed the title as "Advice." OK, here is the advice.

*Don't get involved in partial problems, but always take flight to where there is a free view over the whole single great problem, even if this view is still not a clear one. (L. Wittgenstein, Journal entry, 1 November 1914, Notebooks*

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<sup>2</sup> A great deal more needs to be explained before this view becomes plausible. Especially needed are (1) an ontology of individuals and of real kinds that explains what objective reidentification amounts to and why people are able to agree with themselves and with others on reference despite using different methods of identification (see, for example, my 1984 Chs. 16-17, 2000, 2005, 2010) and (2) what might be called an "epistemology of unicepts" to explain how we tell whether we are reidentifying correctly or not (see, for example, my 1984 Chs.18-19, 1998, 2004 Chs. 18-19) and (3) a theory of natural information that will fit with this ontology and epistemology (see my 2012).

1914-1916)

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(Most of these materials are on my web site.)