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Phil 490

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Check with Hubbs

1. Can we email questions early
2. Do you think any of the activities are good
3. Do the questions look good
4. Should we print out
5. Should we ask questions we only know the answer to or also questions we don’t know the answer to

TO DO

1. Maybe add some controversial statements to questions if possible so I can facilitate debate.
2. Check:
   1. Conceptual analysis under the umbrella of conceptual engineering?
   2. Understanding how the combination of concepts in pragmatic genealogy are greater than the sum of their parts.
   3. Understand Aristotle’s 4 causes
   4. The 7 benefits of pragmatic genealogy

Ideas

1. As a class or several groups, run through analyzing the same concept through:
   1. Intension first
   2. Extension first
   3. And function first
2. Have two teams with two groups each that compete where they do conceptual engineering and conceptual reverse engineering
   1. Conceptual engineering
      1. “From the function to the conceptual practice that would perform it”
   2. Reverse engineering
      1. “Begins at the point of the conceptual practice, to the function it performs.”
   3. Each team is given the same two ideas to analyze (say truth and justice). Both teams assign their groups a concept to analyze by conceptual reverse engineering. And then the groups give their analysis (which does not explicitly spell out the idea they are analyzing) to the other group on their team and then they must use conceptual engineering to give the functions they were given to reengineer the idea. If each group, is able to piece together the concept the other group analyzed, then they get a point.
   4. Analyze what worked well for understanding ideas
   5. This technically covers material from Ch 1 pg 17
3. Create a mindmap of the features in the concepts described in this chapter
4. Discuss thesis, antithesis, and synthesis

Facilitation Questions Asked and Their Potential Answers

1. On page 31, Queloz says the approaches genealogy, pragmatism, and naturalism share a reputation for being reductive. Is there good reason for this? He also says pragmatic genealogy, which is a combination of the three aforementioned approaches, is not reductive. If there is good reason to think genealogy, pragmatism, and naturalism are reductive, how can Queloz claim the combination of them is not reductive? Why can genealogies without the pragmatism and naturalism be reductive?
   1. Reductive because
      1. Genealogy - Revealing the origins and historical circumstances undermines the universality and perceived necessity of concepts
      2. Naturalism – Explains human behavior in terms of the animal kingdom and detracts from our uniqueness as human beings.
      3. Pragmatism – Emphasizing practical need for and the utility of concepts rather than their intrinsic value or truth.
   2. Together, the combination is non-reductive because they compensate for each other’s shortcomings.
   3. Genealogies without pragmatism and naturalism might be reductive due to their failure to consider the practical functions and natural underpinnings of ideas.
2. How is the pragmatic genealogical combination of naturalism, pragmatism, and genealogy a stepping point for going from one end to the other end of the genealogical spectrum Queloz describes in chapter 1?
   1. I think:
      1. Naturalism moves away from the historical genealogies towards the state of nature stories.
      2. Pragmatism considers and emphasizes both or more so the state of nature stories.
      3. Genealogy moves away from the state of nature stories towards the historical genealogies.
3. This chapter focused primarily on the benefits of pragmatic genealogy. What are some of the drawbacks of pragmatic genealogy? When would pragmatic genealogy be the preferred method of analysis? When would conceptual analysis be the preferred approach to understanding concepts?
   1. Pragmatic genealogy potential drawbacks
      1. Is there a chance of overemphasizing instrumental thought – the function-first approach?
      2. Potential problematic assumptions in regards to the fiction of pragmatic genealogy
   2. Pragmatic genealogy is preferred
      1. When you need a less restrictive method of analysis that zooms out.
      2. The rest of the benefits of conceptual reverse engineering and pragmatic genealogy.
   3. Conceptual analysis is preferred when you need a more restrictive method of analysis that zooms in.
4. Can pragmatic genealogy and conceptual analysis be performed meaningfully together? If so, what ways does pragmatic genealogy complement traditional conceptual analysis? In what ways do they limit each other when done together?
   1. Might want to get rid of the first part of the question because I think the answer is yes.
      1. Yes, pragmatic genealogy can paint the intension and extension of a concept by highlighting what functions and needs a concept serves.
      2. They give different perspectives which may be of value in different contexts.
   2. How do the limit one another?
      1. Conceptual analysis zooms in and reverse engineering, which pragmatic genealogy is a species of, zooms out (pg 29-20)?
         1. Conceptual analysis is restrictive whereas pragmatic genealogy is not as restrictive.
      2. Queloz I believe mentions that pragmatic genealogy can displace conceptual analysis.
5. Can the conclusions that have been reached through pragmatic genealogy conflict with the ideas that have stemmed from conceptual analysis? If so, which conclusions are preferred? Or is this not possible?
   1. Yes they can conflict
   2. When conflicts arise, pragmatic genealogy may be preferred because
      1. It is less restricted.
      2. Can better identify the most common factor when conceptual practices are diverse.
      3. Conceptual analysis focuses on current conceptual practices while forgoing their historical and practical origins.
6. Queloz says all pragmatic genealogy is a function-first approach. Are all function-first approaches genealogical? If not, what are other approaches which are function-first?
   1. Might want to get rid of the first because I believe the answer is no
   2. No, not all function-first (conceptual reverse engineering) approaches are genealogical.
      1. These other approaches could be where one knows the function already or where they focus on the function a concept should serve.
7. According to Queloz, why is pragmatic genealogy the reverse engineering variant most well-suited for responsible conceptual engineering? Do you agree with this claim?
   1. It alerts us to the plethora of functions we need to consider when revising our conceptual practices. It shows what we stand to lose or gain.
      1. If this is the case, then why couldn’t another kind of conceptual reverse engineering fulfill the same purpose? He says that pragmatic genealogy is only one of the conceptual reverse engineering variants.
8. Queloz brings up the trial of Oscar Wilde as being a good example of the distinction between justification and vindication. Can you think of another example which illustrates the distinction well?
   1. I think anything concerning the law illustrates the distinction well.
      1. Issues of freedom of speech
         1. Whether freedom of speech applies would concern justification
         2. Reasons on whether freedom of speech is a valuable concept to have would be whether or not it is a valuable concept to have exist and use
         3. A situation in which freedom speech is useful as a concept but not applicable to it immediately would be another instance which paints the distinction.

Questions Not Asked

1. How can you apply pragmatic genealogy to your own life?
2. How has your perspective changed if at all? In what ways are you skeptical of what Queloz claims?

Notes

* Conceptual engineering
  + Forward looking exercise focused on creating and modifying concepts
  + Starts with functions and moves to concept
  + Queloz says it requires to know what is good and bad
    - Conceptual reverse engineering helps to illuminate this
  + More strict in terms of being limited by exceptions and counter-examples
* Conceptual reverse engineering
  + An exercise to understand what needs a concept serves
  + Starts with a concepts and moves to functions
  + 7 benefits of conceptual reverse engineering:
    - More tolerant of exceptions and counter-examples
    - Explanatory use of typical conditions
    - Imposes order on internally diverse practices
    - Dissolves debates
    - Demystifying role
    - Yields a holistic understanding of concepts
    - Can guide and justify conceptual engineering
* Conceptual analysis
  + An exercise to determine the intension of a concept
  + Intension
    - The explicit definition of a concept.
      * The definitional content
    - Intension-first conceptual analysis is guided by Socratic Question.
    - Used to explain a concepts extension
  + Extension
    - The set of all cases a concept applies to.
    - Extension-first conceptual analysis is guided by Socratic Question.
  + Socratic Question guides it
    - Here the guiding question is a version of the Socratic ‘What is X?’ question, namely: ‘What are the conditions that are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for something to fall under the concept of X?’
    - “What is X? What are the properties or unifying principles that make it X?”
  + Sensitive to counter-examples and exceptions
    - Thinning of a concept
* Pragmatic genealogy
  + A kind of conceptual reverse engineering
  + Has the 7 benefits of conceptual reverse engineering and in addition these 3 more:
    - Explanation without reduction
    - Affecting the space of reasons
    - Facilitating responsible conceptual engineering
  + Function
    - The purpose or role a concept serves
      * Especially in relation to the needs and practices of the users of the concept
    - Pragmatic genealogy is a function-first approach
      * This approach is guided by Pragmatic Question.
        + Questions like:

"Why do we have the concept of X?”

“What does it do for us?"

* + - * Identifying a concept’s function is used to explain its existence and intension.
      * Prioritizes the point or function of concepts or terms in practice over inquiries and explanations primarily focused on their content or meaning.
    - Less limited by counter-examples and exceptions
      * Not as thin
  + Naturalism
    - Considers natural processes
  + Pragmatism
    - Looks at practical needs
  + Genealogy
    - Considers the historical origins of a concept and how it evolves through time
* Justification vs Vindication
  + Justification
    - Concerns the correct application of a concept.
    - Refers to providing reasons for a particular application of a concept or a specific expression of a value or virtue.
    - It concerns whether a concept applies in a particular case or whether certain consequences can be drawn from its application.
  + Vindication
    - Concerns the value and warrant for using the concept at all.
    - “Provides reasons for concept use.”
    - This involves providing reasons for or against cultivating a certain type of conceptual practice. It concerns whether to organize one's life along the lines articulated by the concept at all, rather than whether to apply the concept in a particular case or to draw consequences following its application.
  + The trial of Oscar Wilde illuminates the difference
    - “The difference is well illustrated by the trial of Oscar Wilde. Pressed by the cross-examiner to admit that a certain story was blasphemous, Wilde resisted. Yet he quite rightly did not dispute that the concept of blasphemy applied to the story. Instead, he found that given his needs and concerns, he had no reason to use the concept of blasphemy in the first place—‘blasphemous’, he remarked, ‘is not a word of mine’.” (Queloz 38).
* Cambridge pragmatism
  + Agent-centeredness
    - Focus on agents and their dispositions, attitudes, concepts, and words related to a philosophically puzzling topic rather than starting with the object itself.
  + A function-first approach
    - Prioritizes the point or function of concepts or terms in practice over inquiries and explanations primarily focused on their content or meaning.
  + Genealogical dimension
    - Seeks explanations of how a mode of talking, thinking, and practicing might have come about, given in terms of the functions it serves.
* Aristotle’s 4 Causes.
  + Material cause
    - The physical substance or matter something is made of
      * Eg the wood in a table is the material cause of a table
  + Formal cause
    - The essence, pattern, or structure that defines what something is
      * Eg the design of a table where there are 4 legs of equal length connected to a flat top is the formal cause of a table
  + Efficient cause
    - The source of change
      * Eg the carpenter which makes a table is the efficient cause of a table
  + Final cause
    - The purpose, goal, or function for why something exists
      * Eg an object to place and rest other objects on is the final cause of a table
  + Are not mutually exclusive and often work together to more effectively explain something
  + Believed understanding all 4 causes was necessary for having complete knowledge of something