Chapter 2
Introduction

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Abstract   This chapter uses the distinction between speculative and analytic philosophy as a background against which to present the summaries of the articles on the nature of philosophy by Mary Whiton Calkins, Dorothy Walsh and Marjorie Glicksman. Calkins and Walsh (in her first contribution) examine the relationship between philosophy and metaphysics: Calkins identifies philosophy with speculative metaphysics while Walsh argues that any ethical theory requires some underlying speculative metaphysics. In Walsh's second contribution, she further argues that philosophical language rightly is characteristically different from the languages of science, logic and poetry. Glicksman, finally, addresses the question how to deal with the multiplicity of views concerning the nature of philosophy.

2.1 Introduction

Analytic philosophy, one of the main strands of twentieth-century Anglo-American philosophy, provides a still popular answer to the question of the nature of philosophy. Analytic philosophy is characterised by the assumption that philosophy should be a critical rather than speculative enterprise. Whereas speculative philosophy ultimately aims to go beyond established opinion in order to make substantive claims about reality as a whole (humanity, the universe) and often aims to criticise science and common sense, critical philosophy aims to avoid, as far as feasible, going beyond established opinion. Instead, it aims to answer its questions by making explicit and/or reconstructing existing scientific or common-sense commitments on the assumption

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21   of the overall truth of some portion of these commitments (Katzav, 2018). Such
22   critical analyses typically proceed in a piecemeal fashion, focusing on portions of
23   reality or some of our knowledge of it. Speculative philosophers see the value of
24   piecemeal and critical work but think of it as preliminary to the pursuit of systematic
25   visions of all-that-there-is.

26   George E. Moore's work nicely illustrates the critical and piecemeal approach
27   characteristic of analytic philosophy. In his *Principia Ethica*, he claims that the
28   substantive disagreements found in the history of philosophy are principally due to
29   one cause, namely the fact that philosophers have tried to answer their questions
30   without first clarifying them. In many cases, he tells us, such clarification will lead
31   to answering the questions (1903, p. vii). Clarifying questions can involve their
32   disambiguation and discerning the order in which they need to be answered. More
33   importantly, it involves analysing the questions' concepts, that is, figuring out what
34   they stand for. One does this by seeing what the indubitable propositions involving
35   the concepts share or imply (ibid., pp. xii, 1–6).

36   Thus, for example, the *Principia Ethica* is concerned specifically with the ques-
37   tions of ethics. One of the primary questions of ethics is, 'What kinds of actions
38   ought we to perform?' Moore argues that this question cannot be answered without
39   first answering the question, 'What kinds of things are good in themselves?' and that
40   answering this last question involves analysing the concept of being good and thus
41   what 'good in itself' refers to in the world. In order to provide such an analysis, in
42   turn, one need only analyse what we already know to be indubitably true propositions
43   about the good, e.g., to see what they share or imply about the good (1903, pp. xiii,
44   1–6).

45   Moore's answer about the concept of the good is that it is not reducible to other
46   concepts, so that 'being good' corresponds to a simple–in the sense of 'having no
47   constituents'–property or quality. Moore's main reason for this view is an objection
48   to identifying being good either with any natural property or with any supernatural
49   property. A natural property is one that, like pleasure or the fulfilment of desire,
50   might be revealed to us by empirical observation. A supernatural property is one
51   that, perhaps like being in accord with one's true self, is not empirically observable.
52   According to Moore, if we define 'being good' in a way that identifies being good with
53   some natural or supernatural property, we are identifying being good with something
54   about which it makes sense to ask, 'Is that good?' That this question remains open
55   indicates that we have failed to explain our indubitable knowledge about what is
56   good and thus adequately to define 'being good' (ibid., pp. 15–16, 112–114).

57   Note that Moore here criticizes another important strand of twentieth-century
58   Anglo-American philosophy, namely, naturalism. Naturalism aims to use empirical
59   methods in order to answer philosophical questions and, accordingly, to formulate its
60   theses in terms of natural properties. When applied to ethical questions, naturalism
61   aims to use empirical evidence to teach us about the nature of the good. If Moore is
62   correct, however, and the good is simple, empirical evidence can teach us nothing
63   about the good itself. To claim that it can is what Moore called 'the naturalistic
64   fallacy' (ibid., p. 16). Moore is also arguing against metaphysical theories of the good,
65   which for him means analyses that identify being good with supernatural properties.

Thus, ethical truths are, according to Moore, autonomous. They are truths which are incapable of proof but are rather self-evident (i.e., they are intuitions). Also in this, Moore distances himself from some forms of naturalism, in particular from naturalist views which tell us that moral statements are non-cognitive (viz., have no truth conditions and truth values) in virtue of being, for example, merely expressions of affective responses in people.

One of the most influential naturalists in the analytic tradition was Willard V Quine. He (1981) argues that ethical statements, in contrast with scientific ones, are not responsive to empirical evidence. Given this, ethical statements are not statements of fact; they lack cognitive content.[1] In fact, Quine was generally critical of non-naturalist approaches to philosophy, including the program of Moore and the logical empiricists. His naturalism makes philosophy a branch of science, in the sense that it, like science, is and should be informed by observation. Quine reaches this conclusion partly by arguing, in his paper 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' (1951), against a distinction that earlier analytic philosophy relied on to distinguish between philosophy and science, namely the distinction between analytic truths (truths that are true by virtue of meaning) and synthetic truths (truths that are true by virtue of some matter of fact). Analytic philosophers had tended to suppose that philosophy, like mathematics, is solely concerned with analytic truths, while the special sciences are concerned with synthetic truths. With this distinction being rejected, Quine believes, philosophy cannot but be an empirical form of investigation, like science.

Although Quine was critical of non-naturalist approaches to analytic philosophy and arguably offered a systematic philosophy, his philosophy is a form of critical philosophy. Philosophy, according to Quine, should aim to minimise the extent to which it goes beyond what our best science tells us about the world. Metaphysics, according to Quine, proceeds by examining the logical implications of our best science regarding what exists. If, for example, our best science's use of mathematics implies that numbers exist, we should include numbers in our metaphysics. Epistemology (the theory of knowledge and its development) is taken to be the empirical investigation of how what we know depends on evidence. This moves analytic philosophy closer to the earlier naturalism developed by speculative thinkers. However, Quine still thinks of epistemology as being relatively distant from empirical considerations and as proceeding by seeing what established, relevant science, mostly psychology, teaches us about human cognitive development rather than by going beyond such science, never mind by criticising it (Katzav, 2022; Kelly, 2014).

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[1] This is not to say that all twentieth-century Anglo-American naturalists thought that ethical statements lack cognitive content. See, e.g., the moral functionalism of Jackson and Pettit (1995) and the Cornell realism of Richard Boyd (1988).

2.2 The Nature of Philosophy According to Mary Whiton Calkins

Mary W. Calkins' position on the nature of philosophy, as expressed in her 'The Nature, Types, and Value of Philosophy' (taken from her book *The Persistent Problems of Philosophy*, 1907), is a speculative one. Although she, like Quine, thinks that philosophy starts with an examination of science, philosophy also aims to go beyond science and its implications in developing a vision of the real. Whereas science has as its object of study single facts or groups of facts and does not properly tackle the question of the ultimate or fundamental nature of these, philosophy properly investigates the ultimate nature of some fact or group of facts and, ideally, the ultimate nature of all-that-there-is (ibid., pp. 3–4; this volume).

Thus, whereas the biologist is interested in characterizing, say, a living cell in terms of its internal and external biological processes, the philosopher aims to determine whether such processes are, at an ultimate level, biological or something else, e.g., psychical. Further, in going beyond the scientific focus on specific domains of fact to investigate all there is, the philosopher aims to uncover that ultimate reality into which all else can be resolved and which cannot be resolved into anything else. Calkins does not say much about what she means by 'ultimate nature of reality' here, describing an ultimate fact as one that is irreducible and not a manifestation of anything else (1907, p. 5; this volume). Elsewhere (see her paper in Part V: 'Time', p. 235) she suggests that it can be thought of as referring to fully concrete or real phenomena, as opposed to abstract or idealised ones; we have already noted the concept of the ultimate or fundamental (the Introduction: 'American Women Philosophers'), as well as noted that ultimate phenomena can also be thought of as being those upon which the existence/natures of everything else depends.

Since science cannot properly investigate what is ultimate or properly investigate the all-that-there-is, according to Calkins, she is clear that philosophy cannot hope to answer its questions by unpacking what science teaches but must go beyond science in its inquiries. To use Calkins' own metaphysics as an example, it tells us not only that what science treats as purely material objects have a psychological side that is hidden from science but that their material side is explicable in terms of that psychological side and, ultimately, in terms of the absolute person. Calkins is an absolute idealist (see the Introduction and Part IV: 'Mind and Matter', p. 175). We can add that, given her systematic view of reality, philosophy cannot solely be approached in the piecemeal way in which analytic philosophy typically approaches it.

To say that philosophy starts with an examination of science means, according to Calkins, that it uses as raw materials the individual facts discovered by any of the sciences. Calkins thinks the history of philosophy provides a similar starting point for philosophy. History of philosophy, she believes, is a study of facts; it attempts to discover what previous philosophers have meant with what they have said and, subsequently, to critically engage with their views (1907, p. 7; this volume). Further, to say

¹⁴³ that philosophy is continuous with science implies that philosophy cannot be distin-
¹⁴⁴ guished from science in terms of the analytic/synthetic distinction: philosophical
¹⁴⁵ knowledge is, just like scientific knowledge, synthetic.

¹⁴⁶ Calkins' identification of philosophy with metaphysics is also evident in her
¹⁴⁷ overview (see Sect. 2.3 of her text) of existing philosophical systems. Her approach
¹⁴⁸ here is to classify such systems according to their metaphysical portrayal of all-of-
¹⁴⁹ reality. Numerically monistic, for instance, are those systems which, like her absolute
¹⁵⁰ idealism, tell us that the all-there-is is ultimately numerically one; numerically plural-
¹⁵¹ istic, in contrast, regard reality as comprising multiple distinct fundamental entities.
¹⁵² And so forth.

¹⁵³ Throughout the chapter, Calkins remains modest about what philosophy can
¹⁵⁴ achieve. She acknowledges that philosophical inquiry might be open ended and
¹⁵⁵ yield questions rather than substantive answers about the nature of all-there-is. Still,
¹⁵⁶ philosophy *might* be able to tell us, or make progress towards telling us, whether
¹⁵⁷ ultimate reality is one mind or many, mind, matter or something else. Moreover,
¹⁵⁸ these issues, according to Calkins, have a bearing on personal life: one's philosoph-
¹⁵⁹ ical system typically affects one's conduct and moulds one's personal relations. This
¹⁶⁰ suffices to make philosophy a privilege and a duty (ibid., pp. 12–13; this volume).
¹⁶¹ Again, Calkins' own philosophy is illustrative here. It surely matters to how we act
¹⁶² if we sincerely believe, with Calkins, that ultimately all beings, including those we
¹⁶³ ordinarily think of as mere matter, are selves.[2] "The more adequate the philosophy,"
¹⁶⁴ Calkins concludes her paper, "the more consistent the life may become" (1907, p. 13;
¹⁶⁵ this volume). In this way, philosophy aims "[t]o provide sound theoretical foundation
¹⁶⁶ for noble living, to shape and to supplement conduct by doctrine" (1907, p. 13; this
¹⁶⁷ volume). Metaphysics, for the philosopher, is thus not just a goal in itself but a goal
¹⁶⁸ in service of the good life.

2.3 Dorothy Walsh on the Relationship Between Ethics and Metaphysics

¹⁷¹ In her article 'Ethics and Metaphysics' (1936), Dorothy Walsh addresses the nature
¹⁷² of ethics. More specifically, she develops the view that ethics is dependent on meta-
¹⁷³ physics. So, like Calkins, she insists on the primacy of metaphysics in philosophical
¹⁷⁴ inquiry and, as we will see, on the speculative view that metaphysics goes beyond
¹⁷⁵ scientific fact. Walsh's argument proceeds primarily by criticizing alternative views,
¹⁷⁶ views she shows fundamentally require a metaphysics.

¹⁷⁷ Walsh starts out by targeting two ethical theories, Moore's and empirical natu-
¹⁷⁸ ralism. Whereas Moore grounds ethics in purportedly simple, undefinable ideas, such
¹⁷⁹ as 'goodness', empirical naturalism seeks to ground ethics solely on reliable empirical
¹⁸⁰ observations of a wide diversity of humans. Consider empirical naturalism first. One

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[2] It is thus not surprising to find that Calkins' ethical system takes our moral duties to be to the
community of all conscious beings (1918).

option is to base empirical ethical theories on observations of human moral behaviour. According to Walsh, however, this would require interpreting observed behaviour in light of a metaphysical idea (ibid., p. 463; this volume). If, for example, we observed behaviour that did not fit our ethical theory, that is, if humans were behaving in ways our theory deems unethical, we would have to interpret the behaviour as not reflecting the true or ultimate nature of humans. Another option is for the naturalist to attempt to base a moral theory on direct observation of human nature. But here too, a metaphysical idea would be needed to interpret what is observed. Only with such an idea would we be able to decide which of the many potentialities of humans are those that ought to be selected by our ethical theory as those that ought to be promoted (ibid., pp. 463–464; this volume).

Given such difficulties, some philosophers, including Moore, have tried to build an ethics based on notions that are ethical from the start. We have seen that, according to Moore, knowledge about moral truths is arrived at via intuition, i.e., the perception and recognition of self-evident simple ideas; he thinks he can build his ethics without reliance on empirical data. Walsh's criticism of Moore's ethics, now, is that it either resolves into a solipsistic position, and is thus not really a theory at all, or must be underpinned by a systematic metaphysics.

Walsh notes that, if 'goodness' expresses a simple idea, for someone to tell us that their intuition of something is that it is good, is no more informative than for them to say "'good' applies to that" and thus leaves us without a shared understanding of 'good'. Solipsism about what is good would be the case. To overcome this difficulty, Moore needs to offer a theory of the good which tells us which kinds of things, e.g., aesthetic enjoyment, pleasure or virtue, are good. And here, contrary to Moore's intention, we would need empirical evidence to show that 'good' and the kinds of things an individual's intuition says it is predicated of generally do co-occur. Moore's position thus requires a metaphysics for the same reasons that naturalism does. Indeed, his position is worse off than naturalism. First, naturalism openly recognises the need to collect empirical evidence about what is good. Second, generalization is possible only regarding kinds of things. If we want to say that a class of things are good, we need to be able to identify diverse things as all sharing in goodness. And that, says Walsh, is not possible if all we are intuiting are unique, unrepeatable simples. The simples need to be recognised as being of a kind, in some way or another (1936, p. 466; this volume).

Equally, if Moore is correct, it is impossible to relate one moral concept with another. How could one, for instance, pass from 'good' to 'ought'? The relationship between these simples is either one of genuine entailment or is a fundamental presupposition about moral experience. In the first case, 'good' and 'ought' are no longer primitives but interrelated concepts grounded in a conception of reality. We would thus have to go on to develop a metaphysics. In the second case, one is already acknowledging the need for some metaphysical explanation of moral experience, for example, a theory according to which humans, as children of God, are free but invited to do the good (ibid., pp. 466–467; this volume).

One might, Walsh notes, agree with her that naturalism and Moore's theory necessitate a recourse to metaphysics, but insist that there is yet another alternative that

²²⁶ does not necessitate this. She is here thinking of ethical theories that treat notions
²²⁷ such as 'good' and 'ought' not as undefinable simples (as Moore did) but as unde-
²²⁸ fined ideas, i.e., ideas that cannot be defined in terms of one another, but that must be
²²⁹ explained in terms of the context in which they occur. Walsh finds this unsatisfactory
²³⁰ because an examination of the history of ethics shows that the two terms are concep-
²³¹ tually tied to each other. So, ethics is, and should be, concerned with the interrelation
²³² of 'good' and 'ought'. It is one of the ethicist's principal tasks to provide an answer
²³³ to questions, such as, "What is the good in doing what one ought to do?" and "Why
²³⁴ ought one pursue the good?" (1936, p. 468; this volume).

²³⁵   Some ethical theories—ones that Walsh objects to—resist connecting obligations
²³⁶ to the good. They might, for example, identify moral agents with those agents who,
²³⁷ given the context they find themselves in, correctly perceive their direct and uncon-
²³⁸ ditional obligations, and act accordingly. According to such a picture, obligations
²³⁹ can be understood without reference to the good. Walsh, however, contends that such
²⁴⁰ a picture implicitly assumes that being a moral agent, specifically doing one's duty,
²⁴¹ is the supreme, intrinsic good. Any other assumption about the agent, violates what
²⁴² is most important about the self. Conversely, some ethical theories tell us that we
²⁴³ pursue the greater or greatest good. Such theories assume that we must be able to
²⁴⁴ rank the various goods we find in our world and that we, as agents who have this
²⁴⁵ ability, ought to pursue the greater or greatest good (1936, pp. 469–470; this volume).

²⁴⁶   Since an ethics must recognise the conceptual interdependence of the concepts
²⁴⁷ of the good and of ethical obligation, it must also explain this interdependence. If
²⁴⁸ the good were a simple property, for example, it could not be intimately related to
²⁴⁹ moral obligation. And if moral obligation were simple, it could not be intimately
²⁵⁰ related to all the other values. Such an explanation, however, requires an adequate
²⁵¹ portrayal of the nature of the moral agent. The good, including moral obligation,
²⁵² need to be recognised as an interrelated set of values of the self, so that ethics needs
²⁵³ to concern itself with the self. More in particular, one needs to understand what
²⁵⁴ moral agents actually are (less than they ought to be), and what they possibly are
²⁵⁵ (in principle already everything that they ought to be). Questions about actuality
²⁵⁶ and possibility are at the heart of metaphysics. For example, metaphysical inquiry
²⁵⁷ might reveal that human nature is, in actuality, egoistic but, in possibility, altruistic.
²⁵⁸ It is only with reference to such claims that one can characterize moral agency
²⁵⁹ (most likely, it will be expressed in terms of altruism) and, subsequently, in light of
²⁶⁰ such characterizations, determine the intrinsic goodness of moral agency. Further,
²⁶¹ all ethical theories recognise that humans must be moral. Morality is not optional in
²⁶² the way that, say, becoming a musician is. So, ethical theories need to explain what
²⁶³ it is about our nature that grounds this necessity. And they can only make sense of it
²⁶⁴ by reference to our total, fundamental nature (1936, p. 471; this volume).

²⁶⁵   Walsh does not explicitly address Moore's worry about metaphysical definitions of
²⁶⁶ 'being good', but her position answers this worry. Her proposal is not for metaphysics
²⁶⁷ to reduce the concept of being good to some other concept, e.g., to that of acting in
²⁶⁸ accord with one's true nature, thus identifying being good with some other property.
²⁶⁹ Rather, a metaphysical theory should explain the conceptual connections between the
²⁷⁰ concept of being good and other concepts, such as of being obligatory and being a self.

271 Metaphysics will thus recognise, and explain what underpins, necessary connections
272 between being a self and other distinct properties. So, if we understand what the self
273 really is in the way Walsh suggests, we will understand that it has a moral aspect and
274 thus why some selves are, while others are not, good.

275   Walsh does, at the end of her paper, explicitly address two other objections to the
276 idea that ethics is dependent on metaphysics. The first is that metaphysics is as much
277 dependent on intuition and common sense as ethics is and that, accordingly, there is
278 no added value in approaching ethics via a metaphysical detour. Walsh agrees that
279 intuition and common sense play a crucial role in metaphysics. Yet, ethical theories
280 are not derived only from the data of the moral life, but from the general material
281 of experience (which includes but is not exhausted by moral experience). In other
282 words, "man, as a moral agent, cannot be understood except as a consequence of
283 some [metaphysical] view of man in his *total* ontological setting" (1936, p. 472; this
284 volume, italics added).

285   The second objection is that metaphysics is too uncertain an enterprise for ethical
286 theory to wait for its answers. Walsh agrees that action goes on because it must and
287 must go on based on the best ethical insights present. Thus, she does not require that
288 ethical action wait on an adequately developed ethics or metaphysics. But, she insists,
289 ethical theory cannot be adequate without an explicit metaphysical foundation (1936,
290 p. 472; this volume).

2.4 Dorothy Walsh on the Poetic Use of Language

292 In another paper, entitled 'The Poetic Use of Language' (1938), Walsh is concerned
293 with the approach to language that philosophy ought to take. She wonders about the
294 type of language philosophy should rely on. In answering this question, she compares
295 the natures of the technical language of the sciences and logic, poetic language, and
296 philosophical discourse.

297   Walsh starts by defending the perhaps counter-intuitive claim that the languages of
298 the sciences and of logic are intentionally *ambiguous*, whereas the essence of poetry
299 is *linguistic precision*. Because natural languages constantly undergo transforma-
300 tion, and science, for the purposes of generality, needs a stable frame of reference,
301 scientific language is constructed as a closed, rationally organized system, in which
302 technical terms are clearly defined by means of other well-defined technical terms.
303 Walsh contends that such terminological precision is not the same as linguistic preci-
304 sion. The scientist's technical terms are about ideal entities and their relationships.
305 For example, many theories in classical physics (Newtonian gravitation, classical
306 electromagnetism) rely on the notion of a point particle, which is defined as a phys-
307 ical object that lacks spatial extension. The term point particle would be linguistically
308 precise if it were intended to refer to an abstract entity. But the scientist, in talking
309 about ideal entities, is referring to specific natural ones. Talk about point articles
310 refers to specific, extended parcels of matter. As a result, the scientist's expressions

are ambiguous (ibid., pp. 74–75; this volume). Scientific expressions provide "understanding of what is meant but what is said is not identical with what is meant" (1938, p. 75; this volume). The expressions specify a type of event but not the specific events the scientist is referring to. Accordingly, Newtonian gravitation theories describe types of events, but leave unspecified the specifics of particular gravitation events. Such ambiguity is not a weakness, but a strength of scientific language. After all, the ambition of science is to offer generalizations about classes of events; its expressions must be applicable in different contexts in which specific events, belonging to a given class, take place. Moreover, modelling and making predictions about classes of events across different contexts requires, given the complexity of the world, idealisation.

In a similar vein, the language of symbolic logic is ambiguous, at least if it has any meaning at all. Logic aims for clarity but does so at the price of only referring to the most general structural relationships and providing minimal information about these. On one interpretation, the structure logic refers to is that of reality. Logic may then rest on undefinable primitive ideas about reality that can only be understood in some inarticulate way. And if its primitive ideas can be defined, then this will involve offering logic a metaphysical interpretation (e.g., claims about the kinds of togetherness expressed by 'and' or about the ultimate nature of negation will have to be made). But whether the primitives are undefinable or are just actually undefined, logic itself means more than it says because of the limited information it provides about the reality it refers to (1938, pp. 75–76; this volume).

Logic, to be sure, may not be about reality. Perhaps logic just specifies the internal structure of a consistent language; it tells us about what such consistency amounts to. In such a case, logic is not an abstraction from actual languages but a normative scheme—to which, for purposes of consistency, actual languages ought to conform. In this case, the expressions of logic are in fact meaningless; they refer to nothing (1938, p. 76; this volume).

Poetry, by contrast, represents the ideal of linguistic precision. Poetry, more than other forms of linguistic expression, means everything it says and says everything it means. Here the idea is that, rather than referring to reality as such, refers to reality that is already linguistically experienced. The poet is thus not interested in capturing the world as it is but rather the world as it is found in language. Poetry, then, can only be successful when it does not lead us beyond what it says, so that what it says coincides with what it refers to. In this way, contrary to what is commonly thought, what poetry presents is a completed thing not something that is to elicit, on the part of the reader, associations and further thought about the world (1938, pp. 77–79; this volume).

So where does that leave philosophical language? Walsh claims, much as we have seen Calkins argue, that philosophy is interested in the expression of total reality. Further, philosophical language should not be ambiguous because its aim is to *correctly* communicate meaning (i.e., concrete, total reality). Language, however, is abstract and thus is inadequate in its ability to fully capture total reality. The language of the philosopher, therefore, can only be *suggestive* of all-that-there-is. What the philosopher says is always less than what they mean; their object always transcends what they can say about it. For this reason, philosophical discourse benefits from

the re-expression of meaning with the help of a variety of linguistic expressions. Given that poetic language aims to be complete, and philosophical language aims to suggest more than it can say, the philosopher ought to avoid relying on poetry in her attempts at capturing the all-of-reality (1938, pp. 76–77; this volume).

Walsh's position substantively differs from the positions of Moore and Quine. To begin with, Moore's piecemeal approach conflicts with the aim that Calkins and Walsh attribute to philosophy, that is, a systematic investigation of total reality. And Moore assumes that any philosophical concept has a single and determinate meaning, and that the philosopher can and should find *the* adequate expression of it. Walsh, by contrast, argues that philosophy benefits from various re-expressions of the complete meaning it wants to capture, each of them inadequate. Something similar applies to Quine. Recall that Quine believes philosophy (and thus philosophical language) to be continuous with science (and thus scientific language). According to Walsh, however, scientific language aims to sacrifice concreteness in favour of linguistic precision; it *ambiguously* refers to *parts* of reality. Philosophical language, in an *incomplete* and *suggestive* fashion, aims to characterise the concrete totality of being. So, philosophy deliberately sacrifices linguistic precision in order to capture reality.

2.5 Glicksman on Relativism and Philosophical Pluralism

Given the differences we have noted between the approaches of Calkins, Walsh, Moore and Quine and between the numerous metaphysical systems that Calkins discusses at the end of her chapter, questions arise as to how to deal with philosophical disagreement. Should different metaphysical systems be treated as exclusive, only one being true, or should we endorse some form of relativism? Wouldn't relativism undermine the aims and value of philosophy? Marjorie Glicksman addresses these questions in her paper 'Relativism and Philosophic Methods' (1937).

Glicksman starts her paper by noting that, at least since William James, philosophers have come to realize that their preferred philosophical system might not be the one true system; they have come to acknowledge that philosophical analysis is tainted by their own personal preferences and temperament. What is worrying, according to Glicksman, is that philosophers, having acknowledged relativism of philosophic methods, that is, that there are different, valid ways of doing philosophy, often nevertheless tend to forget about it, treat their own system as absolute, and criticize other systems from within their own perspective. They regard the premises of other systems either as being also true within their own system or, if the premises are inconsistent with their own system, as false. But, Glicksman argues, if the philosopher were to take into account the fact that premises might be arrived at by different methods, she would or should realize that the conflict is not one of disagreement, that is, it is not a conflict between truth and falsehood. Rather, she should consider the 'competing' premises as simply *irrelevant* to her own system (ibid., p. 655; this volume) and the competing system as (perhaps) equally valid as her own.

³⁹⁶ Glicksman substantiates these points by evaluating, one against another, three
³⁹⁷ traditional methods of philosophical reasoning, namely, the atomic, genetic and
³⁹⁸ logical methods. The atomic method analyses complex phenomena by breaking them
³⁹⁹ down into simpler units that can be built up again into complex units. The genetic
⁴⁰⁰ method analyses phenomena by looking at their development. It emphasizes growth
⁴⁰¹ and starts from, e.g., *historical* units. The logical method, finally, aims to uncover
⁴⁰² general principles or presuppositions which organize experience.

⁴⁰³ Genetic propositions, which pertain to temporal stages of history, cannot be
⁴⁰⁴ absorbed into an atomic system. Whereas, in genetic systems, the unit of analysis is
⁴⁰⁵ change, the unit of analysis in atomic systems are constants. To explain, in genetic
⁴⁰⁶ terms, how knowledge evolved out of something that is not knowledge and did so in a
⁴⁰⁷ way that allows addressing problems we confront is to say very little from the atomist
⁴⁰⁸ perspective. According to the atomist, knowledge is built up of isolated, invariable
⁴⁰⁹ bits (e.g., beliefs based on sense data) whereas the genetic analysis of knowledge
⁴¹⁰ identifies no such units (1937, pp. 652–653; this volume). This difference does not
⁴¹¹ imply the falsity or truth of any of the two contentions about knowledge; none of the
⁴¹² two contentions can be meaningfully assessed from a perspective other than the one
⁴¹³ from which it arose. Both systems make, based on different fundamental assumptions
⁴¹⁴ about reality, (possibly) valid claims about the same world (1937, pp. 654–655; this
⁴¹⁵ volume).

⁴¹⁶ The propositions of genetic methods are also incongruous with the propositions
⁴¹⁷ arrived at via logical analysis. Although the structural principles of logical methods
⁴¹⁸ may sometimes pertain to change, their units are *structures* of change not change
⁴¹⁹ *qua* change. Regarding knowledge, for instance, logical methods abstract away from
⁴²⁰ the historical *processes* leading to it, and define knowledge as a *function* of, say,
⁴²¹ concept and given. We know, on such views, when concepts apply to a corresponding
⁴²² given. From a genetic perspective, such definitions will refer to abstractions and thus
⁴²³ falsifications (ibid., p. 653). Given the two approaches' assumptions about what the
⁴²⁴ relevant units of analysis are, one approach cannot be brought into accord with the
⁴²⁵ other if they are treated as absolute, but neither is more ultimate than the other and
⁴²⁶ thus deserves such treatment (1937, pp. 654–655; this volume).

⁴²⁷ Another incongruity—and Glicksman discusses a couple more—is between
⁴²⁸ atomic and logical methods. Atomic propositions refer to actual homogeneous units.
⁴²⁹ Logical propositions, in contrast, are expressed in terms of functions, which may but
⁴³⁰ need not correspond to actual existent units. A logical approach might tell us that
⁴³¹ knowledge is a function of concept and given, without concept and given ever being
⁴³² actually instantiated in reality (1937, p. 653; this volume).

⁴³³ To reiterate, according to Glicksman such incongruities do not show the truth or
⁴³⁴ falsity of propositions that are arrived at in any of the three systems. Rather, each
⁴³⁵ system describes the world in a different way, and has a different kind of objectivity;
⁴³⁶ its propositions should be assessed according to its own standards of objectivity.

⁴³⁷ Glicksman's pluralism conflicts with many of the views we have encountered
⁴³⁸ above. It conflicts with Calkins' and Walsh's contention that philosophy should only
⁴³⁹ be concerned with the ultimate nature of part or all of reality. From Glicksman's
⁴⁴⁰ perspective, it seems, there is no single ultimate nature of reality. Further, according

to Calkins, science typically breaks up and studies bits of reality (an atomistic approach); philosophy, by contrast, is and should be speculative, a logical enterprise that engages with the structural relationships between such individual facts. Glicksman recognises, for example, that the historical genetic approach is a viable philosophical approach even though it is not concerned with what is ultimate. Walsh draws another lesson from the claim that philosophy is and should deal with all-that-there-is. Given language's incompleteness, all-that-there-is cannot but be approached with a language that is suggestive. From Glicksman's perspective, such a conclusion is optional. Glicksman's account also conflicts with those of Moore and Quine. Moore favours an atomistic program to the exclusion of other approaches, and Quine excludes any approach that is not continuous with the sciences.

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