

could also pair it with an anthology. Some leading anthologies already contain a few of these essays, but these same anthologies also include some of the work (such as that of De George on whistleblowing or Holley on sales) discussed in essays in this collection. Useful in various ways, students could surely benefit from much that is contained in this compact edition.

Note

1. As Frederic Bastiat counseled over 150 years ago. See his classic essay, "What is Seen and Not Seen," (1850) in *Selected Essays on Political Economy*, ed. George B. de Huszar (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1964).

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The Philosopher's Toolkit

Julian Baggini and Peter S. Fosl

Blackwell, 2003, ix +221pp., \$20 pbk. 0-631-22874-8, \$55 h.c. 0-631-22873-C

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The Philosopher's Toolkit is a very good book. It could be highly useful for both introductory courses in philosophy, or philosophical methodology, as well as independent study for anyone interested in the methods of argument, assessment and criticism used in contemporary analytic philosophy. It is unique in approach, and written in a pleasant and considerate tone. Its authors are both competent philosophers, and the book visibly reflects their deep sympathy to the discipline and their appreciation of its unique character. This book will help one to get going to do philosophy, but more advanced students might find this text helpful too. I wish I had had access to this book as an undergraduate.

The book has six chapters. It presents instances of a certain kind of philosophical tool in each of these. These are: Basic Tools, Further Tools for Argument, Tools for Assessment, Tools for Conceptual Distinctions, Tools for Radical Critique, and Tools at the Limit. The tools presented get increasingly sophisticated, and the chapters are more or less explicitly built on the preceding ones. Characteristic entries are, in the first chapter, concepts such as "Arguments, Premises and Conclusions"; "Abduction" and "Intuition Pumps" in chapter 2; "Ockham's Razor" and "Paradoxes" in chapter 3; "Knowledge by Acquaintance/Description" and "Realist/Non-Realist" in chapter 4; "Foucaultian Critique of Power" and "Pragmatist Critique" in chapter 5; and "Gödel and Incompleteness" and "Self-evident Truths" in chapter 6. All in all there are eighty-seven entries, usefully cross-referenced.

The entries end with suggestions for further reading; some of these are marked as suitable for novices.

Each entry starts with a short example, a personal note or historical instance in which the concept, tool or distinction discussed has played a role. For instance, when introducing the a priori/a posteriori distinction, Baggini recounts that as schoolkid, he wondered how he could be sure that the internal angles of a triangle would add up to 180 degrees. Discussing analogies, the authors make reference to a number of important analogies in Plato's *Republic* (e.g., the just *polis* as an analogy for the justice of the human soul). These motivating examples, as well as all other examples used, are carefully chosen for an even mixture between the core disciplines of philosophy (mostly philosophy of mind, metaphysics, ethics and epistemology). I think this is an extremely valuable approach which both introduces the reader to some basic episodes of the history of philosophy, and manages to bring to life the abstract philosophical ideas. This is among the most difficult aspects of teaching philosophy, and the authors do an excellent job at it.

The book is not without problems. But philosophy is all about disagreeing well too. I disagree with a number of things in this book, and I point most of these out below. But I do agree with practically all the rest in this book. I would recommend it to my students. This is the one-stop book to master philosophical techniques.

Chapter one starts off, appropriately enough, by describing the importance of "arguments" in philosophy. However, instead of giving any of the mainstream definitions straightaway, it goes on to first discuss some rather tangential ideas. For instance, it addresses the distinction between arguments ("attempt to demonstrate *that* something is true") and explanations ("attempt to show *how* something is true" (2, italics in original)). This seems confusing, and anyway irrelevant. An example of an argument only follows five pages later, and in passing. Given the importance of arguments in philosophy, this is the most disappointing part.

By contrast, the entry on "validity and soundness" is exemplary. It points out how "invalid," that is, improper, logically valid arguments might appear to the layman, makes the appropriate reference to the "structure" of an argument determining its validity, and then resolves the tension by introducing the importance of truth for the soundness—not of course the validity—of arguments. The soundness of arguments was, in a way, what appeared problematic to the layman who objected to the "validity" of the initial valid argument, since that contained false premises.

In chapter 2, the hypothetico-deductive (HD) method is characterised. This entry appears confused to me. First, the HD method is said to be also called the "covering-law" or "deductive-nomological" method; this is false. It also says that "the results of the experiment may, in the strongest case, prove or disprove the hypothesis; in weaker cases, the result provides evidence for or against it" (41). This too is mistaken, and badly so. The mistake—the idea

that with the HD method one could ever prove the truth of a theory—even gets repeated on the next page. Admittedly, the authors relativize this by saying that “Popper thought one can falsify but not fully verify a universal claim” (42), but this comes as a side remark, almost as if stating a minority opinion on the HD method.

To give a contrasting example again, the entry on “reduction” is quite illuminating. Discussing how boiling water may be explained by Brownian motion, knowledge by justified true belief, and how utilitarianism reduces goodness to happiness, it illustrates this fundamental technique, at the same time pointing out its difficulties.

Chapter 3 is the longest chapter, containing twenty-nine entries. The entry on “ambiguity” bothered me a bit. Talking about ambiguity (e.g., what is bogus in the “bogus e-traders guide,” the guide or the e-traders?), the authors compare the concept to vagueness. They say that when “something is vague, it is out of focus. It is unclear in the sense that one can’t be sure what it is at all, even what the alternatives are.” The concept of vagueness comes up again a few pages later, under “Bivalence and the excluded middle,” and there even is a reference to Williamson’s *Vagueness*. In that entry, “fuzzy logic” is also mentioned, but neither are really explained. Since unfortunately there is no separate entry on vagueness, I tend to think this leaves the uninitiated reader with at best a very unorthodox understanding of vagueness, and at worst entirely confused.

I thought that the entry on the “is/ought gap” was quite helpful though. It explains clearly how any argument ending with a normative conclusion must contain a normative premise. It also helpfully quotes the relevant passages from Hume.

Chapter 4, on “conceptual distinctions,” presents concepts and their opposites such as “absolute/relative,” “sense/reference,” etc. It is competently done throughout. The entries on “a priori/a posteriori” and on “analytic/synthetic” are maybe not as well integrated as one could hope, but this is a knotty issue even for professionals. It is always hard to explain how people can have as different views on, say, the foundations of mathematics as Kant and Frege; but I miss entirely why, as the authors say, Leibniz would have thought that “Paris is the capital of France” would be analytic and a priori. It is probably not possible to do justice to these concepts in such a format, though the authors do well.

In chapter 5, the authors not just clearly explain what, say, feminist critique is, but also how it may be applied by the reader. For almost all of the “Radical Critiques” presented, they give one or several characteristic questions one should ask to apply that critique. For instance, for the feminist critique, the second question reads: “Might there be some way, even contrary to the intent of its authors, that this concept or theory functions to subordinate women or privilege men?” (181).

Chapter 6 discusses some very fundamental ways of approaching philosophical problems. All of these entries are, in my opinion, to the point and helpful.

Maybe what is missing is an indication of the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of philosophy. Very often, and for various reasons, techniques from other disciplines are imported into philosophy. For instance, econometric modelling may help us to understand causality; Bayesian networks, mostly used in the AI community, may illuminate fundamental concepts in epistemology such as coherence. Philosophers are often expected to master such methods too even if they are not, properly speaking, philosophy.

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Problems from Philosophy

James Rachels

Boston: McGrawHill, 2004, 225 pp. \$31 0072474238

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James Rachels's *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* is one of the most popular philosophy textbooks ever written. At one point nearly a third of all ethics classes taught in the United States were using this book. In *Problems from Philosophy*, James Rachels, who died of cancer in September 2003, brings his gifts as a writer and thinker to the task of introducing beginning students to the major problems of philosophy. It seems fitting that such a prolific writer and thinker would write his last book for those who study philosophy for the first time. For who can be a better guide to the study of philosophy than somebody like Rachels who has actively shaped the study of applied ethics over a period of more than thirty years?

Problems from Philosophy has many of the features that made the *Elements of Moral Philosophy* such a popular text. First, despite covering a large number of topics the text is amazingly short. Rachels manages to cover thirteen chapters in less than 200 pages. No chapter is longer than twenty pages and some are less than ten pages long. This means that each chapter can be read in less than an hour. Even freshmen who are not used to reading philosophical texts should be able to read the book easily late at night or (God forbid) right before class time. The book is therefore an ideal companion to a larger anthology. As a matter of fact, Rachels designed *Problems from Philosophy* to be used in conjunction with a companion reader *The Truth about the World: Basic Readings in Philosophy*. However, I see no reason why the text could not be used with alternative readers of original sources or as a stand alone text for a freshman class in philosophy. A second attractive feature of the book