

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY COLLOQUIUM SERIES

MISDIRECTION: UNDERSTATED CONCERNS ABOUT THE USE OF MODERN LOGIC IN THE RECONSTRUCT AND EVALUATION OF HISTORIC ARGUMENTS

Even if a logic is topic-neutral, it is not neutral with respect to methods and concepts. How does a lack of neutrality impact our efforts to reconstruct and evaluate the history of philosophy? The history of philosophy includes historic concepts and methods (call them all 'notions'). Yet a topic-neutral logic can either distort or preclude historic notions. When the commentator's logic does not support historic notions, the commentator either upgrades or replaces each ill-fitting notion with a modern notion. Such changes misdirect our efforts to study history: shifting the focus to what is not there, and obfuscating what is present. I will show that the standard view that Plato is a rationalist (in the sense that knowledge comes from intuition and inference) exemplifies misdirection. Given his notions, early Plato can be neither a rationalist nor an empiricist. I will show that his appeal to a mathematical proof in the Meno is an appeal to a method of proof that cuts across the distinction between rationalism and empiricism. With the focus on rationalism and empiricism, the central epistemological concern of this period is obfuscated: a criterion for unity. As a result, significant facts have been obfuscated: Plato's initial criterion for unity prohibits logic as we know it; his later development opens the door for Aristotle's Prior Analytics. There is a hidden history here; it is a history away from which we have been (mis)directed.

DWAYNE RAYMOND

BIOGRAPHY



Dr. D. Raymond has an interest in the history of logic, in particular ancient proof traditions. He is completing a book on the non-neutrality of logic. Dr. Raymond received a Ph.D. with distinction from UWO for his work on Aristotle's modal logic. His work appears in *Journal of the History and Philosophy of Logic, Apertion and Sophia*. He has spoken at conferences including the ARPA, CPA, APA, the Joint Session of the Aristotelian Society and Mind. He has given talks at the U of Toronto, Ecole Normale Supérieure (Paris), Helsinki, Birmingham, Stockholm, and he will be in Prague and České Budějovice in the spring.

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