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TRAVELING EPISTEMOLOGY, OR AN INTERSECTION BETWEEN EPISTEMOLOGY
AND ETHICS THROUGH THE LENS OF PRAGMATISM

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TRAVELING EPISTEMOLOGY, OR AN INTERSECTION BETWEEN EPISTEMOLOGY
AND ETHICS THROUGH THE LENS OF PRAGMATISM

by

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Abstract

The concept of traditional epistemology carries with it values and expectations that are rarely talked about. Based on the critiques of traditional epistemology by the pragmatist tradition, there is an opportunity to think of an alternative to the traditional view of epistemology as solely a theory of knowledge based on theories like the correspondence theory of truth. The concept of traveling epistemology serves as an alternative that questions the values of traditional epistemology, where things like certainty, and authority are expected in conjunction with a view of knowledge that rests on a mind-independent reality. Traveling epistemology offers a view that relies on pragmatism's view of knowledge as intertwined with human agency, such that knowledge is thought of in terms of the more grounded and practical human efforts.

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Introduction

In order to approach this work, I think it's important to address several things. In my first chapter, I begin by providing an interpretation of the concept of traditional epistemology. Coined by W.V.O. Quine, I begin by looking at the concept of traditional epistemology, and from there I begin to expand and add to other aspects I see as relevant to such a paradigm. Right from the outset, I interpret such a concept as a truth-oriented epistemology. This is to distinguish the aims and character of both conceptions of epistemology, truth-oriented and traveling-oriented. Truth-oriented epistemology is distinguished from traveling-oriented epistemology in so far as the focus of a truth-oriented epistemology is, as the name suggests, the concept of truth. I distinguish traveling epistemology as an approach to epistemology that focuses on the role knowledge has for navigation, and as I call it, traveling. In this sense, traveling aims to be more practical, and to ground itself on real-world situations. For this reason, I side with the pragmatists as their sensibilities to practical matters, and to real-world situations provide me the tools to develop the concept of traveling epistemology. I begin my analysis with the help of pragmatists such as Richard Rorty, and Cheryl Misak. Their perspectives, along with being more contemporary, provide me with a varied perspective that sees different facets of American pragmatism. Misak provides a view of American pragmatism that focuses on its historical development, and how at least two directions are taken by American pragmatist philosophers.¹ One is characterized by the work of figures like Peirce, Quine, Sellars, Goodman, and Putnam. This direction focuses more on the technical aspects of the pragmatist theory of truth. The other is characterized by James, Dewey, and Rorty. Although Misak is critical of the pragmatism of James, Dewey and Rorty, I think there is more than enough room for an approach to pragmatism that is open to both

¹ Cheryl Misak, *The American Pragmatists*, pg. 3

directions, that is, being careful and rigorous with our thinking but also not losing our perspective about the possibilities pragmatism can provide for us. That is one of the reasons for the direction of my thesis. The rigorous part of pragmatism should help us get to a more consistent, and concrete vision of what can we do with pragmatist philosophy, which I want to take to epistemology and ethics. I conceive the concept of traveling epistemology as an alternative to traditional epistemology and present it as an attitude or approach to doing epistemology, but also as an umbrella term to refer to what comes after my critique of traditional epistemology, that if one rejects such a view of epistemology, it shouldn't mean the end of truth and meaning or the adoption of a more nihilistic view of the world.

This work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter focuses on my critique of traditional epistemology through mostly the work of Richard Rorty. After his critique of the correspondence theory of truth, and its place in philosophy, Rorty provides an interesting vision of philosophy that does not stop at a nihilist position, unlike others. His philosophy is as much informed by the pragmatism of Dewey as it is informed by the philosophy of language of Wittgenstein, and the philosophical vision of Heidegger.² Much of his efforts center on what to do about philosophy, politics, and even poetry after rejecting the vision of philosophy as aligned with the epistemological efforts of getting to a theory of knowledge. I think this vision of philosophy is in line with the vision of traditional epistemology. But unlike Rorty, I interpret the question of what a theory of knowledge is quite differently. In this sense, I turn to the concept of traveling epistemology to analyze the concept of epistemology in terms of values and its perhaps more psychological aspects, and by psychological, I mean to talk about agency, attitudes, and

² Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, pg. 5

expectations. In simple terms, traveling epistemology aims to change the focus and expectations we have for a conception of truth, where those expectations include getting things right or arriving at a place of absolute certainty, or an unshakable base from which we can feel secure in the assumptions of our knowledge. Traveling does not aim to do away with many of the terms epistemology already uses, but it does aim to reevaluate their use and value, terms like objectivity, true beliefs, and justification, just to name a few. By challenging the values of traditional epistemology, traveling epistemology attempts to offer an approach to epistemology that instills an attitude of continuous understanding, and fallibilism, such that we consider the communal aspect of knowledge, and how we interact with others in the creation of knowledge. Aside from clarifying the picture of traveling, I consider the ways in which I think traveling is informed by pragmatism.

The second chapter considers the ways American pragmatism directly informs and influences the concept of traveling epistemology. I primarily focus on the work of James and Dewey and their different approaches to pragmatism. James's influence on my thoughts on traveling centers on his thoughts on fallibilism, his psychological lens, and his own critique of truth. His thoughts on fallibilism lead to a pluralist view of knowledge, and one that right from the outset sees knowledge as always changing. Given this view of knowledge, he further moves on to the psychology of having beliefs, and what role beliefs play in our everyday life. If we consider his fallibilist and pluralist views, I think James instills an attitude around the concept of knowledge that sees change as a part of having knowledge and beliefs. Furthermore, he recognizes that people have different beliefs and that beliefs are central to human actions. In other words, having beliefs is part of the human experience, and so, these are instrumental to how we lead our lives.

Dewey's influence on my thought centers on his thoughts on the role of experience over knowledge, and his thoughts on inquiry. Carol Misak, in her work *The American Pragmatists*, points to one of the most enduring themes of pragmatism. To say that knowledge and human psychology are interwoven, I argue is to say that knowledge and the human mind are interwoven, and by talking about minds, human agency is also interwoven into ascertaining how we know the world and others in the world. The mind and the categories we use are inextricable from our efforts of attaining knowledge.³ Dewey's thoughts on inquiry are important to traveling since inquiry means the interaction of an agent in her engagement with the world to come to an understanding of it. In other words, an agent goes out into the world, and through her categories, she describes it to the best of her abilities. And part of inquiry is the engagement with indeterminate situations, which I think is what traveling should be about. We go out into the world and meet with situations with which we are not familiar, but which we still want to understand. And perhaps this is where my own thoughts surface, as engagement with an indeterminate situation through the use of our own categories does not mean we will travel smoothly through such a situation. Perhaps as a real-world example, if I'm in Japan and I don't know the language, I can maybe come to some inferences through my knowledge and past experiences, but obviously, it will not be guaranteed that I will engage adequately or meaningfully understand my surroundings such that I can travel, i.e., that I can navigate as easily through such a situation.

Finally, the third chapter focuses on the ethics I argue arises out of traveling epistemology. I approach this chapter by presupposing my previous chapters such that if my line of analysis is

³ *ibid*, pg. 115

accepted, we are able to see agency differently, namely, as the intersection between ethics and epistemology. And this intersection is seen under what I call the traveling epistemic attitude (or just traveling attitude). If one sees epistemology in this way, then there is a way to approach the underlying values and predispositions found in traditional epistemology with an ethical lens. In this sense, we can approach concepts such as responsibility, certainty, and justification and see how these pan out in a view that sees agency as inseparable from epistemology and ethics. And I think this is to say, how our own attitudes, our predispositions to knowledge affect our actions, and how these affect our interactions with a world full of agents, and communities doing inquiry of their own. I end this chapter by considering a real-life example of an education that takes pragmatist virtues seriously through the Shadows to Light program in El Paso, Tx. By considering this program, I want to explore in what ways can the traveling epistemic attitude inform our own ethics. Furthermore, by talking about actual, real-world situations, such as what takes place in Shadows to Light, or other situations within my own community of El Paso/Juarez and what others outside this community believe about it, I want to present the type of insight the traveling epistemic attitude can tell us about understanding, others, and ourselves as agents traveling the world.

Chapter 1: Traditional and Traveling Epistemology

Epistemology as a formal discipline is a relatively new discipline within philosophy. The word episteme dates back to the Greeks, but it has been explored in many ways by philosophers like Descartes, Hume, Kant, Russell, and Wittgenstein. In more contemporary times, epistemology has developed and has in its focus questions of justification, i.e., questions on the nature of justified belief. In this thesis, I want to consider something that I argue is relevant to the discipline of epistemology, and that is its relationship to ethics, normativity, and value theory. And so, my efforts focus on what that relationship looks like. In this sense, I will argue that any analysis of a theory of knowledge, or any approach to epistemology as a discipline, must consider the agency of the one practicing it, and what goals or expectations each philosopher has for his or her own theorizing. An example of this would be William James who brings a psychological lens into his philosophy when he speaks of temperaments in philosophers, and how these temperaments can be found in their writing and philosophizing.⁴ Following the work of the pragmatists, and my readings about epistemology, I see two expectations centered on the way it is practiced. I call one truth-oriented epistemology and the other traveling-oriented epistemology. The former is preoccupied with getting to the truth of things, to represent the world as it actually is, what has often been referred to as reality. I identify this approach to epistemology as consistent with the correspondence theory of truth, which I will argue, has its expectations in showing us the way our thoughts and language connect to a mind-independent reality or world. And as we'll see later in the chapter, this approach to epistemology has its own expectations and focus, and that is truth, justification, beliefs, reason, and sources. This approach to epistemology differs insofar as to how truth is seen and valued. A theory of knowledge that

⁴ William James, *The Present Dilemma in Philosophy*, pg. 11

just seeks an understanding of “truth for its own sake” is at odds with this approach, and as I develop the concept of a traveling epistemology throughout my thesis, I will make clear how truth-oriented epistemology relies on expectations that leave other ways of understanding the world neglected, and how a more adequate process of taking into account alternative ways of knowing the world and its variety of perspective or approaches is needed. Given the previous, in this chapter, I will provide a critique of what I mean by truth-oriented epistemology, or as I often characterize it, ‘traditional epistemology’. From this, I will later explore, and provide a picture of traveling-oriented epistemology. I will discuss it in terms of what can be done with it, and what could be expected of such a conception of epistemology, all with the hope of seeing the value it could have for future philosophy and its engagement with other disciplines and areas of study.

TRUTH-ORIENTED EPISTEMOLOGY AND TRADITIONAL EPISTEMOLOGY

In this distinction I make between what I call truth-oriented and traveling-oriented epistemology, I think there's a chance to reflect on the purpose of epistemology, and thus, on our approach to questions about knowledge. But questions of epistemology, in the way we practice it, depend on questions of truth. There are many theories of truth, and these wonder about where and how truth can be found, or things like the nature of truth, or the value of truth. The answer to these questions will vary depending on one’s view of truth. But by making this distinction, I want to explore the question of the relation between value and knowledge, and what this says about truth. And by focusing on epistemology and questions of knowledge, I also can reflect on other areas of epistemology that concern this relation such as the concepts of certainty and authority.

It is important to clarify the concept of traditional epistemology. This term is usually understood in contrast to W.V.O Quine's *naturalized epistemology* to represent an older tradition within an epistemology that focuses too much on *a priori* foundations and forgets to see the actual conditions under which knowledge is treated, used, and understood. Patrick Rysiew characterizes traditional epistemology with Descartes and with his skeptical tradition of treating an agent's psychological traits as objects of doubt.⁵ Furthermore, he identifies three assumptions that can be characterized as traditional epistemology: that epistemology is "carried out *a priori*, that it is autonomous from the sciences, and that it is supposed to bring us normative content. Traditional epistemology, in this sense, is understood as foundationalist. Jaegwon Kim also characterizes Descartes as the main influence on the foundationalist approach in epistemology and sees movements like logical positivism as largely continuous with this foundationalist approach, albeit on a "physicalist basis".⁶ It is important to notice that just as Quine is critical of this foundationalism, and of the idea of certainty within traditional epistemology, he also criticizes the normative efforts within epistemology.

So far, what is important to my thesis is to know that Quine was critical of the efforts of traditional epistemology in its conceptual and doctrinal efforts. In his naturalized epistemology he proposes to see epistemology as a largely psychological endeavor, and so, a scientific one. In doing so he separates normativity from epistemology, and as in his views of philosophy, he conceives epistemology as largely continuous with science. "Epistemology, or something like it, simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science".⁷ I agree with the empiricist's criticisms of naturalized epistemology insofar as it concerns its view of certainty and

⁵ Patrick Rysiew., *Naturalism in Epistemology*, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2020

⁶ Jaegwon Kim, *What is Naturalized Epistemology*, pg. 384

⁷ W.V.O. Quine, *Epistemology Naturalized*, pg. 82

autonomy, but I disagree with Quine's separation of epistemology with normativity, as I think this separates epistemology from value theory, and thus from ethics. I think there is good reason to keep normativity next to epistemology if we are to address more relevant and contemporary issues surrounding not only epistemology but social and political problems as well. New ideas like epistemic injustice, or even social epistemology engage epistemology on a normative basis. In fact, as I will argue in my second and third chapters, epistemology and ethics are deeply intertwined.

The concept of traditional epistemology is relevant when talking about the distinction between what I call truth-oriented and traveling-oriented epistemologies, as it encapsulates some of the things I see in this idea of a truth-oriented epistemology. In this sense, concepts such as certainty and the autonomy of epistemology are things to be critical of, which will be discussed later in the chapters. But for the purposes of this chapter, I use the term traditional epistemology to refer to the approach to epistemology that sees epistemology as an endeavor that is supposed to get us to the actual truth of the world or reality, and in doing so, a secure foundation that serves as an authoritative way to tell what truth is and what it is not. And to clarify, this is not a condemnation of the concepts of truth, the world, reality, or authority, but, as I will argue throughout my thesis, a reexamination of these concepts under the lens or approach of what I call traveling-oriented epistemology, or in short, traveling epistemology.

CORRESPONDENCE THEORY OF TRUTH

One way I characterize truth-oriented epistemology, and traditional epistemology is through the correspondence theory of truth. But it should be noted that there is not just one version of the correspondence theory, there are many. As David Marian points out, although the theory of correspondence is generally focused on the relation between truth and reality, the theory will vary depending on the concept one employs to refer to that relation—congruence, accordance, picturing, representation, reference, just to name a few.⁸ Moreover, Joshua Rasmussen adds another dimension to this aspect of the theory:

“There are different ways to articulate the connection between true things and the reality they describe. Some theories, for example, treat the connection as a structural relation that ties constituents of a true thing to constituents of the world. Other theories treat the connection as a nonstructural correlation between true things and the world. This difference between structural and correlation theories depends on one’s theories of three components: true things, real things described by the true things, and the correspondence between true things and real things. All versions of the correspondence theory arise from theories of these components”.⁹

In this sense, it is very difficult to give a general account of the correspondence theory as there is much disagreement on the exact nature of this theory. One approach to the theory is the truthmaker theory. According to this approach, it could be said that a theory of correspondence is interested in the relation between a truthbearer and a truthmaker. Theories differ as to what

⁸ David Marian, *The Correspondence Theory of Truth*, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2015

⁹ Joshua Rasmussen, *Truth, correspondence theory of*, Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2018

constitutes a truthbearer and a truthmaker, but often truthbearers are seen as propositions, sentences, and beliefs, among others, while truthmakers can be facts, states of affairs, events, or things in the world.¹⁰ In this sense, truth is correspondence to a truthmaker. Whatever can be verified as true or false, is so in relation to whatever in the world that truthbearer is corresponding to. But as I previously mentioned, the nature of this relation is the object of debate. Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* saw it as thought to state of affairs; in doing so, he talked about logical space and the sense/nonsense distinction. Any sensical statement or thought must be within the logical space of the world. Anything nonsensical is outside the material world. This is partly the reason for his thoughts on ethics and aesthetics, as propositions of value are outside of this world, and they can't be represented as there is nothing physical to represent.¹¹ Already we can see some of the concerns of Wittgenstein, that of the limits of language or the limits of what can be said. For the purposes of this thesis, I want to argue against what I think is a limitation for the correspondence theory of truth, and that is the existence of a variety of descriptions of the world or of a given thing, object or aspect of the world. In this sense, my critique comes with a pluralist background. If there are many descriptions of the world and its objects, and these often contradict each other, how can one maintain and use in the everyday a theory of correspondence? It is my effort in this chapter to provide such a critique. Even so, this approach to correspondence is challenged by other views, and so, the place value has for correspondence will be addressed later in my thesis. Other theories of correspondence say different things. For the purposes of this chapter, I will focus on Patricia Marino's work "What

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, section 6.42

Should a Correspondence Theory Be or Do?” in order to provide a solid picture of the correspondence theory of truth, and of the limitations I argue it has.

In her paper, Marino presents an argument in favor of her own interpretation of correspondence, as well as what she sees as problematic with the theory. In doing so, she presents a very clear picture of the correspondence theory of truth. She structures her argument around the emphasis on a mind-independent reality, and just what type of nature this approach to correspondence has. She considers some of the main objections against correspondence—what she calls the “comparison problem” where the issues come from the relation between sentences and their mirroring of a raw, unconceptualized reality to which we have no clear access.¹² The other problem with correspondence is one she calls the “triviality problem” where correspondence is seemingly just reestablishing what coherence or deflationary theories already state. If instead of raw, unconceptualized reality, truth is correspondence to ordinary, predigested reality, aren’t coherence and deflationary theories already working within this view of reality?¹³ I would add that a pragmatic theory of truth also sees reality similarly, if not the same way. The shift between what she calls ordinary instead of raw, uninterpreted, or uninfluenced reality could be interpreted as one leaving the emphasis on a mind-independent reality. If correspondence is the act of mirroring statements to facts that are characterized as ordinary, mind-dependent reality, then other theories of truth become more similar.

Marino argues in favor of correspondence through what she calls the five features traditionally associated with correspondence theories.¹⁴ She argues for what she calls a modest

¹² Patricia Marino, *What Should a Correspondence Theory Be and Do?*, 2006, pg. 416

¹³ *ibid*, pg. 417

¹⁴ *ibid*, pg. 418

correspondence theory of truth where “true sentences, statements, and beliefs correspond to the way things are in the world,” what she calls “correspondence platitude”. When a sentence corresponds to something in the world, it is not corresponding to the whole world, but rather a little piece of it. These pieces of the world are what we call facts, states of affairs, or *relatum*. True statements are then to mirror these little pieces or facts of the world, and these are, again, raw, unconceptualized, mind-independent reality.¹⁵ She calls this feature “independence-congruence”. Furthermore, she argues there is a gap between sentences, and the facts they correspond to—what she calls “cleavage.” This gap presents itself through the variation of descriptions of a given fact.¹⁶ Also, if truth depends on the relation between language and the world, truth must be a property that allows for analysis of true statements—what she calls “propertyhood.” Finally, she argues true statements must be true of something—what she calls “content-implication”. Given all features, Marino’s picture of correspondence argues for the relation facts and statements have through language. And this way, statements can be verified as true or not in so far as truth is a property of all true statements. Finally, if all statements have content, then they are true of something. “Thus, sentences whose subject matter we have doubts over can’t both be true and taken at face value. They are either not true or not assertions at all, or must be reinterpreted to have different content”.¹⁷ Marino’s picture of correspondence is of course not to be treated as the only picture. As I have previously discussed, correspondence theories differ as to the exact relationship between truth and the world. Still, her description directs us to some of the most important features I think correspondence has in relation to

¹⁵ *ibid*, pg. 422

¹⁶ *ibid*, pg. 424

¹⁷ *ibid*, pg. 430

epistemology, namely mind independence and the relation of language to the world. I will focus on these features.

I maintain that the theory of correspondence must deal with, according to Marino, the emphasis on a mind-independent reality, and just what type of relationship we have with this reality to be able to achieve correspondence. Furthermore, the insistence on sticking with a mind-independent reality is perhaps what is most at odds with theories such as the pragmatic theory of truth which informs much of my thoughts on traveling epistemology. Given this, the question of what is real and what is not becomes important for the concept of traveling epistemology, as the place agency, language and the mind have on matters of truth are at the heart of the limitation I see in the correspondence theory of truth. The question of what is real has, of course, been at the heart of philosophy since its conception, but if one talks about a reality that is also mind-dependent, where agency has a prominent if not central place in matters of knowledge, then one can easily see there is room for interpretation, intersubjectivity, consensus, or subjectivity while at the same time not committing oneself to antirealism. But what would mind-dependence mean in terms of a theory of truth? I maintain the idea of a mind-dependent reality means talking about how we as agents affect truth by the different ways we theorize and describe the world, or in other words, making sense of the role a person's agency, and psychology has when theorizing about truth. Or put differently, to illustrate the input a person brings when talking and recognizing facts through statements, sentences, or thoughts. In this sense, language is always relevant when addressing the relation between epistemology and agency. The objectivity Marino speaks of is in terms of a mind-independent, "raw, unconceptualized reality."¹⁸ This type of objectivity is favored instead of a previously digested, processed reality. The way to go about this would be through what she

¹⁸ *ibid*, pg. 416

calls the independence-congruence feature of correspondence, that statements somehow mirror bits of a mind-independent reality. It would seem the problem of what the nature of this reality is, is highlighted by the debate of what terms to use: facts, states of affairs, *relatum*, etc. There is no real consensus as to the way of approaching this reality. Although Marino talks about reality as “the way things are in the world,”¹⁹ I think there are some difficulties when insisting on a raw, mind-independent reality. Nelson Goodman brings a challenge to this idea that there is a way the world is. He characterizes the correspondence theory of truth in terms of “mirroring and faithful reproduction”.²⁰ But this faithful reproduction is made difficult when mirroring means a verbal description. If representation is based on our use of language, then our descriptions will be tainted, and they will be tainted by our senses, conventions, taste, or preferences. For Goodman, there are no true descriptions of the world as there is no single way the world is.

“The idea of making verbal descriptions approximate pictorial depiction loses its point when we understand that to turn a description into the most faithful possible picture would amount to nothing more than exchanging some conventions for others. Thus, neither the way the world is given nor any way of seeing or picturing or describing it conveys to us the way the world is”.²¹

If correspondence is to commit to a mind-independent, raw, unprocessed reality, then it must also make sense of the many ways the world is described. This entails that no description of the world is exclusively true. In terms of correspondence, if there is no description of the world that is exclusively true, then whatever makes descriptions true cannot be mind-independent, as there

¹⁹ *ibid*, pg. 415

²⁰ Nelson Goodman, Peter J. McCormick, *Starmaking*, 1996, pg. 9

²¹ *ibid*, pg. 9

cannot be two different descriptions of the world, and both be true at the same time. If this is the case, then the usual aim of objectivity in epistemology must be either dropped or thought of in a different way. And if the traditional conception of objectivity as a property of mind-independent true statements meets with a world with a variety of descriptions, objectivity then also must grapple with the concept of authority, as a description of the world can't be mind-independent. Furthermore, if our descriptions are always "tainted," then the insistence on a mind-independent world becomes pointless. If our descriptions are always influenced by a variety of human factors, then our commitment to describing an untainted world is hopeless. But also, whatever thing makes our descriptions good, it cannot be mirroring the world if our own vision is tainted. And this is important as, I will argue, we can still think our descriptions of the world are good, which then depends on how good is defined, for example, in terms of function or meaningfulness. For this, I want to move further away from the supposition that if our descriptions are tainted, then they are not worth working for. In this sense, if describing the world comes through our use of language, but this language will not put us in any privileged epistemic position, then perhaps the search for this epistemic privilege is not necessary. This privilege would be the alleged relation our language has with the world, and that somehow language allows us to mirror the world in some isomorphic way.

So far, I think there are some challenges to correspondence if it is anything as I have described. The commitment to a mind-independent reality is difficult to maintain if one acknowledges the difficulties language brings to this view of representation. We cannot assume language allows us to mirror an independent reality if language is always based on convention. Any description of the world will be influenced by other descriptions. And these descriptions can be such as our frameworks, our schemas, our theories, discourse, and the like. From this criticism, the

implications leave some room for reevaluating the role correspondence has for epistemology, and as I see it, the reasons why we do epistemology in the first place. The pursuit of true knowledge in the traditional sense is not enough to address the phenomenon of variety of descriptions, and perhaps the idea of variety is not consistent with this view of true knowledge based on a mind-independent reality. In what ways can we think of the phenomenon of variety of descriptions? Donald Davidson in arguing against the dependence on an uninterpreted reality which is relied upon by the correspondence theorists believes that we do not lose objectivity because clarification of sentences is thought of in terms of truth in terms of his coherence theory of truth. In his work, *On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme*, Davidson criticizes the concept of conceptual relativity in terms of a conceptual scheme. Based on Quine's criticism of the analytic-synthetic distinction, he sees the dualism of conceptual scheme and empirical content as unintelligible.²² His position, with which I am sympathetic, in some instances, entails that talking about truth must make sense in terms of the coherence theory.

“In giving up dependence on the concept of an uninterpreted reality, something outside all schemes and science, we do not relinquish the notion of objective truth—quite the contrary. Given the dogma of a dualism of scheme and reality, we get conceptual relativity, and truth relative to a scheme. Without the dogma, this kind of relativity goes by the board. Of course truth-of sentences remains relative to language, but that is as objective as can be. In giving up the dualism of scheme and world, we do not give up the world, but re-establish unmediated touch with the familiar objects whose antics make our sentences and opinions true or false”.²³

²² Donald Davidson, *On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme*, pg. 201

²³ *ibid*, pg. 208

Davidson's coherence theory sees truth as a property of sentences but sees sentences as parts of sets of propositions. In this sense, truth is not found in the connection of language to the world, but in the coherence of a set of propositions, in their being consistent to one another.

Similarly, Goodman also has a good point when he distinguishes between philosophical discourse and the subject of discourse.

“We seldom conclude that the world consists of words just because a true description of it does, but we sometimes suppose that the structure of the world is the same as the structure of the description”.²⁴

Whenever we make descriptions of the world, it is not that the world must be simple, coherent, or correspond to our words to make any sense or to be considered true. As in the case of Goodman, he says the following of the coherence theory:

“Coherence is a characteristic of descriptions not of the world: the significant question is not whether the world is coherent, but whether our account of it is. And what we call the simplicity of the world is merely the simplicity we are able to achieve in describing it”.²⁵

In this sense, at least for coherence, and I will argue for pragmatism as well later on, to talk about truths is to talk about whether descriptions are coherent or not. And to talk about the world is still to talk about a world that is independent of our minds. But to describe it, and from our descriptions to talk about truth and reality, and then tell whether something is real or not, means engaging with our agency and values. To say that a statement is true because we think it

²⁴ Nelson Goodman, Peter J. McCormick, *Starmaking*, 1996, pg. 3

²⁵ *ibid*, pg. 3

corresponds to the world in an isomorphic way, or that its logical form is the one that corresponds to the world is not enough. Descriptions are mind-dependent because agents with values describe the world. Whatever descriptions of the world inform our way of understanding the world, that description is built upon a language with a history behind it, and a language that constantly evolves as humans do. If we want knowledge of this type, then we need language to describe the world. But, at least for me, the issue is not that the world is independent of human minds, but that the act of describing the world and the tools we use are not independent of human minds and agency. If the previous is the case, we must make sense of our own input, and our own role whenever we make descriptions of the world and call those descriptions knowledge. And to add more, making descriptions of the world, while at the same time recognizing the descriptions of others, should move us into being conscious of our own role in describing the world and in building knowledge.

I think the argument for a mind-dependent reality is important if one also insists on accounting for certainty and authority. The reason why correspondence theorists stick to a mind-independent reality seems to be the need for a certain, unshakable base from which one can build without any worry as to its reliability. If one appeals to a mind-independent reality, and whatever truthbearer one uses is true according to correspondence, then that truthbearer is just unobjectionable. There would just be no possible way to argue against it. But authority becomes an issue when one considers the existence of other descriptions of the world, and that they are useful for people in their everyday living. In this sense, variety of descriptions becomes an issue for the argument of a mind-independent reality. This is one of the issues correspondence has to deal with, the existence of variety of descriptions of the world. If correspondence is the case, then a true statement is so independently of other minds. And such a statement would correspond to the

world via some mirroring property of sentences. In this sense, if there is a way the world is, then there can only be one correct description of the world. In my view, the issue is this: there exist many descriptions of the world that purportedly work for people in their going about through life; things like work, religion, life projects, etc. If we insist on a single true description that we cannot know or access because of our limitations (use of conventions, biases), and true knowledge is only possible by accessing a mind-independent reality we cannot access, then we get into some position where true knowledge is impossible. I argue this is a problem. If we stick to this conception of knowledge, then whatever we can say about knowledge becomes limited. But other theories of truth avoid this problem, I think, by also reevaluating the concept of knowledge or knowing. For the coherence theory, true knowledge is a bit simpler where a statement is true if it is coherent with the set of statements it comes from. For a pragmatic theory, generally speaking, truth is a tool of language that allows us to cope with our lives and projects. If we are to look for other theories of truth beyond the correspondence theory, then we must also reevaluate what having knowledge means. And this is also important to my thesis, as the change from what I have been referring to as traditional epistemology and, perhaps conventional ideas of realism should lead us to reevaluate important concepts as having knowledge, or having justified true beliefs.

By making the distinction between truth and traveling-oriented epistemology earlier in this chapter, I initially raised questions about the role that the concept of truth has for epistemology. By focusing on the role that the minds of agents have in describing the world, and thus, understanding reality, I tried to point out then the relevance agents have to the concept of truth. Given what I have discussed, I think the concept of truth is still important for epistemology in so far as the descriptions we make can be relied upon, but if my critique has any weight, it should

also question our own expectations of what truth should look like in our act of describing the world. In other words, the distinction I have made in our approaches to epistemology serves to precisely reevaluate the place truth has for epistemology, that it should not be its only aim when we focus on questions of knowledge. By highlighting issues of certainty, authority, and privilege in epistemology, and the concept of truth, I want to address the hue that conventional theories like correspondence cast upon our expectations and valuation of the concept of truth, distorting what it is precisely that one is supposed to do when one makes a value judgment that this or that claim about the world or this or that experience of the world is true or not. At this point, my claim is that truth is important because it is relevant to the relational character of our living, not because it has some agent-independent intrinsic value. And to add a bit more, if my critique has any weight, I think there is room to question what it means to know or hold knowledge beyond the idea that knowing something is the act of holding some justified belief via correspondence of some fact in the world.

And to clarify, the theory of correspondence has many approaches and opinions surrounding it. For the purposes of my thesis, I decided to focus on the picture given by Marino, but to reiterate, it is not the sole version of the theory. Furthermore, aside from traditional epistemology, there are many others, and more recent approaches to epistemology, and to the connection between normativity and epistemology as in the case of Ernest Sosa's thoughts on virtue epistemology, and Miranda Fricker's thoughts on epistemic injustice. In this sense, it is not my intention to downplay recent developments on epistemology, but to provide my very own thoughts and approach on the matter.

RORTY ON THE IDEA OF A THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

In his book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty explores and gives a picture of academic philosophy where the main goal is finding a theory of knowledge. He approaches the idea of a theory of knowledge in a historical way, telling of philosophy's trajectory from the times of Galileo and Copernicus to Descartes and Spinoza, and taking form with Kant. He notices the blurry line between philosophy and science, where metaphysics studied the heavens and the earth only to be replaced by physics with the coming of Descartes, Spinoza, and later Kant. With the power of the church over the sciences out of the way, a new secular story of the meaning and truth of the universe came into being. Philosophy was now differentiated from science as to what it can achieve, and where its efforts should be oriented. For Kant, philosophy's job turned to the search for foundations, for what we could claim to know with relative claims to certainty. Thus, the sciences would follow suit, and philosophy would become their foundation. Rorty presents this position in the PMN:

“I shall try to back up the claim (common to Wittgenstein, and Dewey) that to think of knowledge which presents a “problem,” and about which we ought to have a “theory,” is a product of viewing knowledge as an assemblage of representations—a view of knowledge which, I have been arguing, was a product the seventeenth century”.²⁶

One of Rorty's main foci throughout his works is the correspondence theory of truth. In Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Dewey, Rorty sees an opportunity to leave the hope for correspondence in philosophy, in aiming our efforts on representing the world accurately. These three thinkers, in Rorty's eyes, provide an alternative to our philosophizing, be it in terms of

²⁶ Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 1979, pg. 136

philosophy as therapy, as a philosophy of existence, or inquiry and dialogue. In this sense, Rorty sees epistemology as providing efforts towards a theory of knowledge that should be dropped, and that is not needed anymore. And so, he hoped philosophers to drop doing philosophy in the way they did, at least for academic philosophy in the U.S. Although Rorty's words seem anti-philosophical, it seems to me that in the end, he did not argue to drop philosophy entirely, but indeed argued to drop the vision many parts of academia had for philosophy, as a secure foundation for other areas of discipline, and so, to challenge the attitude that philosophy's best interest lay in the search for a theory of knowledge, truth, and justification based on correspondence.

Tracy Ann Llanera characterizes Rorty in this way:

“Rorty reevaluates philosophy by believing that our problems can be conveniently distinguished into two ways: they are either attempts to get to the bottom of things, to mirror nature and achieve certainty; or, they are provocations for us to be more creative, even experimental, in our interpretations of our life-situations”.²⁷

This is, as James would put it, the temperament found in Rorty. Similar to most postmodernists, he criticizes traditions, and he is suspicious of anyone attempting to have the final say in any matter, in this case, philosophy as it has mainly been practiced but especially in mainstream epistemology. As an alternative, Rorty presents us with what he calls edifying philosophy which is one that looks for ways of talking about things in a more interesting, helpful, or practical way. Coping with the world then takes center stage in this approach to philosophy.

²⁷ Tracy Ann Llanera, *Shattering Tradition: Rorty on Edification and Hermeneutics*, 2011, pg. 109

EDIFYING PHILOSOPHY

Perhaps one of the main differences between what I have been describing as truth-oriented epistemology and Rorty's thought is a disenchantment with the pursuit of truth for its own sake, and thus, of the reason many do philosophy. If the view of philosophy as the pursuit of a theory of knowledge where knowledge is only achieved through correspondence is dropped, philosophy then finds itself in a sort of crisis. This disenchantment with truth, I argue, leaves a hangover of values—the residual feelings or expectations that last after one leaves or abandons one's system of beliefs. If this view of philosophy is separated from the efforts it has followed throughout millennia, then the worth and reason to be of philosophy are questioned. And like when Nietzsche proclaimed that even if God is dead, his shadow will still last for ages, this hangover comes in the residual feelings towards truth and knowledge, where truth is seen as the most important goal philosophy could ever hope to pursue.²⁸ A view of philosophy without the pursuit of absolute truth and its promises at its center will be seen as pointless. At least for traveling, truth still serves a purpose—but it would find itself deflated, or rather, demystified. The traveling view of truth is still not completely clear; it could be seen as just a function of language, or as a tool to help us travel the world, but never its main goal (although my own take on truth will come later in this thesis). In PMN, Rorty brings forth his notion, or rather his hope for what philosophy could be—a living practice conducive to the growth of its practitioner. He turns towards a more humanistic approach to philosophy, where the worth of philosophy is not in its foundations, but in how it helps us cope with the world. One of edifying philosophy's main goals is exploring, as Rorty puts it, a more interesting and helpful way of talking about the world through philosophy. Like Kuhn, he sees the changes in philosophy as those of science, where

²⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Nietzsche Reader, The Gay Science*, section 108, pg. 219

normal science is the norm until revolutionary science challenges the established paradigm of science.²⁹ Revolutionary science is then judged on its ability to tackle scientific problems or on the quality of its descriptions. In this sense, Rorty argues for a paradigmatic view of philosophy, where dialogue and conversation come into the front in the discussion of its paradigms.

Edification philosophy challenges the conventional view of philosophy as centered on epistemology and its efforts toward a theory of knowledge, by providing a different approach to philosophy, where we take into the foreground topics and concepts we would otherwise see as irrelevant or not worthwhile.

SOME THOUGHTS ON RORTY

In identifying American academic philosophy with epistemology and the pursuit of a theory of knowledge, Rorty generally displayed a dismissive attitude towards the discipline. However, I think there is room for a critique of correspondence and of a mind-independent reality, and to still be able to approach the subject of a theory of knowledge. But this approach to a theory of knowledge would certainly not be the same as what I describe as truth-oriented epistemology. Furthermore, this distinction I make between truth-oriented and traveling becomes relevant when we consider the expectations and attitudes that result from such theories. Part of my critique and my identifying truth-oriented epistemology with the correspondence theory is the resulting attitudes that come from the issues I posed, namely the incompatibility between mind independence and the phenomenon of variety of descriptions, and the resulting attitudes towards true knowledge. I think that the problems associated with the attitudes of authority and

²⁹ Isaac Levi, *Escape from Boredom: Edification According to Rorty*, 1981, pg. 590

certainty can be seen when there is an expectation of having unobjectionable true statements. Although I differ from Rorty in this regard to a theory of knowledge, I still think he pointed to relevant issues surrounding epistemology: the pursuit of certainty, and the resulting issue of epistemic authority, or the question of who gets to say what true knowledge is. Rorty argued for a change of attitude towards our epistemological commitments because of his own critique of correspondence, mind independence, and realism, as well as his original thoughts on the contingency of vocabularies and descriptions. Furthermore, Rorty's critique of a theory of knowledge had an ethical and political purpose. In *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Rorty laid a path from the realization of the contingency of knowledge, the ironic attitude that results from the realization of said contingency, and finally, the realization of human solidarity and hope philosophy could bring from the cruelty of an authoritarian attitude towards knowledge.³⁰

It is my hope that in this approach to epistemology, I can contribute by bringing the distinction between truth-oriented and traveling epistemology in relation to the subject of a theory of knowledge. There are issues a truth-oriented approach to epistemology, I think, is not addressing adequately, namely certainty and authority. In moving into traveling epistemology, I want to address knowledge and truth in their practical, and social manifestations. I think these can be exemplified in things like beliefs, dialogue, and actions, among others. Truth is important and has a role in epistemology, so I want to explore the ways truth is relevant when it comes to beliefs and the impact these have on our actions, and on the lives of others, on how to move from the path of beliefs and actions within an individual to the impact beliefs and actions have over the lives of others.

³⁰ Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, pg. xvi

TRAVELING

Following Llanera, I identify traditional epistemology with virtues such as objectivity, or rationality,³¹ where the passions or otherworldly affects, in other words, human biases are obstacles towards getting to reality, or how the world really is. Based on the picture I have provided, I maintain epistemology becomes separated from the relevance the mind of agents has over the study of knowledge, which is I think is a worthwhile reason for doing epistemology. In this thesis, I'm providing a picture of what a different approach or conception of epistemology could look like, and what its value would be. Traveling epistemology pictures humans as being related and directly involved in the creation of the bodies of knowledge they use in their everyday living, and so, in a constant relationship with knowledge. It puts the fact that people navigate and travel the world, and find themselves with others holding different views and beliefs. It focuses on the interactions of those with different beliefs, and how differences, agreements, or disagreements affect how they travel and understand the world and others. This makes traveling epistemology always grounded on actual, real-world experiences. It wants to address questions of knowledge about where agents find themselves in the world, instead of looking for the foundation from which to find real knowledge. In this sense, traveling must be open to the variety of experiences agents go through in their navigating and traveling the world. If traveling is to find agents where they're at, it must also make sense of where differences of belief are disclosed—in conversation. In this sense, traveling epistemology is also a theory of communication and dialogue. If it wants to meet agents where they're at, it must make sense of attitudes and how they relate to the formation of beliefs, the preservation of beliefs, and the communication of those beliefs. From all the previous, traveling epistemology intersects with

³¹ Tracy Ann Llanera, *Shattering Tradition: Rorty on Edification and Hermeneutics*, 2011, pg. 109

ethics, in so far as it wants to make normative claims of how to engage others with different beliefs from ours. If this approach to epistemology gets closer to making sense of all it hopes to achieve, then it also proves itself as a viable option for people to listen and practice in their day-to-day, or perhaps in other social issues of a greater scale.

BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

To say that we have attitudes over our beliefs is to say that we can hold our beliefs as important to us or not, that is, that they have a value component to them. To illustrate, an attitude about a religious belief is relevant when it comes to how important, how firmly or closely one adheres to that belief in one's lived world relations with others who may have differing beliefs. This tells of how one interacts with others, and how tolerant of other beliefs one can be. It also tells how likely one is to preserve, modify or reject one's beliefs. And beliefs are important as they form a worldview to which people often commit themselves. To illustrate, suppose you see your neighbor in the morning and the two begin to chat about movies. She tells you about a movie she saw the other day that she considered a masterpiece. On the other hand, you previously saw the movie and thought it was ok, but not a masterpiece. Both of you disagree and won't move past this disagreement. Her opinion is based on her beliefs of what a great movie looks like, but her attitude (and yours) is what won't let her (or you) get past the disagreement. It is the strength of her belief that influences her attitude and actions, in this case, not moving past the disagreement. But attitudes aren't necessarily just influenced by the strength of one's belief. One's perception of what truth looks like can influence one's attitude toward our commitments to this or that belief. In other words, if one lives with a conception of truth where truth is fixed

and unchangeable, where it is valuable in and of itself, and thus, conveys authority, then this conception will influence the way one values one's beliefs and also one's commitments to one's beliefs. If a person is convinced of her beliefs, and this conviction is affected by her own perception of truth, and this perception of truth looks like what I previously described, then it is unlikely that that person will feel inclined to change her beliefs. But changing one's beliefs is a big thing, as our beliefs also tell of our worldview, which more often than not, tells us how to live to some degree or another. Perhaps your neighbor will not care too much about her thoughts on the value of a movie, but if her most important or relevant beliefs to her everyday living are challenged, then she will just not be prone or likely to change or reconsider her beliefs. Although I speak from a position that is suspicious of the concept of certainty, I recognize the place it has over one's living. Still, as I have been discussing, one's thoughts on certainty will be influenced by one's perception of truth, and by exploring the concept of traveling epistemology, I will explore how certainty looks within traveling. What I am pointing out is the fact that our conceptions of how truth and the world are will influence our commitments to our beliefs. It is not necessarily the case that we should not commit to this or that belief, but I am arguing that there are attitudes (informed by our conceptions of the world) that do not allow a person to move from her beliefs even if they impact their life negatively. That people double down on their beliefs is not a secret, but realizing that our attitudes are informed by our conceptions of truth and the world certainly allows us to understand the way others and ourselves go through our lived world relations. If I double down on my belief that a particular movie is bad and hear anything different, then clearly my attitude towards the movie will affect the way I see other people who don't like the movie. And of course, as I have described, the way we commit to different types of beliefs like political, or religious beliefs will affect our relations with others.

As I have been describing traveling epistemology, I think dialogue becomes a key part of my project when we find ourselves at the intersection between epistemology and value theory.

Communicating, informing, or just interacting with others are moments where agents exchange information with each other, be it trivial or serious. Dialogue as a phenomenon concerned with epistemology and value theory, I argue, is immensely important if one also has a conception of epistemology as a social endeavor.

In dialogue, one can be challenged over the coherency, or impact of one's beliefs over others. In other words, when face to-face with another whose attitude towards this or that belief differs from ours, we are challenged in how we are justified in acting on our own beliefs. If we reject truth-oriented epistemology, we no longer accept correspondence as that which tells us whether we are justified in our beliefs or not, insofar as correspondence, based on the analysis I have provided, proposes a conception of truth that struggles with the fact that there are many descriptions of the world that are treated as truth. Justification in turn must come from somewhere else if it even has a place in traveling epistemology. For traveling, beliefs are recontextualized in terms of the value our beliefs have in our navigating, finding, and understanding others in the world. The notion of having correct beliefs can go in either of two ways: if one identifies correct beliefs with true beliefs, then one either rejects the whole notion of the existence or relevance of true beliefs at all or sees beliefs as true or correct in terms of how they fit in a scheme, theory, or belief system by which one has a more relaxed view of truth. Having a system of justification in which we can distinguish what belief is justified or not seems to be the same as a system that tells what beliefs are correct, or ok to have. For traveling, justification has to be centered on agency. Justification is relevant to epistemology, value theory, and theory of action in so far as it is a way to tell what actions are ok or not, or what actions are

informed by “correct beliefs.” If the idea of having correct beliefs is dropped, I think justification must take a different shape, and one that is centered on agency and their living with others in the world. But this idea of justification will clearly not be the same as the one traditional epistemology would envision.

When traveling, we go out into the world and have experiences, which in turn makes us form beliefs about the world along with our attitudes regarding such beliefs. Such epistemic experiences can be described as largely educational. We receive and interpret information in our experiences, and we use this information in our traveling. Whenever we go into the world and find ourselves in unknown situations, such as meeting someone from another culture of which we have no experience, or when we speak with people from different backgrounds. We approach such situations through what we know, through our beliefs, our conceptual schemes, our systems of belief, our descriptions of the world. It can, and will be the case that people from different backgrounds will not fully understand each other as they will not have and use the same description of the world. I argue the realization of the previous should lead one to reconsider one’s attitudes towards one’s beliefs in terms of how important they are, and if contested, how one should approach communication or dialogue, again, how our beliefs and our commitments affect our lived world relations.

Some of our beliefs may be inconsistent in terms of coherence to our conceptual schemes, or that of others. Traveling asks us to reevaluate our attitudes towards inconsistent, or false beliefs. Instead of accepting or negating a belief presumed to be incorrect, or incoherent, traveling allows one to hold that belief even if the possibility exists of that belief being incorrect. But it also informs us that we cannot commit ourselves to that belief as we can only preserve that belief

provisionally. Whatever attitudes we have towards that belief become important if one is conscious of the possibility of not having the best belief. For traveling, we cannot just hold some incoherent belief and call it a day; one must reevaluate one's own holding of that belief, such that one becomes aware of the possibility of that belief being incoherent. In this sense, an attitude of "fear and trembling" could be held, such that one acts on that belief but with the looming possibility of that belief being incoherent, or not the most appropriate belief. One would not be able to act with confidence on the security of that belief. As such, one would develop a more modest or humble disposition toward that belief and how that belief aids one in traveling. One can accept that belief in terms of its use in traveling the world, but one cannot affirm that belief as one would a more reliable belief, where reliability is informed by inquiry (this will be covered in chapter 2). William James and Soren Kierkegaard put beliefs and attitudes into perspective in their works. Returning to religion, James distinguishes between a live and a dead hypothesis. A hypothesis is dead or alive in relation to us as "individual thinkers."³² In this sense a person can hold a belief as one holds a hypothesis if it still holds value for one's life. Kierkegaard has a more depressing view, as this attitude of fear and trembling means one becomes anxious about holding such uncertain beliefs, as one cannot give a satisfactory account of that belief.³³ Both philosophers wrote in the context of religion, but both gave very different critiques of beliefs and religion compared to what truth-oriented epistemology usually holds: that the focus of epistemology should lie in the nature of truth, and not in its use in navigation. Traveling then allows the holding of any belief, but it also provides a difference on what it means to have beliefs

³² William James, *The Will to Believe*, pg. 199

³³ Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, pg. 52. In his analysis of the binding of Isaac, Kierkegaard explores the existential situation Abraham is in, as he faces God's commandment of sacrificing his son Isaac. His existential dread resided on whether he should have faith in God's commandments, or if he should have doubted the possibility that God would ask such a terrible task.

and asks believers to examine their beliefs in the context of living with this or that belief, how that belief gives shape to our vision of the world, and of others, and how to interact with others.

FINAL COMMENTS

So far, my efforts have been directed toward providing my critique of what I think truth-oriented epistemology is and what its limitations lie based on my critique the correspondence theory of truth. But I also work towards picturing what traveling epistemology would look like in comparison. What I want my readers to get out of this chapter is to think about the traditional attitude toward epistemology and what I think are its limitations. Given this, I present traveling epistemology as a view of knowledge and the relation it has to the world and us as agents living in it. But this shift in attitudes means a shift in the values epistemology has held throughout its existence—justification, authority, certainty. Traveling is a reevaluation of some of the central concepts within epistemology, and the resulting attitudes these lead to. In the following chapters, my goal is to picture what traveling looks like through the work of the philosophers that have informed much of my conception of traveling. So much of the pragmatist tradition is of interest to traveling, particularly the work of James, Dewey, and Rorty, though I also appreciate the works of other non-pragmatist philosophers that are considered adjacent—people like Davidson and Goodman. It is also my hope to also open discussion surrounding other topics of social philosophy and their relation to epistemology—things like inquiry, common sense, agreement, and how these could inform a, perhaps, traveling ethics.

Chapter 2: Traveling and Pragmatism

Perhaps it would be helpful to clarify what traveling epistemology aims to arrive at if it's distinct from what I described as truth-oriented epistemology. In simple terms, traveling epistemology aims to change the focus and expectations we have for a conception of truth, where those expectations include getting things right or arriving at a place of absolute certainty, or an unshakable base from which we can feel secure in the assumptions of our knowledge. Traveling does not aim to do away with many of the terms epistemology already uses, but it does aim to reevaluate their use and value, terms like objectivity, true beliefs, and justification, just to name a few. And by reevaluating central concepts within epistemology, traveling attempts to offer an approach to epistemology that instills an attitude of continuous understanding, and fallibilism, such that we consider the communal aspect of knowledge, and how we interact with others in the creation of knowledge. Aside from clearing the picture of traveling, I will consider the ways in which I think traveling is informed by pragmatism. In other words, in this chapter, I want to demonstrate the ways in which pragmatism could be interpreted or seen as a case of what I describe as traveling epistemology.

ON PRAGMATISM

In her book *The American Pragmatists*, Cheryl Misak explores pragmatism through its history and argues for an interpretation where two different strands of the movement can be delineated. These two types of pragmatism are distinct through their historical development. She sees this distinction in the early pragmatists like Peirce and James. Part of this distinction is in the debate on whether pragmatism is at odds with analytic philosophy or not, and thus over their interpretation of the concept of truth. From its very beginning, Misak identifies pragmatism with the clarification of concepts, one of the main features of analytic philosophy, but also sees the practical dimension of pragmatism, and how it leads to more social and political outcomes, such as the concept of hope and progress. This distinction can be seen in Peirce's focus on the logic of pragmatism, and James' more humanistic and culturally oriented focus. It can also be seen in the trajectory from James to Dewey, and Rorty.

So far, I have argued against the correspondence theory of truth based on some limitations I think the theory faces, namely the rigidity of descriptions, and the values that result from it. In moving into the qualification of conventional epistemology to what I am calling traveling, I want to explore these limitations, and what they would look like in terms of traveling epistemology. But in order to explore, we need a coherent, and bigger picture of traveling.

According to Misak, there are two lines in pragmatism in the U.S., one humanistic, and the other focused on the logic and foundations of pragmatism. That is not to suggest that there haven't been influences from one line to the other. Rorty takes from Dewey as much as he takes from Quine, or Sellars since both are an important part of his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. And as Misak notices, James takes on Peirce, much to his disagreement. Still, pragmatism as a

movement has many different conceptions and approaches, neither of which is my point to argue. What I want to focus on is how pragmatism, and how what I think are its main tenets, inform traveling epistemology. Topics such as common sense, fallibilism, holism, inquiry, and how these lead to a different valuation of truth, and so, of epistemology. It is from this view that I draw inspiration for the concept of traveling epistemology. By exploring people like James, Dewey, and Rorty, I want to give an interpretation where their respective works could be seen as aligning with traveling epistemology, or at least close to something similar.

JAMES AND FALLIBILISM

In James, we can see many of the themes traveling sets out to explore. As not only a philosopher, but a psychologist, James had an affinity for empiricism which he turned into a proper framework and approach to his work. Misak points out James' psychology is based on observation and non-reductive conceptions of mental states. This can be further seen in his conception of consciousness as a stream of thought, emphasizing its fluid and dynamic behavior, as opposed to Hume's or Locke's more atomized conception of consciousness. At the same time, Misak also contextualizes James' empiricism as a response to the absolute idealism at Oxford, where he attacked what he saw as the overly intellectual "...metaphysics of idealism, or monism, or absolutism that was popular not just in America, but in England as well".³⁴ Indeed, James was against the rigid absolutism where parts are explained by wholes, and the phenomenon of experience and observation is not taken into consideration.

³⁴ Cheryl Misak, *The American Pragmatists*, 2013, pg. 55

“James’s aim is to make sense of the world and the way we experience and represent it without exerting a viselike grip. He wants to leave room for freedom and creativity on our part, as we partly make the world”.³⁵

As in my criticism of correspondence, by emphasizing the role of agency when representing or describing the world, James gives attention to the role experience has in the formation of the knowledge we use to go about in the world. Creativity becomes important, as the very act of describing through whatever framework we use, it is ultimately agents who use words and concepts to describe the world and thus to form knowledge to go about in the world. This is of interest for traveling epistemology. By engaging in the act of conceptualizing we are not solely giving whatever description we prefer. Although there is an element of subjectivity, insofar as traveling is concerned this is not a concern as it does not claim to hold such conceptions as true knowledge or true beliefs, but perhaps it is proper to say that one simply knows or believes provisionally. In this sense, if we are to entertain this position, of the role of human descriptions through frameworks and worldviews, we should also acknowledge the subjectivity that comes in describing the world as an agent. This means that our descriptions can be fallible and that we engage with descriptions from others that are different from our own. Indeed, the very act of developing one’s vocabulary and grammar, namely, tools for description, entails that we engage with the descriptions of others and the works of others. In this way, we also recognize the role a community of agents has in the act of describing the world. And insofar as pragmatism goes, inquiry has a vital place in its conception of truth. This is present in the works of Peirce, Dewey, and Rorty.

³⁵ *ibid*, pg. 56

James' idea of pragmatism was influenced by his friendship with Peirce, although their own conceptions differed significantly. Ayer, in his work *The Origins of Pragmatism*, characterizes James as more concerned with the big picture of any given theory, and so he is skeptical towards the inclination to linger in semantic disputes.³⁶

“Temperamentally also, he was a man who took large views. The very earnestness with which he held his opinions, the importance which he attached to philosophy as a view of life, made him inattentive to questions of technical detail.”³⁷

Ayer notices James' avoidance with technical details and semantics, but also his avoidance of Hegelianism of which he characterizes as largely intellectualistic. He sees Hegelianism as too detached from the actual conditions of the world, as to abstract.³⁸ But Ayer also notices his attention to detail lies on his thoughts on empiricism:

“Not that he was lacking in respect for facts. On the contrary, it was for their lofty indifference to matters of mere empirical fact that he chiefly censured his Hegelian opponents. But feeling that his vision was correct, he was impatient with arguments that seemed to him not to go to the heart of it but merely to turn on niceties of formulation.”³⁹

In his lectures on pragmatism, he gives an example of a dispute among some colleagues who were debating about the metaphysics of observing a squirrel: “does the man go round the squirrel or not?” James proposed to simply think of the dispute in terms of what is practical—“it depends

³⁶ A.J. Ayer, *The Origins of Pragmatism*, pg. 185

³⁷ *ibid*, pg. 185

³⁸ *ibid*, pg. 188

³⁹ *ibid*, pg. 185

on what you practically mean by going round”.⁴⁰ James’ pragmatism provides an attitude with which one can look at how we do philosophy, and what we can do with it. Suppose we solve in a pragmatic way those disputes philosophers linger on too much. In that case, we can look at other matters of value within such disputes, or simply dissolve the dispute entirely.

The pragmatism James proposes tries to do away with those types of questions where what’s at stake is semantic meaning when there may be more prescient things at stake. Such a view of philosophy asks us to see these types of disputes differently, to shift our focus and energies from staying too much on the details and semantics. In this sense, James’ pragmatism is suspicious of the importance philosophers give to metaphysics in matters of truth and epistemology. James differs in this way from pragmatists like Peirce who took semantic disputes in terms of their practicality, who saw semantics as a way to get to clarity, and only then to continue into sensible or reliable discourse. Perhaps the question of *what is at stake* is the question important for pragmatists, as disputes are considered in terms of what the other party wants to get out of discourse. Practicality as a philosophical concern is difficult to articulate, but the way James does philosophy tries to put it first. Perhaps his concern is not even metaphysics as a discipline but the time and focus it takes from philosophers when it is seen as first philosophy. *What is at stake* is a question of vision, of what concerns one.

“In what respect would the world be different if this alternative or that were true? If I can find nothing that would become different, then the alternative has no sense”.⁴¹ James takes this quote from Peirce to illustrate the pragmatist attitude. The quote focuses on actual, physical differences

⁴⁰ William James, *What Pragmatism Means*, pg. 505

⁴¹ *ibid*, pg. 507

in the world, and how meaning in a pragmatist sense is tied to real-world, empirical, and practical outcomes.

One interesting way that James approaches his philosophy is through his view of temperaments. As an early and significant contributor to the emerging field of psychology, James emphasizes the importance of the human experience in his own philosophy as well as in his version of pragmatism. For example, and this is relevant to my thesis about traveling, he ascribes temperaments to types of philosophers to characterize the attitudes rationalists or idealists, and empiricists take—the tender-minded and the tough-minded.⁴² James, as a self-proclaimed radical empiricist,⁴³ gives human experience in one’s way of doing philosophy the biggest importance, as he wants to move further from the intellectualism he sees in philosophy, which in turn could be seen as the detachment of philosophy from lived world experience. As an example, he argues, with much nuance and critique, for the importance of common sense and how its responsible use can aid us in our everyday living.⁴⁴ In this sense, his epistemology ceases to be too abstract and brings forward a sense of real-world weight. In this sense, James characterizes his epistemology in terms of how a person’s beliefs, attitudes, and bodies of knowledge are relevant to said person’s affairs in the world, or how one’s decisions and actions are informed and taken by our common sense, epistemic commitments, or beliefs about the world and how it works. In talking about the temperaments of philosophers, it seems to me that James emphasizes the importance of attitudes in philosophizing and epistemology, and this is a defining characteristic of his form of pragmatism, the relevance agency has over epistemology, and how we see the world.

⁴² William James, *The Present Dilemma in Philosophy*, pg. 11

⁴³ Carol Misak, *The American Pragmatists*, pg. 55

⁴⁴ William James, *Pragmatism and Common Sense*, pg. 76

In bringing agency to epistemology and attitudes, the relevance values and presumptions we bring to our philosophizing become more present, and it becomes clear in what we are informed or influenced by them. In this sense, any philosophical theory that purports to say anything about truth, the world, beliefs, or ethics, should consider, if not their temperament, what they think is at stake. And the question of what is at stake is related to the concept of values. I think pragmatism is goal-oriented in that it seeks practical theorizing to inform our actions and decisions. It sees knowledge in terms of theories to be tested in our everyday affairs. In this sense, the meaning of stakes in any given dispute, theory, or philosophy must be thought of in terms of what one expects for one's philosophy. To consider this idea, I think of the long-standing dispute between free will and determinism. This ancient dispute largely asks what is responsible for human actions and their consequences: human agency or causality, destiny, or external factors. In a general sense, free will sees humans as the authors of their own actions, and so responsible for them.⁴⁵ At the same time, determinism holds that human actions are influenced by a host of things, be it external forces, or causal determinacy of the past.⁴⁶ Of course, there is no one-encompassing idea of each side of the argument. Many philosophers have their own take and nuance for each side of the argument. For example, some determinists may hold that responsibility may not fall entirely on society, and that there is some space for human, or individual responsibility, what is usually called soft determinism. At the same time, someone like John Calvin may believe in double predestination and hold that whatever humans do happens because of the will of God, and so, humans are predestined to believe in God or not.⁴⁷ Someone like Kierkegaard sees the irony and paradox of human existence under the will of God, and so

⁴⁵ Nathan Smith, *Intro to Philosophy*, pg. 194

⁴⁶ *ibid*, pg. 195

⁴⁷ Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, pg. 209

has his own original take and nuance over responsibility and human will.⁴⁸ In the case of free will, each existentialist has their own take, but many agree that humans have more say over their own situations than they think. Someone like Jean-Paul Sartre would say that humans are condemned to be free, and it is over this absolute freedom that we despair over our choices and responsibility, not only for our actions but for our own lives.⁴⁹ A pragmatist like James, if we consider the previous Peirce quote, would say this dispute is only meaningful if the difference between each side has a practical, real-world outcome. In this sense, the point would not be to be correct or to hold a true belief (in the way of correspondence), but that our holding this or that belief will affect us in our everyday lives and that people holding different beliefs is just a part of life. What I consider insightful about this view is the shift from a traditional epistemic attitude (holding true beliefs in the way of correspondence) to the focus on how beliefs inform our living, and how, at least for James, the choice of having this or that belief is a commitment we have to be willing to reexamine in light of more relevant, or better beliefs (in terms of pragmatism).

“To begin with, our knowledge grows *in spots*”.⁵⁰ James, in moving forward on his idea of pragmatism, also argues for a position he calls noetic pluralism, that there are other minds who also participate in knowledge creation.⁵¹ In recognizing other minds, James also recognizes the acts of others engaging with the world and using descriptions other than our own. He also sees the world as eternally incomplete in contrast to the monist or the absolutist. In talking about knowledge growing in spots, James talks about our knowledge being prone to fallibility and

⁴⁸ Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, pg. 44. In his Attunement, Kierkegaard provides several examples of how Abraham could have fulfilled the binding of Isaac. In each example, as in the rest of his work, Kierkegaard considers the irony Abraham faced in having faith in the face of the absurdity of God’s commandment.

⁴⁹ Nathan Smith, *Intro to Philosophy*, pg. 194

⁵⁰ William James, *Pragmatism and Common Sense*, pg. 75

⁵¹ *ibid*, pg. 74

being open to addition, that the knowledge we use to judge, whenever it is exposed to new knowledge, must make sense of how this new information will look like in contrast to one's own previous knowledge or schemas. "My thesis now is this, that *our fundamental ways of thinking about things are discoveries of exceedingly remote ancestors, which have been able to preserve themselves throughout the experience of all subsequent time*".⁵² James uses the concept of common sense to describe the knowledge we are able to preserve throughout time, but he was also skeptical of the reception common sense had back in his time, and that I think may still linger today, that common sense is a definite type of knowledge that has stood the test of time. Instead, James sees common sense from a historical perspective where it is also knowledge, we are able to change as we go on in our affairs in the world. Common sense changes because people experience other descriptions of the world, and we compare and evaluate our descriptions in terms of how they serve a community. Thereby, the pragmatism James describes is pluralistic, so he is in the end asking us to reevaluate our judgments, especially those that are of the type of definite, absolute, or final knowledge. Instead, he argues for a pluralism that is aware of the variety of ways people see the world and sees the inconsistencies or conflicts between theories.

About common sense, James says this:

"The first one relates to common sense. We have seen reason to suspect it, to suspect that in spite of their being so venerable, of their being so universally used and built into the very structure of language, its categories may after all be only a collection of

⁵² *ibid*, pg. 76

extraordinarily successful hypotheses (historically discovered or invented by single men, but gradually communicated, and used by everybody) ...”⁵³

In terms of traveling, the variety of descriptions that exist because of other people making descriptions of their own, and the skepticism of epistemic authority to one sole theory, suggest traveling epistemology is pluralistic in some form. In this sense, traveling adopts a social feature to its vision of epistemology where, through the descriptions of others, knowledge is not seen as a solely individual endeavor, but a communal one. If there are many descriptions of the world, and agents engage with one another to share, discuss, or debate their positions, this moves me to think that traveling, like James and Peirce, adopts the phenomenon of inquiry as one of its main features. Returning to attitudes and beliefs, traveling aims to give a picture in which one recognizes the phenomenon of dialogue, and what it is to engage in dialogue with others with different world views than our own. We have beliefs, and these beliefs are informed by values in many different ways. For James, there are different types of beliefs, and one of them, religious belief, serves as an example of the place a worldview our beliefs have over our life. James argues that religious beliefs can be justified based on the outcome it has for a believer. Much of the debate during James’ time centered around how controversial his views were, that a belief is justified based on how it serves a person. Misak does point out that there is still much debate and interpretation over *The Will to Believe*, and how even James is thought to have revised his views on the matter. James is often thought to be anti-evidentialist, but this is in contradiction to his own radical empiricism. On the other hand, Misak thinks of James as an evidentialist, but with an expansive conception of what constitutes as evidence.⁵⁴ One thing that can be said about

⁵³ *ibid*, pg. 86

⁵⁴ Cheryl Misak, *The American Pragmatists*. pg. 62

James' thought is that, if he holds his anti-dogmatist, pluralist, and largely empiricist view, it suggests that his own thoughts on belief justification based on outcome should take a more modest approach. Holding beliefs in the way described previously, as pluralist and anti-dogmatic, means that as much as one holds one's beliefs dearly one also must also hold fallibilist, non-dogmatist attitudes about one's beliefs. Perhaps this brings up some tension within James, as there is often difficulty in holding beliefs dearly, as in the case of religious beliefs and being of the mind that they can be fallible. But I think this tension is of an existential character, as the act of leaving a belief that is also dear to us means also leaving our ways of seeing and acting in the world, which is a very big deal for actual living people faced with actual existential consequences for choosing to act on this or that belief. Still, this should not affect my thesis on traveling, as much of my efforts center around the reevaluation of this type of attitude which, as I have pointed out in the first chapter, can be analyzed in a Nietzschean sense as being affected by a hangover of values as in the case of nihilism and the negation of the existence of values.⁵⁵

In analyzing James' pragmatism, I also seek to explore the ways traveling would look. In general, traveling is a reevaluation of our conceptions of epistemology, what it does, and why it is important to us. In James, I see a picture where our assumptions of truth and its value are explored in different and practical ways. One of the most insightful ways James informs traveling epistemology is in how we should see fallibilism. A possible objection to fallibilism is that if all descriptions are prone to correction or addition, then we can't ever hold true beliefs, and we can't know anything about the world as we can never be sure or certain of the validity of this or that belief. Although this observation can be seen as a simplistic reduction, this is exactly the type of attitude traveling wants to challenge, that is, given what is logically entailed in

⁵⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Nietzsche Reader, The Gay Science*, section 108, pg. 219

fallibilism, to be consistent with this criticism, one must also hold a traditional epistemic attitude. Traveling, and most of all, pragmatism, aims to show that fallibilism is a problem if one holds the traditional epistemic attitude. Much of the work of James can be interpreted as challenging this attitude towards epistemology and as an attempt to show an alternative to said view.

“A pragmatist turns his back resolutely and once for all upon a lot of invertebrate habits dear to professional philosophers. He turns away from abstractions and insufficiency, from verbal solutions, from bad a priori reasons, from fixed principles, closed systems, and pretended absolutes and origins... It means to open air and possibilities of nature, as against dogma, artificiality, and the pretense of finality in truth”.⁵⁶

By this quote I want to emphasize the rigidity that James saw in the philosophical practices of his time. His practice of philosophy is centered on how philosophy can inform our everyday living, and that is the approach he has when understanding ideas like truth and beliefs. There are things to be critical of James regarding his views on belief holding, but we should also make an effort to understand James in terms of what he wanted to accomplish (a philosophy for life), and the type of discourse he found himself in.

DEWEY AND INQUIRY

“Knowledge and human psychology are inextricably interwoven. We have seen that this is a mainstay of pragmatism: to know something, or to have a belief about what you experience,

⁵⁶ William James, *What Pragmatism Means*, pg. 509.

is bound up with our human capacities and categories”.⁵⁷ Experience is an integral part of Dewey, and how he does philosophy. Experience is integral because it is human minds that bring something whenever there are descriptions of the world. It is through our categories and sensibilities that we differentiate between this or that object, or phenomenon. I think this is the same to say that knowledge or descriptions are mind-dependent phenomena, and agents are not just passive spectators appreciating the world. Agents describe the world, and through their conceptions, schemes, and categories, they give a different hue to each description. But experience is not the only thing Dewey focuses on. Misak points out that much of Dewey’s efforts are directed toward the link between practice and experience.⁵⁸ In this sense, any description of the world cannot be separated from its practicability and use. The beliefs we hold are informed by the experience of the use of our knowledge in the world, as well as by the use of others who engage in knowledge creation. In this way, Dewey moves into what I think is one of the centers of pragmatism: inquiry.

Inquiry is central to my thoughts on traveling, as the social aspect of traveling and pragmatism become apparent, insofar as inquiry, like traveling, frames its efforts of explaining and understanding the world in terms of human activity and experience, and that the effort of describing the world is not detached from human experience at all. For traveling, knowledge is as much an effort of experiencing the world as it is of describing it through one’s use of language. In a pragmatist sense, knowledge is a tool for navigating and interacting with the world and its objects, as much as it is a constant activity. But in bringing traveling, we travel and navigate the world, we test our theories, assumptions, and descriptions in our traveling, or

⁵⁷ Cheryl Misak, *The American Pragmatists*, pg. 115

⁵⁸ *ibid*, pg. 114

whenever faced with obstacles we can either adapt or double down on those descriptions. And perhaps, to continue the metaphor of traveling, we use knowledge when faced with the unknown, things that are new, different, or alien to us. In Dewey, we find a view of knowledge that puts at the center the act of inquiry, in other words, a theory of knowledge that seeks to resolve doubts and the problems we meet in our everyday dealings with the world and the others living in it. Through inquiry, we test our theories whenever faced with problems, and we change or tinker with them depending on their usefulness or success. In this sense, inquiry is a fallibilist practice. We can be open to revising our descriptions of the world if we are also of the attitude that our own descriptions are not final. And this attitude toward knowledge is central to what I think traveling is. When we go out into the world, we use the knowledge we must interact and move around the world. But whatever knowledge we may have, it will not work the same way for everyday situations and for extraordinary situations. When we travel, we are meeting places and others we don't know, and so, it is silly to suppose that whatever expectation I have of this or that custom, or norm, or even word will accommodate to what I know. It is in traveling where we learn about things unknown to us, and the attitude of fallibilism, that our knowledge can be incorrect, or perhaps insufficient to the process of understanding is a part of facing the unknown.

The question of how we are involved in the process of having knowledge is a difficult one. I have argued that coming to have knowledge, or coming to know, in general, is a process of experiencing the world and its objects, which could be seen as the passive part of the process, and the active part of actually using our language to describe it. Much of the discussion on descriptions have focused on the logic of the use of descriptions. Bertrand Russell developed his own theory centered on definite descriptions and their semantics, metaphysics, as well as the referential character of them. Indeed, theories of description differ on whether descriptions

should be seen as referential, quantificational, or predicational expressions.⁵⁹ But perhaps an approach to descriptions like that of the later Wittgenstein is more adequate for traveling. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, we see a more holistic and psychological view of descriptions, and the use of language in general. The phrase “the meaning of a word is its use in the language”⁶⁰ gives a sense of just how different the analysis of language is when we take an ordinary language approach. The meaning of a word is dependent on the language game being used for that word. Language in its everyday use has a myriad of uses. Perhaps there are as many possible uses of language as there are many ways a person can intend to use her language. In this sense, our use of descriptions, if it is also a use of language, can have many different uses beyond reference, and quantification. In Russell’s approach to descriptions, it seems the focus is on just sentences, where the definite article “the” denotes the existence of some object in the world in the form “The F is G.” In an ordinary language sense, what can be said of descriptions, perhaps can be more than focusing on single definite sentences, and refer to a conception of the descriptions where the act of describing, and expression takes priority. For traveling, this means adhering to the idea of a mind-dependent reality, where our act of expression, our linguistic choices, and our language games affect how we interpret, understand, or describe reality and the world. Wittgenstein’s quote “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world”⁶¹ takes a more prescient sense. Indeed, I maintain this quote has a different meaning in both the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*. The *Tractatus* refers to the limits of sensical language and what it can represent, while in the *Investigations* it refers to the limits of our everyday use of language, how we understand the world, our minds, and others. For traveling, we use our language to describe

⁵⁹ Peter Ludlow, *Descriptions*, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2022

⁶⁰ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, section 43, pg. 20

⁶¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, section 5.6, pg. 68

the world through the process of inquiry, where the reason for describing is not solely referencing the world but forming bodies of knowledge that then inform our worldview, which we in turn use to navigate, and travel the world.

As inquiry is an ongoing process pertaining agents, it can also be analyzed in terms of epistemic attitudes, or epistemic values. By attitudes, recalling the first chapter, I discussed the weight beliefs can have over one person, and how the weight or strength of this or that belief will influence her attitude regarding the importance of holding this or that belief. The main point of the discussion centered on the relationship between beliefs and attitudes. In terms of epistemic values, as I have been trying to argue throughout my work, our conception of epistemology carries certain values to which we commit or support. Certainty and authority are some of the ideals I think are prevalent in the picture of traditional epistemology I have presented. My aim has not been to do away with these, but to assess and reevaluate them in terms of what I think traveling epistemology would support. If inquiry is a fallibilist practice, and fallibilism could be seen as an attitude towards knowledge, then its way of seeing epistemic values, such as certainty, will just not be the same as in traditional epistemology. If inquiry focuses on testing and revising knowledge that is put to the test in the real world, then its attitude towards certainty will not be the same as a traditional attitude of certainty. For inquiry, certainty would be of the sort that seeks to have revisable knowledge, where a person is certain or confident of her knowledge as long as it has been proven to work by herself, or the community of inquiry to which she belongs, or the community of inquiry that does research on the topic. At the same time, she would not hold absolute certainty and absolute confidence in her knowledge, as being a part of such a community means she would participate in the revision of upcoming or already existing bodies of knowledge. As a fallibilist, she would hold the attitude that her knowledge, and that of the

community of inquiry, can be proven false or inadequate. In contrast, it would seem in the type of realism that is in the business of getting things right via the correspondence theory of truth, and as a result, having justified true beliefs and having knowledge of this sort, then certainty will only be achieved by getting things right and having justified true beliefs. But as I have been arguing, this does not leave much space for there being at least two theories that claim to have true knowledge of the world, which I find to be the case in the real world. There exist different theories of things in the world that aid us in our projects, even if they contradict each other. In science, theories such as general relativity and quantum mechanics claim to have the true description of space, time, and movement, while at the same time having contradictory views. And yet, both are highly successful theories in the scientific community. In this sense, realism of this sort does not leave much space for inquiry, if at all. In his lectures titled *The Quest for Certainty*, Dewey is suspicious of, as the title says, the supposed aim of epistemology as a practice of philosophy whose goal is absolute certainty. Instead, he argues that what people really are interested in is the security that a reliable belief brings. This of course is only possible if one also rejects the common view that philosophy is in the business of getting to the reality of things, and to the supposed security an absolute truth brings.

“The Quest for Certainty, that is, has it that any search for absolute truth is not merely bound to be fruitless, but that absolute truth is not in fact what we take ourselves to be seeking. No one investigating a particular problem aims for certainty. Rather, they aim at “security”—at a reliable solution to the problem at hand. We aim at getting beliefs that would stand up to all the evidence; we aim at getting beliefs that will work well”.⁶²

⁶² Cheryl Misak, *The American Pragmatists*, pg. 126

Misak points out how Dewey and Peirce stood the same when both argued: “that truth adheres to human judgments or beliefs, not to abstract propositions”.⁶³ In this sense, security adheres to beliefs as we carry these in our travels, and so, inform our attitudes towards knowledge, and inquiry. And as Dewey saw, security is really what we want to get to whenever one speaks of certainty. One can be certain when one has the security or comfort of having a belief that has been proven to work before for whatever purpose such a belief may have been used. The issue is not having the comfort of a reliable belief, but extending our security to the point of dogmatism. And this is the main problem I find in the way we evaluate certainty, that the pursuit of certainty via justified true beliefs leads to a sense of security that in turn becomes a dogmatic attitude towards knowledge in general, and in particular, the knowledge other communities create.

THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF INQUIRY

One aspect of inquiry that is of great worth dealing with is its social dimension. If inquiry deals with experiencing the world and testing our knowledge, this means we also meet others in the world doing inquiry of their own, and they can be part of those communities that engage in inquiry. If inquiry leads to a social view of knowledge through the work of communities of inquiry, then epistemology is indeed a discipline that is not detached from its own community of inquiry. Traveling epistemology seeks to be a reevaluation of epistemology and its main concepts (truth, knowledge, beliefs), and so it considers the ways these reevaluations lead to a social view of epistemology, as inquiry and traveling epistemic values, I maintain, lead to a social conception of epistemology. For traveling, the intersection between value theory and

⁶³ *ibid*, pg. 126

epistemology raises some questions as to what the relation between both is exactly. I contend that the traveling attitude conceives of epistemology as a kind of inquiry that does not consist solely of a single agent traveling the world and testing her theories but also sees the agent as a member of communities that engage in inquiry. It occurs when an agent meets others within her already existing community of inquiry whose theories and beliefs may or may not differ from her own but with whom she nevertheless practices evaluating their respective theories. In this sense, the overall picture of inquiry within traveling is one where an agent sees herself as an active part of the process of acquiring knowledge, where acquiring knowledge means learning about the existing descriptions of the world of others who belong to communities of inquiry of their own and contributing to an existing body of knowledge through descriptions of her own. These descriptions are tested by her, and the community of inquiry, where the hope is to be able to get to a description that works for the purpose of navigating and traveling the world, which in turn I see as using our knowledge to aid in our going around the world and meeting different or unknown situations or places, or agents. I argue this view of knowledge becomes viable the moment one introduces the traveling epistemic vision where truth is not dependent on correspondence, where there is the rejection of the search for absolute certainty and authority in one's knowledge, that an agent who describes the world is of the attitude where her descriptions can be contested by others in the community.

Returning to the first chapter, this vision of epistemology is possible if one is not in the business of having knowledge of the type found in truth-oriented epistemology, i.e., justified true beliefs via correspondence. But if we turn to the alternative view I propose, we still need a description of the type of knowledge found in traveling. As with James, the type of knowledge traveling epistemology envisions is pluralistic but also non-dogmatic. As with Dewey, it is based on the

process of inquiry as it is a social and communal process of describing the world via our concepts and terms, concepts that do not exist in isolation and are used by a community that describes the world in order to travel.⁶⁴ Returning to the metaphor of traveling as it pictures agents using knowledge in their going in the world and meeting others with different knowledge, different worldviews, meeting different places with different norms, different societal expectations, and just different ways of living, the purpose of having knowledge becomes more than just having the correct description of a state of affairs in the world, and the use of that knowledge as being agents that navigate the world and meet things unknown to one takes place. As important as it is to have knowledge, the use and valuation of such knowledge are also important. As such, traveling wants to provide a view of epistemology that aids in our traveling, and in our experiences of being and going in the world.

“I DON’T KNOW VS I DON’T HAVE KNOWLEDGE”

And perhaps another way of thinking about the type of knowledge found in traveling is by asking the question “what does it mean to have knowledge?” I think the contrast between traditional and traveling epistemology gives a good sense of the type of knowledge I try to picture. The traditional way, as I understand it, and have described it, would say that we can only have knowledge when it is of the type that correspondence describes. In correspondence, when referring to a simple, or single description of the world, a sentence referring to something in the world, I think the correspondence theory works well enough. But I think this attitude about knowledge becomes insufficient when talking about whole bodies of knowledge. Given how

⁶⁴ These aspects of James and Dewey are explored extensively in the previous sections of this chapter.

paradigms shift in disciplines, there seems to me to be a problem with how we provide adequate theories of explanation that consider issues such as agency, interpretation, consistency and coherence of the corresponding relations of referent and mind, that is, mind to world relations as such.

I think this leads to an interesting situation. If we don't separate the minds of agents and the place, I think, they have in describing the world, we then would not have true knowledge and thus, we would not be able to claim to know something we purport to know. The language that results from this situation is interesting, as the way we describe such a situation perhaps illustrates some of the differences between traveling and traditional knowledge. Is saying "I don't know" the same as saying "I don't have knowledge"? So far, I have been using the phrase "having knowledge" in a particular way, as I think knowledge is something we have or hold, in this case, we have descriptions. I think there is value in distinguishing between both, as saying "I don't know" does not extend to or invalidate a complete description of a thing in the world. As I said previously in this chapter, descriptions of the world can extend beyond single sentences to paragraphs or complete works of literature. In making this distinction, I want to illustrate what the type of epistemic exploration would look like within traveling. And as I think of traveling epistemology, the notion of knowing takes a holistic and practical emphasis. And finally, perhaps this distinction illustrates, I think, also what is at the center of my traveling-traditional epistemology distinction.

TRAVELING AND COMMUNITIES

If we agents are grounded in the world, that is, if we cannot be thought of without the knowledge that we are situated somewhere in the world, then we inevitably meet with the contents of the world. As I have commented before, we can distinguish between the objects of the world and agents because our interactions with both are distinct. I cannot communicate with trees or discuss with rocks. Thus, part of the traveling picture is the fact that we meet other agents, but in doing so, we meet them in many different settings or situations. For the purposes of this work, we can go with the general idea that communities come to surface when multiple people who share knowledge find themselves together, engage with one another, and live among others of the same endeavor. This is not to say that this working description captures a full understanding of the concept of communities as a real-world, complex, and fluctuating phenomenon, but it aims to make sense of how groups of people share, discuss, and inquire about knowledge. In this working conception, agents are part of emerging or already existing communities where knowledge is used, shared, and discussed. Part of traveling epistemology is the idea that when going around in the world, we meet things that are unknown to us, and so the traveling attitude reminds us that our knowledge of the world is limited to the context we are found in. If I was born in El Paso and haven't left the city in my life, then I will not know what other people outside of El Paso think, or what they know, insofar as the knowledge that pertains to their particular way of living. This is to say that although humans share the same (biological and psychological) necessities throughout the world, people in different places will have their own way of going about things. That is, although all people eat food, we don't eat the same food, but what we eat will depend on the culture, geography, or even diet we grew up with. People from different places will think and know different things about food. Some communities will

accept customs such as eating without eating utensils, but others will not. Such communities know that it is ok to eat without utensils as the knowledge they hold pertaining to eating traditions allows them to eat in such a way. Communities share knowledge, norms, and rules, such that their understanding of the world will be different from other communities, and thus will live differently. Traveling epistemology tries to picture people living and moving not just around the world, but to actual cities, towns, and regions, with different languages, different knowledge, different norms, different attitudes, and different ways of living. It is the insight that our knowledge of the world will perhaps always be limited that instills the attitude that traveling epistemology wants to arrive at. Being aware that we are limited in the things we know, and even so, we visit other places unknown to us, means we cannot hold the authoritative and completely certain attitude that I characterize with traditional, or truth-oriented epistemology. In this sense, communities become a central theme for traveling as the knowledge that communities with different traditions and cultures exist, and more often than not exist in the same country, and they interact with one another, and agents from within communities do not know how to interact with others from different communities presents a challenge traditional epistemology, I argue based on my critique in chapter 1, does not address, or engages with adequately.

Speaking of communities, perhaps, in a general sense, an example of a community of inquiry is the scientific community as it is found in the academy, where members of different departments engage with each other by testing others' theories. Speaking generally, the scientific community is a large community that is divided by different disciplines but still uses work from other disciplines within its own community. The biologist uses knowledge from the chemist, the physicist, or the mathematician. They also work using the scientific method as a method of revision. As I understand it, the scientific method works with a fallibilist approach the moment

the community tests their theories against an already existing body of knowledge and agreed upon theories, and changes or tinkers with their existing ones the moment convincing evidence comes to them by members of the community. But perhaps, as long as there are disciplines, there are different communities of inquiry. And although communities of inquiry imply interaction of the sort where one discusses one's inquiry with other members, even within a distinct or singular community one can visit other members who differentiate themselves according to their experiences or findings in order to discuss or engage in dialogue.

A concrete example of a community that I think exemplifies a traveling epistemic attitude through its approach to education is the Shadows to Light program in the Sendero and Adelante re-entry programs in El Paso, Tx. These groups work with non-violent offenders, and re-entering citizens in their path towards entering society again. The programs work to combat the growing rates of recidivism in the region, and successfully aid students in their re-entry by giving them an education that seeks to prepare them to engage with a society they are oftentimes not prepared to engage with. The students learn philosophy, literature, and meditation as a way to not only cope but thrive in civil society. I think interpreting this program as a case of traveling is a valid thing when one considers the experiences and the approach to education this program brings to its students. The students are oriented to think critically about their own assumptions and reflect through the works of literature their teachers bring to the class. In doing so, they are made to reflect on their life choices, their history, and how they navigate or travel a world that is more often than not just too complex, changing, and alien to them. There is much to say about this program and the impact it has on its students. For this reason, this is left for further commenting in the following chapter.

But perhaps, in bringing the idea of communities closer to traveling, I want to give a sense of what traveling is about. That ultimately, traveling attempts to make sense of the relevance of epistemology over ethics, and how these manifests through our inquiries, discourses, dialogues with others, with whole communities. Ideas, pictures, descriptions, and interpretations, these are not just put up in the air, they are for communication with other agents, with other human beings.

FINAL COMMENTS

In this chapter, I have endeavored to present a solid picture of what traveling is all about. Much of it is inspired and informed by the pragmatism of people like James, Dewey, and Rorty, who ultimately focused on the relevance pragmatism has over everyday life. Although there is much room to comment on the political considerations Dewey and Rorty had for pragmatism, which is more than relevant for analysis in today's political landscape, I have chosen to focus on pragmatism as an intersection between ethics and epistemology, and how the tenets of pragmatism lead to a social picture of how to do philosophy. In bringing these under the umbrella of traveling epistemology, I want to direct our attention to the ethics that arise from this interpretation. If what I have presented is convincing, solid, or the case, I want to further argue that ethics is as much an integral part of traveling as epistemology is, perhaps as in the other side of a coin. In this sense, the traveling attitude is worthwhile, if we go out into the world and meet others. But in meeting others and exchanging our descriptions or knowledge, we also find ourselves in situations that take ethical considerations. If one goes out into the world and meets communities who engage in their own inquiries, inquiries different from one's own, how does one approach such communities, how could one establish a dialogue, a healthy one if possible?

And dialogue is important if one is an agent that meets others. We approach others with attitudes informed by our own conception of the world, and its objects in it. How do our attitudes affect our approach to other communities or other agents? And if our knowledge is always “tainted” by our own conceptions of the world, and when sharing our knowledge, when presenting our ideas, how could we be responsible for the things we say and offer? In this way, I want to present the ethical side of traveling, by talking about the (or at least one) intersection of ethics and epistemology, by talking about the need for an ethics in order to have a healthy, or perhaps respectable, or responsible dialogue, and to talk about our responsibilities as members of communities of inquiry. Finally, I will present what I think is one such case of a community that “does” traveling through the program of Shadows to Light in the Western District Court of Texas in the city of El Paso, Tx.

Chapter 3: Epistemology and Ethics

To explore further into my thoughts on traveling, and as the title says, the intersection of traveling and ethics, what I think is the social and ethical aspect of pragmatism comes to relevance. If pragmatism sides itself with the inextricable relation of knowledge and human agency, and we consider part of the distinction between traditional epistemology and traveling epistemology, that is the traditional and the traveling attitudes and expectations, I think there is a possibility to talk about the social aspect of knowledge through the idea of communities of inquiry in a way that is centered on everyday experiences. And by this, I mean to talk about the interaction of agents with one another as people actively engaging with the world and coming up with knowledge of their own through their descriptions via language and its conventions. Agency and knowledge work, I think, if we also revise our attitudes and expectations of knowledge. We cannot be of the mind that epistemology guides us to the truth of some mind-independent reality, but that when we describe the world through our use of descriptions and conventions, we must be aware that we are doing just that, describing the world through a language that has conventions and biases, and that our descriptions are not final as there can be things we miss about the world. As such, previous epistemic values such as certainty, authority, and responsibility are to be revised under the new epistemic attitude. If we cannot claim that true knowledge of the world is independent of our minds, biases, conventions, and agency, then we must accept responsibility for the descriptions we come up with or use. And so, we can work to some level of certainty where we use a description in a pragmatic way, as a means to move forward with our projects or our intentions, but also being of a fallibilist attitude, of our biases and conventions. We cannot work towards absolute certainty as in the traditional attitude, as for a pragmatist that does not exist. As such, authority is never final or is never absolute. In other

words, we have to be more modest, or humbler with what we affirm, or what we claim to know about the world.

INTERSECTION

As I have described pragmatism, and its direct influence on my thoughts on traveling epistemology, one of the most important ethical considerations that arise from such a view of epistemology is the concept of responsibility and human agency. If there is no description independent of us, if there is no appeal to some ideal knowledge, and if our descriptions of the world are subject to fallibilism, then whatever we say about the world must be taken with some considerable seriousness, and by that, I mean to say that whatever we purport to know, we must be conscious of the responsibility this entails. Just because descriptions are dependent on human agency, it doesn't follow that we can just give any description we may prefer and call it a day. Indeed, being conscious and aware of our limitations as humans as to what we can and cannot say about the world should instill some sense of humility whenever we offer a description or an alternative to some piece of knowledge in the world. There is an ethical finality to pragmatism and traveling when one becomes aware of its way of valuing knowledge. In his foreword to Rorty's *Pragmatism as Anti-authoritarianism*, Robert Brandom clarifies Rorty's attempt to envision pragmatism as:

“... the rejection of the traditional understanding of authority and responsibility in terms of subordination and obedience. It is to be replaced by a conception of judging and acting as exercising the authority to undertake commitments that come with a correlative

responsibility to justify them, to offer reasons for them that can be assessed by our fellow discursive practitioners ”.⁶⁵

And Rorty contrasts this attitude against what he sees as the religious inclination within epistemology. For Rorty, pragmatism is analogous to the efforts of the enlightenment in regard to its critique of religion.⁶⁶ He characterizes the correspondence theory of truth and its efforts toward representing a mind-independent reality and getting to some intrinsic truth to the religious attitude of truth being subject to the divine will, of God.⁶⁷ Epistemic authority falls entirely to God, and so, other things such as morality are then also subject to the will of God. Moral authority falls under the will of God, and in terms of human lives, to religious authorities. Although the focus of my chapter is not on religion and morality, I think Rorty points out an important conclusion to pragmatism, that if epistemic and moral authority does not fall under a divine jurisdiction, human agents are found responsible for the epistemic or moral norms they come up with, and put to use. And this I would call an intersection between epistemology and ethics, that our ethical descriptions are also subject to human agency, and by being subject to human agency, our ethical descriptions become subject to the inquiry and agreement between communities. And returning to some of the topics from the first chapter, attitudes become more relevant as holding this view works if one also aligns with the pragmatist or the traveling attitude of being mindful, aware, and modest about what we claim to know about a particular thing in the world. That our descriptions of the world are not final, nor are our ethical descriptions. In this

⁶⁵ Richard Rorty, Robert Brandom, *Pragmatism as Anti-Authoritarianism*, pg. vii

⁶⁶ *ibid*, pg. 1

⁶⁷ *ibid*, pg. 1

way, I think traveling is relevant to our ethics, as we, in the world, make choices based on the things we know, and in this case, we make ethical decisions.

One thing I should clarify, or rather remind the reader (from chapter 1), is where Rorty and myself deviate in our treatment of epistemology. For Rorty, epistemology, or the search for a theory of knowledge is a thing that should be dropped entirely.

“The great pragmatists should not be taken as suggesting a holistic variation of this variant, but rather as breaking with the Kantian epistemological tradition altogether. As long as we see James or Dewey as having “theories of knowledge” or “theories of morality” we shall get them wrong. We shall ignore their criticism of the assumption that there ought to be theories about such matters”.⁶⁸

And this direction on Rorty stems from his moving away from the “foundational discipline” he saw prevalent after Descartes, and in his environment.⁶⁹ Even so, his characterization of the concept of a theory is still that of an essentialist description of the world, and he also sees it as in line with correspondence.⁷⁰ What he wants to emphasize about James and Dewey is their anti-essentialism about things like language, morality, and truth.⁷¹ Also, part of the reason why he is so critical of this foundational philosophy is due to the assumptions from which their efforts have been directed, that philosophy ought to take us away from culture into something deeper that tells us the order of things, about axioms, or *a prioris*, indeed, Kantian philosophy.⁷² In this respect, I agree with Rorty, that one of the main tenets of pragmatism is the view that there are

⁶⁸ Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, pg. 160

⁶⁹ *ibid*, pg. 160

⁷⁰ *ibid*, pg. 162

⁷¹ *ibid*, pg. 160

⁷² *ibid*, pg. 160

no foundations or abstractions that can take us beyond human agency or culture. Where I differ from Rorty is in that pragmatism still needs to make sense of its own epistemology, and that this conception of traveling works for pragmatism. And to ground epistemology with human agency, also requires us to make sense of the type of ethics that would allow us to hold this anti-essentialist, fallibilist, view of knowledge. For this reason, Brandom's quote becomes even more relevant. Things like authority, certainty, and responsibility must now be seen through the lens that whatever we say about these must also be conscious of the limitations, or perhaps conditions we have as humans. And these conditions I see as our sense of bias, our predispositions, and our attitudes. In this sense, traveling becomes relevant, as whatever attitudes we have about the things we know, how to know things, how we hold beliefs, and how we see the beliefs of others will inform our actions with other people, and other communities, and other cultures. Furthermore, and in a more concrete sense activities like dialogue, discourse, and communication, are informed by our, again, attitudes.

It is worthwhile to clarify that traveling epistemology is a picture of that intersection between epistemology and ethics. As I have previously addressed in the first chapter, there are approaches to epistemology that approach this intersection, but not through the philosophy of pragmatism. In this sense, the picture I present of this intersection rests on my analysis of agency within epistemology, but perhaps it is distinguished from other approaches in so far as I want to ground my efforts on navigation, or traveling as I call it. The traveling epistemic attitude is an approach to navigation that centers itself on responsibility, and that of our own dispositions and attitudes.

RESPONSIBILITY

But what is ethical about this attitude to epistemology? Given the previous section, I think it's appropriate to move the discussion of ethics and epistemology into what I think is the relevant concept of epistemic responsibility. Again, if we accept the previously discussed attitude, what I have been describing as the traveling attitude, I think this puts agents in an interesting situation. The situation is that an agent provides a description of the world or some phenomenon and attempts to the best of her ability to present such a description with accuracy, but also being mindful of the conventions she may have used in order to give such as description. The description she has created does not have a one-to-one relation to whatever part of the world is described. The description she provides can be taken as an interpretation, as a proposal as to how to think about a given thing in the world, but in the end, based on her knowledge used to create this description, the agent has proposed a way to see something. Ethics becomes relevant to the discussion the moment we realize that it is the agent who has brought something to the table to other agents, and that the agent is sharing a view among many of the world. And returning to the idea of traveling, its main concern is that we want knowledge not to get to the truth of things in the same way as getting to the reality of things, or to the fundamental blocks in order to have some justified true beliefs. For traveling, we want knowledge as we are agents who find ourselves in social settings, who use knowledge to navigate, traverse, to travel around such settings, but also to situations or settings that may be alien or just unknown to us. And to travel around we use the knowledge that has been built by communities of inquiry who enter into dialogue or discourse to discuss and review such knowledge. And I think this situation is ethical, as we are members of communities who use, propose, and share knowledge. And the type of ethics I think we require is, of course, opposed to the traditional epistemic attitude where

absolute certainty is the end goal, and authority is delegated to a mind-independent reality that simply tells us what is real or true. The responsibility found in traditional epistemology is that one is responsible for getting the world right. But perhaps it is not as healthy to use, propose, and share knowledge and also be of the mind that we're just out there to get things right, and there is no place for human agency. For traveling, we are responsible because we participate in traveling with others, and thus we share and discuss knowledge with others, and in doing this, we have to be aware of what it is we are presenting and how it is related to our agency. And agency is what is important here as it tells where the responsibility for the things we say, believe and act on falls.

In traveling, are we responsible in other ways? Recognizing the agency of others, and thus recognizing the endeavors of others to understand the world, I think is an ethical situation. I'm not aiming for a secure unshakable foundation. What I want to get out of traveling is what kind of insight can this intersection between ethics and epistemology tell us about the current ways we go about treating knowledge and how these pictures of knowledge affect our interactions with others. This is partly why I have been presenting attitudes as relevant to traveling, as they are affected by our conceptions of knowledge, the knowledge we hold, and in turn, affect our treatment of others. This is partly why I have been discussing pragmatism and have tried to present a picture of the underlying pragmatist attitude. I think this pragmatist attitude allows one to also hold the pragmatist view of truth as primarily a tool to help us in our projects. The pragmatist cannot fully commit to some belief or description of the world, as they are also of the attitude that there are other ways to describe or believe about the world. But this situation of not being able to fully commit to this or that belief, or view of the world is not necessarily a problem for the pragmatist, or for the traveling attitude as that attitude is also the one putting our feet on the ground in terms of how our ways of holding beliefs and acting on them affect our

relationships and interactions with other agents, and the world and its objects. In other words, a pragmatist can't fully commit to this or that belief, but only partially. In doing so, she still informs her actions by the knowledge she holds, but the fact that she can't fully commit to this or that belief should instill a sense of humility about commitment and justification for whatever action she does. For this reason, I think maintaining knowledge as a social endeavor is important, as checks and revision should maintain our feet grounded in the sense of how we can hold beliefs which in turn is seen in terms of how committed we can be to some belief. The social aspect of pragmatism presents itself when you recognize that other existing descriptions of the world are not yours, but from other agents, and that other agents engage in inquiry, and do so in communities. Knowledge is a social endeavor that requires agents to check their attitudes in order to engage in ethical interactions with others. Agents must remind themselves that there are other agents with descriptions of their own, and that if we are to interact with others in the community, we must also be mindful of others' perspectives, and how they look in the living of others.

Another question I would like to briefly address is the question "Are we responsible for understanding each other?" And to explore in real-world terms how this responsibility looks in the living of others, and our own, an example is in order. Suppose I'm driving in my neighborhood and I'm approaching a stop sign. I stop at the sign, but I know other drivers are not always responsible and so, a driver ignores the stop sign and crashes into my car. My responsibility, in legal terms, falls on me to follow driving norms and following the law, as does the other driver. But in traveling terms, I go out of my own way to stop as I want to avoid a crash for me and for the other driver. For the pragmatist, there is no universal picture of responsibility that tells me to always stop at stop signs. But I go out of my own way to understand why such a

norm is there in the first place, to prevent accidents. In a more prescient example, people in the margins are sometimes not taken seriously, and their worldviews are just ignored as unimportant or irrelevant to the conversation or discourse. A migrant from Oaxaca that crosses the border into the US will have her own background, and reasons as to why do such a thing. The reasons are usually out of economic necessity, or to escape from violence, and gain access to better opportunities for living a decent life. More often than not, migrant voices will not be heard as they are ignored, or just put down. But migrants from any part of the world will have their own past and background, and so, will have different pictures of the world. In this sense, understanding a migrant beyond basic necessities will need the effort of us going out of our own way. It will take us asking questions about their life, or their experiences. In this sense I think traveling epistemology is relevant to social epistemology, and other contemporary research on epistemology such as epistemic injustice, where the focus lies on the way groups of people can be “wronged in their capacity as a knower”.⁷³ I think the traveling attitude encourages agents to be ethical in their going out of their way in order to understand other agents in the margins, whose voices and experiences will simply go or be not heard. Such an issue is as much a matter of language as it is an attitudinal problem. Or in other words, understanding an agent in the margins is an ethical endeavor as much as it is epistemic, as understanding such a person can mean understanding the ways she has been wronged, misunderstood, or misrepresented. The concept of understanding, in this sense, takes another meaning and another use than the usual way of thinking of it as knowing some truth of the world.

The traveling attitude asks us to take the first step in taking that responsibility of understanding people. We put in the effort to understand other agents as we know they may have different

⁷³ Alvin Goldman, *Social Epistemology*, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2019

backgrounds and experiences that have shaped their beliefs. Communication may be difficult at the beginning, but for the traveling attitude, we go out of our own way to remind ourselves of this fact. Understanding other agents is not the easiest thing, and as many other philosophers have pointed out, because communication is seldom direct or clear. Misunderstandings are just a part of human communication, and our attitudes may already prime us into not accepting or even listening to other agents. The traveling attitude tries to make sense of such situations, where agents are not open to being understanding of one another. Returning to my example, of how traveling epistemology aids me in understanding how to know what to do, vis a vis, other drivers as in the case of the stop sign, communication is infinitely more complex. Traveling can help us understand some of these difficulties in communication.

COMMUNICATION, DIALOGUE, AND ETHICS

For traveling, dealing with the world means dealing with others. Throughout the chapter, I have endeavored to provide a picture of the role agents have in the process of acquiring knowledge and acting on that knowledge. For the purposes of traveling, when it comes to dealing with the contents of the world, I distinguish between dealing with the objects of the world and dealing with its agents occupying it. One of the aspects that make this distinction between objects and agents, I argue, is communication. In inquiry, one encounters and studies the objects of the world, but the interactions mean the agent is the one conducting the inquiry, and the objects are just there to be sensed and appreciated. Traveling the world and meeting others means interacting with other people with minds and bodies with their own distinct sensing and appreciating. And insofar as traveling is concerned, others are needed to understand the world,

that is if inquiry has any place within traveling, which it does. Interactions with others mean that there must be some way of understanding each other, and in our case that is language. Given the previous, I want to explore a complicated topic, that of understanding other humans. What does it mean to understand others? How do we understand each other? These are some of the general questions that I want to raise and explore.

Perhaps a good way of approaching this topic—understanding others through my thesis about traveling epistemology—would be through selectively exploring what others have said about language. Returning to Wittgenstein, his two main works, the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*, deal with what can be said about the limits of language. The latter of his works deals with the limits of language in terms of how ordinary human language is used in our every day, and the relevance of these limits in our understanding of the world, and of other people. And keeping with the theme of limits, his concept of language games examines just that, at least in terms of human communication and understanding. If the meaning of a word is dependent on a language game, then whatever vocabulary speakers use,⁷⁴ its use must be shared to some extent with the community. If I speak with another person, and we want some semblance of communication, then we must share the meaning of the terms we use beforehand. But if we follow Wittgenstein, knowing word meanings is not the only thing we need for communication. As with speech-acts, recognizing things like pragmatics in the linguistic sense is important if we are to understand someone else. If I ask my friend “Do you have this book I need?,” obviously I’m not just asking if my friend possesses such a book, but rather that I would like to borrow it.

⁷⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, pg. 20

Language is complicated, and it most certainly isn't always clear. But for language in communication, in order to have understanding, it is fruitful to look to understand those moments where language isn't clear.

Davidson in his essay *The Social Aspect of Language*, considers, at least for communication, it is not just knowing "... a precise and specifiable set of syntactic and semantic rules"⁷⁵ that allow us to have an understanding when communicating. He argues that in order to have communication with other people, one does not need to master the rules of a language, nor is it sufficient. The skills we have for communication work, but also important are "imagination, appeal to general knowledge of the world, and awareness of human interests and attitudes".⁷⁶ It seems Davidson argues that it is not necessary to master a language in order to have communication, but we need other things too, we need to know about societal rules, norms, cultures, etc. For him, interpretation plays an enormous role in understanding other people. But interpretation, at least in the way Davidson uses it, extends beyond just knowing language rules. It means utilizing our resources, and the things we know of the world in order to have some level of understanding of other people's utterances. He seems to follow Wittgenstein's concept of language and communication.

Returning to the idea of language games, in order to understand the language game of another, it is not enough to merely know the rules of language the other speaker uses. Understanding the language game of another means understanding the background, history, or even especially the cultural context of the other person, and the place she lives in and from. Even If I speak with a Japanese person who knows English, it is not sufficient that we know the language. One must

⁷⁵ Donald Davidson, *The Social Aspect of Language*, pg. 110

⁷⁶ *ibid.* pg. 110

learn the everyday use of the language, which means different uses of words or terms, the intentions of the speaker (or imagining what the other speaker wants to get out of the conversation), and the way the other speaker acquired the language. In this sense, learning a language game extends beyond immediate communication where one understands another perhaps instantly given the tools, we as humans possess for language. But understanding a language game, that is, an agent and the community behind the language game, means coming to understand the world of another.

And to continue with the metaphor, in terms of traveling, meeting others means interacting with others with a world of their own, and so, it means to navigate, to travel into the epistemic world of others. And this can mean knowing their particular use of language, knowing their history, being aware of the context of their current situation, and certainly, other dimensions or aspects of meaning that are not visible to me at the moment. But this idea of understanding, I think also needs being of the attitude that recognizes the difficulties in understanding another person, and that means recognizing that understanding extends beyond just expecting to know some true propositions of the world or of someone else. In terms of pragmatism, an adequate description of the world means one that allows us to move forward with our plans and projects, and in terms of talking about the world, a good description does look into the objects of the world to give a good description. We sense and appreciate the world, and we also interact with the objects and others in the world. In this sense, it is important to interact with others to understand them, but the reason for interacting with others, or understanding others does not stop at getting an accurate description. We want to understand other agents because we live meaningfully with other agents. We share relationships with other agents, be they serious or not.

SHADOWS TO LIGHT (AS A CASE OF TRAVELING)

To talk about traveling epistemology in a more grounded sense, I think it is important to consider actual real-life instances of philosophy aiding the growth and lives of people. For this reason, I present my experiences and interpretation of my brief time in the El Paso, Tx federal program Shadows to Light.

“Shadows to Light (S2L) is a program specially designed from the ground-up for participants in the Sendero program, a Federal Re-entry program for returning citizens from prison, and the Adelante program, a Federal Diversion program that dismisses felony charges upon graduation. S2L is an 18-month humanities class for participants to develop critical inquiry, deeply engaging literacy skills, effective problem solving techniques, and centering methods that converge into a successful space for transformative higher learning”.⁷⁷

According to the United States District Court Western District of Texas, the Sendero Re-entry court began as a “response to high probation revocation and recidivism rates,” and serves “to provide an environment in which re-entering citizens can learn and practice mindful decision making, accountability, and life skills with intense support”.⁷⁸ The program is divided into three phases in which participants learn new skills, master those skills, and turn those new skills into habits. Also, for the participants, the program includes “moral recognition therapy, the Shadows

⁷⁷ EASSI (Engineering + Art + Science = Social Impact), “*Shadows to Light*”, <https://www.utep.edu/eassi/Projects/currentprojects.html>.

⁷⁸ US District Court, “*Sendero Re-Entry Court – El Paso.*”, <https://www.txwd.uscourts.gov/programs-services/sendero-re-entry-court-el-paso/>.

to Light Program, drug screenings, employment monitoring and assistance, use of mindful meditation and journaling, mentorship program, and financial fitness”.⁷⁹

During the month of November and December 2021, among other students, I assisted both the Sendero and Adelante programs as part of a graduate course requirement in order to experience the process of reentry and diversion in El Paso. During this time, I completed 15 hours assisting the Adelante group on Wednesdays and the Sendero group on Saturdays through the video platform ZOOM. I want to share some of my experiences during my time in the Shadows to Light program to give a picture of what goes on in the program, and how it also informs or inspires my own thoughts on traveling.

The Shadows to Light program is led by Dr. Kim Diaz and Dr. Juan Ferret from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), who teach philosophy, literature, and arts; the name Shadows to Light being a reference to Plato’s cave. Aside from teaching, they oversee the growth and path of the students throughout each of the phases. In the program, the students receive an education many did not have an opportunity to receive, and even so, the students engage in meaningful and edifying dialogue with both Diaz and Ferret and other students. In both Sendero and Adelante, classes begin with Diaz and Ferret asking students about their week, if they enjoyed their work, about their weekends, and if they struggled with the material or their rehabilitation.

On November 3, 2021, the class was asked to read a short Hemingway story: The Old man and the Bridge. The class reflected on the solitude felt by the old man, how his thoughts stayed on the animals he left, and on how he was tired to carry on their moving away from the upcoming war and violence in Spain. For the students, much of their reflection stayed on the solitude of the old

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

man, and how even the company of animals was a thing to be grateful of. One student commented on the company his new cat was giving to him, and in his taking care of the cat, how he felt he was appreciating the presence of the cat, how he would stop feeling lonely, if only for a moment. Other students reflected on the solitude they lived through in their past, but everybody agreed on the value the program was giving to them, the ability to articulate and make sense of their experiences. On November 10, the students reflected on the idea of gratitude. One student wrote an essay as part of his finishing phase 3. He read it to the class, and he showed his appreciation and gratitude to the class, to Diaz, Ferret, and the other students. He was grateful for being taught to meditate, and how through it, learning to understand and manage his emotions.

On November 17, the students read Jorge Luis Borges, and they reflected on the concept of reality. Ferret shared ways of approaching this concept, that even if it is the focus of physicists or philosophers, they reflected on how reality could be approached in terms of our lives, that we live and engage with the world, and that we could talk about reality in terms of our experiences, in terms of what we go through in our lives. Throughout my time in the program, classes would go this way. Diaz and Ferret would engage with the class as to their lives, and what they would go through at work. If needed, they would continue and talk to the students about their experiences in the program, and their own life outside the class. The students would be given homework in the form of readings, or short writings. Some of the homework would be to write letters showing gratitude to someone in our lives, to keep a gratitude journal, or to meditate in our own time. For this, Diaz gave YouTube videos to guide our meditations. And being one of the main pillars, meditation was an integral part of the program. Students learned to be mindful and to be self-aware. This way they learn to engage with their own selves, to think about their emotions, the way they perceive things, and how things may affect them.

On December 4, some issues were addressed. Both programs had to change their venue from the El Paso Community College (EPCC) to Zoom. Given the nature of online classes, some issues arose which were all focused on the attention of the students, or rather how online classes are prone to be difficult for the students to keep their attention on the class. Diaz and Ferret explained the changes and the way they would carry on classes, requirements like always having one's camera on, no eating, no driving, no one else in the room, no being at work while in class, and no children present. Still, the class turned to reflect on the value of the program, and one of the quotes I liked the most from Ferret, he told the class their time in the Adelante class was a time to work on themselves as adults. This really struck me, as it made it clearer what the Shadows to Light program is for students. Many students just didn't have an education, and according to Diaz, some just didn't know how to read or write. The program is an education for adults that perhaps just didn't have the same opportunities or access to education. And by being an education for adults, it is also an education for adult life. Aside from gaining new knowledge, be it in the form of writing, reading, and financial skills, or in learning philosophy, humanities, art, and how to meditate, the program instills habits that will help students for the rest of their lives. Many students were young, perhaps younger than me. But other students are older people, with a history of their own, and experiences many of us will probably never understand. It is fair to say that many, if not most of the students have had difficult lives. Given all this, the program tries to give them the tools to make sense of their present, as much as of their past. But the habits they form, the skills, and the mindfulness they gained, those are for their future. Eventually, students finish their time in the program, and after leaving, it is fair to say they may feel unsure as to whether they are fully prepared to deal with the world they're in. The work they do in the program becomes an everyday habit, and a way to see the world in a completely different light

than how they did in the past. It gives them tools they didn't have before to go into the world and live in it.

On December 3, the UTEP students and I had a meeting with Diaz to talk about the program.

One of the most impressive feats of the program is, according to Ferret, its 0% recidivism rate.

Part of the discussion with Diaz was on her thoughts concerning the success of the program.

Aside from the curriculum, the work done by the whole team of lawyers, social workers,

teachers, and Judge Frank Montalvo has been a key part. Diaz points out the seriousness of the

program in the way they approach release. They won't release a student until they, Diaz and

Ferret, are completely sure the student is prepared. This takes an incredible level of commitment

and work. Diaz, Ferret, and the other staff put in a lot of work in order to get to know their

students, what their strengths and weaknesses are, and how much they have changed. This means

they work with the same students for years. One question I asked Diaz was concerning the

difficulty of the work. In my experience, most of the students in the program seemed to be

genuinely engaged. Perhaps some were just a bit shy, and unsure in their sharing, but in general,

the student looked engaged with the class. Still, there may be some students who will be difficult

to engage with. Some of the characteristics of such students, according to Diaz, are bad attitudes,

being challenging, and being inauthentic. A student being inauthentic can mean a student who is

not honest as to the work being done in the program, or a disinterested student. Perhaps another

term to make sense of such students is genuineness, they must mean their efforts. Students must

genuinely engage with the program, with each other, and with their teachers to achieve

meaningful results. Some of these students may seem inauthentic because of their sense of

insecurity. They may think education is not for them, or they may just not believe in themselves.

Still, Diaz thinks she has to believe in them even if they don't believe in themselves. In this

sense, she points out to working with people where they're at. Some students may be very damaged people who need patience and understanding. For the Sendero program, students may experience similar things. The experience of prison or jail profoundly affects individuals and leads to recidivism. As such, many Sendero students may be damaged, tired, and will need patience from the team. At the same time, Adelante students may suffer from hubris and think they know all about the world, even though they may just not. The type of patience needed is different, like the patience needed for young people. This is the type of work the teachers at Shadow to Light must do.

During my time in the Shadows to Light program, I got to experience the growth of many people, and witness the success of the program. Students in general had a great attitude, but what I think was important about the attitudes that allowed them to grow so much, was the shift in how they thought about things. In this case, students learned how to interact with their environment, learn to appreciate it, and see the important things in it. And a shift in their attitude was important as it means the way we evaluate things. By teaching them different pieces of literature and philosophy, the students considered different perspectives on life. And I think the education they received was very important in the growth of the students. According to Diaz, regarding their education, one of the most important ideas the students got from the program is that knowledge changes, and that our terms and categories change. Part of the philosophy of the education in the program is to get the students to think outside of the things they think they know. For this reason, the students are taught different philosophical perspectives through literature, and philosophy, all in order to reflect on themselves. I think this activity is already a form of travel as it represents the theme of going out of our own way, but aside from philosophy and literature, the practice of meditation allows students to reflect on themselves in even more

personal ways. And through the course of the program, the professors get to see the change in their character. Still, they know not every student will take the program seriously, or not engage wholeheartedly with the material. As much as the professors put in the effort, the students must also put in real effort. They are not expected to be perfect, but to meet the expectation of the program. Some people change a moderate amount, while others change 180 degrees. A lot of them heal past wounds, such as addiction, in the program, and other students get to mature and stop victimizing themselves if that is something they were dealing with. And still, the professors will not always get to see the changes after they graduate. Not everyone will always be great, nor is it guaranteed that the students will never relapse into past behavior. As Diaz points out, we just don't know their future or what they will do. Again, the students aren't expected to be perfect, upstanding citizens, but for them to be aware of their humanity, and that of others. And I think this means for the students to realize things like the human condition, that humans all around them struggle with the same experiences of being a human, such as depression, going through hardship, having personal struggles. And even so, the education they receive teaches them to think through such experiences, to reflect on themselves and their relationships, or to have insight into such situations such that they do not fall into past habits. And in terms of my thesis on traveling epistemology, the program presents a relevant example, as the focus of the education students receive is not the same as in college programs. The success of the program rests on students reforming their ways, that they go out of their own way, and consider many perspectives on how to see their lives, their actions, their past, and their future. It is not an education for the sake of knowing, but for the sake of living. This is not to say that knowing, that having and gaining knowledge is not important, or not a part of the program, or of living. But the program directs their knowledge acquisition challenging them to learn in terms of how the kinds

of knowledge they learn inform their living, that is, by reorienting how they navigate and travel the world.

Another reason why I argue this program is relevant to my project is the fact that both Diaz and Ferret are pragmatists themselves. They identify with the movement and focus their efforts on implementing pragmatist philosophy into the program. And this can be seen through the type of education the students receive from their professors, but as Ferret points out, part of the spirit of pragmatism is precisely to be embodied through lived world projects. In this sense, the pragmatism Ferret practices seeks to employ philosophy into the system of organizations in order to be guided by a reliable logic that sees historical context as just as important as logical rules. Indeed, aside from teaching at UTEP and the Shadows to Light program, Ferret is also president and executive director of the Philosophic Systems Institute.

“PSI provides empowering transformational learning for a more just society. The PSI process centers philosophy and the arts, and is defined by effective collaborations and responsive design that leads to sustained, systemic change.”⁸⁰

According to the PSI website, the institute was created with the intention to “address fundamental problems in our community of the greater El Paso area”.⁸¹ And the direction the institute takes is to develop programs with philosophy at their center, so as to better address the needs of the community. And in the case of the Shadows to Light program, which is an initiative of the institute, they address the needs of the students via education in the humanities and arts, along with special psychological attention. For Ferret, this is a way to implement philosophy into

⁸⁰ PSI, <https://www.psicomunity.org/about>

⁸¹ *ibid.*

actual practical projects. Aside from the Shadows to Light program, the institute currently works with other projects in the El Paso area, and they are mostly community-based educational programs such as the *Artstream* program, and a partnership with “HOME to develop Transformative Learning Community programs for low-income communities”.⁸²

To finalize this section, Shadows to Light presents a very relevant case of the importance of considering our own conceptions of epistemology in terms of our own education, and how it affects and informs our living. I interpret the program through my thoughts on traveling epistemology as it helps me understand, if just a bit, the process of understanding what students, who are prior felons, go through in their experiences in the program. The program teaches students to be open, and think outside of their own understanding to, in turn, better understand and engage with the world and others. Many of the students, had Spanish as their first language and did not know that much English. It takes great effort to manage and meaningfully educate a group of 20+ students, some of whom may not be fluent in English, and to be aware of the different backgrounds the students have, which in turn inform their worldviews. If anything, the program demonstrates just how difficult this type of understanding is, as it means dealing with attitudes rooted in history, and past experiences. In this sense, the traveling attitude I have been describing is one that actively looks to understand possible horizons, windows, pictures of meaning. And it is one that seeks to aid in the process of this type of understanding when it comes to communities such as the Juarez/El Paso community. Communities in the literal, geographical margin between political boundaries are difficult to understand. Perhaps with the traveling attitude, we can begin by appreciating such difficulties.

⁸² *ibid.*

TRAVELING TO MY COMMUNITY

The community of the Juarez/El Paso region, I argue, finds itself in a situation that could afford a bit of the traveling attitude. In media, one can find many accounts of the US/Mexico border as being open, and by being open, this means the free movement of people between both regions. This is often brought up in order to attack growing trends of migration to the US by South American migrants. At the same time, anyone living in the region can attest that this is far from the case; in fact, human movement between the border is heavily controlled and militarized. Nevertheless, this does not stop media interests from showing and viewers from holding such beliefs, that there is an open border between the US and Mexico. For traveling, the simple solution is that anyone holding such beliefs to actually travel to the region to see its current situation, and be responsible in our navigating the world, and meeting others from the border. But one does not need to go to such lengths to contest such beliefs. One can very easily look for what experts and communities of inquiry have to say on the topic, but one can also look for what the people at the border have to say. And to understand the situation at the border, and people from the border entails that one actually goes out of one's own way to know the experiences, context, conventions, and backgrounds of the region and its people. And this means holding conversations and dialogues with such people. One must travel outside of one's own perspective in order to even attempt to understand others. The ethical dimension of epistemology becomes clear in the action of going out of my own way, which is to travel out of my perspective, and into the perspectives of others. And another example from the border is the case of the 2019 El Paso shooting, where Patrick Crusius traveled all the way from Dallas to El Paso with the sole purpose of committing mass murder. The whole region suffered greatly from this happening, and the reasons why Crusius committed this act affected the community greatly. Eleanor Dearman

comments on how he speaks of an immigrant invasion, and the loss of its “western culture.” He speaks about being replaced by immigrants and how he also uploaded a “white supremacist rant” on 8chan, an online platform widely known for its white supremacist culture to justify the reasons behind his actions.⁸³ Fernando Garcia, the executive director of the Border Network for Human Rights comments: “Before the attack, there was a narrative, a very powerful narrative coming from the President of the United States. And unfortunately, that narrative was about racism and xenophobia and white supremacy”.⁸⁴

We really don’t need a traveling epistemic account to realize how Crusius, or what some news outlets believe affects the community of El Paso and Juarez, nor the violence against other communities. But traveling does bring insight as to how the way one holds beliefs, affects the lives of such people, and in turn, affects other communities in profoundly negative and violent ways. A little fear and trembling goes a long way. We should never have the type of certainty that justifies actions like this. Justification is much more complicated than we think precisely because, from my traveling epistemic perspective, it is more fluid and personal. But it also is linked to this realization that understanding another means traveling outside of one’s own perspective. This is part of the reason why communities of inquiry are so important, as agents in those communities check and revise the knowledge of others. And so, if beliefs are to be justified, if they can be at all, they must be checked by other agents.

⁸³ Eleanor Dearman. *Racism and the Aug. 3 Shooting: One Year Later, El Paso Reflects on the Hate behind the Attack*, El Paso Times, 2020.

⁸⁴ *ibid*

Conclusion

By addressing these topics through the lens of what I call the traveling attitude, I want to address epistemic issues that have real-world consequences. Concepts such as authority, certainty, and epistemic responsibility, I maintain, have a lot to say about epistemic justification and its role in the actions of agents which, in turn, can be analyzed in an ethical way. To put this even more strongly, as I have asserted repeatedly in my thesis, epistemology and ethics not only can be intertwined in this way but should be understood as inextricably related. And the concept of traveling epistemology aims to be a picture, or an approach to think about such concepts with sensibilities for more grounded experiences, or for everyday life situations. My epistemic attitudes and dispositions lead me to act in the world in certain ways, and the actions I perform will have ethical consequences which can be understood through the formation of my epistemic background. In other words, an ethical analysis of a given action can be aided in its insightfulness if it is also informed by the epistemic background of the agent performing such a given action. Furthermore, for a traveling epistemic account, an assessment of a given ethical action or situation can be understood by an agent via her epistemic dispositions. At first glance, this may leave the impression that traveling epistemology just falls into some relativistic account of ethics. But, aligned with its fellow attitude of pragmatism, the ethics of an action or a situation are understood and assessed on a community basis. And so, such communities of inquiry must engage in discourse and dialogue with other communities. In this sense, agents with a traveling attitude must be humble in their own ways of holding knowledge. Perhaps this is to say that agents must be mindful not only of the limitations of their knowledge but also the limitations or resources of their attitudes. Just as we go out into the world with the knowledge we hold, and act based on that knowledge, we must also be careful with our actions or assumptions. We are

limited in our understanding of the world, but we also have blind spots in the way we learn about the world. For this very reason, we must check, correct, and revise our knowledge with other agents, and other communities. By doing this, we deal with our biases and our limitations which enables us to more confidently go out into the world with the faith that the knowledge we use, while not final, can aid us, or helpfully direct us in our traveling the world.

Perhaps the traveling epistemic attitude is not the easiest to hold and practice, but I think by making us aware through reminding us of our own limitations of ourselves as agents who want to better know and ethically engage in the world, it provides tools to do exactly that. It is a perspective and approach to epistemology more than it is a systematic theory, though it of course aims to be careful and consistent, as it wants to represent something very real about the world. That very real something is ourselves as travelers who are *only* able to know the world by navigating responsibly in our traveling with others.

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Vita

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