

Befriending Wisdom

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Introduction

We live amidst the biggest explosion in knowledge in human history. More and more facts emerge, faster and faster, from the activities of researchers. More and more applications of those facts are then transformed into technologies which in turn allow the further emergence of yet more facts. This process is driven by methodological innovation in the production of knowledge that began crystallizing during the Renaissance and hit its stride during the Enlightenment. Set adrift from its traditional focus on wisdom by Descartes' accommodation of the new science and cemented into the new paradigm by Kant's critical move to make philosophy a kind of knowledge, philosophers have been active and full participants in the new approach. There have been suspicions, however, given the ways that certain aspects of modern life seem to have gone astray, that leaving wisdom behind was perhaps, well, unwise. Motivated by this thought, some philosophers want to return to our roots as a discipline focused on wisdom. Philosophers are by strong inclination interested in educating the young, so it is natural for us to want to include our students in this revival. Teaching wisdom in the modern academy, on the other hand, seems a rather difficult task. The notion of the transfer of knowledge, conceived of as collections of facts and their relationships, as the central task of education inclines against teaching wisdom. The methods and attitudes that philosophy has developed while adapting to a world dominated by abundant, scientifically created knowledge, are also impediments. In this paper I will be looking at some of the barriers to teaching wisdom facing a philosopher in modern academia. Broadly, the barriers can be divided into two categories: confusions based on the notion that knowledge is wisdom or at least serves the role that wisdom had previously served, and those arising from the belief that wisdom is a kind of knowledge not too different from the propositional knowledge that other disciplines teach. I will then offer an alternative framework for thinking about the teaching task that focuses on the notion that the goal is not a transfer of knowledge but the beginning of a friendship, a friendship between the student and wisdom.

Pedagogical assumptions of the university context

Universities are in the business of manufacturing and distributing knowledge. Knowledge consists of propositions, grouped by discipline, and the methods by which those facts are justified as being worthy of believing as true. Knowledge is only knowledge if it is explicitly representable. The model for knowledge production and justification is science, especially mathematical physics. Analysis, the breaking of things and processes into discrete parts, is the foundational method which underlies the specific methods of the various disciplines. Knowledge is, of course, independent of the characteristics of the knower, being objective and hence democratically accessible to all. Reason is a tool for analysis and calculation, to be used to manipulate the propositions as needed.

The job of the teacher is to act as the distributor of knowledge to the students. The teacher knows which propositions are relevant to the discipline being studied and directs the students toward them. The methods of justification of the discipline are also presented. Since knowledge is a kind of explicit representation, it is an important feature of good teaching to be as clear as possible. What is being taught should be specifiable in detail

and the results of teaching should be clearly measurable.

The minds of students are best thought of as blank slates or empty boxes, which the teaching process fills up with the relevant propositions and provides with the relevant methods. The slate or the box remains the same, while the contents change via learning. In order to know whether the learning objectives have been met, the contents of the box must be measured. This is accomplished primarily by testing in which the students' memory is sampled. Correct answers are evidence of learning and incorrect answers evidence of lack of learning. Since knowledge is propositional and its possession measurable, it is obvious that there must be correct and incorrect answers. Put in simple terms, teaching is the transmission of a series of propositionally expressible messages and the checking to make sure that the messages have been received. What is being transmitted is knowledge.

Once the correctness of answers has been assessed students are then assigned differential rewards according to how well they did on the task of providing correct answers. The students have been conditioned to have emotional reactions to the rewards and further believe that their collection of rewards can be traded at some later date for more concrete rewards provided by society. There are two assumptions that underlie the reward system. The first is connected to the notion that the university is sorting people out for future roles in society. The second is that the motivation for learning needs to be provided from some external source.

Philosophical pedagogy in the context of the university

The teaching of philosophy obviously operates in the context of the pedagogical assumptions of the university. The notion that knowledge consists of explicitly representable propositions, the truth of which is established by methods of appropriate justification is quite consonant with analytic practice. When applied to teaching philosophy, the knowledge transmission model produces pedagogy that treats arguments as items to be memorized, and analysis as the method to be applied to these items. Professionally we philosophers provide the evaluation of knowledge produced by other disciplines via our methods of critique and produce knowledge of our own in the form of arguments. We pass on to our students, via transmission, our knowledge. We evaluate our students knowing what and knowing how in a manner not too dissimilar to those of our colleagues in other fields. The practice of teaching philosophy fits, perhaps with some moments of bad conscience, into the model of transmitting knowledge to the ready minds of students, students who are motivated to learn in hopes of some abstract reward. Knowledge is an abstract commodity and we contribute our share to its manufacture and distribution. In this way of looking at the project philosophy has both knowledge of its own and can act as quality control for the other products.

The problem of teaching wisdom in the context of university philosophy teaching

When we think of the phrase "teaching wisdom", given the assumptions of the pedagogical model that I have been discussing, we might think that wisdom is some kind of knowledge of the sort that could be characterized as a set of propositions that could be taught to students in just the same way that other things are taught. There would be, of course, methods of manufacturing and justifying those propositions that would count as wisdom. Students would be found in libraries and other quiet places, storing wisdom in their capacious memories along side the history of US (1860 to 1940) and other such topics. Later we could test them in usual ways to see if they had learned wisdom. The absurdity of this scenario shows that wisdom is not the sort of knowledge, if it is knowledge at all, that the university, as it is currently configured, is set up to teach. Further it seems that philosophy, having eaten the pomegranate seeds of the underworld, is similarly hindered from the teaching of wisdom.

Wisdom, as it is traditionally conceived, is a virtue or a power. It is not a kind of propositional knowledge or a method for producing or justifying propositional knowledge at all. It is a quality that someone has, being

wise, rather than a commodity that they possess. It is true that wise people have written books full of declarative sentences that are designed to express wisdom. Yet the memorization of those sentences, even believing them, does not mean the person remembering and believing them is wise.

A working definition of wisdom

There are undoubtedly a number of ways that wisdom could be defined. It is not the goal of this essay to address that problem. Instead I will offer a working definition which accords well enough to the common use of the term to be helpful to the task of sorting through the potential solutions to the problem of teaching wisdom as a philosopher in the university. For the sake of this discussion then, I will define wisdom as the power to choose well.

There are a number of qualities or abilities that someone who is able to choose well would need to have. I would like to focus on four in particular, although there are surely others that are also important. Again I am not providing rigorous arguments for my choices. I offer them as being representative of the family of qualities that we commonly assign to the wise.

To count as a person who has wisdom, possessing the ability to distinguish appearance and reality would seem to be crucial. Choices obviously need to be grounded in reality in order to be effective. Since what is real and what is not is often not clear on the face of it, the wise person must have good epistemic discernment.

The wise person is also aware of the limits of their knowledge. In other words they acknowledge their own ignorance. Human understanding of the world is limited and individual understanding more limited still. Without recognizing these limits, choices are made as if knowledge were perfectly certain and this can easily be disastrous.

Choices are always aimed at some end. In order for choices to be wise they must be aimed at some actually good end. The ability to distinguish appearance and reality is not just about metaphysics or concerned with our ability to tell if someone is lying but is also applicable to the realm of what is worth desiring. It is not enough to merely know what is good though, it has to be wanted as well, so we could think of this aspect of wisdom as the quality of desiring well.

Perhaps the core concept of what it means to be wise, and hence what founds the ability to choose well, is self knowledge. The wise person knows themselves. This is not merely knowing a set of propositions that are true of oneself, but is some other kind of knowledge, the possession of which has some ongoing transformative impact on the knower. When someone knows themselves, their choices reflect the reality of who they are.

Some potential solutions

Having adopted a tentative working definition of wisdom and surveyed some of the qualities or abilities associated with it, we are now in a position to look at some potential solutions to our problem as teachers of wisdom. All of the solutions that I will examine in this section are being used in one way or another already. I will point to what I think are the problems with each approach in light of the previous discussion. In the next section I will turn to a framework that I think will allow us to make some progress toward success.

The technocratic solution is to define wisdom so that it is just knowing what means skilfully obtain which ends. Choosing well just means picking the best technical solution to the problem of achieving whatever goal you have selected and then implementing it. Wisdom reduces to knowledge, in fact knowledge of exactly the sort the university is set up to manufacture and distribute, so teaching this sort of wisdom is what is already being done.

Presumptively philosophy is taught as intellectual quality control, so that the ways in which calculative reason is brought to bear on technical problems are absent the flaws in logic that would undermine the process. Really this is just a rejection of the notion that wisdom has a role in education, since none of the qualities or abilities (except perhaps distinguishing appearance and reality in some basic sense) are cultivated or valued. There is no consideration of desirable ends, or self knowledge, only the pursuit of ends that seem good at the time. If this solution worked, conveniently nothing needs to change as there is really no problem anyway.

The critical thinking solution is to recognize that wisdom consists of being able to distinguish good beliefs from bad beliefs (a version of the appearance/reality distinction). Some of this work is done by good empirical investigation, but philosophy retains the job of making sure the justifications are up to the task. Teaching wisdom consists of arming our students with the tools necessary to reject bad arguments where ever they may be found. This approach extends the ability to distinguish appearance and reality that the technocratic solution offers; it might also help with the acknowledgement of ignorance, although in practice the rewards for correct answers and the fear of a lapse into wild relativism militate against this. If we add an ethical problem solving dimension to the approach, it has some of the flavour of meeting the need to choose good ends that I discussed as part of wisdom earlier, and that is missing altogether from the technocratic approach. It does not, however, provide any impetus for change that is aimed at the level of desire and certainly does not work at all in terms of developing self knowledge. The critical thinking approach has the same virtue that the technocratic approach has in that it does not require any change in practice, only a renaming of the product of the practice. Perhaps the most damning argument against the critical thinking approach as the right one is that it is the very approach that leads interested parties to wonder about the difficulties of teaching wisdom in the first place.

If the problem is business as usual, then casting the net wider might produce some better ideas. Choosing well does seem to involve notions of the good, so perhaps the reluctance to teach values directly might be at issue. While the critical thinking approach is, of course, critical, its primary form of critique emphasizes logic and other such concerns, rather than value oriented issues like power and oppression. Perhaps the solution to the problem of teaching wisdom is to take a page from the playbook of those disciplines that have turned more toward postmodernity in their approach to education. Let us tendentiously call this approach, the ideological approach. There is a clear attempt to influence choices in this pedagogical strategy through the direct presentation of the correct values and attitudes that one should have, if one is to be a good person. In light of these values, assumptions are suspiciously examined to discover how reality (oppression, class interest, racism) is hidden by appearance (false consciousness, denial, self deception of the powerful). The purpose of the relevant choices which are encouraged is to produce a better society (or world, depending on the ambitiousness of the teacher) and so the question of what good is be pursued is answered.

There is much to recommend what I am calling the ideological approach, especially its emphasizing the moral character of the choices that we make. It, however, fails as a strategy for teaching wisdom, especially as a strategy that would allow analytically inclined philosophers to teach wisdom. The relativism that underpins it intellectually forces the teacher to, on the one hand, proclaim the relativity of all values and, on the other, to proclaim that oppression is wrong and that we should value tolerance over other values. This kind of incoherence can perhaps be justified by a rejection of logical coherence as some kind of logocentric fetish but this seems like empty name calling, and further would sit poorly with a discipline in which analysis is the core methodology. If we accept the rejection of logic as a basis for argument, then it seems that thinly disguised bullying and playing on moral sentiments that have been inculcated by other means are all that remain to the postmodern educator. The desire for the good is reduced to an internalized political agenda and self knowledge seems limited to the discovery of the ways in which one has been either a victim or an oppressor or both. At its best the ideological approach will produce justice, not the virtue we are concerned with in this case, and in the worst case it is an approach intellectually unsuitable to the philosophically inclined and unproductive of wisdom.

It is possible that wisdom should be taught as a skill, a knowing how rather than a knowing what. This might

prove to be consonant with the emphasis on method in analytic philosophy. It would have to be skills that are somehow different than the critical thinking skills that were discussed above. Instead they would be skills that allowed for the successful navigation of the social world and the challenges of pursuing one's goals in the context of other humans. Let us call this approach the *sophistical solution*. Teaching wisdom would involve teaching the arts of persuasion, both overt and covert, in terms of outer success and methods for achieving the appropriate emotive states such as confidence and cheerfulness in terms of the inner life. This approach has the possibility of aiding a certain kind of good life, good in terms of achieving one's goals.

The *sophistical strategy* fails as a good strategy for teaching wisdom, in spite of being the strategy most directly focused on the task at hand. It fails for some of the same reasons that the *technocratic solution* fails. It is concerned only with the means but not the ends of choice and action. It is not even as good as the *technological solution* at practicing a discipline of distinguishing reality and appearance, as illusions, both one's own and those created in others, might be the best means to some goal. It, in the end, entails the same problems of relativism that the *ideological solution* entails, without even the justification of a moral focus. Since as a strategy it could avail itself of some of the tools of analysis, some of its subject matter could be taught by philosophers but in the end it seems more like a discipline for psychologists, personal improvement trainers and gurus. It is a return to the strategies of the teachers of wisdom in ancient Greece and as such is a repudiation of the whole project of philosophy. Nonetheless it might be the best shot at teaching wisdom, if we think that wisdom is some kind of knowledge that we can explicitly teach.

Befriending wisdom

I think that the vital clue to making progress in creating a useful approach to teaching wisdom, while practicing analytic philosophy, lies in the name of the discipline itself. Philosophers are not the wise, as the sophists styled themselves, but merely the friends of wisdom. We have been deceived by the success of the natural philosophy side of philosophy and the explicit knowledge transmission model of pedagogy into thinking that to teach wisdom we must do so directly, explicitly. This is the key error. If we are going to successfully teach wisdom, then it will be by acquainting our students with wisdom in the way we would encourage a friendship between people. We do not think that encouraging a friendship consists of passing on facts about the people we wish to introduce, nor would we merely offer arguments for why they should be friends. Of course we offer reasons for why the friendship should exist. "You should meet Sophia. You would love her, she's so funny." This is not enough, however, a relationship must come about or there is no friendship.

We cannot change the larger context in which philosophical teaching occurs. We can, however, change the frame within which we teach. I have proposed a shift to the notion that we are acting to promote a friendship between our students and wisdom. I will discuss some of the implications of this shift below but it seems useful to discuss how shifting the framework in which teaching is practiced might be helpful in general.

The meaning of an activity is tied crucially to the end at which it is aimed. This can even effect how easy it is to learn something. For example, it has been found that people have an easier time learning 3 ball juggling if they think the end goal is learning 5 ball juggling than if they think learning 3 ball juggling is the end goal. Learning 3 is just a step on the way to the much harder goal of learning 5. Similarly, if being able to produce and evaluate good arguments is the end goal, the students' and teacher's attention and what they get out of the process is very different than if they think arguments are part of a process of approaching wisdom in some indirect but effective way. Expectations that whatever topic is under discussion will contribute to developing self knowledge or coming to desire well, and so forth, create a very different learning experience than expecting that one will sharpen the argumentative knife to a fine edge. This is true even if the very same topics and methods are the center of attention.

The framework in which teaching is conducted also effects the attitude that the teacher has toward the stu-

dents. If the teacher is transmitter of knowledge, then the students are seen as passive in a certain way and the teacher must work hard. If instead the teacher is striving to bring about a friendship, then they can adopt the role of the Socratic midwife, actively helping the student, but also trusting the students to do their part, really the larger part in pursuing the outcome. By shifting the framework, the minds of the students are no longer experienced as empty boxes to be laboriously filled, but instead as being already full and dynamic, ripe to be introduced to wisdom.

Shifting the framework in which teaching is envisaged can also change what we as teachers invent, in terms of experiences and assignments. Assessment and fulfilling the task of sorting students is obviously still needed but the kinds of questions that are asked and the kinds of tasks to be performed can shift as the notion of what is being accomplished shifts. Of course, analytic skills and knowledge of specific arguments can still be investigated, but the purpose of that knowledge has changed, so its assessment can also change in both meaning and form. I will return to this theme very briefly in the last section of the paper where I will touch on some examples of teaching practice in light of befriending wisdom.

The teacher's internalized framework is communicated to the students, even if it is never explicitly presented. The focus on explicit knowledge transmission obscures this very important fact about teaching. The teacher is acting as a model for the students, and learning by imitation of models is a very powerful and constantly operating feature of human learning. Of course the modelling of being a friend of wisdom, rather than one of the wise, frees teachers from the need to somehow act the role of the wise person or think that they must be wise to teach wisdom. It also means that they can model using arguments as tools rather than as the point of the exercise.

The power of philos

Real friendship is based on a kind of love. This love has effects not just on the one who is loved but in the best cases on the one who is doing the loving. Since I am proposing that we put friendship with wisdom back at the core of the philosophical enterprise, it seems useful to spend a little time discussing some of the ways that friendships can benefit people seeking wisdom. Of course, wisdom itself is the best friend in this context, but let's begin with just some general thoughts about the benefits of friendship.

At the heart of friendship is the mysterious presence of the other. Their value to us in friendship lies at least in large part in the fact that they are not us. This distance allows for curiosity, exploration that is motivated not by some hope of external rewards, but with knowledge of the friend. This experience of curiosity in some sense is its own reward. Further the mysteriousness of the friend helps us to see the limits of our knowledge, not just in the sense that they know things that we do not but also that they see the world from a viewpoint that is not our own. The desire to be friends leads to the desire to see the world from their viewpoint and so helps us develop intellectual empathy. This actually allows us more access to self knowledge as we can genuinely step outside our view of ourselves and the world and see them through other eyes.

Friends challenge us to become better people. They can do this directly and also by acting as models of excellence. Friends disagree and argue, but in deep friendship the goal is not winning the argument. It is a way of exploring, genuinely encountering, not merely tolerating another mind. One of the features of this encounter is that friends incorporate the qualities of their friends into themselves. In some sense this is a model of how the friends of wisdom develop their capacity for wisdom.

Being friends with wisdom brings with it the usual benefits of friendship, although wisdom is obviously an unusual sort of friend. She cannot speak for herself, so must have surrogates that speak for her. All of the other minds that the student encounters in a philosophy class can perform this role, if the student is primed to expect the voice of wisdom underneath the conversation. Both the teacher and any authors that might be read can

enact wisdom for the student. To emphasize a point I have made several times, this is not necessarily because the text or the teaching is explicitly conveying propositions about wisdom. Perhaps the topic is trolley problems or our knowledge of the external world. The opportunity to develop self knowledge and the other qualities of wisdom is still there.

Friendship is an ongoing process, so there will be no final moment when the student has gotten wisdom, the way they might get calculus or how a reductio argument works. This might seem problematic in the outcome oriented environment of the university but this is only a seeming. The process of creating and nurturing the student's friendship with wisdom can occur mostly in the background of activities that are perfectly recognizable as legitimate knowledge transmission oriented pedagogy. Further they use the skills that analytic philosophers have already developed, so this way of framing teaching philosophy has the advantages of the technocratic and critical thinking solutions, without the failure to really address the issue of wisdom.

Some introductory examples of praxis

In hopes of stimulating the imagination of my readers, I am including here some examples of what I have done in the classroom acting on the ideas discussed so far in the paper. All of the examples are drawn from my Introduction to Philosophy class. Each example presumes that the substance of the argument is being treated in the usual way. Some of the experiential examples do help the students connect with and understand the arguments themselves, but my focus in the discussion is on the cultivation of the friendship with wisdom.

To set up the framework, and to put something in the back of the students' minds for the rest of the semester, I discuss wisdom as the underlying goal of philosophy the first day of class. After looking at the etymology of the word, I ask the students to talk about what qualities they think a wise person has and whether wisdom is something that can be learned. This leads into a discussion of the difference between knowledge and wisdom, and the role of the kinds of questions that philosophy asks in the search for wisdom. This strategy as a way of opening the class not only has the virtue of producing an expectation that befriending wisdom is the goal of the class, but also gets them into the habit of actively thinking about the topic at hand rather waiting for the instructor to tell them what to think.

Personal identity is an important topic for philosophers. In addition to the arguments, the topic can be used to promote self knowledge, a crucial aspect of wisdom. In the section on personal identity I like to use, among other authors, a section of Hume. To set up the discussion I ask them to think about if it would matter if it were false that they had a self which endured across time. This brings out the ways in which the self is important in their thinking about life. I then ask them to just take a moment and introspect, looking for that self that they are convinced that they have and which they believe is obvious. As they are doing this, I point out that sensations and thoughts, even thoughts about the self, are not the experience of the self, so they should search more thoroughly. In the ensuing discussion, the various attempts to put this thought or that in the place of the self can be undermined. This prepares them for the discussion of Hume (and Kant if one is inclined that way) and it also shakes their confidence in their own self knowledge, which is of course necessary for them to gain any deeper self knowledge.

The Hume lesson can also lead into a discussion of the difference between observation and what the mind adds, by focusing on the discussion of causality. I perform some actions that are obviously causal (knocking one eraser into another, turning off and on the light) and then ask them to describe what they have observed, focusing especially on the question of whether they observed the causing. In the case of the light example it is very easy to get students to see that they are inferring the causation. With some good questions they can also come to see that they are also inferring the causation in the case of the erasers. I return to this when I do epistemology, the section of the course most obviously focused on being developing epistemic discernment, another important ability of the wise. I open that section with Russell's discussion of our perception of a table and how problematic

that is. He does a very nice job of pointing out the ways in which our previous knowledge plays into the way we interpret our sensory experience without even realizing it. Before the discussion I have them observe a book placed squarely before them. I ask then if the cover appears to be a rectangle, reminding them of the definition of a rectangle. With a bit of work it is possible to get them to drop what they “know” and see that the far edge is shorter than the near edge and hence the sides are not parallel. Having gotten them to see that direct visual experience and the interpretation of visual experience are not the same, the Russellian attack on their naive realism is more effective. After the reading, I ask them to journal their experience of spending an afternoon seeing the world as much as possible with the interpretation turned off, focusing on just the raw visual experience. This deepens their direct contact with the ways in which their neurology is between them and the world, advancing both the possibility of connecting to the epistemological arguments of Locke and Descartes and seeing that the distinction between appearance and reality is one that can be explored outside the classroom.

Earlier I emphasized the importance of the role of being able to choose well in wisdom. To be able to choose well involves having a good theory to apply in ethically complex situations and some notion of one’s moral intuitions, both of which can be supplied by experience in the relevant kinds of philosophical argumentation. It also involves some awareness of the kinds of choices that one is inclined to make and what the motivation for those choices might be. A good place to start this discussion could be Mill’s distinction between the higher and lower pleasures. Of course, there is a great deal of philosophical work to be done around whether the distinction and the argument for it is any good, as well as showing why the distinction is important. I also like to ask them if they would choose to live the life of a well cared for pet. They can be pushed to justify their choice and this brings out the distinction between different kinds of pleasure quite strongly. Offering to plug them permanently into the pleasure machine does much the same work, with respect to the importance of meaning and effort in pleasures appropriate to good human life. I also assign a journaling exercise in which they spend an afternoon noticing the pleasures that they choose and categorizing them as higher or lower pleasures. They are invited to reflect on the choices and the process of choosing in light of Mill’s remarks.

I return to the theme of choice and desire when I do the section on free will. One of the texts I use is D’Holbach’s argument against the existence of free will. The students are usually quite confident that they have free will, in fact a will so free that even the traditional God would be envious. It is easy for most of them to dismiss D’Holbach arguments, especially because they are often closet dualists (although I have usually done some work to make that less reflexive by this point in the semester), so his physicalist arguments have a hard time getting purchase. One of the approaches that I take is to ask them to journal an afternoon paying attention to the desires that arise (usually this will be the second time I have asked them to focus on desires, acted on or otherwise) and to note the source of the desire. They are often quite surprised to discover that their friends, their parents, the TV and so forth have an enormous amount of impact on what they want and hence on what they end up choosing. Of course, this does not get you to D’Holbach’s conclusion, but it does open a space to notice how the process of coming to choose is being structured and hence a space for the kinds of questions that lead to a closer friendship with wisdom to be asked.

As part of the assessment process at the end of the class I ask them to write an essay, to be turned in at the time of the final, in which they reflect on what they have learned in the class and what questions they will take forward with them. The instructions for this essay, and the length requirement, preclude it being an exercise in flattery. They are required to talk about specifics, what was important and why and how their thinking on the various issues covered in the course has changed or become deeper. This allows the students to take the time to see the class as a whole and to structure it for themselves so that they can more easily remember and reflect on it in the future. Given the opening frame of the class it is also a chance to notice the beginnings of their friendship with wisdom. Writing about the questions which they found important enough to want to continue to ponder gives the students a chance to project the process they have begun in the class into their future. In the process of writing the essay they are guided to imagine how they will continue deepening the friendship with wisdom that they have come to value, now that the introduction has been made.

Concluding remarks

In presenting my solution to the problem of teaching wisdom in the context of analytic philosophy, my goal has been neither to try to create a work of scholarship¹ nor provide a knockdown argument in favour of my solution to the problem. Instead I am offering, in the spirit of friendship, my perspective on the matter, a perspective born of 15 years of wrestling with the problem as a classroom teacher who cares about wisdom. In keeping with the view expressed in the essay, I leave it to the reader to answer the question of the solution's aptness, as well as to use their imagination and experience to discover ways to apply it in practice.

Endnotes

1. Hence why there are no footnotes, and only one joke.

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