

Faith in Reason

With 'Getmethere1' of Youtube

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Rationality

Who is there in the world who can speak of their irrational mind without love?

One or two seconds - this is all it takes to penetrate to the important truths of life and death. Yet it is eternally true, that man does not wish to exercise his mind to such a degree.

The people of today say: "What's the use of thinking? It doesn't get you anywhere." This is like a blind person saying "What's the use of looking, you'll never see anything." Yet the people of today are blind only because they refuse to open their eyes.

— Kevin Solway, ['Poison for the Heart'](#)

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Getmethere1 is a fairly intelligent, mature bloke, probably in his late forties or mid-fifties, who is interesting for his ability to express the views of scientific materialism succinctly. While he is not a thinker, he has a positive contribution (albeit an unconscious one) in the fact that he can shed a little more light on why intelligent, educated men cannot apply that intelligence more fully to ultimate questions - but, instead, seem repelled from the very domain of philosophy. The reason for their failure is this: they have happily swallowed the bullshit relativism of modern popular science, which claims nothing can be known for certain (with deep smugness), and gets away with rubbing our noses in similar irrational turds by blasting its hypnotic fanfare of 'glorious cosmos' and 'the fabulous discoveries of such-and-such and so-and-so' (or, as Getmethere1 waxes poetic: "like demonstrations of the heliocentric nature of the solar system, the awesome vastness of space and billions of giant galaxies, and the potential "magic" of simple life evolving into thinking creatures by a simple, understandable process"). I hope publishing this exchange will generate a deep skepticism and distrust of such blatant charlatanism - the false attitude that underlies all scientific materialists' superficial promoting of reason.

This discussion was taken from the comments page to my Youtube video, [Feminism 2 of 2](#).

Kelly Jones

Getmethere1: Are my comments posting?

Kelly Jones: All your comments that generated email notifications have been posted, as far as I know.

Getmethere1: Maybe it's necessary to clarify: IMO, most people act instinctively on most issues--perhaps ESPECIALLY regarding life motivations. And those motivations have been shaped from female mate selection as the PRIMARY factor. The resulting behaviors are such things as: females seeking attention (in order to gather the maximum pool of possible mates to choose from) and males competing for power and resources (those things desirable to females that are under individual control).

Kelly Jones: Most people, yes. Except the enlightened. That is, those who understand perfectly the nature of Ultimate Reality. While the initial desire to become enlightened is constrained by instincts like problem-solving, wanting to avoid suffering, to control threats against oneself (i.e. concepts control the world), and impress others, the further one goes the less one relies on these initial motives. Hence, I emphasise masculine character, and taking it all the way.

Getmethere1 : I wouldn't try to say that all people are the same. People are animals that have developed brains which can create and communicate via concepts, and juggle those concepts by rational and logical processes (i.e., processes which seem to work in sync with the natural world). Thus they're able to question themselves and conceive the possibility of "enlightenment," which can only be an abstract "clarification" of consciousness beyond the standard animal one we're issued at birth.

Kelly Jones: Enlightenment, as I define it, is understanding perfectly what is ultimately real and true. It doesn't rely on an empirical process, i.e. trying generalise what is perceived through the senses, but a purely logical one. It relies on absolute logical truths, of the type: "causes are necessary for the existence of a thing". The reason the fully enlightened being is not prone to the emotional, animal-type motivation, is because they see through the false construct of egotism - the view that a self inherently exists, and all the consequent motives for power and personal gain.

But it's not for everybody. In fact, there have been so few enlightened persons, primarily because women would never choose to mate with them.

Getmethere1 : I have to say that I don't quite have that much confidence in "logic" to see it as the be all and end all. Logic is only a construct of language, and language is, almost by definition, "imperfect." Language can only claim to be a good analogue of reality. I think we're currently getting lessons about this from quantum mechanics, which seem to show the limitations of language and logic (or, so many physicists would seem to admit). Logic is unbeatable on its own terms. But it's really only a conjecture to think it's power might extend beyond language manipulations and machinations. There's every reason to believe that human perception might be able to connect to reality in ways that leave logic (and language) behind.

Kelly Jones: Actually, language is a construct of logic. The meaning of words isn't somehow a magical gift from the gods. Words come from the inherent discriminating

function of consciousness, i.e. identity. Identity (given symbolic form as $A=A$ to demarcate what one knows *prior* to inventing or using that symbol) is the basis of logic.

Getmethere1: Now you're mincing. Think of this: It's generally accepted today that quantum theory best describes the very fabric of reality. Yet, for example, the dual nature of light--both a particle AND a wave--directly contradicts the law of identity itself. Quantum theory simple COULD NOT HAVE been deduced from logic. It required empirical investigation. There is simply no good cause to believe either that logic is a useful tool for approaching "ultimate reality," or that or that aspects of it must/will operate in a way that is consistent with logic.

Kelly Jones: I'm not mincing anything, but being direct and plain-speaking. The identity you suggest is precisely what it is: both particle and wave. That's its identity. It's not only a particle, nor is it only a wave, nor is it not-both-particle-and-wave. $A=A$ means a thing is what it is, and not something else. This law is applicable in pure logic (ie. deduction, philosophy) and in inductive logic (empiricism).

Getmethere1: Mostly, logic produces more words (i.e., conclusions). Do you really believe that "ultimate reality" is just a matter of possessing the "right words?" That it could be written down in a book? Richard Feynman has said "If anybody tells you they understand quantum theory, they're wrong." This is tantamount to saying that science has indeed begun to exceed the boundaries of utility of words (and logic).

Kelly Jones: Words are simply generalisations. They are pointers. We can either use them to create useful and internally coherent definitions, or not. All definitions are absolutist in their meanings (the Feynman quote is explicitly absolutist), but few people use internally coherent definitions. By the way, quantum theory is about observable matter. It's not talking about Ultimate Reality, just an observable reality. It's not able, nor trying, to offer anything other than contingencies.

Getmethere1: Words are abstractions, and logic works only on abstractions. So far, philosophy hasn't really produced much of anything very substantial by manipulating abstractions. Science has produced FAR more in terms of new and useful truths. Also, I don't propose quantum theory as anything beyond what it is. But it is--as far as we can say--a component of reality, and it does demonstrate some shortcomings in words and logic to completely describe any and all reality.

Kelly Jones: Science cannot produce truths, but theories based on observations, that are attempting to find reliable explanations for the causes for those observable things. These theories can be abolished with new data. It seems unlikely that major theories like the speed of light will be abandoned, but there's no telling what new observations and interpretations will come to light. Philosophy is an entirely different ball-game, and doesn't rely on observations. It has and can produce absolutely reliable truths about the nature of Reality. It all depends on your own intellectualising. If you equate "philosophy" with the blind twaddlings of academic philosophers like Kant, Hegel, Wittgenstein, Baudelaire etc. then obviously you would conclude that philosophy "hasn't really produced much of anything very substantial". That would be a case of looking in the wrong place.

Getmethere1: Well, yes, I had equated "philosophy" with those twaddlers. I'm aware that other sorts of thinkers (writers of "literature," for example) have elucidated "truths." But only, IMO, "human truths." I'll agree that one can benefit by understanding humans, but I won't agree that there's evidence that one should search within humans for "ultimate reality." That seems presumptuous.

Kelly Jones: One only need search one's own mind for what is ultimately true. There's no other way. As to having faith in reason, it is not difficult to verify why it is a valid means for finding what is ultimately true. All one need do is understand what truth is, which leads back to "A=A". It may help to understand A=A's simplicity and reliability, by thinking about why "something is happening" is an absolute truth. But there are many other absolute logical truths.

Getmethere1: That "one need only search one's own mind..." is an assertion which is (obviously) not "provable" or verifiable objectively. It's a theory on which you wish to operate, and, IMO, it's a worthwhile one. But it's wrong to assign it certainty--especially not having "reached the goal." Again, with the law of identity, you're failing to acknowledge that quantum theory raises doubts about the applicability of logic to all reality.

Kelly Jones: QT doesn't raise any doubt whatsoever about the identity of things. If you can't see that "wave-particle" is a very precise identity, I really can't help you. It's just as precise as saying, "I don't know where my keys are".

I see you can't provide any reasoning for your notion that thinking provides no certainty. I wonder why. ;-)

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Kelly Jones: Science cannot produce truths, but theories based on observations, that are attempting to find reliable explanations for the causes for those observable things. These theories can be abolished with new data. It seems unlikely that major theories like the speed of light will be abandoned, but there's no telling what new observations and interpretations will come to light. Philosophy is an entirely different ball-game, and doesn't rely on observations. It has and can produce absolutely reliable truths about the nature of Reality. It all depends on your own intellectualising. If you equate "philosophy" with the blind twaddlings of academic philosophers like Kant, Hegel, Wittgenstein, Baudelaire etc. then obviously you would conclude that philosophy "hasn't really produced much of anything very substantial". That would be a case of looking in the wrong place.

Getmethere1: It's formally true that science can't produce truths...but geez, you MUST admit a certain real and deep "value" in terms of knowledge and understanding of things like demonstrations of the heliocentric nature of the solar system, the awesome vastness of space and billions of giant galaxies, and the potential "magic" of simple life evolving into thinking creatures by a simple, understandable process. Honestly, I can't think of anything interesting that comes directly from logic... and, as I've tried to point out: regarding physical realities, logic alone is painfully inept at discovering new information about physical reality. The Greeks tried it and failed miserably at it--setting the world back two thousand years!

Kelly Jones: Logic does not fail, but the human using it can, and often does, fail, owing to lack of courage or clear-headedness.

Philosophy gives science the greatest value: it puts everything that one learns through the senses into context. It also enhances and improves one's scientific theorising, by helping one to avoid mistakes - such as pour out of cosmological theorists like Stephen Hawking. Science is useful, but beware of the religious feel-good overlay.

Getmethere1: Sorry, I simply find such absolute confidence in logic unsupportable. Logic is like mathematics (I suppose it is currently seen AS a part of mathematics in modern philosophy). Mathematics is ALWAYS correct on its own terms, and it's quite fun that it seems to have a great power to describe reality--but there's ABSOLUTELY no guarantee that it MUST always correspond to "reality." People have merely presumed that.

Kelly Jones: One cannot verify that two is equal to one plus one by looking at the "outside environment". Maths creates the definition of 2, prior to any observations. It is identical to philosophy in this "a priori" method. So it is false to believe that logic must correspond to reality in that way, as if empirical evidence needs to be found to make a logical conclusion correct. This is inductive logic (science), not deductive (philosophy). Deductive logic only uses thinking.

Getmethere1: Regarding math, I disagree. IMO, $1+1=2$ is DEEPLY and originally grounded in common reality. And it's verifiable in only two ways: because the rule of math DECLARES that it's true (and that's arbitrary), or because it's in agreement with physical reality. Mathematicians are so happy about the harmony and math and physics, but don't admit the basis of math in ordinary reality. And on a personal level, my deepest insights have always been PERFECTLY contrary to logic (and math). I can't really elaborate (and don't wish to proffer this as a point of argument), but I "feel" I have experienced moments of insight in which I saw that OPPOSITES were both true...that paradox is the fundamental reality. I really don't wish to go into this area in detail; but, in a tentative way, I assert that is what I have seen when I "look within."

Kelly Jones: Thanks for your honesty. I have been aware that you had a personal-psychological blockage about logic, otherwise you wouldn't have spoken about motivation as much as you did earlier. It was a clue. I'm absolutely certain that if you examine the "paradox" more carefully, it will fall to pieces. There are no paradoxes.

Getmethere1: I certainly don't have a "blockage" about logic--I would say it informs virtually everything I do. Instead, I have an awareness of the (at least potential) limitations of logic when discussing unknown phenomena. Logic is a human invention that deals well with what humans currently know about reality...and that's all. It's wholly presumptuous to claim more for it.

Kelly Jones: There you go again. You provide a very precise identity, and then claim logic (which enabled you to form that identity) is limited because the identity's meaning is "unknown". It's a rubbish argument. ;-) Unknown just means, we haven't yet found out stuff about it. No mystery.

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Kelly Jones: Yes, the rules of arithmetic are utterly arbitrary, but this means they're invented, not that they're fantastic and whimsical. That we invent logical rules doesn't mean that there is no correlation to reality, but that correlation comes after the rules are invented - if they are logical ones. Basic logical rules aren't invented a posteriori (from

observing data from the senses), since it is the abstracting mind that makes up the idea of "unity", "division", "parts" and "shapes".

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Getmethere1: I have to say that I don't quite have that much confidence in "logic" to see it as the be all and end all. Logic is only a construct of language, and language is, almost by definition, "imperfect." Language can only claim to be a good analogue of reality. I think we're currently getting lessons about this from quantum mechanics, which seem to show the limitations of language and logic (or, so many physicists would seem to admit). Logic is unbeatable on its own terms. But it's really only a conjecture to think its power might extend beyond language manipulations and machinations. There's every reason to believe that human perception might be able to connect to reality in ways that leave logic (and language) behind.

Kelly Jones: It's not possible to leave logic behind and remain conscious. If it's not obvious that it's the only coherent means to understand the nature of Ultimate Reality, then you don't understand what logic is. Otherwise, if one wishes to abandon logic, then one has also abandoned truth.

Getmethere1: Nothing I wrote promotes the idea that logic be abandoned--any more than, say, Newtonian mechanics should be abandoned. Logic works fine WITHIN its framework (which is wide). But your statement implied that logic is EVERYTHING--that full immersion in logic is full contact with reality. That assertion can't be rigorously supported. It certainly can't be empirically supported. Logic works unfailingly in the realm of language and that which can be expressed in language.

Kelly Jones: Language is not separate from reality. The aim is to use language is to reflect the truth of what it ultimately is. And that is the same reality which is true for the totality of all things. How could language be somehow intrinsically separate from everything else?

Getmethere1: Your use of the term "Ultimate Reality" itself implies something...extraordinary. Logic is very ordinary. No philosopher can support the assertion that logic will serve unfailingly on the "ultimate" level, because no philosopher has ever convincingly claimed to have experienced or elucidated "ultimate reality;" so none can make claims about its contents or processes.

Kelly Jones: Ultimate Reality is very ordinary. The "ultimate" means one can reasonably stop with it. I think you may be misinterpreting the idea as some particular reality, i.e. some reality relative to another reality - but don't worry, it's a common mistake. It couldn't be ultimate if it were dualistic.

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Getmethere1: Virtually all thinking is upon abstractions. Abstractions are mostly models of real phenomena. The idea is that the manipulations of the abstractions will allow for the subsequent matching of new abstractions with new realities. Well, it often does. The mistake is believing there is a "proven" correlation. All analogy is imperfect by definition. more...

Kelly Jones: I can't yet see your second comment here, following "more...." You may need to repost it.

Your argument seems to be saying that there is no ultimate truth in thinking, because the map (abstractions and thinking) aren't the territory (reality). But I've already dealt with this argument when you presented it under the guise of language. Namely, language / thinking / abstractions *is* inseparable from reality. And logic (identity) reflects reality perfectly, without interpretation.

Getmethere1: There's no use continuing this forever. I'll try this: 1) The meat between our ears comes with absolutely no guarantees; it's a presumption (only) to say it can know "ultimate reality" (whatever that is). 2) It's also a presumption that say that we can have a process (e.g. logic) which can generate limitless truth. The reliability of truth generating processes can be demonstrated only in closed systems, or arbitrarily defined systems.

I feel that you're not really comprehended (or are stubbornly intransigent over) my main point: We can not make claims to have any system guaranteed potent to elucidate--or even describe--any and all truths. Maybe we DO...but nobody can make that claim rigorously. Therefore, your claim that you can get "ultimate reality" into your mind by logic--while it may in fact be TRUE--cannot be rigorously supported. and, I've been trying to point out that you are irrational (or at least careless) on this issue. I've been thinking HARD about these issues since before you were born. One practical lesson I've learned is to focus KEENLY on shortcomings/limitations, both in one's thinking style/assumptions and in one's "tools." You have not even QUESTIONED logic for possible shortcomings (apparently), therefore you are not being careful in your thinking.

Kelly Jones: Here's how your argument plays out: It's either: A tentative speculation about the limitations of reasoning, not a definitive assertion. Therefore, it must make room for doubting that speculation about reason. Or: It asserts as absolutely reliable and faultless this: that it is impossible to claim / know / generate / demonstrate / elucidate / describe / get / assert limitless / absolute / faultless truth using reason. First option: doubtful. Second option: internally contradictory. ;-)

Getmethere1: Neither. I simply reject any claims of limitless utility or power of logic--not because I don't appreciate logic, but because such claims over-reach. But it's also a personal pet peeve how people tend to grasp things and declare them the ultimate, end all...thing. I'm sure humans will make their best progress with a steady awareness of human limitations. IMO, we're not really terribly smarter than chimps--yet we've made pretty good mileage.

Kelly Jones: Are you saying that it is impossible to know anything with certainty? If so, how do you know that with certainty? If you aren't certain that it's impossible, then you have left room for the possibility of certain knowledge.

Getmethere1: I consider that sort of discussion rather useless hairsplitting. I'll admit to the mindset of a scientist, where "knowledge" is always provisional. Here's GetMeThere's theory of knowledge: the more certain you can be of a fact, the less interesting or useful it is.

Kelly Jones: The statement "knowledge is always provisional" contradicts itself, because it implies that the knowledge offered ("knowledge is always provisional") is not always provisional. This is not hair-splitting, but the process of forming coherent, logical definitions. The philosopher's skill of recognising when an absolutist premise is

offered, and whether it sustains credibility, is of utmost importance. Logic is reliable, it's humans that fail to use it properly.

Getmethere1: Right. I'm just not interested in discussion at that level. To me it's kindergarten semantics. I'll leave you to enjoy this issue on your own.

Kelly Jones: Semantics is very important: if one doesn't know what one means by a concept, there's no understanding. Every statement is based on concepts, which must be carefully defined.

Like I said, enlightenment isn't for everyone. It's for those who are fastidious with their concepts, and like to know exactly what their ideas mean.

Best of luck with your life.

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