

## Toward Root Metaphor: Pepper's Writings in the *University of California Publications in Philosophy*

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The general thesis of this paper is that much of what Pepper wrote about "root metaphors" in metaphysics and value theory may be found prefigured in his early papers published in the 1920s in the *University of California Publications in Philosophy*. His friend and colleague D.W. Prall had argued that there is only one type of value. In response, Pepper was led to argue that there are at least two types of values, what at that point he called "immediate" value and "standard" value. And he came to feel that just as there is more than one value, there is likely to be more than one acceptable metaphysical theory, or "world hypothesis," based on more than one type of "root metaphor." Pepper was eclectic in value theory (including ethics and aesthetics), as well as metaphysics. It seems to be the case that only late in life did he see that eclecticism in these different areas involved different commitments. For to be eclectic in ethics and in aesthetics is to assume that more than one type of value can be accepted as genuine and that these values can be related in various ways. But to "accept" various metaphysical views or world hypotheses, is still to say that only one (if any) is correct, and then to admit that we don't know which is the correct one.

Since I am a philosophy teacher, my paper will be the usual blend of a small amount of facts and a great deal of speculation. And as usual, I have to admit that the facts are likely to be more important than the speculation. I hope I can be forgiven for beginning with a few autobiographical details. A little over twelve years ago I published the first definitive (well, *rather* definitive) bibliography of the work of Stephen C. Pepper, and I'd like to say something about how that came about. I was first introduced to Stephen Pepper by Professor Van Meter Ames, in more than one sense of "introduced." That is, I first heard of Pepper in Ames' aesthetics course at the University of Cincinnati in the Fall of 1957. Ames used the second edition (1952) of Rader's *A Modern Book of Esthetics*, which included a selection from *The Basis of Criticism in the Arts* (Pepper, 1956). Then, in 1960-1961, Ames taught a course in value theory using Pepper's *Sources of Value* (1958). In 1967, after I had gone to Baylor to teach, the American Society for Aesthetics met in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Ames personally introduced us there. In 1969, the Society met at the University of Virginia, and John Fisher of Temple, who was program chairman that year, planned a session on Pepper's aesthetics. Pepper read his "Autobiography of an Aesthetics" (1970) with responses by Victorino Tejera, Francis Sparshott, and me. I recall that when Fisher called me, I tried to respond with fitting

modesty, "I'm honored, but . . .," coming up with the names of a few scholars who knew Pepper's work better than I did, "why didn't you ask so-and-so . . . or . . . ?" Fisher replied, "I tried to get them, and they couldn't come, so I called you." So much for modesty. I really didn't have much to say, so I tried to redeem the trip by taking along "A Bibliography" (Duncan, 1970), which was published, along with Pepper's "Autobiography," in the Spring 1970 issue of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. When I arrived at the meeting, I found that Pepper had brought his own bibliography with him. So the first fact I want to share with you is that the bibliography really *is* rather definitive, because Pepper prepared much of it himself. He *said* I had listed some items he had forgotten, but I'm not sure of that. The one major addition I made was a listing of about fifty secondary sources; Pepper had listed only his own writings.

A second fact is more general, and may sound trivial. I merely want to call attention to the fact that scholars often make a serious mistake by consulting only books and those articles published in the so-called "major" journals, thus overlooking the many university publications. These "house organs" are often said to be the last refuge of second-rate professors who couldn't publish anywhere else. Well, maybe that's true in some cases. But in the area of the country in which I teach, some good philosophy has been published in the *Rice University Studies* (by such scholars as James Street Fulton and Radaslav Tsanoff) and the *Tulane Studies in Philosophy* (by H.N. Lee, James K. Feibleman, Andrew Reck, etc.). And Andrew Reck was surely correct when he wrote, in an excellent study of Pepper's life and work, "The *University of California Publications in Philosophy*, particularly during the 1920s and 1930s, reveal that the members of the department of philosophy at Berkeley engaged in a stimulating and enriching exchange of ideas" (Reck, 1968, pp. 45-46).

So much for facts; I turn now to speculation. I want to discuss, briefly, what I take to be the origins of Pepper's ideas concerning "root metaphor." One source may be his early arguments on the subject of value with his friend and colleague D. W. Prall. One may suspect that those who were familiar with the philosophy department at Berkeley in the early 1920s would have considered Prall, and not Pepper, the department's most promising young scholar. Prall was born in 1886 and was, then, some five years older than Pepper. In 1921, Prall published *A Study in the Theory of Value* as a monograph-length item in the *University of California Publications in Philosophy*. The work was well received. When Ralph Barton Perry published his *General Theory of Value* in 1926, he gave due credit to Prall's work, saying, "The present writer is in essential agreement with the whole of this admirable monograph" (Perry, 1954, p. 117). By contrast, the only book Pepper published before 1937 was his *Modern Color* (1923), which was, again Reck reports, ". . . written in collaboration with a painter, it describes and recommends a new method of painting colors" (Reck, 1968, p. 46). Perhaps I should also add here that Pepper came

to teach at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1919; Prall taught there from 1921-1930. Prall then moved to Harvard, where he remained until he died in 1940. He shared Pepper's interest in aesthetics, and published two major books in that field: *Aesthetic Judgment* (1929/1967a) and *Aesthetic Analysis* (1936/1967b). Like Pepper, Prall was a fine general scholar. He had his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of California, but he also taught English at Cornell and at the University of Texas. He was a good logician, having studied for a time in England with Bertrand Russell and, in the early 1920s, he carried on an interesting exchange in a distinguished series of papers on value theory—in the *Journal of Philosophy*, no less—with John Dewey.

Pepper's first paper in the *University of California Publications* was his "The Equivocation of Value," in Volume 4 for 1923. D.W. Prall published no less than eight items in the *Publications* during his stay at Berkeley. It is significant that in the 1923 issue, Pepper's paper was preceded by Prall's essay on "The Present Status of the Theory of Value." To summarize is to risk oversimplification, but it can safely be said that Prall's theory of value is primarily *affective*. That is, value is analyzed in terms of liking, being pleased, finding something immediately agreeable, etc. But how does a value theory of this sort account for a theory such as that of Immanuel Kant, based on duty? Clearly, Kant went about things in a quite different way. Prall does not leave the reader in doubt:

For ethics, what value theory seems to me to do is to indicate the fatuousness of duty ethics. As standard-value is not a case of value at all, so conformity to a moral imperative is in itself not a case of value. The limitations of strict Kantian ethics have long been fully seen, but in some form or other the ethics of conformity remains dominant, and moral value itself is widely supposed to mean conformity. What value-theory makes plain is that conformity to rule cannot as such be value. (Prall, 1923, p. 101)

Prall's point is that what he here calls "standard-value" is not really a case of value at all. There is, he contends, only *one* kind of value, the kind he had described in his monograph. I shall not make a big thing of this, but philosophers as a class seem to have a positive passion for "unified" theories, in which everything is traced back to one single unifying principle; I once heard John Rawls say that William Frankena had only "half a theory" because Frankena's ethics has *two* basic principles.

In his paper, "The Equivocation of Value," Pepper replied directly to Prall's argument.

We have been told that value is just one thing—behold, there is but one name, how can there be more than one thing to be called by that name? Yet all the while value has been at least two quite different things.

Let us call these things immediate and standard value. The one is a fact, the other is a norm; the one is instinctive, the other rational; the one is dynamic, the other regulative; the one is vital, the other a mere form, and impotent until filled with life from without. They are not even species of the same genus. . . . Let us call them both value. There are many unrelated Smiths and Joneses; there may be as many unrelated values. (Pepper, 1923, p. 107)

Remember that this was published in 1923, when Pepper was only 32, some nineteen years before he was to publish *World Hypotheses*. This openness to different points of view was major characteristic of his work throughout his career. But to return to the paper, Pepper went on to argue that the hedonistic philosophy of Epicurus was based almost entirely on what he called "immediate value," whereas (as noted above) Kant's moral philosophy was based on "standard value." The important point is that these are both legitimate *values*. Neither can be denied (though Prall tried to do that), nor can one be resolved into the other. Standard value is not, for example, some sort of special case of immediate value. In Volume 7 of the *University of California Publications in Philosophy*, published in 1925, Pepper devoted an entire paper to "Standard Value." His conclusion was that,

Standard value is a parasite that sucks its living from immediate value, and because it is always found attached to the stalk of its host is generally mistaken for a part of its host. But it is a distinguishable entity. It consists in a comparison between two patterns, a portion of one of which is set up as a standard. (Pepper, 1925, p. 110)

Perhaps before I leave Prall for good, I should add that Pepper admired his work. When Prall's two books on aesthetics were reissued in 1967, I did a review article on them for the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (published in the Spring 1968 issue). I later sent a copy of my paper to Pepper, who wrote me a letter dated January 25, 1970, in which he commented, "Your article on Prall pleases me greatly bringing him back into prominence again and so honoring a dear friend of mine."

For all that, his disagreement with Prall was important because of the way he insisted that there is more than one type of value. I suggest that if this thought is carried over into metaphysics, we can conclude that there can be more than one acceptable world hypothesis, more than one acceptable way to explain or describe our world, based on more than one "root metaphor."

At this point an objection might be offered. We expect philosophers, if they are to be consistent, to use the same sort of methods in all of their areas of thought. Kant tried to produce a "transcendental" account of epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics. Aristotle sought "functional definitions" in both ethics and aesthetics. And Dewey discussed "problem-solving behavior" in psychology, logic, ethics, etc.—*ad nauseum*. Pepper follows a consistent methodology in the differing areas of value theory (including ethics and aesthetics) but, I would argue, only up to a point. To be specific, Pepper had, as I noted above, an unusual open-minded attitude toward various points of view. He accepted varying types of values as genuine values, and he accepted several relatively adequate world hypotheses. But it should be emphasized that he always refused to mix metaphors. That is, in metaphysics, we are free to follow Dewey or Hegel, but *not* both at the same time, and the two don't mix. In other words, to say that there are two "relatively adequate" explanations (or four, or

five) is not to deny that only one explanation is finally correct. It is only to say that we don't know which one is correct, so we cannot condemn the individual who accepts either explanation. But, once more, we can accept several quite different values at the same time. I think Pepper only discovered this difference between the way we operate in metaphysics and the way we operate in value theory rather late in his career. Again, I refer to a letter he wrote to me, this one dated October 4, 1970. Concerning his *The Sources of Value*, he wrote:

I intended when I began it to organize it like the *Basis of Criticism in the Arts*, developing the values consonant with the four *relatively* adequate world hypotheses. But as the study proceeded one type of value led to another so inevitably gathering together under the embracing concept of 'selective system' that I concluded I must perhaps have a new root metaphor by the tail—whence emerged the world hypothesis of selectivism and *Concept and Quality*. 'Good' here has as many legitimate meanings empirically (i.e., 'Naturalistically') for me as there are selective systems. But these latter are all interrelated in ways I try to point out.

It turns out, then, that to "accept" several world hypotheses is to show that a final choice among them cannot be made on purely logical (or empirical) grounds. But to "accept" several different values is to show that all are legitimate *and* interrelated (*not* unrelated, as he had thought in 1923).

I could go on, but perhaps I should state again that the point of this paper was that much of what Pepper wrote in his *World Hypotheses* (1961), and even *The Sources of Value* (1958) and *Concept and Quality* (1967), can be traced back to that first paper published in the *University of California Publications in Philosophy*. At the close of that early paper, he wrote, "I am convinced that the problem of value can be solved only from the point of view of a dualism clearly envisaged at the start, and that it is foolish to despise either side of the division" (Pepper, 1923, p. 132). He tried to make good on that promise in his *Sources of Value*.

This paper will be closed with two final comments, one professional (I think that's the word I want) and one personal. As to the first, I have stated that Pepper was open-minded. He was. But to say that there can be many values, and/or many "relatively acceptable" world hypotheses (or root metaphors) is *not* to say that "anything goes." Some proposed values are rejected, and some world hypotheses are *not* acceptable. I have mentioned it too many times, but I return again to that meeting at the University of Virginia. At one point, Francis Sparshott criticized Pepper's philosophy saying that Pepper had never "seen" the full force of the "emotivism" of Charles L. Stevenson. Pepper responded, "I not only can see it, I can see through it!"

Now for the personal comment. In early 1970, as the bibliography was being prepared for the press, I kept finding items which Pepper continued to publish (remember he turned 79 that year!), as well as responses to his work. One of the last I discovered was a review of his *Concept and Quality* by Douglas Morgan. Morgan, a talented and witty man, had died suddenly of heart failure,

at the age of about 50. Pepper had not known that Morgan was to review his book. When I told him, he wrote, in a letter dated January 15, 1970:

I am delighted with your discovery that Doug Morgan had written a review of my *Concept and Quality* for the *Aesth. journal* before he died. I had an exceptional love for that man, and to discover he had taken on himself to do this thing for my latest book touches me deeply.

In this paper I have tried to discuss Stephen C. Pepper, the scholar, and the way his later thought was prefigured in early papers in the *University of California Publications in Philosophy*. But there is reason to believe that the man, with all of his kindness and humanity, would have been a more significant, if somewhat less erudite, topic.

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