

What is knowledge?

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Drawn from Philip Bitar, *Why? In Pursuit of the Ultimate Answer: Abridged* (2008)

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◆ Intro

◇ Walking is usually, but not always, easy. So is determining knowledge.

◇ Examples of foundational theoretical questions:

Ultimate origin of universe, ultimate structure of matter, existence of other minds/God, knowledge of knowledge (infinite regress?), platonic realm of ideas, personal responsibility, ultimate nature of decision-making

◇ Richard Rorty, 1931-2007 – We can't establish what knowledge is.

◆ What is knowledge and what is it for?

◇ Definition of life

An organism is an object that has a body and that maintains its body through work, in the absence of which the body will disintegrate.

◆ Reason applied to experience

◇ Experience is the raw material from which knowledge is made.

Experience encompasses all human experience, including perception, thoughts, imagination, and emotion.

◇ Reason is applied to experience in order to create knowledge.

To argue otherwise requires a rational argument, thereby confirming the use of reason.

To live otherwise would be insane and would result in injury or death.

◆ Knowledge as skill

◇ See handout

◆ Structure of knowledge

◇ See figure handout

◇ No infinite regress

◆ Reality is indeterministic

◇ Knowledge is inherently probabilistic.

◇ Indeterminism is intuitive. Determinism is not intuitive.