

Mind as Conceptual Structure: On Ethical Theory of C. I. Lewis's Conceptual Pragmatism

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Abstract

Clarence I. Lewis (1883-1964) delineated the structure of mind based on his "conceptual pragmatism." Human mind grounds itself on the ongoing dynamic interaction of relational processes, which is essentially mediated and structural. Lewis's pragmatism anchors itself on the theory of knowledge that has the triadic structure of the given or immediate data, interpretation, and the concept. Lewis takes the *a priori* given as a starting point of meaningful experience. The interpretative work of mind is the mediator of the *a priori* given and the concepts. The *a priori* given is the principle that determines the application of concepts in our interpretative process. Our mind interprets the given in relating to other possible experience. In other words, the meaning of the *a priori* given is determined by mind, the subject of interpretative process, which performs constructive and legislative activity, and allows room for the existence of alternatives. Lewis's theory of knowledge calls for pragmatic justification of value experience. In his ethical theory, Lewis pursues to find answers for how to build up the objectivity of value experience regarding the work of mind as conceptual apparatus. For Lewis, knowledge is a claim about valuation and normativity. In our value experience, the normative significance of our empirical assessments for action comprises objective significance for future experience. Mind is "principle-content apparatus" composed of imperatives as the *a priori* given principles and the contents of experience as a whole. Imperatives are the result of lessons accumulated from the past and function as rules for the future. Individuals start their experience from imperatives and organize their own experience by doing based on the inferential process, which is directional from the past to the future.

Key words - C. I. Lewis, conceptual pragmatism, the *a priori* given, mind, interpretation, value experience

I. INTRODUCTION

Human experience is relational. Human “mind” (as Lewis calls it) grounds itself on the ongoing dynamic interaction of relational processes, which is essentially mediated and structural. Breaks in the process of experience, which locate individual mind in problematic situations, can be the source of individual experience. Clarence Irving Lewis (1883-1964) is the last great pragmatist who delineated the structure of mind based on his “conceptual pragmatism.” The peculiarity of Lewis’s thought reaches its height in his notion of the *a priori* given. Lewis takes the *a priori* given as a starting point of meaningful experience. Understanding Lewis’s theory of knowledge is beneficial due not only to its closeness to the nature of human experience but also to its close relation to and the illumination it sheds upon his last endeavor, his ethical theory.¹ The aim of this paper is to investigate Lewis’s triadic structure of epistemology and its implications to his ethical theory. We seek to find answers regarding how the meaning of judgment is determined and how we could build up the objectivity of value experience regarding the work of mind as a conceptual apparatus.

II. THE *A PRIORI* GIVEN

To begin with, Lewis’s theory of knowledge can be explained according to a triadic structure that has three elements: the given or immediate data, interpretation, and the concept. According to him, our experience of the real things in the world is thus constructed (rather than given) through the act of interpretation, because the real object is not given in our consciousness. A truly conspicuous point of his epistemology is that the given is given to us *a priori*. All of our meaningful experience should start from the *a priori* given. An instant question regarding this view could be raised: Is it possible for the *a priori* given to be free from the shackles

¹ In this article, I focused more on laying out the skeletal anatomy of Lewis’s ethical theory, rather than on bringing out controversial issues of the theory. Lewis’s ethical theory I assume here is the first philosophy that determines fundamental characteristics of value experience. For that reason, I will map out the theory from a holistic perspective, which shapes the structure of the paper as presentation rather than discussion.

of the absolute that is beyond any justifiable experience? Lewis certainly denies the identification between the *a priori* given and the absolute. For him, the absolute is merely unjustifiable, since it is beyond *our* justification.² However, Lewis's theory of knowledge still faces inevitable objections concerning the independence of the *a priori* given. Lewis must confront the question of how the given could be intelligible to the mind despite its independence of the mind. Lewis's answer is by explaining the interpretative process of the mind, using concepts that are commonly shared among humans. In doing so, individuals systematically choose concepts in *pragmatic* consideration, which is the root of first principles or deductive systems *beyond* logic.³

Therefore, Lewis's pragmatism depends on the relevance of the given and interpretative process. In order to achieve the relevance of meaning, Lewis distinguishes the sensuous given from the socially given. The sensuous given is not the sense data that are grounding experience. But the sensuous given is not exhausted merely by the concept. What is given to sense is never exhausted because the richness of sensuous data should be beyond all concepts. In interpretation, the sensuous meaning is interpreted according to the denotative determination of meaning, which extensionally designates the object (whether it is actual or not) of judgments.

The sensuous meaning is not the only meaning that can be obtained in the process of interpretation. There should be varying levels of interpretation, from the immediate sense interpretation to the most abstract one. The interpretation of the sensuous given is continuous to the interpretation of what Lewis calls the socially given. In addition to the sensuous given, humans share and utilize the socially given in the interpretative process, from which we get linguistic meaning.⁴ The socially given is a set of *a priori*

2 In this sense, Lewis departs from the Kantian sense of *a priori*.

3 Lewis's scheme of logic in *Mind and the World Order* is basically intensional, which is different from the extensional scheme of analytic logicians. However, his criticisms of the impossibility of a fully developed intensional logic must also be noted. See Lewis, *A Survey of Symbolic Logic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918), 17 ff. The sense of the term "intension" is modified between these two works in technical ways, but in the end the aim of retaining meaning through a series of logical transformations is retained. I will explain the difference between Lewis and logical positivism in the following section in more detail. For Lewis's notion of "pragmatic consideration," see *Mind and the World-Order: Outline of a Theory of Knowledge* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), 375.

4 Lewis specifies two kinds of intensional meaning, "sense meaning" and "linguistic meaning." Rosenthal summarizes the definitions of sense meaning and linguistic meaning as follows: "Linguistic meaning is the pattern formed by the relation of a term or proposition to other terms or propositions. Sense meaning is the criterion in mind that determines the application of the term or proposition; it is the

concepts that function as principles which filter the sensuous given through abstract conceptual analysis. A noticeable point is that a set of *a priori* concepts is socially shaped and, for that reason, it is a social heritage, not the absolutely given.

As we shall see below, Lewis's introduction of *a priori* experience is a matter of considerable controversy. Lewis's preference for *a priori* realm of experience could be seen as a presupposition of a dualistic interpretation of Lewis's theory.⁵ It is true that a set of *a priori* concepts or of first principles shows Lewis's foundationalist stress on the given. As Gowans argues, Lewis has a foundationalist tendency of the given after *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* (1946), which shows the discontinuity of his whole theory.⁶

Lewis's solution for the relevance of meaning in the dualistic setting relies on the pragmatic determination of the *a priori*, by which we interpret the given in relating to other *possible* experience. The meaning of proposition is *pragmatically* determined by the work of mind. The *a priori* given in the pragmatic sense is the rule that determines the application of concepts in our interpretative process. Our pragmatic interpretation has the primacy over the sensually given and the socially given. The interpretative work of mind is the mediator of the given and the concepts. Mind divines the other possibilities of interpretation. In other words, the meaning of the *a priori* given is determined by mind, the subject of interpretative process, which performs constructive and legislative activity, and allows room for the existence of choice or alternatives.⁷ From a pragmatic concern, the principles are open to fallibility and revisability of knowledge, which admit *hypothetic* process.

criterion by which what is meant is to be recognized." See Clarence I. Lewis, *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* (LaSalle: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1946), 37 and Sandra Rosenthal, *C. I. Lewis in Focus* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 34.

5 Here, I bear in mind the dualistic distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori*.

6 Christopher W. Gowans, "Two Concepts of the Given in C. I. Lewis: Realism and Foundationalism," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 27-4 (1989): 573-74.

7 Murray G. Murphey, *C. I. Lewis: The Last Great Pragmatist* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 178.

III. VALUE EXPERIENCE

We should not disregard the relevant and consistent source of knowledge which Lewis's theory of value and ethics provides. For Lewis, knowledge is a claim on valuation and normativity. In our "value experience," the normative significance of our empirical assessments for action comprises objective significance for future experience. Knowledge is a matter of two moments, beginning and ending in experience, but the ending is an opened operational process "which translates a presented datum into an instrument of prediction and control."⁸ Knowledge, in Lewis's pragmatic scheme, therefore, should be continuous with future action and evaluation.⁹ It is indubitable that the connection between knowledge and purposive action is essential in his ethical theory.

Lewis's profound stance on value experience is that moral claims do have cognitive value. This view makes a stark demarcation from logical positivism of those days. For Lewis, the sense data cannot *solely* determine what is right to do. In this sense, the view of logical positivism that declines the objective cognitive truth of value judgments is absurd because it neglects the other sources of meaningful value experience. The problem of extensional logic on which logical positivism is based is its ignorance of *counterfactual* judgments that deal with the realm of possible experience. In our ordinary life, any inference is essentially relational and intensional because it deals with the possible dimensions of experience. Thus, Lewis is against logical positivists who desaturate experience and reduce empirical meaningfulness to linguistic one.¹⁰ For Lewis, positivist view on value judgment results in the lost of, pragmatically important, empirical meaning, which necessarily includes "relation" and "valuation." The cognitive value of value judgment is intrinsically deep-rooted in hypothetical judgments. To put it differently, the verifiability of value judgment does not necessarily have to do with factual entities that are limited to actual existence. Having possible reference to experience suffices.

8 Clarence I. Lewis, "Pragmatism and Current Thought," *Journal of Philosophy* 27-9 (1930): 246.

9 In this sense, the real object of knowledge is *made* rather than given, by our purposive activity which interprets the given before us out of our interest for future action. See Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 129.

10 It is true that Lewis was against logical positivism that makes the relational aspect of life logically abstract. But after *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* (1946), Lewis more focused on finding the grounding of value in general. This is his foundationalist tendency, as mentioned above.

However, Lewis acknowledges the necessity of analyticity as it related to the work of mind. The *a priori* is coextensive to the analytic, in other words, logically necessary, and at the same time empirically meaningful.¹¹ Lewis's effort to advance the objectivity of value judgment that asserts the objectivity and the analyticity of empirical meaning in value experience originates from his mention of "empirical statements." Lewis distinguishes three classes of empirical statements, expressive utterances, terminating judgments, and objective beliefs, or non-terminating judgments.¹²

According to Lewis, expressive statements signify "appearances" of indubitable content.¹³ They do not predict what might appear; they merely formulate the given in experience,¹⁴ as Lewis puts: "in thus referring to appearances, or affirming what appears, such expressive language *neither asserts any objective reality of what appears nor denies any*. It is confined to description of the content of presentation itself."¹⁵ Terminating judgments formulate and predict what we might experience and the prediction would be verifiable by some test that involves a way of acting.¹⁶ Unlike expressive statements, the certitude of terminating judgments is falsifiable, since terminating judgments are by nature hypothetical.¹⁷ Non-terminating judgments go further beyond terminating judgments since they involve *possible* terminating judgments. Thus, they can never be completely verified, and are probable, not certain.¹⁸ As Rosenthal claims, the validation or the verification of these objective beliefs is the central problem for Lewis's theory of empirical knowledge.¹⁹

A point that deserves due attention is that, for Lewis, through non-terminating judgments, reality can be extended to the extent that includes "possibilities." In this

11 Lewis, *Mind and World-Order*, 213.

12 The three kinds of empirical statements bring to mind Dewey's treatment of propositions, intermediate judgments, and final judgments.

13 Lewis uses "expressive language." I borrowed Rosenthal's term instead. See Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 179 and also Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 81.

14 Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. "Clarence Irving Lewis." Last modified November 1, 2016. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/lewis-ci/>.

15 Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 179.

16 Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 179.

17 Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 181.

18 Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 181.

19 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 82.

extensive process of verification, the given is, limitlessly, related to the possible and the objective beliefs are “conceptual interpretation.”²⁰ Now, the conceptual interpretation provides “sense meaning” despite its impossibility of verification.²¹ In this sense, for Lewis, our concepts are equivalent to *principles*, which guide our actions within the relations among possible predictions of actions. This normativity, which should be more than verifiability because it is beyond the mere collection of particular instances, comes from “the fixed rule of organization.”²² The sensuous given plays an important role in fixing certain “schemata,” since this is possible through inductions that need empirical verification.

Some might raise a suspicion that the objective beliefs, therefore, could be problematic due to the inherently dualistic building blocks of Lewis’s system. A part of empirical statements, such as sense meaning, cannot be verified, while Lewis also depends on “inductively learned probabilities.”²³ My understanding is that Lewis’s dependence on inductive logic reveals the very possibility of the verification of value assertions in this context. This point seems manifest when he suggests “immediate value apprehensions.” As he puts it:

Immediate comparisons are presumably very important in determinations of value. Such determinations of better and worse, as between immediately presented quaila such as two pleasures or pains, conjointly experienced, are often called “value-judgments.” Such comparison is doubtless indispensable to determination of value, but, here as elsewhere, judgment, in the ordinary sense, does not concern the immediately presented as such or for its own sake, but the enduring value of something *objective* to which this immediate comparison may be a clue. Here as elsewhere, the immediate comparison is indubitable and verification has no meaning for it; what needs to be verified and is worth judging is the permanent quality of some object, or type of objects, or some permanent possibility of value-experience.²⁴

20 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 82.

21 See Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 83 and also Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 37.

22 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 87. See also Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 187, 236, 250 and 283.

23 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 87.

24 Lewis, *Mind and World-Order*, 126.

According to Lewis, immediate value apprehensions are the closest value assertions, which are experiential to individuals.²⁵ Immediate value apprehensions are different from sense meaning, because in immediate value apprehensions individuals go through the experiment through which one can *hypothetically* approve the objectivity of the empirical statement in question. The objective value depends on, despite its inconsistency in individuals' experience, its relation to actual or possible experience, even though these experiences depend on the capacities of the subject.²⁶ Therefore, the evidence of objectivity is *intrinsically* given, since the hypothetical experiment is based on the necessity of logic.

In line with this, there should be something beyond the individual context which makes the given context *objectively* meaningful. Lewis does adopt "the imperative" as the source of objectivity. Individuals should share imperatives as their action-guiding principles, because it is impossible to share idiosyncratic contexts. However, Lewis's imperative takes a different route from Kantian imperative. Kantian categorical imperatives originate from the noumenal world, not from the real society individuals live in. Even though the guiding principle of action is immediate, Lewis's imperatives are apprehensions that reflect individual contexts. The Kantian *a priori* imperative is self-evident, because it does not require the verification of experience. In other words, individual experience does not determine categorical imperatives, while individuals determine immediate value apprehensions.²⁷ Lewis sees the matter otherwise.

At this point, we need to understand Lewis's "naturalistic or humanistic conception of values" more fully. Naturally, value assessment varies due to its reliance on the relation of value potentialities of objects to our possibilities of action, which leads to the evaluation of objects in every mode.²⁸ In this sense, the degree of our control over the realization of objects is critical in the evaluation. If we are securely in control of the realization of objects, positive values are greater, while disvalues are greater in case their realization is out of our control.²⁹ This point about control, subsequently, implies that the objectivity of value could be relative to persons. For example, to a person, who determines to go to one spot by his or her own car, airplane tickets to the

25 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 130 and Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 397.

26 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 132 and Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 409.

27 I will provide a related discussion in the next section.

28 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 132 and Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 541.

29 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 132 and Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 538, 561.

spot could have no value, due to the vast difference in control. In one instance the individual conveys himself or herself, while in the other case that person must rely upon the expertise of others and a dense collection of social hierarchies. The objectivity of value, therefore, seems vulnerable, since it could vary in different individuals. Nonetheless, this does not mean that valuation is peculiar to a particular individual. The difference of values can be explained through, as Lewis calls, “value-in-fact,” by which he claims the relativity of evaluation.³⁰ However, the variations of values-in-fact are just due to differences of situations. For this reason, both values-in-fact and disvalues-in-fact are valuable, since disvalues-in-fact could be the other possibilities in other contexts; they differ only in terms of individual control. Lewis supposes the reality of what is naturally valuable to humans, and the growth of human beings in general, which is common to all human mind and thus barely requires verification.

It should be noted that the verifiability posits the future. The operational definition of “verifiability” is the empirical side of meaning that is verifiable only in the future when consequences can be traced. Lewis turns his attention to “temporality” again regarding the issue of the relativity of verification. Lewis’s view on temporality raises one important truth that life is temporally accumulative process, which flows from the past to the future. The past is the principle that determines the meaning of concepts. Living in time, therefore, *necessarily* includes our concern for the future. This point is crucial since it reveals the very nature of human rationality. Our having foresight and our self-directing control is the root of the logicity.³¹ By way of rationality, we can start from what we have already accepted and consistently be led to valuable prediction, which affects our future action. Life, for Lewis, is a continuous process which allows both “immediately-given” values and values that are “contributory” to life.³² Regarding these dual dimensions of valuation, “the value quality” is not found in momentary experiences, but in relational flow of a whole experience, namely a whole life.³³

30 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 133 and Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 538.

31 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 137.

32 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 137 and Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 479, 492.

33 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 138-9 and Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 479, 486.

IV. MIND AS PRINCIPLE-CONTENT APPARATUS

In the last section, I investigated Lewis's *a priori* pragmatic objectivity in value experience and concluded that mind is the locus of the relational flow of the whole meaningful experience. Naturally, we are led to delve further into Lewis's views on the work of mind. Lewis rightly sees that mind itself is a structure and that it structures the world. The essence of mind is thus its making the world mind-like. As we have seen, Lewis grants two evaluational dimensions of knowledge, the dimension of the *a priori* and that of the real. Leaving aside his foundationalist tendency, I indicated that Lewis opined that the pragmatic *a priori* treats the two dimensions as converse. There could be still a hazard regarding the dualistic trap, that is, the trap between mind and "outside reality," if we do not fully understand the work of mind in Lewis's thought, which I think is the essential part of his ethical theory. It is not exaggerating the matter to say that Lewis's ethical theory guides his ontology and not vice-versa.³⁴

Some might think that if the distinction of physical and psychological dimensions holds rigidly in Lewis's thought, then the difficulty of synthesizing the two is palpable. Lewis's immediate response to the question could be this: The two dimensions are not separated, but continuous. In other words, they are pragmatically *and* objectively related. However, Lewis needs to provide more evidence in order to escape from the critic who identifies the subjectivist situation, which could promote the contextualism (in the sense I described earlier) that disregards any relevant source of morality. Such critics were numerous in Lewis's time. Lewis knew well that emphasizing experience could lead to psychologistic subjectivism, a context-based theory that could result in extreme relativism. Lewis tried to escape from this threat of psychologistic subjectivism in his comment on concepts as follows.

Any immediate **content** of the concept is extruded by the principle of the pragmatic test. If your hours, as **felt**, are twice as long as mine, your pounds twice as heavy, that makes no difference, which can be tested, in our assignment of physical properties to things. If it should thus make a difference in our **predication** of properties, we should at

34 In this sense, he was, after all, Josiah Royce's student, whose teacher considered ethics to be "the first philosophy."

once decide that one of us must be mistaken. Such decision would reveal our **implicit recognition** that our concept of the predicated property excludes this subjective element, and includes only the objectively verifiable relations. [my emphasis in bold]³⁵

According to Lewis, concepts by their nature include subjective element. The *content* of concepts immediately incorporates felt experience. The openness of meaning and valuation to the future is basically the fallibility of concepts. But at the same time, the pragmatic test tends to grant the infallibility of felt experience. The pragmatic test forces out the merely felt content of concepts and navigates in favor of objectively verifiable relations that amend the meanings of our concepts. This is what Lewis calls “implicit recognition” which reveals our pragmatic tendency for the exclusion any subjective element of the predicated property.

However, it should be acknowledged that concepts exclude their ineffability to experience. Concepts “should designate something concretely identifiable in experience, not abstractions apart from that which serves for their empirical discovery.”³⁶ Concepts should be referable to concrete things (just as James insisted). To put it differently, the application of concepts to real life should follow the rules that determine the implication of sensory data into concepts, *and* of concepts to concrete things, as well as things operative in pragmatic experiment. In the imaginary experiment, we perform the experiment according to concepts, that is, the warranted principles. This process does not disregard the need for a contextualized, first-person basis.³⁷ The contextualization is a part of pragmatic experiment where we follow the determination of rules, or concepts, that we get from pragmatic experiments.

I believe this point inevitably raises the need for a *medium* that corroborates the possibility of the synthesis between the inner and the outer. Lewis also considered the importance of the medium, as he put it:

Also, it may be said that the statement “This is the same yellow that I saw yesterday” has meaning in a sense which does *not* have to do with the objective quality of a physical thing. I believe this is correct; it may intend the assertion of the qualitative

35 Lewis, “Pragmatism and Current Thought,” 243.

36 Lewis, “Pragmatism and Current Thought,” 241.

37 Murphey, *Lewis*, 406.

identity of two *psychological states*. But the statement with this meaning is significant only in the same sense in which it is verifiable; that is, on the assumption that psychological states are events which modify a substantive thing, the **mind**, and that this enduring mind is an **organized reality** in which, as in physical things, events are later verifiable by the effects which they produce. What is not a “thing” or objective, in terms of our knowledge of the physical, may be something objective in the categories of psychology. Qualia as presentations of external reality and qualia as states of a mind are quite different matters. In both cases, they are presentations of objects—quite different objects because the *relational context* into which the presentation is brought in being understood is quite different in the two cases. In the one case, they are presentations of an external reality, a physical thing or property; in the other, they are presentations of a psychic reality, a mind. In no case are they objective or the object of knowledge apart from a relational context of **conceptual interpretation**. And in all cases, the judgment or knowledge is about what is objective. [my emphasis in bold]³⁸

Again, the concept is the medium that determines the two-way processes from sense data to concepts, on the one hand, and from concepts to external objects, on the other hand. But it should be noted that Lewis argues in the above that both “presentations of external reality” and “states of a mind” are conceptual interpretations. In presentations of outer objects, whether it is outside-in or inside-out, the relational context of presentations is *between* the inner and the outer. The relational context of states of mind is between inner psychological states of mind. In other words, concepts are also the *medium* of the interpretation of inner states. In this case, conceptual interpretation of inner states are presentations of a psychic reality, a mind. Lewis was led to claim that inner states modify the mind and their verification depends on effects of the states later in that mind, thus modified. Mind is “a substantive thing” and “an organized reality” that is the *virtual* presentation of psychic reality.

My suspicion regarding this line of thought is that Lewis acknowledges the insufficiency of the *medium* when it comes to the verification of inner states in other minds. The main reason is that he should introduce a *socially* extended concern that could result in the inconsistency, and in the impossibility, of the objective verification

38 Lewis, *Mind and World-Order*, 127.

of the whole. Mind as the medium is indispensably suggested in order to posit the consistency of one's logical and rational processes. But mind should be consistently extended to other minds, in the same way that mind is a presentation of individual inner states. The problem, therefore, is whether the determination of individual mind could be extended to other minds *without* losing consistency. Going back to the excerpt above, mind as the presentation of inner states has different relational context from that of external reality. Then there arise a couple of legitimate questions. Do inner states within one mind and those in the other minds have the identical relational context? Could psychological states of a mind modify the other mind? If yes, how can the modification happen in other minds?

In this sense, one might validly claim that a circularity underlies Lewis's theory. Lewis was correct in saying that "our purposive activity has a normative dimension."³⁹ Apparently, the distinction between good and bad consequences should be decided in the future because of fallibility or revisability of knowledge that is expected also in value experience. Surprisingly, Lewis's position "is naturalistic in that no act can be found right or wrong *without* reference to the goodness or badness of its consequences, and good and bad are natural qualities of experience" (my emphasis in italic).⁴⁰ It seems evident that Lewis presupposed *a priori* "imperative" in its non-pragmatic sense, from which Lewis tried to escape. Without any recourse to *real* consequences (including those in pragmatic experiment), he ends up obscuring the distinction between right and wrong.

This point is obvious when it comes down to a matter of Lewis's naturalistic or humanistic tendency. For Lewis, the determination of right and wrong requires references to rules or principles, and the validity of the imperatives is grounded in what is called the character of human nature. This is what Lewis truly pursued for regarding the source of rationality. Lewis's concept of rationality is founded on the enrichment of human life. Following the pragmatic nature of *a priori* knowledge, experience is the flow from the past, where *a priori* arises, to the future, where the *a priori* is held legislative. The rules of rightness arise from the interactions of the past experience and prescribed ways of acting in the future. In the flow of time, the nature of human life obtains the warrant of principles. For Lewis, rationality of mind is the

39 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 148 and Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 502.

40 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 151 and Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, 398-400.

source of legislative *a priori*. In this sense, principles are *categorical* in their projection of human enrichment. Therefore, principles are the creation of mind.⁴¹ Its creation of alternatives, in other words, possible experience, is suggested by mind. In so doing, possible experience follows the rules of mind and, at the same time, affects the mind.

For Lewis, the individual-society relation is an ongoing dynamic process of mutual influence between individuals and, as Rosenthal points out, Lewis wants to pay attention to its “constitutive” nature of the very dynamics of developing selfhood.⁴² Therefore, the success of Lewis’s scheme depends on the relational context between minds. Mind as presentation of psychological states is presupposed as the evaluator of judgments. The evaluated judgments, or knowledge, serve as a presented datum in other minds. But the consistency of my judgment in other minds is *preceded* in my mind. The source of objectivity of my judgment in other minds is my evaluation of the judgment that emulates the embedded structure of mind that what Lewis calls “character.” I do not think Lewis does not consider the distinction between individuals. Rather, he is interested in finding the objective structure of mind common to all (human) minds. In my estimation, Lewis assumes that the distinction between the social and the individual is inextricably interwoven. Speaking differently, Lewis rejects the dichotomy of individual-social as the fundamental distinction in ethical sense. For him, the ultimate demands of ethical principles⁴³ lie within the very nature of selfhood as inherently social.⁴⁴ For Lewis, the individual-society relation, which entails synthesized and maximized processes, could be the source of objectivity. However, this is not an inductive certainty, but the maximized congruity of structures within one coherent whole. In this regard, Lewis acknowledges the systematic structure that holds good between concepts. The system is *reflectively* and critically

41 For Lewis, principles arise in figuring out alternatives of action. In other words, principles are creation of mind. As he puts it: “The *a priori* has its origin in an act of mind; it has in some sense the character of fiat and is in some respects like deliberate choice. The *a priori* is a peculiar possession of mind because it bears the stamp of mind’s creation. And the criterion of creativity is not inevitability but exactly its opposite, the absence of impulsiveness and the presence of at least conceivable alternatives.” See Lewis, *Mind and World-Order*, 213.

42 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 162.

43 Lewis asserts principles into two, principle of prudence and justice, which are the two categorical imperatives that govern the interrelation of individuals and society. See Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 154.

44 Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 162.

formed, and it wields power on all individuals concerned. Therefore, in the communicative processes of sharing concepts, agents engaged hold true regarding making sense. As Lewis puts it, “socially constituted meanings and behaviors contained in the social inheritance of ideas” work rather than biological inheritance.⁴⁵

In sum, Lewis presupposes the mind as a system that enables meaningful (and moral) experience. Lewis’s mind as “principle-content apparatus” is not purely disembodied mind but natural and experiential structure. The denial of dualistic or dogmatic status of mind is possible on the basis of Lewis’s peculiar view of individualism. The mind is structural since, on the one hand, it performs inferential and interpretative process starting from the given principles, and, on the other hand, it is a complex apparatus including many kinds of humanistic aspects as its content.⁴⁶ Communication between individuals, therefore, is performed by principlized concepts in both deep and appearancial states of individuals. Radically speaking, individual mind *is* the totality of imperatives, which consists of the fruits of lessons learned from the past and provides rule-guided ways of behaving as we move to the future.

V. CONCLUSION

Lewis’s conceptual pragmatism calls for pragmatic justification of value experience. The most important feature of his theory of value and ethics could be the two-dimensional scheme, composed of, on the one hand, the imperatives as the *a priori* given principles and, on the other hand, the contents of experience as a whole. Imperatives are the result of lessons accumulated from the past and function as rules for the future. Individuals start their experience from imperatives and organize

45 E. Paul Colella, *C. I. Lewis and the Social Theory of Conceptualistic Pragmatism* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992), 160.

46 Practically speaking, the structure of mind is suggested to function as “synthetic intuition.” The synthetic intuition connects any, possible or actual, valuations, and enables the completion of our inductive inferences. Without the synthesis, the evaluation of life as a whole is never possible, because the synthetic intuition concerns our preference for truth and it is the real source of how we rationally cognize the wholeness. Another instance of the work of mind is empathetic imagination. Lewis’s extension from individual judgments into social judgments is possible by aid of “empathetic imagination,” by which we could put oneself into the place of others. See Rosenthal, *Lewis in Focus*, 139-40.

their own experience by doing based on the inferential process, which is directional at bottom since principles themselves are experience of the past and purposively aim at the future.

Lewis's individualism distinguishes individual as biological organism from individual as *structure* for the reason that the former restricts the concept of growth while the latter encompasses the concept of morally right or wrong. The growth, in the pragmatic naturalistic sense, should include every aspect of human experience. Lewis's separation of morally right and wrong from good and bad consequences is useful in that it does not neglect the normative dimension of our purposive activity, and consequently the social-bound conception of the human growth.

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