

PHILOLOGOI:

THE BELMONT UNIVERSITY
UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

VOLUME ONE
SUMMER 2012

Philologoi:

The Belmont University
Undergraduate Journal
of Philosophy

Φιλόλογος

Philologos (mas. noun): “student, scholar.”

From the conjunction of *philos* [a friend]
and *logos* [word, idea, reason];

philologoi are “fond of words, *i.e.*, talkative, argumentative,
learned, philological.”

—Strong’s Greek Concordance.

It was said of Socrates, that he was a *philologus*—one fond of words, talkative, keen of speaking (*Phaedrus* 236e). According to Aristotle, it is one who is fond of dialectic or of philosophical argument, a lover of learning and literature, or one who is literary (*Rhetoric* 1398b14). For Zeno, the *philologoi* are lovers of reason; they are students and scholars, learned in conversation, and studious of words (*Stoic. I.67*).

—Liddell Lexicon.

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Mission Statement:

Philologoi: The Belmont University Undergraduate Journal of Philosophy is a student-run scholarly journal deeply rooted in the history of philosophy. Our mission is to provide an engaging and reflective forum for showcasing exceptional undergraduate work, particularly that which explores the idea of philosophy as a way of life.

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Editor's Letter

There are certain questions that are commonplace in the philosophy wing of Belmont University: is philosophy a way of life? Is the pursuit of wisdom entwined with more than just the enrichment of rational speculation? Is it not *merely* concomitant, but *necessarily* so with an academic lifestyle? Questions of this variety are critical; they demand significant attention from anyone investigating the history of philosophy—and even more from those who desire to participate in philosophical scholarship. To contemplate philosophy as a way of life is to attempt to delineate the practical boundaries of philosophical inquiry, to determine how far into everyday life philosophy should permeate, and to explore the value of philosophical pursuits and activities. These discussions have been consuming and intimate amongst us at Belmont, inspirational of growth and change, and have prompted in us the desire to open the discussion of the connection between philosophy and life beyond Belmont's halls.

Philologoi was conceived with these questions and thoughts in mind, as our attempt to grapple with them and put them into action. It is a journal whose very creation and activity is marrying theory with practice, whose content is and reflects an intimate engagement with philosophy as a way of life. *Philologoi*, both this issue and the journal at large, has grown into a unique presentation of perspectives; it is the amalgamation of a complex array of focuses and interests in philosophy. Each author and each member of the staff has added a slightly different point of view to the end product. The different voices have created a structure for the journal that is flexible, that allow space for all philosophical perspectives, and, thus, have created an ideal groundwork for the inquest of enduring philosophical questions.

Philologoi is a showcase of undergraduate scholarship, which was inspired by “philosophy as a way of life.” Whether philosophy is a way of life, and whether that question is answerable, I am sure you will find in the tone of the authors within, and lurking in the periphery of their given subjects, a contention on the matter. And while this was intentional, I

think that it could not have turned out otherwise. It truly does seem as though having a philosophical topic is sufficient to conjure and cultivate such perspectives. And maybe the essence of *Philologoi* is just the desire for that—a desire to enrich perspectives on philosophy as a way of life.

In this issue of *Philologoi*, you will find works on many different topics, and written in a variety of styles. Within the diverse subjects, analytic and Continental philosophy, history of philosophy, abstract jargon, and poignant prose all have some role. What I hope you uncover while reading these articles, and I sincerely hope you read them all, is a personal connection to philosophy as a way of life. I hope that at times you will feel disapproval of a view and, at times, approval; I hope that those feelings linger in you long after you stop reading, so that you might even take these topics away from the armchair and into discussion with others. I hope that you lose track of where your daily routine begins, and the ideas of philosophy end. Perhaps with a little luck you will even find yourself saying, in the words of my favorite childhood bedtime book, “I really can’t say how this happened next ... I departed the text.”¹

I wish to say a few words of praise about my fellow *Philologoi* staff, because they deserve it and more. My great fear, back in October of 2011, was that those involved in the journal would grow apathetic, that the primary motivation behind their participation would be a mild résumé buff. Worse yet, I thought they might quit and leave the idea of an undergraduate journal smeared and forgotten, understaffed or abandoned. But my fears were promptly assuaged by the ceaseless team efforts. I found that even in the most stressful times of the year, the journal staff remained adamantly committed to its end goal—successfully meeting deadlines and publishing the inaugural issue in the summer of 2012. Since last fall, the journal staff has excelled beyond what was required for the journal’s commencement. They have taken what started as a mere idea, and developed it into a remarkable framework for future journals. For that, and more, I cannot give them enough credit.

I hope that you enjoy your stay with us,
Daniel Rock,
Editor

¹ Berkeley Breathed, *Goodnight Opus* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1993), 3.

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PATRICK ANDERSON

**Creating Ideal Liberal
Subjects: Law, Contract, and
Superego**

ABSTRACT: Liberal political theorists notoriously champion their views as disinterested in cultivating virtue, but liberal theorist Mark E. Button goes against the grain when he argues liberalism relies on civic education to propagate liberal virtues such as toleration, reciprocity, and civility. Even if Button's work is a step in the right direction, he neglects both the role of social institutions, such as law, in shaping liberal subjects, and the depth to which it must go to be truly effective. By criticizing liberal social contract theory using the Marxist legal theory (China Miéville) and psychoanalysis (Freud and Zizek), this essay attempts to delineate the way in which we are all *made* liberal subjects by the law and that this process is most effective with the development of the liberal superego.

“CIVILIZATION” DESCRIBES THE WHOLE SUM OF
ACHIEVEMENTS AND THE REGULATIONS ...
WHICH SERVE TWO PURPOSES—NAMELY TO PROTECT MEN
AGAINST NATURE AND
TO ADJUST THEIR MUTUAL RELATIONS.

—SIGMUND FREUD¹

The inability to cultivate a sense of community is often viewed as one of the most problematic aspects of liberalism. In feudal times, nearly all people were born, lived, and died in the same place, so they identified themselves with the community of their fiefdom. Their values and interpersonal relations were determined by their setting. In contrast, people living after the Reformation and the agricultural revolution of the early modern period, up to and including people living today, are increasingly mobile.² Liberal political theorists responded to the new conditions by conceptualizing social systems designed to manage itinerant individuals. Communitarian opponents of liberalism that orient their critique around its normative consequences argue that liberalism has no mechanism to promote community development, and that liberal subjects risk sliding into solipsistic nihilism. Those who argue that without some form of intentional civic education a community cannot sustain itself seem to make an important point against liberalism.

For their part, liberals embrace the lack of civic cultivation because many equate such policies with an imposition of the good, but liberal theorist Mark E. Button goes against the grain, arguing that all versions of social contract theory intend to shape people into good liberal citizens. In *Contract, Culture, and Citizenship*, Button says that Sandel and other communitarians overlook the crucial role that education plays in contract theory, and identifies “a significant *transformative* ethos within the heart of modern liberalism.”³ Button’s stance reinforces the positions of both Hobbes and Rawls that the contract is forward-looking, not merely backward-looking. Having intentions for the future, liberalism requires its subjects to have civic character and ethical public sensibility; however, these virtues are not natural, people must learn to live as good liberal subjects. “The question is not,” for Button, “*whether* but *how* a liberal society should best understand and undertake its transformative influences on the

¹ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2010), 63.

² Cf., Patrick Anderson, “Unleashing Modernity,” presented at the Eastern Michigan University Undergraduate Philosophy Conference, Ypsilanti, MI, March 17, 2012.

³ Mark E. Button, *Contract, Culture, and Citizenship: Transformative Liberalism from Hobbes to Rawls* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 5.

character and self-understanding of its citizens and the culture that sustains them.”⁴

Button’s survey of social contract theories from Hobbes to Rawls concludes that education is the primary means to shaping citizens. The conflict between not imposing the good and promoting civic values, or what Button calls the “paradox of civic virtue,” is only a tension, not a contradiction.⁵ A minimum of positive characteristics such as toleration, mutual respect, reciprocity, civility, and fidelity are necessary to sustain the liberal ends of autonomy and freedom.⁶ For Hobbes, ‘diffidence’ or distrust is the primary impediment to solidarity, thus fidelity is an important virtue because “Contracts, promises, and agreements are devices of mutual coordination that address this condition of moral and political uncertainty.”⁷ Ultimately, Button’s central thesis, that “*contract makes citizens*, never simply the other way around,” is an important insight that liberals often neglect.⁸

Button is correct to identify education as an important aspect of liberalism, but his account falls short, both by misunderstanding education itself and by ignoring other formative structures. In a critical look at American public education, Michael W. McConnell complains that “Every affirmation of principle is simply an attempt to ‘impose values’ on someone else.”⁹ McConnell argues that this claim is pervasive in educational settings, a fact that seems to undermine Button’s views on education. Button may respond by saying that education, in his sense, resembles socialization rather than formal learning in an institution. While he would agree with Rawls’ position that we should not impose “comprehensive doctrines” - religions, ideologies, etc. - on citizens, he insists that toleration, mutual respect, and reciprocity qualify as foundational values that make other values possible, and that it is imperative to distinguish between these and enforced, monolithic worldviews.

By focusing all his energy on education, Button overlooks key social configurations that guide the individual not *to* others, but *away* from them, namely, the law and the economy. Button

⁴ *Ibid.*, 22, emphasis mine.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

⁶ Sandel repeatedly argues that these features occupy the place of “the good” in liberal theory. Cf., “Political Liberalism,” in *Justice: A Reader*, ed. Michael J. Sandel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), and *Democracy’s Discontent* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996).

⁷ Button, *Contract, Culture, and Citizenship*, *Op. Cit.*, 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹ Michael W. McConnell, “Don’t Neglect the Little Platoons,” in *For Love of Country? Martha C. Nussbaum*, ed. Joshua Cohen (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 78.

mentions these in passing but does not seriously consider their influence on the formation of the liberal subject. The legal system, taking individual isolation as its starting point, forms in the space between individuals from their interactions. Law is intended to direct people to their ends without impeding the paths of others. Anytime two individuals do intermingle, the interaction is supervised by the state—the institutional manifestation of the law—and contracts are enforced to secure promises and promote certainty. This form of social control only becomes educational when subjects internalize external authority and govern themselves according to its maxims in the absence of the external power. Thus, education in the liberal sense is the utilization of the law in the creation of a liberal superego, which is designed to manage the actions of, and interactions between, solitary beings, in order to make governing more efficient.

Law

The separation of church and state brought about by the Reformation did not negate the need for civil authority; rather it created new ways of conceptualizing such power. Martin Luther, and John Calvin after him, theologically justified state power; in fact, Luther went so far as to say, “Men ought to obey rulers as His officers and be subject to them with all the fear and reverence, as to God himself.”¹⁰ No person had authority to defy the sovereign. While Calvin agreed with Luther, he felt that the state should be systematized to ensure order, and for this he relied on the law. “A well-regulated polity,” says Calvin, “which excludes all confusion, incivility, obstinacy, clamours, and dissensions” is governed by law.¹¹ The law must promote rational, calculated actions on the parts of individuals. Calvin surpassed Luther and set legal thinking on a new trajectory that shaped the post-Reformation period. Understanding this aspect of law’s origin, its relation to the state, and how it functions now and for the future help bring to light the ways in which law shapes liberal subjectivity.

In the history of legal theory, law is taken to represent the entire matrix of interpersonal relations, manifesting as an organized system derived from simple interactions. Kant describes the law as “derived entirely from the concept of freedom in the *mutual external relationships* of human beings.”¹² Law emerges from the

¹⁰ Duncan B. Forrester, “Martin Luther and John Calvin,” in *History of Political Philosophy*, Third Edition, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 335, 338.

¹¹ Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960), 171.

¹² Immanuel Kant, *Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 73.

interactive space between individuals. It is not something that is manufactured independent of and imposed upon relations; interpersonal contact is the precondition from which the law can manifest. The social contract is created to mitigate potential conflict between two or more wills, which may dispute property or ideas. While these tensions are always *public* in the sense that they have to do with external, physical beings, the law “ultimately derives from *the clash of private interests*,” the interests that the social contract is intended to manage.¹³ The guiding principles that emerge are at first only customs, or *lex non scripta* [unwritten law]; only after systematizing conventions does the law take its shape as “something permanent, uniform, and universal.”¹⁴

The form of our interactions produces law, but it secures only rights and not ends. For Kant, private wills desire public things, property, for example, but the law “does not concern the relationship between the will of one person and the desires of another ... it concerns only the relationship between the will of the first and the will of the second.”¹⁵ Equal regulations imposed on all parties harmonize the freedom of all by mutually limiting the freedom of all. The law then becomes a system that separates people, directs their interactions, and maintains order. Individual rights are secured, but in order for the law to be impartial and objective, it must protect all individuals and create a framework in which all can pursue ends without impinging on the projects of others. Law maintains order by becoming an anonymous system that regulates the wills of others. As China Miéville explains, “Where there is even the potentiality of disputation ... a specific form of social regulation is necessary. It must formalize the method of settlement of any such dispute without diminishing either party’s sovereignty or equality. *That form is law.*”¹⁶ What would be direct contact between two human beings is instead mediated through an ‘objective’ system designed to resolve differences by the predictable, universal application of pre-established rules.

The enforcement if an abstract legal system requires the creation of an impersonal sovereign, the point at which the legal matrix is quilted together.¹⁷ William Blackstone says that the law is “the

¹³ China Miéville, *Between Equal Rights: A Marxist Theory of International Law* (London: Pluto Press, 2006), 86.

¹⁴ Quoted in Herbert J. Storing, “William Blackstone,” in *History of Political Philosophy, Third Edition*, ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 627–628, 630.

¹⁵ Kant, *Political Writings*, 133. Also, “Hobbes defines law in terms of will, not reason” (Laurence Berns, “Thomas Hobbes,” in *History of Political Philosophy, Op. Cit.*, 412).

¹⁶ Miéville, *Between Equal Rights, Op. Cit.*, 79.

¹⁷ This section is guided in part by the Marxist state derivation theory of law; cf. *ibid.*, 122–128.

supreme arbiter of every man's life, liberty, and property." It must stand independent of the legislature and executive: "were [the law] joined with the legislative, the life, liberty, and property, of the subject would be in the hands of arbitrary judges, whose decisions would be then regulated only by their own opinions, and not by any fundamental principles of law."¹⁸ But law must be enforced, so Hobbes cleverly depersonalizes the sovereign; it is the office of the sovereign—not the person occupying it—that administers the law and demands respect.¹⁹ It is from this office that the law emanates, as the sovereign has "the whole power of prescribing the rules whereby every man may know what goods he may enjoy, and what actions he may do, without being molested [annoyed] by any of his fellow subjects."²⁰ It is the anonymity of office that guarantees order, for "mass habitual obedience to certain persons" causes instability.²¹ The sovereign permeates society through law, formalizing inter-individual contact by colonizing the space between.

For law to fulfill its purpose in reducing and reconciling disagreements and dispute, it must have a performative function that shapes the lives of its subjects. Both Hobbes and Locke desire the law to guide individuals rather than restrain them. "For the use of laws," according to Hobbes, "is not to bind the people from all voluntary actions, but to direct and keep them in such motion as not to hurt themselves by their own impetuous desires, rashness, or indiscretion, as hedges are set not to stop travelers, but to keep them in the way."²² The analogy here is astute and revealing: just as pedestrians are kept on the path and off the grass by hedge, people are kept on their paths and out of the way of others by the law. Locke articulates the same position in similar language, saying, "for law, in its true notion, is not so much the limitation, as the direction of a free and intelligent agent to his proper interest [and] ill deserves the name of confinement which hedges us in only from bogs and precipices."²³

¹⁸ Storing, "William Blackstone," *Op. Cit.*, 627-628.

¹⁹ Quentin Skinner, "The State," in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, ed. Terrance Ball, James Farr, and Russell L. Hanson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 124-126. Calvin agreed along similar lines, saying, "the law is a silent magistrate, and a magistrate a speaking law" (quoted in Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, *Op. Cit.*, 186).

²⁰ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1994), 114 and Berns, "Thomas Hobbes," *Op. Cit.*, 404-405.

²¹ H. L. A. Hart, "Positivism and the Separation of Law and Morals," in *Philosophical Problems in the Law*, ed. David Adams (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1996), 40.

²² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, *Op. Cit.*, 229.

²³ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 123.

Despite the fact that liberal philosophers conceive of the law as a restraint on the potentially arbitrary paths of people, they argue that it is necessary for the preservation of negative individual liberty. Negative liberty, the state of being free from external constraints, constitutes an important piece of liberal social contract theory, and restrictions on this type of freedom are antithetic to individual autonomy. Locke, for example, argues first that the law does not confine people, and then goes further, insisting that it must “preserve and enlarge freedom.” Because the freedom of each person is threatened by the arbitrary and uncertain wills of others, the law makes it possible “to be free from restraint and violence from others.” In its performative functioning, law is the only institution that can guarantee the negative liberty of all; therefore, “where there is no law, there is no freedom.”²⁴

Legal efficacy applies to people in the present but its main objective is to secure rights and freedom on a long-term basis, extending its performativity into the future to promote stability. The scientific and rationalistic similarities between Hobbes and Rawls come to life when they connect law to certainty. For Hobbes, law is about the good to come, namely, future order and long-term stability.²⁵ As Berns explains, “just as controversies are put to rest in mathematics, so evidently [Hobbes] hoped that the political controversies that had always disturbed the peace of the political world could be put to rest.”²⁶ Similar to Hobbes, Rawls advocates “justice as regularity,” and defines the legal system as “a coercive order of public rules” designed to regulate individual conduct by “providing the framework for social cooperation” and “a basis for legitimate expectations.”²⁷ For these thinkers, individuals need law to guide others out of their paths, and base the expectations they have of others on this function of law. They both agree that people “lack full confidence in one another,” that they distrust others, not only now, but always.²⁸ Both present and future social certainty rests on the legal regulation of wills.

Contracts

Law is designed to shape the wills of citizens both in the present and into the future, which requires a guarantee on future action. As Friedrich Nietzsche states, “To breed an animal with the right to make promises—is not this the paradoxical task that nature

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 123–124.

²⁵ Richard Ashcroft, “Ideology and Class in Hobbes’ Political Theory,” *Political Theory* 6 (1978), 39.

²⁶ Berns, “Thomas Hobbes,” *Op. Cit.*, 405.

²⁷ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 235–236.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 240.

has set itself in the case of man?”²⁹ Nietzsche points out the problem of trust: we can never be certain someone will follow through on a promise. Liberal legal theorists rely on contracts to resolve the “paradoxical task of nature” that Nietzsche describes. Just as law is designed to channel individual trajectories away from those of others, contracts represent the meeting point of isolated people and expectations for the future. The enforcement of contracts gives the State a window into the interactions of its citizens. In a problematic way, contracts are often equated with promises, confusing the nature of interpersonal interactions. Beginning with Hobbes, liberal contract theorists address this problem because the entire social order is grounded in a contract.

In *Leviathan*, Hobbes defines “contract” as a “mutual transferring of right,” while “promise” is said to be a contract made by “words of the future.”³⁰ Yet in *De Cive*, he states, “contract is a promise, law a command.”³¹ His semantic confusion does not clarify whether a contract or a promise is the class to which the other belongs. Regardless of the relationship, Hobbes is clear that promises and contracts are only kept when “there is a power set up to constrain those that would otherwise violate their faith.”³² The power of God may be greater than that of the State, but people more readily fear the State; therefore, Hobbes concludes that a government should be established to enforce contracts and promises. We must remember Hobbes’ theory of diffidence: that the law of nature commands self-preservation, and reason can lead a person to keep or break a promise depending on what will bring the greatest benefit. After all, when people make promises, “it is not the vow, but the law that binds them.”³³

Regardless what form the relation between contract and promise takes, and apart from the problems of the foundations thereof, the importance of promises and the purpose for enforcing them is long-term stability and predictability. According to Charles Fried, in making “a promise one is taking responsibility not only for one’s present self but for one’s future self.”³⁴ For Hobbes, to promise something and not perform is to simultaneously will and

²⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, ed. and trans. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 57.

³⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, *Op. Cit.*, 82-83.

³¹ Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive or The Citizen*, ed. Sterling P. Lamprecht (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1949), 157.

³² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, *Op. Cit.*, 85. He repeats this in *De Cive*, saying of the person tempted to break a promise, that the law “compels him to make good his promise for fear of the punishment appointed by the law” (quoted in Button, *Contract, Culture, and Citizenship*, *Op. Cit.*, 69).

³³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, *Op. Cit.*, 88.

³⁴ Charles Fried, *Contract as Promise: A Theory of Contractual Obligation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 21.

not will an action—an obvious contradiction, and, since inconsistency is averse to peace, people must be *made* to follow through on their fiduciary duties.³⁵ The irony here becomes apparent when we dilate our analysis from economic and other relatively insignificant contracts and look at the social contract as a whole. If it is an ethical obligation to honor promises, and one promises to follow the rules established by the contract, then breaking the law or causing social unrest is immoral. Peace, stability, justice, order, and morality diametrically oppose conflict, volatility, injustice, disorder, and evil. But if it is not a moral duty to honor promises, then society requires an omnipotent, omnipresent institution to regulate the activities of its subjects, guide them out of one another's way, and supervise their interactions in order to ensure stability, in other words, the State. If, as I argue in "The Nature of the Social Contract: Isolation, Order, and a Peculiar Toleration," the establishment of a neutral third-party arbiter marks the existence of civil society, then in this view society is founded on the distrust that others will not keep their word, and nothing more.³⁶ This is why Hume avoids the whole problem by arguing that we must practice "both allegiance and fidelity" for the same reason: "*because society could not otherwise subsist.*"³⁷

Superego

We began this part of the investigation with a discussion of education and have examined the ways in which societal structures like the law and enforced contracts are intended to give shape to the outward actions of citizens. Now it is necessary to switch from a telescopic analysis of law to a microscopic analysis of the unresolved tension between virtue, morality, and proper liberal subjectivity. Liberalism has primarily been taken as an exterior system; however, it is crucial to discuss the way in which it penetrates the lives, the very selfhood, of people. Sigmund Freud explains that when exterior authority is internalized, the superego forms as a reflexive system of social domination. Liberalism promotes superego development by colonizing individual subjectivity and inculcating people with its values.

Freud argued that the existence of society depends on repressing instincts, such as aggression, and that people use this energy to govern themselves according to social norms and regulations

³⁵ Hobbes, *De Cive, Op. Cit.*, 44, 57-58.

³⁶ Patrick Anderson, "The Nature of the Social Contract: Isolation, Order, and a Peculiar Toleration," presented at the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, & Letters Conference, Alma College, Alma, MI, March 2, 2012.

³⁷ David Hume, "The Irrelevance of Consent," in *Political Thought*, ed. Michael Rosen and Jonathan Wolff (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 64.

through the creation of the superego. In *Civilization and its Discontents*, he describes the process by which this happens in a vivid passage that is worth quoting at length:

His aggressiveness is introjected, internalized; it is, in point of fact, sent back to where it came from—that is, it is directed towards his own ego. There it is taken over by a portion of the ego, which sets its over against the rest of the ego as super-ego, and which now, in the form of “conscience,” is ready to put into action against the ego the same harsh aggressiveness that the ego would have liked to satisfy upon other, extraneous individuals. ... Civilization, therefore, obtains mastery over the individual’s dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an agency within him to watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city.³⁸

This process is a violent process that captures the individual and changes the very way he or she interacts with the other and him or herself. The superego exercises control at a greater efficiency than any external authority because it is pitting the person’s energies against itself. The close proximity of oversight gives the superego access to intent, and “bad intentions are equated with bad actions,” going beyond the prevention of unsocial actions by preventing unsocial *thoughts*.³⁹ Finally, Freud explains that those individuals who conform closest to social norms are the most fearful of inadequacy, saying, “it is precisely those people who have carried saintliness furthest who reproach themselves with the worst sinfulness.”⁴⁰ Though it is questionable whether or not a ruler can successfully repress the passions of the citizens, the superego performs this task with greater efficacy and certainty.

Liberal contract theorists expect subjects to internalize authority to the same extent they want subjects to obey the State. Hobbes argues that people must be taught to respect the sovereign and “to avoid doing of injury,” and they must “do all this sincerely from the heart.” The citizen should not obey only because they are being coerced, the citizen should want to obey because they see it as good. Such obedience requires that intentions as well as actions should conform because “Not only the unjust facts [acts], but the designs and intentions to do them ... are unjust, which consisteth in the pravity of the will as well as in the irregularity of the act.”⁴¹ The Hobbesian “superego” reflects Freud’s account in

³⁸ Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, *Op. Cit.*, 114.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁴¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, *Op. Cit.*, 222-224.

the prevention of unjust acts via the prevention of unjust thoughts.

Locke follows Hobbes in demanding this internalization, even though he puts it in somewhat different words. Repression is more apparent in Locke's writings because he emphasizes the denial of desire. For Locke, "the great principle and foundation of all virtue, and worth is placed in this, That a man is able to *deny himself* his own desires, cross his own inclinations, and purely follow what reason directs as best, though the appetite lean the other way."⁴² Moral rectitude means resisting those things that could jeopardize social stability and order under the guidance of reason. But Locke knows that people do not naturally do this, so he recommends educating children to act in accordance with social expectations so they may freely control themselves when they become adults. Rawls actually argues that future generations will come to accept the social contract as being in their best interest, and that would be the case because people will be socialized or taught to appreciate it as such.⁴³ As David C. Durst comments on Locke's theory, "For what seems to be the innermost authority of man is on closer inspection but the moral authority of others within."⁴⁴

Of all the social contract theorists, Kant seems to be the paradigmatic case of liberal superego authority. Nietzsche warns us that "Not even in good old Kant" is there real freedom because "the categorical imperative smells of cruelty."⁴⁵ Kant recognizes the need to educate people because "reason does not itself work instinctively, for it requires trial, practice and instruction to enable it to progress gradually from one stage of insight to the next."⁴⁶ Because we access morality through reason, this development is imperative. Like all other liberals, Kant knows that people will things, but their motives must be "none other than the absolute *law* itself."⁴⁷ He seems to equate the moral law with the juridical order, prompting the question about law's foundations once again. Regardless, Kant requires people to follow both moral law and legal law, so the superego must direct the subject to obey each.⁴⁸

Despite the history of the superego in liberalism, Rawls believes that contemporary citizens can relax their superegos because they

⁴² Quoted in David C. Durst, "The Limits of Toleration in John Locke's Liberal Thought," *Res Publica* 7 (2001), 52.

⁴³ Cf., Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, *Op. Cit.*

⁴⁴ Durst, "The Limits of Toleration," *Op. Cit.*, 52.

⁴⁵ Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, *Op. Cit.*, 65.

⁴⁶ Kant, *Political Writings*, *Op. Cit.*, 42.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁴⁸ Cf., Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 363-369.

are no longer as necessary; however, it is not that the need for the superego has disappeared—it has merely changed its form. “One of the virtues of a well-ordered society,” says Rawls, “is that, since arbitrary authority had disappeared, its members suffer much less from the burdens of oppressive conscience.”⁴⁹ He seems to argue that since the principles of justice as fairness are chosen in the freest way possible, and they provide the greatest stability to society, that people will not have to internalize “arbitrary authority.”⁵⁰

There are two possible readings of this, both of which are inspired by Slavoj Zizek’s Lacanian psychoanalytic approach. First, one could argue that the superego does not disappear, people just identify with it so closely that they forget it is the superego—a process akin to Zizek’s observation that ideology has not disappeared, it’s just that we believe more than ever.⁵¹ In the second, more compelling reading, the superego injunction to obey—or in its Kantian form, “Think freely, but obey!”—has extended itself beyond obedience to enjoyment. In our contemporary consumer culture, pleasure and gratification are the only things for which we strive. To be sure, the superego foundation remains: we must discipline ourselves because discipline is the precondition for true enjoyment.⁵² We must jog, before we have cake; we must work hard and save, before we can have a new car. But now we may reformulate the command: “Enjoy, but obey!” Ultimately, these two readings are not mutually exclusive. We can believe more than ever that we must have discipline in order to enjoy, and that we *must* enjoy.⁵³ In this light, the Rawlsian superego appears as an innocuous acquaintance that leaves us undisturbed by moral conundrums, so long as we obey.

Through this analysis of law, contracts, and superego, we can see the truth of Button’s statement that “contract makes citizens,” but we can also recognize the shortcomings of his approach. We can agree with Button that “it is not whether, but how,” liberalism employs its “transformative ethos” to create its own subjects, but a focus on education ignores the subtle forms of coercion and violence that impose on the individual. Nietzsche was correct when he stated, “man was actually *made* calculable,”

⁴⁹ Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, *Op. Cit.*, 490.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Cf., Slavoj Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (New York: Verso, 1989).

⁵² Alain Badiou and Slavoj Zizek, *Philosophy in the Present*, ed. Peter Engelmann, trans. Peter Thomas and Alberto Toscano (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2009), 56.

⁵³ Slavoj Zizek, *How to Read Lacan* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 98.

and now we see part of how this calculability is cultivated.⁵⁴ The law emerges from the entire matrix of interpersonal relations and, once abstracted, it is knitted to the sovereign as a mysterious, impersonal system of order. Individual trajectories are guided by regulations while interactions are managed by enforcing contracts. Eventually, people internalize these forms of authority becoming good, ‘tolerant’ liberal subjects who move about while avoiding conflict.

⁵⁴ “Man himself must first of all have become *calculable, regular, necessary*, even in his own image of himself, if he is to stand for *his own future*, which is what one who promises does” (Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, *Op. Cit.*, 58–59)!

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Θωερτψιπασδφγηφκλξνχ...Philo
logoi...τψιιπασδφγηφκλξνχωβν
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AMIE ZIMMER

**All By My Self: Understanding
the Implications of the
Heideggerian Conception of Self
and the Necessity of an Inherent
Will to Make Meaning
Meaningful**

ABSTRACT: For Heidegger, things show up as meaningful only because they show up for us in this way as being completely and utterly independent of our own will. For him, the projection of meaning onto things from our own subjectivity is an improper imposition of meaning that ignores the inherency of meaning that exists ‘in the things themselves.’ In this paper, I hope to show the forgotten necessity of the inherent and personal will as a counterpart and necessary inclusion in this equation in making meaning meaningful. I rely primarily on Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, but draw on contemporary French philosopher Jean-Luc Marion to support the notion of an autonomous, in fact ‘erotic’ will.

German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) rallied his efforts toward his project to overcome nihilism: a project that necessitated going *through* nihilism itself rather than attempting merely to overcome it, and so misunderstand it by and through failing to comprehend the entirety of its component parts. Crucial to the project of overcoming meaninglessness was cultivating meaning-*ful*-ness. For Heidegger, true meaning must necessarily come from that which is independent of our own will, if we are to avoid the problem of it being arbitrary and thus only meaningful because it has been decided by us to be so. His penultimate project, then, begs the question of where, exactly, are the responsibilities of the innate human will, apart from independent meanings.

What Heidegger calls *Dasein* is the German word that literally translates to *being there*, signifying man as that being for which things *can* and do show up as meaningful. In other words, *Dasein* is the metaphysically-structured comportment out and beyond ourselves. This transcendence is here defined by our phenomenological intentionality to direct ourselves in a certain direction and thus comport ourselves outward, away from entities and toward being, and is our inherent nature. But the grounding, or direction toward which *Dasein* executes itself, is for *Dasein* itself, and can thus be said to exist *for itself*. To argue counter (that *Dasein* exists for that which is not itself), would be to subject Heidegger to the very thing he warns us against: becoming a mere means to an end, and thus failing in overcoming nihilism. Particularly within the paradigmatic case of love, I argue that while it is significant to allow things to matter to you because they have so been rendered as having inherent qualities of significance that exist outside of and independent of a human will, it is not only of equal importance, but of the utmost necessity to recognize the existence and inertia of an inherent will radically free from the publicness or exteriority that Heidegger so duly holds claim on as that which allows meaning to be meaningful. Heidegger's position holds that because things show up for us as meaningful on their own accord, the phenomenological project, we are not merely subjectively projecting our own wishes and desires and arbitrarily deciding them to be meaningful. This inherent will, which I will show as having an innate 'erotic' disposition (that of desire), must necessarily overcome the infiltration of the public mood to show itself *primordially*: in and for itself as pure desire, in order to make matter the things that matter 'independently' by showing that they matter as originally starting with the will and not primordially through the other.

John Caputo advocates the view that Heidegger aligns himself more with the mystic than the philosopher when calling for a

non-representational experience of being.¹ This call for non-representation, however, is not a cry for the theological, but rather a plea for the experience of being to stand up on its own. Caputo addresses the claim in dialogue with the poet Silesius and his infamous rose: “[Silesius] speaks of the rose not as it stands before the representing subject, but as it stands in itself.”² For a thing to stand up ‘on its own’ as it were, I take it, is a word of caution and advice to us, to *Dasein*: to allow reality to show up for us on its own, rather than so quickly imposing our own conditions upon it. As Caputo puts it: “The poet lets the rose be the thing that it is, without reducing it to the status of an object.”³ As Heidegger tells us in the *Der Spiegel* interview:

The experience that humans are structured [*gestellt*] by some-thing that they are not themselves and that they cannot control themselves is precisely the experience that may show them the possibility of the insight that humans are needed by Being. The possibility of experience, of being needed, and of being prepared for those new possibilities is concealed in what makes up what is most modern technology’s own.⁴

Not having a choice otherwise (letting public mood or independent meanings outside of our own selves influence us so as to allow things to show up for us as being meaningful) seems to lead to deeper problems than that of being able to re-assign value, or the problem of arbitrariness we briefly acquainted ourselves with in the introduction. If our subjectivity is actually our inability to escape from public moods, then it does not actually seem to fall under the problem of value re-assignment. It would seem that it would be, actually, more difficult to consciously choose to love someone else. But in love, what is significant is that one actively chooses to respond to those inherent qualities in another by dedicating one’s life to their uncovering. The ineffability of love comes from, in part, the notion that explaining why we freely choose to do something is more difficult to understand than doing something (loving someone) who we can’t *not* love. Pure selfness must necessary have a world underneath that of *Dasein*. It has a will, where true subjectivity lies, outside the trapped world of the phenomenological project.

¹ John Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger’s Thought*, (New York: Fordham, 1986), 29.

² *Ibid.*, 64.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ “Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten,” Spiegel-Gespräch mit Martin Heidegger am 23 September 1966, *Der Spiegel*, May 31, 1976, 193-219, reprinted in *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism*, eds. Gunther Neske and Emil Kettering (New York: Paragon House, 1990), 41-66.

The Mistranslation of Mood To Dasein

Language itself and the words we use serve to further compound the problem of understanding our own will free from the public sphere in which it is usually immersed. Even in solitude, we are thrust into the center of the crowd: surrounded by the history, stories, and lives of all who came before us and have influenced and affected the meanings of the words that we cannot *not* use. In addressing the dangers of mistranslation, Heidegger states:

If we say that the basic signification of λόγος [*logos*] is “discourse,” then this word-for-word translation will not be validated until we have determined what is meant by “discourse” itself. The real signification of “discourse,” which is obvious enough, gets constantly covered up by the later history of the word λόγος, and especially by the numerous and arbitrary Interpretations which subsequent philosophy has provided. λόγος gets “translated” (and this means that it is always getting interpreted) as “reason,” “judgment,” “concept,” “definition,” “ground,” or “relationship.” But how can discourse be so susceptible of modification that λόγος can signify all the things we have listed, and in good scholarly usage?⁵

For Heidegger, even the “seemingly legitimate translation may still miss the fundamental signification.”⁶ We spy the shortcomings of mistranslation on a daily basis, yet we are not as quick to spot the misgivings of the dangerous mistranslation that occurs between the texts of public mood (the public realm of language) and that of our own will (the private world of the language-less.) Language is the means by which we communicate to ourselves, thus creating a contingent and non-direct relationship between our ‘public self’ which ‘speaks words’ and the ‘self’ that we really ‘are’ (the self underneath *Dasein*.) Contemporary French philosopher and critic of Heidegger, Jean-Luc Marion (b. 1946) reminds us that “if my certainty depends on me, this very surety, that I must decide about, can in no way reassure me, since, even fully accomplished, it only has me as its origin—this me that it is in turn necessary to secure.”⁷ Though

⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 55.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Jean-Luc Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon*, trans. Stephen E. Lewis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 18.

Marion does not utilize this argument to in any way show that we cannot be ‘certain’ of our existence in the Cartesian sense, he does recognize the inescapability of most often relating to ourselves in a non-direct manner (through language), thus leaving us open to the grave dangers of misinterpreting our own moods.

Interpreting Dasein Primordially with a Zero Degree of Interpretation, and Mood as Secondary Interpretation

Upon recognizing the contingencies and dangers of self-interpretation, we must take it upon ourselves to relate to ourselves primordially, with a zero degree of interpretation, in order to understand the inherency of our own will (which itself acts primordially, beyond and underneath the infiltration of publicness). To encounter something else in the world is to encounter it as “primarily *circumspective*.⁸ This circumspective concern for Heidegger is “not just sensing something, or staring at it,” but involves a deeper level of meaningful relating to the subject of concern.⁹ The “Being-in as such” of the “character” of the subject of circumspective concern (or, that which is in that moment ‘ready-to-hand’) necessarily must have been determined existentially beforehand in such a way that “what it encounters within-the-world can ‘matter’ to it.”¹⁰ However, the means by which the subject of our concern is rendered as ‘mattering’ to us implies a non-primordial relationship with *Dasein* by virtue of the vessel by which we communicate or come to judge the subject existentially: namely, through mood (which we have deemed as public, as transmissible, and as not belonging to the original self but the ‘second layer’ of ourselves, our public layer.) To encounter something circumspectively is to encounter its circumference, its perimeters which we are unable to penetrate. A circumference, something’s outermost boundary, allows us to walk around the periphery only in order to unavoidably end up where we began: a helpless existential circularity. But “phenomenological interpretation *must* make it possible for *Dasein* itself to disclose things primordially; it *must*, as it were, let *Dasein* interpret itself.”¹¹ But how, exactly, is a *Dasein* that relates to its underlying self as a mediating being able to relate primordially not only to its self, but primordially to others?

To relate to others primordially is not to merely respond to them circumspectively (walking around rather than through, as previously illustrated) but to first relate to one’s self primordially

⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *Op. Cit.*, 176. “Circumspection,” *Umsicht*, can be literally translated as a “looking-about.”

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 179, emphasis mine.

and to then propel (or will) one's self toward the other. In other words, primordial relation is achieved not through a passive receptivity of meaning that exists outside of your will, but the equiprimordial positing of one's own inherent meaning toward another.¹² Thus, two primordial projections can unify in a pure phenomenological naiveté: an innocent public-free purity, where the public sphere is annihilated not through a denouncing of the public and thereby through a mediated experience of language, but in utilizing what-is (words) to bring to the surface that which cannot be seen (primordial self).

The Problem of Inherent Meaning Independent of Personal Will

While it is the responsibility and duty of the self to both recognize and respond to the existence of meaning independent of personal will, the significance of the role of the individual will to simultaneously, consciously exert desire and/or need for this other individual has long been neglected. Responding to independent meaning without the conscious, driving force of personal will results in the dangerous subjecting of one's self to an 'arranged marriage' of meaning. Regardless of the inherent meaning existent in the other human being, by virtue of his/her having a world and being like us and thereby *open* or free for empathetic connection, we either can or cannot consciously respond to *our* will to love that person or not. One 'falls' in love and subjects him/herself to forces and meaning outside of one's control. But to fall in love is to maintain a state of *being* in love; a state of willfully *permitting* Dasein to not only circumspectively encounter another, but to consciously and actively figure out the ways of traveling to its midpoint only to find another door toward an even deeper center.

Primordial Dasein as Having Inherent Will

For Heidegger, the self underlying *Dasein* is ultimately rendered dead without the life breathed into it by mood. For Marion, it is the self without this underlying self that is dead. "Assurance" of being, for Marion, "is not to be confused with certainty."¹³ Assurance of being (where assurance might here mean purpose) comes only from what Marion calls the erotic reduction: the necessity of being to have the *possibility* of being loved by another. Marion's erotic reduction presupposes an inherent desire (a will) that is then projected toward others and acts as the enabling force for our responding to their inherent values. Meaning ceases

¹² The "equiprimordial," *Gleichursprünglich*, literally translated as "with equal primordiality."

¹³ Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon*, *Op. Cit.*, 23.

to be meaningful when it can't *not* be meaningful. In other words, we must ascribe to a radical definition of freedom when evaluating the role of personal will in the case of love. In fact, it *must* exist if true meaning is to exist at all.

However, this leaves us with the question of where, exactly, the will comes from. Though, in no way do I suggest Heidegger to be positing a will-less *Dasein*, the locality of it remains problematic when trapped within the world of moods: problems we've already here outlined. Marion states that "the lethargy insinuated by the question 'what does it matter' is dissipated when the elsewhere matters within me and thus matters to me."¹⁴ The radicalness of our freedom to desire and choose meaning, the erotic phenomenon, is what breeds uniqueness to *Dasein* and unties us, at last frees us, from the false illusion of a barren *Dasein* made meaningful only by what it garners in life. To strip away mood is to strip away publicness, but to leave behind a self-less self is not only death in the Heideggerian sense of having no being at all, but death in the sense of stripping away, with certainty, the point of being at all: the maintenance of radical individualism fueled only by our innate will to seek meaning not for its own sake (responding to meaning) but by creating it ('assuring' the self of purpose.)

The Life in Heideggerian Death: The Necessity of a Will that Desires to Be

For Heidegger, our confrontation with death "enables us to discover something about ourselves that remains more powerful than death, an aspect of the self (which he calls our 'ownmost ability-to-be') that does not go down with the shipwreck of our life-projects, but rather survives for as long as each of us do."¹⁵ It is this very confrontation with death that shows the necessary existence of an inherent will—a will to live not just for other people but for its self, for-its-own-sake. The antibody to the Nietzschean nihilistic age is built into us to thrust outward into our worlds as a counter-force against meaningless optimization and consumption by will-to-power during these 'death(s)' which propel us to live for life itself.

In these radical moments of confrontation we choose to choose the projects that define us. In Heidegger's two-fold process of the achievement of authenticity, we radically confront a self that must necessarily *will* to be, and thus inherently desire to be. *Entschlossenheit*, resolve, reconnects us to an existentially dead

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁵ Iain Thomson, "Rethinking Levinas on Heidegger on Death," *The Harvard Review of Philosophy* 16, 1 (2009): 29.

world by illuminating the necessary willpower inherent in the self to actively choose meaningful mattering, opposed to a more passive receptivity. This moment of resolve, where we are confronted with our self, must mean a radical confrontation with a willing self, a self that wills. If the self with which we were confronting was not, it would be a ‘dead’ self irreparably beyond salvation from an existential death where it would even have the possibility of resolve to re-comport itself toward a meaningful world and thus thrust itself into meaningful projects. It is only as a result that this “core volitional self which survives the collapse of its life-projects then finds itself able resolutely to reconnect to the world.”¹⁶

Conclusion

We must drastically redefine the spiritual union between man and world to mean not an inability to turn away from that which shows up as meaningful to us independent of our will to ascribe value to it, but the ability to disregard its meaning while *actively willing* not to. The tangled web of unavoidable subjectivity can be transcended only through this conscious recognition of this two-fold union of independent wills, which must necessarily have desire (an erotic disposition) to want to comport itself into the world and subject itself to the possibility of being loved, and thus of attaining assurance for being, where assurance means both from others and from our own, willing self.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

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SEAN DRISCOLL

Wittgenstein's Approach to Meaningful Philosophy that Makes No Sense

Throughout his philosophy, Wittgenstein constantly attempts to outline just what positive philosophy can and cannot meaningfully assert. Though his theories about meaningfulness certainly change from the *Tractatus* to the *Philosophical Investigations*, they remain the same in one respect: what philosophical language can meaningfully express is severely limited. Nevertheless, philosophers continue to find meaning in the very problems prohibited by Wittgenstein's conclusions. If all meaningful philosophical questions are not to be swallowed up by the closing gap created by Wittgenstein's philosophy, it might be necessary to abandon a strict dedication to positive philosophy. Though Wittgenstein is heralded as one of the most influential contemporary analytic philosophers, his philosophy ironically, yet insightfully, opens a space for philosophical problems to be approached by alternative methods. It could be that solving meaningful philosophical problems is not the responsibility of positive philosophy, but a job for another method.

“PHILOSOPHY IS A STRUGGLE AGAINST
THE BEWITCHMENT OF OUR UNDERSTANDING
BY THE RESOURCES OF OUR LANGUAGE”

—LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN¹

Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* challenges that “Most propositions and questions, that have been written about philosophical matters, are not false, but senseless” provokes any philosophically-minded person to question the possibility of meaningfulness in philosophical propositions.² We naturally want what we say to have meaning. We want to know that what we are talking about is true and verifiable. In both his early and later philosophy, what Wittgenstein means by sense, senselessness, and nonsense clarifies just what positive philosophy can and cannot meaningfully assert.³ Understanding these delineations and delimitations helps philosophy remain within the bounds of sense, but it also quickly establishes just how little can be positively asserted. Wittgenstein recognized philosophy's dwindling hold on philosophical problems and, through his transition from the *Tractatus* to the *Philosophical Investigations*, he greatly expanded his theory of what qualifies as meaningful language.. Nevertheless, his view on the essentially limited scope of language persisted. Though he attempts to establish what can be meaningfully said, Wittgenstein indirectly demonstrates the inadequacy of philosophy's traditional methods. He clarifies just how little sense a positive method can make of most philosophical problems and thus tacitly invites alternative approaches to philosophical issues. For both the early and later Wittgenstein, there are still boundaries positive philosophy cannot cross, and philosophical problems which remain “hallucination[s] of meaning.”⁴ By dismissing these problems as senseless or nonsense, Wittgenstein lays the foundation for philosophical method other than his own to make sense of philosophy.

In the *Tractatus*, statements that have sense say something about the world. Since the world consists of a combination of facts, a statement that correctly pictures those facts has sense. For

¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2009), §109.

² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C. K. Ogden (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1922), 4.003.

³ I use this terminology throughout the paper in order to distinguish philosophy's traditional “positive” or “ascertorial” method of addressing philosophical issues from other methods (such as negative or mystical) In doing so, I invite the connotation to positivism.

⁴ James Conant, “Wittgenstein on Meaning and Use,” *Philosophical Investigations* 21, 3 (1998): 247.

Wittgenstein, a proposition is a “picture of reality” or a “model of the reality as we think it is.”⁵ This picture-model of reality must have not only the correct pictorial content, but it must also be ordered in a correct way for it to be a true picture. According to Wittgenstein, the picture “consists in the fact that its elements are combined with one another in a definite way.”⁶ In other words, when “things are combined with one another as are the elements of the picture”—when the picture is ordered in the same way as reality—then “the picture is linked with reality.”⁷

Wittgenstein uses the picture theory “as a means to make clear the distinction between content ... and form”.⁸ A proposition’s content is comprised by facts about the world. Its form is the structure that allows the proposition to relate to its content. Wittgenstein describes that what “every picture ... must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it at all ... is the logical form, that is, the form of reality.”⁹ W. D. Hart claims that “Logical form is the form of both pictures and reality, since it is what the two must have in common in order for the former to depict, to be essentially and naturally connected with the latter.”¹⁰ That is how propositions are able to have sense: “propositions express their sense through sharing with reality a logical form.”¹¹

Expressing facts through the logical form of the world allows propositions to be verifiable; if something can be meaningfully said, it can also be meaningfully said to be true or false. Wittgenstein asserts that “The picture agrees with reality or not; it is right or wrong, true or false.”¹² Accordingly, pictures and corresponding propositions can be meaningfully true only when they correctly correspond to reality. Wittgenstein explains that “In order to discover whether the picture is true or false we must compare it with reality,”¹³ for, “It cannot be discovered from the picture alone whether it [the proposition] is true or false.”¹⁴ Only when the picture is verified by comparison with reality can we understand the proposition to be true or false. That is precisely why *most philosophical propositions do not have sense*—they do not correspond to the facts. They are “neither ‘empirical’ nor

⁵ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *Op. Cit.*, 4.01.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.14.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.151 and 2.1511, respectively.

⁸ Marie McGinn, “Between Metaphysics and Nonsense: Elucidation in Wittgenstein’s Tractatus,” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 49, 197 (1999): 500.

⁹ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *Op. Cit.*, 2.18.

¹⁰ W. D. Hart, “The Whole Sense of the Tractatus,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 68, 9 (1971): 278.

¹¹ Michael Kremer, “The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense,” *NOÛS* 35, 1 (2001): 43.

¹² Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *Op. Cit.*, 2.21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2.223.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.224.

'logical', they are, according to Wittgenstein, attempts to say things that cannot be said."¹⁵

In attempting to articulate that which cannot be said, philosophy makes propositions without sense. While propositions with sense correspond to facts in the world (and are thus true), the *senseless* propositions of philosophy have no such correspondence or truth-value: "a proposition without a sense corresponds to nothing at all, or it signifies no thing whose properties are called 'false' or 'true.'"¹⁶ Instead of asserting facts, senseless propositions assert nothing about the world; they are what we call tautologies and contradictions; they merely show the proposition's internal correspondence and logical form. In other words, "It is the characteristic mark of logical propositions that one can perceive in the symbol alone that they are true"¹⁷—these propositions can be seen as true or false solely by virtue of having correct or incorrect internal structure. They are not true *of* the world. Wittgenstein explains: "Tautology and contradiction are without sense (I know, e.g. nothing about the weather, when I know that it rains or does not rain.)"¹⁸

So, does the statement "it rains or does not rain" say anything? As Wittgenstein remarks, we certainly do not learn anything about the weather. Instead of saying, this type of proposition *shows*. According to Wittgenstein, "The propositions of logic demonstrate the logical properties of propositions, by combining them into propositions which say nothing."¹⁹ At least this fruitless pursuit of saying nothing clarifies language. Tautologies and contradictions say nothing about the world, but they do demonstrate (or show) logical form. Thus, "What *can* be shown *cannot* be said"—no meaningful propositions can express or explain logical form, rather, "what language cannot say, it shows in its very deployment."²⁰

In the *Tractatus*' model, language *cannot* be used to explain meaning. Why are statements that attempt such explanation senseless? The early Wittgenstein believes that "To be able to represent the logical form, we should have to be able to put ourselves with the propositions outside logic, that is outside the world."²¹ Such would be impossible. Kremer explains how "We cannot use propositions to say what this logical form is. To do

¹⁵ K. T. Fann, *Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1969), 23.

¹⁶ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *Op. Cit.*, 4.063.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.113.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.461.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.121, emphasis mine.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.1212 and Judith Genova, *Wittgenstein: A Way of Seeing*, (New York: Routledge, 1995), 101, respectively.

²¹ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *Op. Cit.*, 4.12.

so, we would need to step outside logical form, but this would be to step beyond the bounds within which meaningful discourse can occur.”²² Wittgenstein calls such meaningless statements senseless—that is why statements about logical form cannot be said. They make no sense. So, though “Propositions cannot represent the logical form,” such form nevertheless “mirrors itself in the propositions.”²³ The propositions do not *say* anything about the logical form; rather, they “show the logical form of reality. They exhibit it.”²⁴

If propositions show logical form, then propositions *about* logical form are entirely without sense and unnecessary; philosophy need not waste its breath. According to Wittgenstein, “The picture ... cannot represent its form of representation” because propositions which attempt such representation make no sense.²⁵ This eliminates the truthfulness of many philosophical statements. According to Wittgenstein, “we can get on without logical propositions [they say nothing anyway], for we can recognize in an adequate notation the formal properties of the propositions by mere inspection.”²⁶ We need no “philosophical” discourse. In fact, “Theories which make a proposition of logic appear substantial are always false”—they are senseless.²⁷

Nevertheless, propositions of “Tautology and contradiction are ... not nonsensical”—they at least *show*.²⁸ On the other hand, nonsensical propositions neither *say* nor *show*. Unlike propositions with sense, which can be empirically verified, nonsensical claims cannot be measured with reality because they fail to establish a link between names and objects. Kremer explains, “Nonsense arises when we construct apparent sentences containing meaningless words—words for which we have failed to make a determination of meaning.”²⁹ Nonsensical statements use words that have no sense and attempt to talk about that which can only be shown. According to Genova, “Their attempt to say things that ... underlie the existence of things or rise above them ... results in a failed attempt to say what can only be shown or what cannot be expressed at all.”³⁰ Furthermore, besides failing to have meaningful content, some nonsensical statements also fail to have correct logical form. They appear both to *say* and *show*, but they semantically and syntactically deceive. For

²² Kremer, “The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense,” *Op. Cit.*, 43.

²³ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *Op. Cit.*, 4.121.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.121.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.172.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.122.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.111.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.4611.

²⁹ Kremer, “The Purpose of Tractarian Nonsense,” *Op. Cit.*, 41-42.

³⁰ Genova, *Wittgenstein: A Way of Seeing*, *Op. Cit.*, 103.

Wittgenstein, much of philosophy neither says anything about the world nor shows anything about logical form.

Since most philosophy, according to the early Wittgenstein, is either senseless or nonsensical, how can philosophy avoid becoming deceptively meaningless nonsense? In the *Tractatus*' model, positive philosophy could stay within the boundaries of sense and at least make senseless propositions, that is, it could make apparently meaningful propositions which say nothing but which nevertheless show logical form. Nevertheless, "there is not much mileage in mouthing tautologies."³¹ If philosophy wishes to make meaningful claims, its propositions must have more than flawless logical form. They must also correspond to the facts in reality. But, most philosophical problems transcend simple empirical statements and consequently fail to establish the necessary link—it fails to correctly depict the facts.

But can language ever correctly represent the facts in that way? According to the *Tractatus*, language consists of sentences that stand for propositions and propositions then correspond to facts in reality (or a state of affairs). Wittgenstein allows for this to happen in the *Tractatus* by dividing the proposition to its most basic level—where names correspond to objects. At this level, it is apparent whether or not the language used correctly depicts the facts (and thus has sense). Eventually, it became evident for Wittgenstein that this model cannot account for the use of all words. What object, for example, does an adverb correspond to? Or a logical operator? This atomic model of meaning cannot explain how all language gets meaning because propositions are never totally independent. At some point, it makes no sense to further divide elements of language. To illustrate, Wittgenstein writes in his *Philosophical Investigations* that "It makes no sense at all to speak absolutely of the 'simple parts of a chair'.³² At what point of division do the parts of a chair cease to be relevantly related to a chair? Similarly with language, the parts eventually become meaningless when further divided from the whole. Though "the linchpin of the logic of the *Tractatus* had been the independence of the elementary proposition," analysis can never reach a level where an atomic proposition can be independently compared to reality.³³ If no such comparison can be made, then, according to the early Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* model, making statements that have sense is impossible!

³¹ *Ibid.*, 103.

³² Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Op. Cit., §47.

³³ P. M. S. Hacker and G. P. Baker, *Wittgenstein: An Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations*, Vol. 1, *Understanding and Meaning* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 45.

Furthermore, the *Tractatus* assumes that all meaningful language is a matter of making true or false statements. Wittgenstein directed his analysis this way in order to account for the nature of logic. But, logic itself has no absolute standard—at least, Wittgenstein finds that it has no source of external verification. Thus, the question of meaning in language is not an absolute question; language can have meaning even if it does not make an empirically true statement. More importantly, language does not usually even run into problems of meaning. Language does not struggle to have meaning, but to be appropriate or relevant. Subsequently, Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* develops a much more comprehensive theory of meaning.

Though they remain central distinctions in the attempt to understand how language is meaningfully used, in the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein modifies the scope of sense, senselessness, and nonsense. He does not, however, understand the root of philosophical problems differently. Ronald Suter explains that:

For Wittgenstein, then, so-called philosophical problems are always seen as symptomatic of some conceptual confusion. There are never genuine problems, because nothing can count as an answer or solution to them. The fact that we cannot conceive of a satisfying solution to such alleged problems suggests there is something wrong with them. Philosophy—done the right way—shows what that is; it dissolves the problem and cures us of the temptation to raise it.³⁴

As in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein continues to believe in the *Philosophical Investigations* that philosophical problems result from misunderstanding the logic of our language. To say anything meaningful in philosophy requires overcoming these misunderstandings. Instead of basing language on a logical system of correspondence, Wittgenstein spends the *Philosophical Investigations* showing how language, which involves more than just propositions, needs a theory that is not based on correspondence, but on use.

Wittgenstein adopted the correspondence-based theory of meaning in the *Tractatus* in order to provide an ontology of meaning. In that model, it becomes possible to make a statement about reality when names stand for objects—as such, the meaning of a word is what it corresponds to in reality. But is such ostensive definition the *means* whereby language is

³⁴ Ronald Suter, *Interpreting Wittgenstein: A Cloud of Philosophy, a Drop of Grammar* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 11.

connected with reality? P. M. S. Hacker claims that “If one thinks that the essence of words is to name things, and that naming is correlating a word with the thing it means, then it is natural to suppose that the mechanism whereby simple indefinable names are thus correlated with their meanings is ostensive definition.”³⁵ But is the essence of words simply to name *things*? After writing the *Tractatus*, it became clear to Wittgenstein that his system could not account for words which obviously have meaning and yet correspond to no object. What object, for example, does the word “rapidly” identify? Thus, Wittgenstein’s “ontology collapsed, and with it the whole idea of a ‘connection between language and reality’”—at least for positive philosophy.³⁶

Instead of advocating another philosophical method, Wittgenstein modified how he understood the connection between language and reality. According to the *Tractatus*, this connection is bound up in a logical structure. Language participates in this logical structure in order to make sense. For the early Wittgenstein, this logical structure lies behind our messy, everyday language. He claims that “in order to avoid” the errors caused by everyday language’s inadequacy, “we must employ a symbolism which ... obeys the rules of logical grammar—of logical syntax.”³⁷ In other words, everyday language is too ambiguous to properly use the logical structure of language—formal notation is required to overcome this disconnect.

This concept of a metaphysical relation of syntax to reality does not continue into Wittgenstein’s later philosophy. Rather, “It rapidly became clear that the conception of language as a calculus was defective.”³⁸ For Wittgenstein, this “calculus” model of language is incomplete because everyday language does have meaning. Hacker claims that:

The picture of ordinary language adumbrated in the *Tractatus* is of a deceptive surface grammar concealing the true logical forms of logical grammar. Natural languages are in good logical order. For nothing can be said, nothing can be represented in a language, *without* the language being in a good logical order. For there are no degrees of sense. A sentence can no more make a

³⁵ Hacker and Baker, *Wittgenstein, Op. Cit.*, 81.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁷ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, Op. Cit.*, 3.325.

³⁸ Hacker and Baker, *Wittgenstein, Op. Cit.*, 50.

little bit of sense than a child can be a little bit illegitimate.³⁹

What would a statement that only has some sense be? Is that not just another way of saying that the statement does not have sense? Our ordinary language makes sense, despite its ambiguity—or perhaps even because of it. Wittgenstein explains:

... every sentence in our language ‘is in order as it is’. That is to say, we are not *striving after* an ideal, as if our ordinary vague sentences had not yet got a quite unexceptionable sense, and a perfect language still had to be constructed by us.—On the other hand, it seems clear that where there is sense, there must be perfect order.—So there must be perfect order even in the vaguest sentence.⁴⁰

That perfect order lies within even ordinary language. Philosophers do not have to go outside of language to some ideal mode of expression in order to understand language’s structure. Perfect notation is not a prerequisite to meaningful language.

We use and understand ordinary language every day. According to Wittgenstein’s thought in the *Philosophical Investigations*, ordinary languages are in the best logical order for what they attempt to accomplish. We are only “under the illusion that what is peculiar, profound and essential ... resides in trying to grasp the incomparable essence of language.”⁴¹ But, no such search is necessary. We use language; it works for us. Wittgenstein claims that, in order to understand language, “our considerations must not be scientific ones And we [must] not advance any kind of theory.”⁴² Thus, “we come to understand how our language functions, not by means of a speculative model of language acquisition, but by paying attention to what is actually involved in a speaker’s acquiring a mastery of the practical ability to use the language.”⁴³

This descriptivism is certainly at odds with the search for logical structure that Wittgenstein elaborated in the *Tractatus*. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein does not completely abandon the idea that language has a certain structure. If that is so, then “what becomes of logic now? Its rigor seems to be giving way

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴⁰ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *Op. Cit.*, §98.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, §97.

⁴² *Ibid.*, §109.

⁴³ McGinn, “Between Metaphysics and Nonsense”, *Op. Cit.*, 65.

here.—But in that case doesn't logic altogether disappear?"⁴⁴ The logic of the *Tractatus* may well disappear, but the logic of what Wittgenstein calls "grammar" replaces it.

This sharp change from the *Tractatus* to the *Philosophical Investigations* fundamentally influences what can make sense. For Wittgenstein, "the rules of grammar ... determine what makes sense They are constitutive of the meaning of expressions."⁴⁵ By following how language meaningfully functions, what is grammatically correct makes sense. Nevertheless, as James Conant points out:

... what early Wittgenstein calls the logic of language and what later Wittgenstein calls grammar is not the name of a grid of rules we lay over language in order to point out where one or another of its prescriptions are violated. A grammatical investigation is a converging of our criteria for the employment of a particular concept.⁴⁶

Grammar is not a prescribed or imposed rule-system for language. Rather, grammar informs the rules of correctness which are extrapolated from language use. This concept of grammar "is common between the 'grammatician' and the philosopher—it is simply that the two have different interests The philosopher is interested in *all* of the constitutive rules of language, the grammatician only in a narrow class of them."⁴⁷

Wittgenstein encourages philosophers to be interested in grammatical investigations because language's sense is bound up in its grammar. According to O'Neil, "The rules of grammar determine the limits of sense, and hence are antecedent to judgments of truth or falsity ... for truth and falsity can only operate *within* the bounds of sense."⁴⁸ That is why Wittgenstein says that his "inquiry therefore is a grammatical one. And this inquiry sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away."⁴⁹ Many of those misunderstandings are philosophical problems which, when examined clearly, disappear. Language is not misunderstood if it is correctly placed in grammar. It has meaning according to that placement.

⁴⁴ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *Op. Cit.*, §108.

⁴⁵ Hacker and Baker, *Wittgenstein*, *Op. Cit.*, 48.

⁴⁶ Conant, "Wittgenstein on Meaning and Use," *Op. Cit.*, 249.

⁴⁷ Martin O'Neil, "Explaining 'The Hardness of the Logical Must': Wittgenstein on Grammar, Arbitrariness and Logical Necessity," *Philosophical Investigations* 24, 1 (2001): 2.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁹ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *Op. Cit.*, §90.

Because grammar's placement rules appeal to no essential or logical super-order, Wittgenstein describes them in terms of "language-games." The concept of a game describes the workings of language more adequately than a calculus. Like language, games have no unifying rule or objective. Instead, Wittgenstein uses language-games "as *objects of comparison* which, through similarities and dissimilarities, are meant to throw light on features of our language."⁵⁰ In the place of a unifying ideology, "we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing."⁵¹ In games, this interweaving "is *not* closed by a boundary."⁵² In other words, there is no exact definition of a game. It does not take an exact definition to make a concept *usable*. Instead, the concept of a game is explained by giving examples. Giving examples in this way is not "an *indirect* way of explaining," but rather, "a better one."⁵³

Understanding language in light of games better shows how language can have sense (and how language use accounts make *more* sense than in the *Tractatus*). The philosopher ought to thus be interested in the study of language-games "In order to clarify meaning and to distinguish between sense and nonsense."⁵⁴ Because words have sense when they function grammatically in language, Wittgenstein claims that "the meaning of a word is its use in the language."⁵⁵ The meaning of a word is not the object for which it stands, but the way it is *used*. To describe a word's role in a language-game is to know how that word is used; to know the use of the word is to know its meaning. So, what has sense is what contributes in the overall use of language.

This broadening of the categories of sense is encouraging to positive philosophers. But, Wittgenstein also broadens his views of senselessness and nonsense. In the *Tractatus*, senseless propositions fail to have meaning because they do not correspond to anything in the world. Rather, the tautological or contradictory structure of senseless propositions shows the logical form of the proposition. Like senselessness in the *Tractatus*, statements without sense in the *Philosophical Investigations* are syntactically correct, but empirically disconnected. They appear to make sense because their form is linguistically correct, but are senseless because they do not mean anything as empirical statements. For example, the sentence "this is called a chainsaw" is a correctly formed sentence, but it asserts nothing (empirically) about the world. Also, while the

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, §130.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, §66.

⁵² *Ibid.*, §68.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, §71.

⁵⁴ Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein* (London: Allen Lane and The Penguin Press, 1973), 164.

⁵⁵ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *Op. Cit.*, §43.

Tractatus' senseless statements show logical form, in the *Philosophical Investigations*, senseless statements show grammatical form. The sentence “this is called a chainsaw,” though it asserts nothing empirically, *shows* how the word “chainsaw” is to be used. This is why Wittgenstein claims that “When a sentence is called senseless, it is not, as it were, its sense that is senseless.”⁵⁶ That is, language is still useful (and thus meaningful) in a senseless proposition because it shows its grammatical employment.

But should philosophy be content that its propositions are useful for the clarifying of language use? It could be worse: Wittgenstein further limits the value of philosophical discourse with his updated versions of nonsense; he still believes that there are many philosophical statements that neither say anything meaningful nor show anything meaningful. Like in the *Tractatus*, he calls these statements nonsense. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Nonsensical propositions neither say anything meaningful about the world nor are they correctly ordered—but they appear to be both. A sentence that is grammatically correct, but employs meaningless words, is nonsense because of *semantics*. Like the verses in Lewis Carroll’s “Jabberwocky,” meaningless words used in a correctly ordered sentence give the sentence no meaning. On the other hand, a sentence that uses words that have meaning in an incorrect structure is *syntactical* nonsense. Philosophy that is guilty of this “takes a perfectly good notion ... and uses it in a way not allowed by its grammar.”⁵⁷ In the *Tractatus*, syntactical nonsense was divided from sense by the rules of logic. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, nonsense is divided from sense by the rules of grammar. In both books, meaningful words incorrectly employed constitute nonsense—the gravest danger to positive philosophy.

Though he continues to embrace these characteristics of nonsense, Wittgenstein broadens his use of the term in a way more relevant to philosophers. What Wittgenstein comes to call “philosophical nonsense” is without sense for reasons neither syntactic nor semantic. Nonsensical statements of this kind are syntactically and semantically possible, but would be asserted neither as an empirical nor a grammatical remark. For example, a sentence like “numbers exist” certainly shows how words are supposed to work, but the words *do not work* as they are shown. Grammatically, this sentence is supposed to show how the words “numbers” and “exist” can function in language. The problem with this sentence is not its grammatical construction (both words *can* be used in the way that they are written). Rather, the

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, §500.

⁵⁷ Steven Hall, “Book Review: Wittgenstein’s Private Language: Grammar, Nonsense, and Imagination in *Philosophical Investigations* §§243–315 by Stephen Mulhall” *Philosophical Investigations* 31, 3 (2008): 278.

problem with this sentence is that it is not used as if it were merely a grammatical remark; it is used as if it were an empirical assertion (as such, both words cannot be used in the way that they are written). Though the sentence is intended as an empirical claim, it cannot be verified as one. The words “numbers” and “exist” simply do not meaningfully function together in the way the sentence has ordered them. This kind of nonsense mistakes grammatical remarks for empirical ones. It cannot function in either science or philosophy—or in any kind of meaningful communication. Rather, this “most common form of philosophical nonsense arises not when a word is being used outside any language-game at all, but when it is used in a language-game other than the one appropriate to it (often the language-game misleadingly suggested by its surface grammar).”⁵⁸ Most philosophical nonsense results from an attempt to assert something out of its appropriate context. Almost all philosophical problems, then, result from the ultimate misunderstanding of our language.

If philosophers are concerned about making meaningful statements, they must learn to recognize and avoid philosophical nonsense—a decision that could subject them to some severe limitations. According to Conant, “Wittgenstein’s reasons for proposing that we explicitly exclude an expression from the language are ... because ‘we are tempted to confuse’ the expression on occasions on which it occurs senselessly with meaningful propositions of our language.”⁵⁹ This is what Wittgenstein means when he claims that “The confusions which occupy us arise when language is, as it were, idling, not when doing its work.”⁶⁰ That is, when language is not stretching to use words outside of their appropriate sphere, it will not fall into nonsensical confusions. Philosophical nonsense results from “Misunderstandings concerning the use of words” which are “brought about ... by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of our language.”⁶¹ When we are using language appropriately, we will have no such confusions. But, as occurs almost systematically in philosophy, when we attempt to impose concepts on inappropriate language-games, we will fall into nonsense.

We want to be able to talk about the world meaningfully. If Wittgenstein is correct, then philosophical nonsense is the greatest obstacle to philosophers being able to do so. In fact, if Wittgenstein is correct, then most philosophical discourse inevitably succumbs to this obstacle and fails to meaningfully

⁵⁸ Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, *Op. Cit.*, 164.

⁵⁹ Conant, “Wittgenstein on Meaning and Use,” *Op. Cit.*, 246.

⁶⁰ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *Op. Cit.*, §132.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, §90.

confront philosophical problems. Despite Wittgenstein's categorical expansions, the essential limitations of philosophy remain from the *Tractatus* to the *Philosophical Investigations*: the boundaries of our language leave positive philosophy with little or nothing it can meaningfully do. In light of such exacting restrictions, important philosophical problems are snuffed.

Though Wittgenstein deems many philosophical problems worthy of abandonment, philosophers nevertheless seem to find meaning in their pursuit. Have centuries of philosophers been engaged in meaningful philosophical discourse, or have they really just pursued an illusion? Have their pursuits resulted in nothing more than the clarification of logic and language's boundaries? Positive philosophers who accept Wittgenstein's conclusions but intend to continue pursuit of the same questions are implicitly committed to either modify or leave their method. If philosophers wish to ensure that they are expressing themselves meaningfully *within* the more analytic traditional method, then, according to Wittgenstein, they must first discern the "unobvious nonsense [from] obvious nonsense."⁶² But as more and more conversations which once were considered meaningful are categorized by Wittgensteinian philosophy as "obvious nonsense," philosophers are bound to wonder just how far an analytic method can lead. If Wittgenstein is correct about just how little positive philosophy can meaningfully say, then it will be the job of another method to find meaning in the "obvious nonsense." For, if Wittgenstein is correct, losing philosophy in a mirage of meaning is an intrinsic danger—at least for positive philosophy.

⁶² *Ibid.*, §464.

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ADAM SHATSKY

Korsakoff's Embodiment: The Inseparability of Experience and Ideas

This article undertakes an examination of Korsakoff's psychosis through Maurice Merleau-Ponty's account of embodiment, *i.e.*, being-in-the-world, and argues its success over accounts from Empiricism and Intellectualism. In his *Phenomenology of Perception*, which articulates the theory of embodied perception, Merleau-Ponty cites the Schneider case, phantom limbs, and anosognosia as counterexamples to Empiricism and Intellectualism. By carefully expounding on these clinical cases, he claims to have their more sufficient account with his theory of being-in-the-world. The current examination applies a medical case that Merleau-Ponty does not address: Korsakoff's psychosis. Korsakoff's is a cognitive dysfunction, primarily caused by alcoholism; its main symptom is severe retrograde amnesia. My approach in this article parallels *Phenomenology of Perception* by explaining Korsakoff's from a Merleau-Pontyeian stance by similarly refuting Empiricism and Intellectualism on the grounds that experience and ideas are not ontologically separate, but instead mutually dependent on one another, and are thus epistemologically inseparable. I conclude that Merleau-Ponty provides the framework for a sufficient account for Korsakoff's psychosis: his theory of embodiment allows for a localization of Korsakoff's that is congruent with the medical definition.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty was a 20th century existential phenomenologist who changed the way we understand perception.¹ In *Phenomenology of Perception*, he makes extensive use of examples of psychological and physiological disorders such as the Schneider case, phantom limbs, and anosognosia, none of which, he claims, can be explained psychologically or physiologically.² Thus, for Merleau-Ponty, the use of these examples highlight certain inconsistencies for an explanation of a philosophical phenomenon or medical explanation of the disorder. He claims that these syndromes can be explained through his account of embodied perception. But what would Merleau-Ponty's account be regarding a subject with severe retrograde amnesia? A subject who is unable to generate new memories, has difficulty remembering old ones, and consequently fills in the gaps with ingenious confabulation³—a subject who has Korsakoff's psychosis.⁴ Oliver Sacks, a physician, author, and neurologist, has performed numerous case studies involving intriguing patients with neurological disorders, one of whom has Korsakoff's. Sacks refers to him as "Jimmie G." Using Merleau-Ponty's approach in *Phenomenology of Perception*, I will argue that neither Intellectualism nor Empiricism have a sufficient account for the phenomenon of Korsakoff's psychosis by appealing to Merleau-Ponty's account of bodily being-in-the-world, i.e., embodiment. In addition to Merleau-Ponty's embodied perception, memory will show that experience and ideas are not ontologically separate but, instead, mutually dependent on one another and are, thus, epistemologically inseparable.

I. The Lost High Schooler

Avoiding a long, drawn out medical explanation, suppose the following situation. It is the year 2011 and you receive a patient from another hospital with a file reading "helpless, demented, confused, and disoriented."⁵ You expect this patient to radiate these qualities because dementia and confusion in a patient are unlikely to hide themselves. However, when you walk in your office, you find a "fine-looking man, with a curly brush of gray

¹ I am indebted to Malachi Sullivan and Matt Sanderson for their inspiration and critical analysis of this work.

² Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Routledge Classics, 2002).

³ Stanley Robbins, Ramzi Cotran, Vinay Kumar, *Pathologic Basis of Disease* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1984), 1421.

⁴ Korsakoff's psychosis is a dysfunction in the nervous system principally caused by a thiamine deficiency that is most often caused by alcoholism and malnutrition. For a thorough medical discussion, c.f., "Nutritional, Environmental, and Metabolic Disorders," *Ibid*.

⁵ For a discussion on the following case, c.f., "The Lost Mariner" in Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales* (New York: Touchstone, 1998), 23-42, 24.

hair, a healthy and handsome forty-nine-year-old. He [is] cheerful, friendly, and warm.”⁶ Suddenly, you become the one who is confused. How can it be that the file you read refers to this man who is sitting in front of you? To clear up your perplexity, you begin to question him: “Where are you from? Where did you go to high school?” and “tell me about your past.” You notice he is giving very detailed responses to all of your questions. It seems that the transfer file must have been a mistake; it clearly does not describe this particular man. You, however, further notice something rather interesting. He answers your questions about his past as if they were in the present. When asking him of his freshman year, he speaks only within the past tense, but when asking him about his later years in high school, he talks as if he is no older than a junior. His change in tense from past to present did not represent a “fictitious present tense of recall, but the actual present tense of immediate experience.”⁷ The confusion continues to overwhelm you. You could not have mistaken the change in tense, and, thus, you ask him how old he is. He responds, rather hastily, “I’ll be 19 this winter.” You continue with, “What year is it?” “It is ... ‘90. Yes, 1990.” You hand him a mirror. His reflection shows an older man, one who *is* “helpless, demented, confused and disoriented.”⁸ You decide to draw his attention to the window to look out at the natural surroundings. Strangely, by the time he looks back, he has no recollection of the conversation or who you are.

In order to grasp the full experience of Korsakoff’s, it is important to imagine oneself not merely as an onlooker to the situation, but as the patient himself. You are answering mundane questions about yourself, such as relating how old you are. It is clearly 1990, and you are clearly 19. However, something horrifying happens. You are handed a mirror to look into, and reflected back at you is a full grown man with gray hair and there are even wrinkles to be found on your face. This is not a soon to be 19 year old; this is not you. Your doctor directs your attention to the birds sitting on the tree outside of his office. You look back and suddenly you find yourself sitting with a man you do not know, and you cannot recollect how you have gotten where you are. He may even ask you questions such as “how old are you?” and you will simply tell him “19” without hesitation.

II. Intellectualism or Empiricism

The intuitive analysis of the phenomenon of this syndrome would seem to favor an Empiricist account. A subject who, as Sacks

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

states, “was a man without roots, or rooted only in the remote past ... had been reduced to a ‘Humean’ being ... a gruesome reduction of a man to mere disconnected, incoherent flux and change.”⁹ The syndrome does disconnect a subject from the present, but not, as I will show, in the same way an Empiricist like Hume would claim.¹⁰ The underlying assumption for an Empiricist is that experience comes first, and, from there, one learns to develop ideas or concepts. Without the experience of sense data, Empiricism argues, one cannot form the ideas or concepts one typically comes to know. There are two reasons why this epistemological distinction of experience preceding ideas or concepts is quite controversial. First, in a cognitively healthy being, there should be a direct relation between experience and ideas. However, for example, an infant can experience the sensation of redness but never subsequently develop the idea of redness, so there is not necessarily any relationship—much less a direct and necessary relationship—between the experience and the idea of it. Second, for a subject with Korsakoff’s, it would seem as though they *could* be this “Humean” being, as Sacks states, however, this is a superficial explanation for an Empiricist because it cannot account for the memory of the subject. An Empiricist would have to argue that there is a problem with the subject’s senses, or that the dysfunction lies within the perception of sense data after a certain age. But, a subject with Korsakoff’s experiences the world just as we do; his or her senses are all intact. Such subjects are still within the world, interacting, experiencing sense data, but there is some cognitive dysfunction, for which Empiricism cannot account.

In sum, Empiricism says that impression X, which can be any sense experience whatsoever, comes first, and from impression X one develops ideas or concepts that then allows one to know something about X. Korsakoff’s is very difficult to explain if one assumes this epistemological position. An Empiricist would need a new explanation for the phenomenon of memory being directly related to experience. It tries to account for this by arguing that the dysfunction lies in the loss of experiencing sense data after a certain age. However, a subject with Korsakoff’s does not perceive or experience sense data at a particular moment any differently than a subject whose sense data is intact. Since the account for an Empiricist states that the dysfunction lies in the senses, the explanation is not sufficient.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁰ Despite Sacks’ pun about Jimmie being “reduced to a ‘Humean’ being,” he is only implying that he is a seemingly selfless (or soulless) character, invoking Empiricist ideas in general, and not Hume’s philosophy specifically; thus, I, too, will speak of Empiricism in general, and not pursue just the arguments introduced by Hume.

Seeing that an Empiricist account could not explain the dysfunction in the correct manner, I will now turn to a discussion for an Intellectualist account. An Intellectualist argument for the phenomenon of perception is opposite of the Empiricist's. It claims that ideas or concepts are essentially innate. For an Intellectualist, ideas or concepts precede experience. This metaphysical distinction, like that of the Empiricist's, is unclear. For a cognitively healthy being, an Intellectualist claims that a subject must say that he or she has some idea or concept of, for example, where my coffee cup is, and that idea or concept helps me navigate the experience. The Intellectualist would say it is not the case that he or she learns where my coffee cup is by means of experience. To go back to the idea of redness in regards to Intellectualism, I must first posses the idea of redness to know the sense experience that I am having is an example or instance of that particular idea. As for a subject with Korsakoff's, the Intellectualist would say that the innate ideas or concepts are scrambled, and, as a result, the subject is unable to reason properly. However, one objection would be that despite the subject's amnesia, he or she often reasons properly due to ingenious confabulation. So, the result of a subject's scrambled ideas or concepts should be that it is possible for an amnestic subject to not reason properly. A second objection would be that Intellectualism reinforces mind-body dualism even more with the explanation of Korsakoff's. Thus, Intellectualists overlook the reality of past experience playing a role in the ideas or concepts one possesses, which would seem reasonable for a subject with Korsakoff's. For an Intellectualist, what is overlooked is the role that experience plays when we interact with the world. In sum, Intellectualism says that this conceptual schema is innate (exactly opposite of the Empiricist), making Korsakoff's very difficult to explain due to the fact that it is not a dysfunction that leaves a subject scrambled with his or her ideas.

Neither Empiricism nor Intellectualism adequately account for the importance of memory being directly related to experience and the intelligence of the subject. There is no distinction between us and the world. The phenomenon needs not to be explained via sense data. Instead we are in the world, i.e., embodied. Merleau-Ponty overcomes this issue of the gap between experience and ideas by saying that neither one is primary or exists independent of the other. Thus, experience and ideas are the wrong distinctions to use when making sense of human existence. Merleau-Ponty claims that we are already in the world by means of our bodies and, as such, we can never truly separate ideas from experience or experience from ideas.

III. Constituents of Being-in-the-World

Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* is broken into three major sections concentrating on: "(1) the subject who experiences, (2) the object of the experience, and (3) the relationship between the subject and object."¹¹ For (1), the subject of perceptual experience is the body. For (2), the object of perceptual experience is the world. And, for (3), the relationship between the subject and the other is consciousness.¹² Thus, the body's ability to perceptually experience the world is made possible through a consciousness that is a fundamentally bodily consciousness. However, this consciousness is between the world that we are in and the body. There is a bodily consciousness that is the unity between the two—there is no distinction. This is a unity of the senses that Empiricism and Intellectualism cannot account for because the latter does not typically account for the senses and the former treats the senses as objects in the world. Embodied perception allows for a new treatment of the senses as our way of experiencing the world. Perceptual experiences are not objects to be separated from the world, but, again, part of us, and vital to our experience.

Another constituent of embodied perception is habit or habitual action. Habit is a manifestation of our being-in-the-world.¹³ The ability to form new memories, for Merleau-Ponty, is not always necessary for habitual action. Instead, bodily consciousness is apt to a familiarity by means of habitual action. As Merleau-Ponty states, "The body is our general medium for having a world."¹⁴ Through habitual action, the body can understand meanings that are in the world and, thus, the subject is able to have access to these meanings. But, it is not necessary that the subject must be aware of these meanings, due to the fact that the body can have awareness independent of the subject's awareness. Thus, Merleau-Ponty's account for bodily consciousness is not necessarily separate from cognitive intentionality, but cognitive intentionality is not a necessary condition for bodily consciousness.

In sum, there are two elements that I am discussing here: first, the unity of perceptual experience and the body; and, second, the ability to understand meanings through habitual actions. I will first pursue this latter element, and its relation to Korsakoff's, because this is the aspect that is most evident in Sacks' case study. As Sacks states:

¹¹ George Marshall, *A Guide to Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2008), 94.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, *Op. Cit.*, 166.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 169.

Jimmie began to form “a sense of familiarity;” he slowly learned his way around the home—the whereabouts of the dinning room, his own room, the elevators, the stairs, and in some sense recognized some of the staff, although he confused them, and perhaps had to do so, with people from the past. He soon became fond of the nursing sister in the Home; he recognized her voice, her footfalls, immediately, but would always say that she had been a fellow pupil at his high school, and was greatly surprised when I addressed her as “Sister.”¹⁵

Regardless of Jimmie’s inability to remember something for more than a minute, his bodily consciousness gained a “sense of familiarity” with the hospital via habit. Jimmie was able to function accordingly through his daily routines—despite his syndrome. The paradoxical question that arises is: how was he able to remember, or, at the very least, recognize, the layout of the hospital and the voices of some of the staff while suffering from Korsakoff’s? Merleau-Ponty’s account for habitual action seems to be congruent with Sacks’ observation of Jimmie’s “sense of familiarity.” Jimmie’s development of this “sense of familiarity” identifies the controversial aspect of his memory loss, that aspect for which Merleau-Ponty’s analysis of habitual action most persuasively accounts. The cognitive function of forming new memories is not necessary for acquiring a “sense of familiarity,” since Jimmie was able to “slowly learn his way around the home.”¹⁶ This “sense of familiarity” is, it seems, only possible because we act within the world; and by acting within the world, we can gain a “sense of familiarity”—even despite Korsakoff’s psychosis.

IV. Radical Reflection’s Localization

To conclude that Merleau-Ponty’s account for embodied perception best fits the explanation of Korsakoff’s psychosis, I must return to and further the discussion of the unity of perceptual experience and the body.

The unity of the senses cannot be accounted for by Empiricism or Intellectualism because both are fundamentally flawed in their metaphysical claims of experience preceding ideas or ideas preceding experience. As a result of their revealed failures, Merleau-Ponty claims that this unity, as is between the senses, can only be accounted for through realizing our essence is as

¹⁵ Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, Op. Cit., 34.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

being-in-the-world and experiencing it. This realization is “radical reflection,” which is provoked when we try to reflect upon prereflective consciousness: “Radical reflection is what takes hold of me as I am in the act of forming and formulating the ideas of subject and object, and brings to light the source of these two ideas ...”¹⁷ We realize, he writes, that “Sensations, ‘sensible qualities’ are then far from being reducible to a certain indescribable state or quale; they present themselves with a motor physiognomy, and are enveloped in a living significance.”¹⁸ This unity of the senses is what accounts for the subject’s “living significance,” that fact of constantly being-in-the-world and experiencing it.

Since the problem with Intellectualism and Empiricism, as George Marshall explains:

... is a problem that arises from the very nature of reflection and its relation to experience. To overcome the problems involved in this controversy, we must be clear about the fact that there are different kinds of reflection, but more importantly we must become aware of the nature of our own investigation.¹⁹

Due to the fact that Intellectualist reflection, as Merleau-Ponty made evident, only redefines the mind-body dualism problem, since it does not properly account for the function of the senses, his account of radical reflection “is a new kind of reflection that overcomes all the paradoxes of Analytic Reflection (synonymous with intellectualist reflection).”²⁰ Thus, now, we may unite our entire experience by means of radical reflection. The underlying distinctions between the two schools of thought, as Marshall said, are controversial due to the relation between reflection and experience. Thus, in radical reflection we are inevitably “aware of the nature of our own investigation.”²¹ What I mean by this is that there is no ground for a theory of human existence that starts with one aspect preceding the other. No such theory could properly result in the correct type of reflection.

With this constituent of Merleau-Ponty’s account for embodied perception, as well as the significance of memory being directly related to sense experience in Korsakoff’s psychosis, there is a proper account for the syndrome which radical reflection

¹⁷ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Op. Cit., 254.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ George Marshall, *A Guide to Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology of Perception*, Op. Cit., 133.

²¹ *Ibid.*

localizes. The Empiricist and Intellectualist accounts investigate the wrong nature of experience to correctly account for Korsakoff's psychosis. Their fundamental flaws are the distinctions between us and the world. This phenomenon needs not be explained with any separability. Instead, we are in the world experiencing it. Radical reflection shows the correct physiological and psychological functioning in past sense experience and, thus, localizes the psychosis as being what it really is: a neurological dysfunction that results in the inability to radically reflect on sense experience after a certain age. The unity of the body and mind, the senses, and a subject's being-in-the-world shows their mutual dependence on one another, along with their ontological or epistemological inseparability.

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CREATING IDEAL LIBERAL SUBJECTS: LAW, CONTRACT, AND SUPEREGO

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KORSAKOFF'S EMBODIMENT: THE INSEPARABILITY OF EXPERIENCE AND IDEAS

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Contributors:

WITTGENSTEIN'S APPROACH TO MEANINGFUL PHILOSOPHY THAT MAKES NO SENSE

SEAN DRISCOLL is a junior majoring in Philosophy at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. He has previously published on Heidegger, Aristotle, Kepler, and Don Quixote. He plans to pursue graduate studies in Philosophy and is especially interested in hermeneutics, the philosophy of narrative, phenomenology, and the philosophy of science.

ALL BY MYSELF: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE HEIDEGGERIAN CONCEPTION OF SELF AND THE NECESSITY OF AN INHERENT WILL TO MAKE MEANING MEANINGFUL

AMIE ZIMMER graduated in May of 2012 with a minor in French language and a double major in English and Philosophy from the University of New Mexico, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude in Philosophy, and Summa Cum Laude from both the University of New Mexico and the University's Honors Program. Inspired by the belief in art as a vessel for both personal and public transformation, her philosophical interests have channeled themselves down the Rio Grande so as to include the philosophies of art, literature, the phenomenology of love, and contemporary Continental thought (in particular, that of Martin Heidegger and Jean-Luc Marion) insofar as the humanities influence both education and the law. She will be applying for M.A. and Ph.D. programs in Philosophy in the fall of 2012.

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