Philosophy in Practice

VOLUME 1 – SPRING 2005

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

There is the anecdote of Thales the Milesian and his financial device, which involves a principle of universal application, but is attributed to him on account of his reputation for wisdom. He was reproached for his poverty, which was supposed to show that philosophy was of no use. According to the story, he knew by his skill in the stars while it was yet winter that there would be a great harvest of olives in the coming year; so, having little money, he gave deposits for the use of all the olive-presses in Chios and Miletus, which he hired at a low price because no one bid against him. When the harvest-time came, and many were wanted all at once and of a sudden, he let them out at any rate which he pleased, and made a quantity of money. Thus he showed the world that philosophers can easily be rich if they like, but that their ambition is of another sort.

[Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I, Chapter 11]

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Thomas Annese (1961–). Epistemology and Modern Philosophy. Professor Annese was instrumental in the founding and development of the Masters Program in Philosophy at CSULA. He supervised several M.A. theses.

Sharon Bishop (1967–). Ethics, Political Philosophy, Philosophical Psychology, Feminist Ethics. Professor Bishop served for many years as Chair of the Department and continues to teach part-time in retirement.

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Note

[1] Years in parentheses indicate the year in which the faculty member began at Cal State L.A., followed by the highest degree earned, the university at which the degree was granted, and the faculty member's areas of specialization.

Professor Spotlight: Dr. Sharon Bishop

Dr. Sharon Bishop began teaching at CSULA in the fall of 1967. Her accomplishments encompass a full range of professional achievement, successful teaching, and university service. As chair of the philosophy department, Dr. Bishop has played a major role in building an outstanding philosophy department. It is not only excellent in quality, but also considered a model of diversity as well as collegiality in a field that remains in North America an extremely "straight-white-male" discipline. Professor Bishop retired in June 2004, but will continue to serve her students and colleagues by teaching in the faculty early retirement program.

Professor Bishop's philosophical specialty is ethics, having completed her PhD at Harvard in 1968 with John Rawls and other leading moral and political philosophers of the twentieth century. During the 1980s she earned a second Ph.D., this one in psychology, while teaching full-time and raising a family.

During the 1970s she was actively engaged in establishing feminist philosophy on the West Coast. She was one of the founding philosophers who began SWIP, the Society for Women in Philosophy, which is an organization that has provided support and professional opportunities for women, feminists (both male and female), students, and faculty since the 1970s. The organization is still flourishing today. She also co-wrote the first course proposal for a feminist philosophy course on campus in 1975 and co-edited one of the early, widely used anthologies in feminist philosophy, *Philosophy and Women* (Wadsworth, 1979).

In the past three decades, Dr. Bishop has spoken about and published a number of scholarly articles on topics in moral philosophy and moral psychology, such as autonomy, self-determination, guilt, love, and dependency. More recently, she has begun speaking and writing on professional ethics—both in psychology and

in language assessment, thereby putting to good use her multi-disciplinary background and interests. In addition, she has served as chair of the Executive Committee of the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association.

Professor Bishop's teaching has been exemplary. She consistently receives extremely high student evaluations in both undergraduate courses and graduate seminars. A former graduate student writes that she is "knowledgeable, compassionate, and sincerely interested in the success of her students." She has supervised an extraordinary number of M.A. theses on contemporary moral and political philosophy.

Her dedication to keeping the philosophy curriculum current and innovative continues to this day. In the classroom, she discusses the most current theoretical writings in moral and political philosophy and is concerned to integrate them with contemporary issues, such as terrorism and international law. In addition, she has encouraged her colleagues to pursue the development of an "engaged philosophy" curriculum that incorporates philosophical questions into everyday contexts. She has also worked with the American Philosophical Association in its initiative, Philosophy Matters, a program that strives to highlight the importance of philosophy in civic discourse and public life in the US and to involve individual philosophers actively in them.

Dr. Bishop has made outstanding contributions to the philosophy department through her role as department chair. She has served a total of four terms: two terms earlier in her career (1976–79 and 1979–82) and then again starting in 1998. She finished her fourth term in June 2004. Twelve years of chairing is a great sacrifice to make for one's colleagues, one's students, and the good of the University, because one must frequently set aside one's own work and interests while being chair.

The results of her years as chair are clear—the Cal State L.A. philosophy department today is a far cry from the one she entered in 1967. Today, it is not only nationally known as a strong, professional department, but also as one with the following features that are unfortunately rare among philosophy departments: (i) it is "pluralistic" (that is, our faculty teach different methods of doing philosophy so that students get a very well rounded education, both at the undergraduate and

graduate level); (ii) it is feminist-friendly, LGBT-friendly, and friendly to ethnic diversity in its curriculum, hiring, and everyday human interactions; and (iii) it is widely praised for its collegiality, democracy, and commitment to students.

Finally, there is no way to quantify the "informal" service that Professor Bishop has given to faculty, staff, administrators, and students. Donna Balderrama, academic support coordinator in philosophy, writes of her, "Never does a student leave our office without having their questions answered and their problems taken care of by Sharon. She has a special aura of calm and understanding that soothes anyone who comes into contact with her. Her intelligence and extreme professionalism reflect on all that she does."

Professor Bishop has not only been a role model for 37 years for other women, but she has also been, for the entire university community, a model of someone with appropriate priorities, good judgment, moral sensibility, quiet professionalism, and tact. We deeply appreciate Professor Bishop's personal virtues and professional accomplishments; in particular, her contributions to the philosophy department at Cal State L. A. have been invaluable. We wish her well in her (sure to be active) retirement.

Invoking the Causal Powers of Physical Properties to Support Dualism

Andrew Udvarnoki

A primary objective of the philosophy of mind is to develop a practical understanding of the concept of consciousness. Such an understanding should include knowledge about the nature and characteristics of consciousness, and what types of relationships it has to physical bodies and properties. However, comprehending consciousness has proven to be an extremely challenging and highly elusive task. Many of the problems associated with consciousness stem from the inability to recognize its origin(s) and the indistinctness of its relational characteristics. This indeterminacy is clearly demonstrated by the inconclusiveness of the explanations that have attempted to give a proper account of the basic features of conscious experiences. These conscious, or *phenomenal*, experiences are characterized by certain feelings and sensations, which give one having such experiences the knowledge and understanding of "what it is like to be" in those particular phenomenal states. David Chalmers, a prominent phenomenalist, explains: "The *phenomenal* concept of mind…is the concept of mind as conscious experience, and of a mental state as a consciously experienced mental state…On the phenomenal concept, mind is characterized by the way it *feels*."[1]

A major difficulty in explaining the phenomenal concept of mind is that it is unclear whether conscious states, also referred to as the subjective characters of experience, are to be described merely as constituents of the physical world, or if they have some additional transcendent qualities that defy purely physical explanations. The view that seeks to establish the former claim, that the conscious states of mind are in fact part of

the physical world, is appropriately termed *physicalism*. Thus, according to physicalism, the subjective characters of experience are to be defined merely as physical states of the brain (another way of putting this is that conscious or mental states *are identical to* brain states). The latter view, that there is more to conscious states than can be explained in purely physical terms, is known as *dualism*. Since things that transcend the physical world are presently indefinable, the primary claim of dualism is that conscious states of the mind are not *merely* physical states of the brain. The concept of consciousness can be a very complicated and technical metaphysical issue, and like most philosophical topics it is highly conceptual and somewhat unsubstantiated; hence, matters pertaining to consciousness have fueled the debate between physicalism and dualism for quite some time.

The focus of this paper will be to examine a certain contention that relates to contemporary deliberations in the philosophy of mind. More specifically, it will analyze and assess a particular argument that has been advanced by John Perry in his recent book, *Knowledge, Possibility, and Consciousness*. Perry is advocating *antecedent physicalism*, which is a form of physicalism that is supposed to account for phenomenal states of mind in a purely physical context. Much of his claim rests on showing that some of the more prominent arguments for dualism actually pose no threat to his version of physicalism. One such argument that Perry seeks to refute is the zombie argument, which David Chalmers introduced in his book *The Conscious Mind*. Perry attempts to show that the zombie argument is actually not an argument for dualism, but rather a test for *epiphenomenalism*, which is a theory concerned with the causal aspects of phenomenal states. Perry concludes that epiphenomenalism is not a theory that supports dualism, and that the zombie argument is really a determinant of epiphenomenalism; therefore, the zombie argument is not an argument for dualism, and poses no threat to antecedent physicalism.

Although Perry's conclusions are based on well-developed and sophisticated ideas, they are not entirely correct, for there is a consideration that Perry seemingly overlooks. It is the fact that properties are sources of causality because properties *just are* causal powers. This is a basic and sensible claim that has been explicated by Sydney Shoemaker in his paper, "Causality and Properties." Recognizing the causal powers of properties is extremely important because it undermines one of the basic premises on which Perry's arguments are founded. The objective of this paper is to demonstrate that epiphenomenalism *is* in fact an argument for dualism, and this claim will be established by showing that properties *are* causal powers. At this point, the relevance of the causal powers of properties is probably not evident, but this issue will be clarified shortly, and by the end of this paper it should be clear why Perry's conclusions are erroneous. However, before the reasons why Perry's conclusions turn out to be incorrect are revealed, it would be helpful to get some background information on the argument that he challenges, as well as a general overview of his own argument; this will make it easier to understand and trace Perry's line of reasoning. Thus, this paper will first provide a brief review of the zombie argument, followed by a synopsis of Perry's premises and conclusions. Then it will explain the causal powers of properties and show how these causal powers undermine Perry's conclusions about epiphenomenalism and the zombie argument.

The Zombie Argument

A well-known argument that endorses the dualist account of consciousness is David Chalmers' zombie argument. In this example, Chalmers seeks to invalidate the physicalist's claim that conscious states and experiences are only physical states of the brain by maintaining that there exists "the logical possibility of a *zombie*: someone or something physically identical to me (or to any other conscious being), but lacking conscious experiences

altogether" (Chalmers 94). Likewise, zombies live in "a *zombie world*: a world physically identical to ours, but in which there are no conscious experiences at all" (Chalmers 94). Further, a zombie will also be functionally identical to his/her actual-world counterpart because:

> he will be processing internal configurations being modified appropriately and with indistinguishable behavior resulting…(and) he will be awake, able to report the contents of his internal states, able to focus attention in various places, and so on. It is just that none of this functioning will be accompanied by any real conscious experience. There will be no phenomenal feel (Chalmers 95)[2].

Thus, the only thing differentiating a zombie from his/her real-world counterpart is that zombies lack the subjective characters of experience that are an essential part of the human experience. The possibility of the existence of beings that are physically indiscernible from humans, but that are completely without conscious experience is supposed to show that the phenomenal states of mind are not identical with any physical states of the brain. If the phenomenal states of mind *were* equal to certain physical states of the brain, then it would be logically impossible for beings that are physically indiscernible from humans to be without conscious experiences altogether; it would be *necessary* for zombies to have the subjective characters of experience that humans have. However, since it *is* logically possible for beings that are physically identical to humans but that lack conscious experiences to exist, it is evident that the phenomenal states of mind are not to be identified with the physical states of the brain. Therefore, there is a duality between phenomenal states and brain states, and the former cannot be explained in terms of the latter (i.e., phenomenal states cannot be explained by physicalism).

The zombie argument is one of the arguments against

physicalism that Perry considers and challenges. By contemplating some of the possibilities associated with epiphenomenalism, he is able to conclude that the zombie argument does not damage physicalism, because under certain circumstances it is possible for the physicalist to accept the existence of zombies.

Perry's Argument

In chapter 4 of *Knowledge, Possibility, and Consciousness* Perry examines the zombie argument and determines that it is irrelevant to the debate between physicalism and dualism: "What may be somewhat surprising, though, is that the possibility of a Chalmers zombie world really has virtually nothing at all to do with the issue of physicalism versus dualism."[3] Instead, he believes "It is a test for epiphenomenalism versus the efficacy of the conscious" (Perry 77). This is a substantial claim, and to thoroughly assess Perry's reasoning, the concepts of *epiphenomenalism* and the *efficacy of the conscious* must be completely understood.

Epiphenomenalism is a theory that is concerned with the causal aspects of phenomenal states; its primary interest is the cause-and-effect relationship between conscious events and events that occur in the physical world. Perry defines epiphenomenalism "simply as the doctrine that conscious events are effects but not causes" (Perry 78). Thus, phenomenal states of mind are affected and shaped by events taking place in the physical world, but they do not influence or impact the outcomes of physical events. In effect, they are results that do not produce further results. This notion can be compared to the occurrence of a shadow that any regular physical object casts when the sun is in an appropriate position to produce such a result. The existence of an object's shadow is an effect that is created or generated by events in the physical world (the mass of the physical object blocking a portion of the sun's light). However, the shadow itself does not create or generate any other effects or events in

the physical world, it simply exists as it is. According to epiphenomenalism, the relationship that the shadow has to the physical world is the same type of relationship that phenomenal experiences have to the physical world. That is, they are outcomes but not initiators of physical events.

The efficacy of the conscious also describes the cause-and-effect relationship between conscious events and events that take place in the physical world, but the roles that each of the events play is slightly different. According to the efficacy of the conscious, phenomenal states of mind are both causes *and* effects of physical events. Therefore, phenomenal experiences are not only the results of events that occur in the physical world, they also initiate and influence the occurrence of other physical events (i.e., phenomenal states of mind directly affect, and are directly affected by the physical world). For the purposes of this paper, the position that promotes the efficacy of the conscious will be coined *"efficacism,"* and the proponents of efficacism will be referred to as *"efficacists."*

It is important to understand the difference between epiphenomenalism and efficacism because it is precisely on this distinction that Perry builds his case against the zombie argument. He acknowledges that the concept of epiphenomenalism is generally associated with dualism, but determines that it is also compatible with physicalism:

> Epiphenomenalism is usually considered to be a form of dualism. But we defined it simply as the doctrine that conscious events are effects but not causes. So defined, it appears to be consistent with physicalism (Perry 78).

If epiphenomenalism is in fact compatible with physicalism, then it seems that epiphenomenalism cannot be an argument that supports dualism. Hence, according to Perry, it is conceivable for a physicalist to be an epiphenomenalist as well.

At this point it should be noted that in his argument Perry distinguishes between what he believes to be the two different types of possible zombie worlds that may exist. The first, which he refers to as a "Chalmers zombie world," is exactly the example that David Chalmers himself formulates; it was briefly reviewed in the earlier portion of this paper. Perry concludes that a Chalmers zombie world is impossible for a physicalist to accept because it would not be physically identical to the actual world. Physicalism promotes the view that phenomenal states are physical states, and that they produce certain effects in the physical world. Thus, the complete absence of consciousness in the Chalmers zombie world would necessarily constitute a difference in the physical structure of the zombies, which in turn would negate the causal powers that conscious states are supposed to possess.

However, Perry does believe that it is plausible for a physicalist to accept the existence of a second type of zombie world, which he calls an "almost Chalmers zombie world." In this zombie world, the physical difference resulting strictly from the complete absence of consciousness is recognized and accepted. Therefore, the only potential physical discrepancy is the one that results from the effects that phenomenal states of mind have on the outcome of physical events. Perry attempts to resolve this disparity by appealing to epiphenomenalism, which he already assumes is consistent with physicalism. He reasons that if the only physical dissimilarity to be accounted for is the one that results from the causality of conscious states, then it is possible for a physicalist to accept the existence of zombies, provided he/she is also an epiphenomenalist (remember that epiphenomenalism considers conscious states of mind to only be effects, and not causes, of physical events). Consequently, if a physicalist epiphenomenalist can accept the possibility of zombies, two critical facts seem to emerge:

(1) Epiphenomenalism *is* in fact compatible with physicalism; therefore, it *is not* an argument for dualism.

(2) The possible existence of zombies *is also* compatible with physicalism; thus, the zombie argument is an argument that *neither* establishes dualism *nor* invalidates physicalism.

Table 1 represents the various outcomes of Perry's entire argument. It accounts for the two major debates that Perry considers to be the focal points of his claims: A) physicalism vs. dualism; and B) epiphenomenalism vs. efficacism. These views in varying combinations make up the four philosophical positions that are pertinent to the zombie issue:

- *Physicalist epiphenomenalist*
- *Physicalist efficacist*
- *Dualist epiphenomenalist*
- *Dualist efficacist*

The table illustrates which philosophical positions can accept the potential existence of the two types of zombie worlds that Perry has described. It provides a "yes" or "no" answer to the question: "Can this particular philosophical position (physicalist epiphenomenalist, physicalist efficacist, dualist epiphenomenalist, dualist efficacist) accept the possible existence of this type of zombie world?" (Note: "CZW" designates the "Chalmers zombie world," and "ACZW" denotes the "almost Chalmers zombie world.")

Table 1

	Epiphenomenalist		Efficacist	
Physicalist	CZW No	ACZW Yes	CZW No	ACZW No
Dualist	CZW Yes	ACZW Yes	CZW No	ACZW No

After examining the table, one is able to realize a few important facts. First, that the possible existence of *any* type of zombie world lacking total consciousness is *completely* incompatible with *both* forms of efficacism. This should come as no surprise, though, because according to efficacism, phenomenal states have causal powers that affect the outcome of events in the physical world. So if there are certain worlds in which beings lack consciousness altogether, there will necessarily be a difference in the outcome of physical events in those worlds. Second, *all* types of zombies are *completely* compatible with *both* types of dualism; this should be equally obvious because the zombie argument is one that supports a dualist conclusion in the first place. Finally, it should also be apparent why a physicalist epiphenomenalist cannot accept the "Chalmers zombie world" (CZW). This is because the absence of consciousness in each zombie is supposed to account for the physical difference between the CZW and the actual-world (remember that physicalism assumes that phenomenal states *are identical to* physical states of the brain). Basically, this claim is stipulated by Perry because it is dependent on the distinction between the CZW and the ACZW ("almost Chalmers zombie world") that he builds into his argument. Interestingly enough, this distinction is not as significant as it may seem. In fact, it may be quite irrelevant to the primary objective of this paper. As long as Perry concludes that a physicalist epiphenomenalist can accept the existence of *some* type of zombie (which he does), his claims will turn out to be erroneous. It is precisely on this assertion, *that it is possible for a physicalist epiphenomenalist to accept the possibility of zombies*, that Perry bases his two (too?) bold conclusions: A) that the zombie argument is not an argument for dualism, but rather a test for epiphenomenalism; and B) that epiphenomenalism is not an argument for dualism because it is compatible with physicalism.

Examining Perry's entire argument has facilitated a

complete understanding of his line of reasoning and has ensured that none of his concepts have been overlooked or misinterpreted. It also has revealed that the differentiation between the CZW and the ACZW is not as important as it seems. Thus, for argument's sake, matters can be simplified by completely disregarding this distinction and simply focusing on the claim, *the physicalist epiphenomenalist is able to accept the possibility of zombie worlds*. This narrower focus is illustrated by the revised and straightforward Table 2. (Note: all factors pertaining to the information in this table are equivalent to those found in Table 1; the only difference is the removal of the CZW/ACZW distinction.)

Table 2

	Epiphenomenalist	Efficacist
Physicalist	Yes	No
Dualist	Yes	No

This table is a much simpler version of Table 1, and so its conclusions remain constant. As was previously stated, it should be *completely* obvious and unequivocal why *both* forms of efficacism are incompatible with the possibility of zombie worlds, and it should be *equally* obvious why the dualist epiphenomenalist can accept the possible existence of zombie worlds. The only position that is not *completely* evident is that of the physicalist epiphenomenalist.

Although Perry tries to substantiate the ability of this position to accept the possible existence of zombie worlds, he does not succeed. In a moment, it will be clear why this is so; but first, a quick recap of Perry's main points.

By saying that the zombie argument is a test that determines epiphenomenalism versus efficacism, rather than an argument that supports dualism, Perry claims that the logical

possibility of the existence of zombies has nothing to do with the issues pertaining to physicalism and dualism. Since the possible existence of zombies and zombie worlds is supposedly an epiphenomenal matter (i.e., one that is determined by what types of causal roles conscious states of mind play), it is logically possible for both physicalists *and* dualists to believe in the existence of zombies. Since according to epiphenomenalism, conscious experiences have absolutely no causal powers, even a physicalist can accept the possibility of zombies, provided he/she is also an epiphenomenalist. Perry's conclusion is that "The zombie argument does not provide an argument for dualism. As long as one is an epiphenomenalist, one can accept the possibility of zombies" (Perry 78).

These conclusions would be a substantial victory for the physicalist, and would be considerably damaging to the dualist position. However, though Perry has well-developed ideas and coherent arguments, his conclusions are not entirely correct. As was mentioned earlier, the objective of this paper is to demonstrate that epiphenomenalism *is* in fact an argument for dualism, and this will be accomplished by revealing that it is *impossible* for a physicalist *also* to be an epiphenomenalist. This claim will be established by invoking the causal powers of properties.

The Causal Powers of Properties

To realize how the causal powers of properties factor into the philosophical issues at hand, it is necessary to have a thorough explanation of the characteristics of properties, the nature of the causal relationship, and the correlation between the two. This will involve recognizing the attributes that properties have and understanding what types of roles these attributes play in the causal sequence. Once the functional aspects of properties are identified, it should become apparent that causality results from features of the physical world. Properties turn out to be the basic components of change, the factors on which actions and

the occurrence of events depend. Therefore, to fully comprehend change and causality, an insight into the complexion of properties is required.

According to *Webster's Dictionary*, 'property' is defined as "an essential or distinctive attribute or quality of a thing."[4] Although this is not specifically a philosophical definition, it captures the essence of what a property is, and what it consists of. A property is a quality of a "thing," which is an extremely broad term that seemingly encompasses all aspects of reality—namely, mental and physical phenomena. While the mental portion of the account may be debatable, it certainly appears as though the physical part is not. After all, it is quite probable that the subjects most referred to by the descriptive expression "things" are in fact physical objects or entities. This is not a deeply philosophical matter at all; rather, it is more of a real-life common-sense observation. Thus, it can be stated with little controversy that *all* physical "things" have properties of some sort. For clarification, a physical "thing" is any constituent or component of the physical world. More precisely, if it can be identified in physical terms, it is a physical "thing," and *all* physical "things" have properties (at this point, quotation marks will no longer be used to draw attention to the indeterminateness of the word "thing"; by now the desired effect should have been achieved).

The other aspect of a property is that it is an "essential or distinctive attribute" of a thing, meaning that a property is a fundamental and necessary feature of a thing that serves as the defining characteristic of that thing. The properties of a thing are what distinguish that specific thing from all of the other things found in the physical world; a property is what makes a particular thing *that* particular thing. Since a thing's properties define its existence and set it apart from the rest of the world, it once again seems that *all* physical things *must* have properties of some sort.

According to physicalism, conscious states of mind are identical to the states of the brain, which means that conscious events are constituents or components of the brain. If conscious events are constituents or components of the brain, then they are obviously part of the physical world and can be explained in purely physical terms. Thus, the physicalist should have no problems acknowledging that conscious events have properties, for physical things that can be explained in physical terms have properties.

Once the characteristics of properties have been properly examined and assessed, and it has been established that phenomenal states of mind have properties, the next step is to explore the nature of the causal relationship. The causal relationship is a type of connection between certain factors that elicits a change in the circumstances surrounding or pertaining to those factors. Events have traditionally been thought of as the factors of the causal relationship, but events themselves are comprised of further parts, namely objects. Objects necessarily have properties, and the changes in their properties is what actually initiates the causal relationship:

> It is events, rather then objects or properties, that are usually taken by philosophers to be the terms of the causal relationship. But an event typically consists of a change in the properties or relationships of one or more objects, the latter being…called the "constituent objects" of the event.[5]

Although events may in fact cause other events, each of the events themselves consists of other parts that determine the type of changes that these events undergo. These other parts are the constituent objects of the events, and it is the properties of the constituent objects of events that actually initiate change. "When one event causes another, this will be in part because of the properties possessed by their constituent objects" (Shoe-

maker 109). Hence, the properties of constituent objects are the real source of the causal relationship.

To understand how the properties of constituent objects actually bring about change, it is necessary to identify the characteristics of the properties involved. The causes and effects of events can be explained "by mentioning certain properties of their constituent objects" (Shoemaker 109). For example, consider an event in which the branch of a tree is blown against a glass window and breaks it (Shoemaker 109). The event itself is the breaking of the glass window, and the constituent objects of this event are the tree branch and the glass window. So it is a certain property (or properties) of each of the constituent objects (the tree branch and the glass window) that initiates the resulting change (the breaking of the glass window). By identifying which property (or properties) of the constituent objects made it possible for the event to occur, one is able to determine the source of the causal relationship. In this case, "the causal relationship holds because of…the massiveness of the one and the fragility of the other" (Shoemaker 109). "Massiveness" and "fragility" are properties of the tree branch and the glass window, respectively, and the fact that these constituent objects possessed these properties is what enabled the aforementioned event to occur. Therefore, the causal relationship can be understood in terms of the characteristics of the properties involved in the instance of change.

However, this causal relationship may become difficult to recognize because objects can conceivably have an infinite amount of properties, some (or most) of which are completely irrelevant to the particular instance of change being examined: "every object will have innumerable properties that are unlikely to be mentioned in any causal explanation involving an event of which the object is a constituent" (Shoemaker 110). Thus, it is necessary to identify which types of properties are to be associated with the causal relationship of a certain event. When

considering change and causality, the only properties that should be appealed to are "real" or "genuine" properties (Shoemaker 109); these are "the sorts of properties with respect to which change is possible" (Shoemaker 112). Real or genuine properties are ones that are capable of being changed or producing change. This can once again be illustrated by using the previous example involving the tree branch and the glass window. The "fragility" property of the glass window gave it the capability to be changed; this was evidenced by the event of it breaking. In addition, this property of the glass window, along with the "massiveness" property of the tree branch, enabled a physical change to be produced. Thus, the "fragility" of the glass and the "massiveness" of the tree branch are real or genuine properties, and it is these types of properties that instantiate causal powers.

Now that the nature of the causal relationship has been analyzed, the final step is to see how the connection between the characteristics of the properties of constituent events and the framework of the causal relationship produce causal powers. First, it is important to recognize exactly what a *causal power* is. A power is something that is contained in a substance or subject (or, as will be shown, in a property) that has the ability "to produce effects in material objects…(for example, the power in the sun to melt wax)" (Shoemaker 112); powers that can produce these types of effects are referred to as "tertiary qualities" (Shoemaker 112). Tertiary qualities are the factors that generate changes in the physical world, and if some particular thing is to have power, it *must* posses some type of tertiary quality. Furthermore, if a tertiary quality is indeed a source of power, it *must* be able to generate some type of change in the physical world. This correlation basically describes the cause-and-effect relationship, and can be stated as follows: *If* something is to have the type of power that produces a change in the physical world, *then* it must posses a specific quality, *such that* the presence of this quality will in fact produce certain outcomes in the physical world.

"For something to have power, in this sense, is for it to be such that its presence in circumstances of a particular sort will have certain effects. One can think of such a power as a function from circumstances to effects" (Shoemaker 113).

This function of circumstances to events can be demonstrated by imagining something that is poisonous (perhaps a pill). This poisonous thing has a particular power (for it is something that possesses the quality or characteristic of "poisonousness") that will produce certain effects in certain circumstances. "Thus if something is poisonous its presence in someone's body will produce death or illness; in virtue of this, being poisonous is a power" (Shoemaker 113). At this point, an extremely important correlation becomes evident: *that the quality of being poisonous is also a property*! So the quality or characteristic of "poisonousness" actually has two aspects to it: A) it is a property; and B) it has some type of causal power. Thus, it has been clearly established that properties *can be* causal powers, at least in certain situations. The immediate conclusion is that properties have at least some causal potentiality, but that whether or not this potentiality can take effect is dependent on certain factors that decide whether or not the property can exercise its causal power(s). The ability to conclude this is a significant accomplishment, and now the only thing remaining is to show that properties *just are* causal power, at *all* times.

It has already been determined that whether or not a property has causality is dependent on certain factors pertaining to the situation that the property is in. So *if* a property is to produce an effect, *then* it must be in a particular situation *such that* the circumstances of that situation enable the property to employ its causal powers. This correlation is parallel to the connection between causal powers and the effects that they are able to produce, which was described earlier as a function from circumstances to events (from causes to effects). Thus, the connection between properties and powers is also a function:

> Just as powers can be thought of as functions from circumstances to causal effects, so the properties on which powers depend can be thought of as functions from properties to powers (or, better, as functions from sets of properties to sets of powers). One might even say that properties are second order powers; they are powers to produce first order powers (powers to produce certain sorts of events) if combined with certain other properties (Shoemaker 114).

Since properties are a determinant or function of causal powers, they are always potential powers, because they have the ability to affect the outcome of physical events, provided that the surrounding circumstances are appropriate for their potentiality to be realized. Therefore, properties can be referred to as *conditional powers* because their causality is determined by the conditions that they are in. Furthermore, "properties are clusters of conditional powers" (Shoemaker 115), meaning that they have a number of potential or conditional powers that may or may not be exercised, depending on the circumstances of the situation. These conditional aspects of properties are like dormant powers; however, if the right conditions are available, these powers can become explicitly active. The right conditions would constitute a property interacting with another property (or properties) in such a way as to "awaken" its dormant powers. In the poisonous pill example, the pill always had the power of being poisonous, yet it could not exercise this power until it was put in the correct situation (inside of a human body) where it could interact with other properties (whatever properties the physical body had that enabled the poisonous power of the pill to take effect). Since all properties are clusters of conditional powers, there are numerous (even infinite) possible combinations of instances where a particular property could realize or exercise its potential causal powers: "for a property to have a causal potentiality is for it to be such that whatever has it has a certain conditional power"

(Shoemaker 115).

Thus, it becomes apparent that properties have potential or conditional powers at *all* times. It is not necessary for these powers to be explicitly active, nor is it necessary for them *ever* to be active; the fact is that they are there. Therefore, it has been established that properties are *always* causal powers. Whether or not they are active or potential is not the issue, because these powers could become active at any given time, given the right type of property interaction. Furthermore, saying that properties are *always* causal powers is the same as saying properties *just are* causal powers.

As was stated earlier, this is exactly the claim—*that properties just are causal powers*—that was needed to show that Perry's refutation of the zombie argument via an appeal to epiphenomenalism is erroneous. However, before Perry's argument is invalidated, it would be helpful to quickly review the main points of the "causality of properties argument":

- It was determined that all physical things have properties; thus, if one believes that conscious states of mind are equal to the physical states of the brain (as does the physicalist), then it becomes apparent that conscious states of mind have properties.
- Events are comprised of constituent objects, and constituent objects have properties. The characteristics of these properties cause changes and events; hence, properties are the primary factors of the causal relationship.
- Properties *always* have potential power because they are clusters of conditional powers; these powers can become active when the clusters of powers of different properties combine in a way that "activates" the causal powers of one or more of those properties. Thus, properties *just are* causal powers.

Conclusion

Perry's two main conclusions are: A) that the zombie argument is irrelevant to the issue of physicalism versus dualism because it is actually a test for epiphenomenalism; and B) that epiphenomenalism is not an argument for dualism. Both of these claims are based on Perry's assumption that the physicalist epiphenomenalist can accept the logical possibility of a zombie world.

By saying that the zombie argument is a test that determines epiphenomenalism versus efficacism, rather than an argument that supports dualism, Perry claims that the logical possibility of the existence of zombies has nothing to do with the issues pertaining to physicalism and dualism. Since the possible existence of zombie worlds is supposedly an epiphenomenal matter (i.e., one that is determined by what types of causal roles conscious states of mind play), it is logically possible for both physicalists *and* dualists to believe in the existence of zombies. Since according to epiphenomenalism, conscious experiences have absolutely no causal powers, even a physicalist can accept the possibility of zombies, provided he/she is also an epiphenomenalist.

However, this paper has demonstrated that: A) *all* components of the physical world have properties; and B) *all* properties *are* causal powers. Thus, if the physicalist believes that conscious states of mind are the same as the physical states of the brain (which he/she does), then he/she must also acknowledge that these conscious states have causal powers, because it is evident that *all* properties of physical things have causal powers. But, if the physicalist admits this fact, then it becomes *impossible* for him/her *also* to be an epiphenomenalist, because epiphenomenalism states that conscious events are effects but not causes. Furthermore, if it is *impossible* for one to be a physicalist *and* an epiphenomenalist, then it is apparent that epiphenome-

nalism *is not* in fact compatible with physicalism; therefore, the zombie argument *is* an argument that supports dualism.

It seems as if the only way Perry can avoid this conclusion is to boldly deny the claim that properties are causal powers, but the causality of properties is completely consistent with physicalism. In some cases, it may even be construed in such a way as to support physicalism (but this is an entirely different matter). Anyhow, the findings of this paper make it difficult for Perry to reject the causality of properties. If he cannot, then it shows that conscious states of mind have causal powers, and since physicalism takes phenomenal states of mind simply to be physical states of the brain, it seems as if Perry has to accept that one cannot be a physicalist *and* an epiphenomenalist. This non-possibility establishes that epiphenomenalism *is not* consistent with physicalism, as Perry claims; hence, epiphenomenalism *is* a theory that supports dualism.

Thus, this paper has accomplished its initial objective, which was to show that epiphenomenalism *is* in fact an argument that supports dualism by revealing that it is *impossible* for a physicalist *also* to be an epiphenomenalist; this was accomplished by demonstrating that properties *just are* causal powers. It should be noted that this paper is not an argument attempting to establish or support the merits of either dualism or epiphenomenalism; its sole purpose was to show that if the physicalist wants to strengthen his/her position by discrediting the zombie argument, he/she should not appeal to epiphenomenalism to support these claims

Notes

1. David J. Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 11. All further references to this work will be noted in the text solely by the author's name.
2. Note: in this example the particular zombie counterpart being referred to is Chalmers' own, hence the strict use of the descriptive pronoun "he."
3. John Perry. *Knowledge, Possibility, and Consciousness*. (Cambridge, MA:

The MIT Press, 2001). p. 77. All further references to this work will be noted in the text solely by the author's name.

4. *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*. New York, NY: Portland House, 1989. pp. 1153.
5. Sydney Shoemaker. "Causality and Properties" from *Time and Cause: Essays Presented to Richard Taylor*. Edited by Peter Van Inwagen. (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1980). 109-135. p. 109. All further references to this work will be noted in the text solely by the author's name.

On the Permissibility of Nondisclosure in a Liberal Society

Michael J. Meyer

Mounting evidence suggests that in 1951 the United States organized a coup in Iran using bribery and threats to overthrow its commercially uncooperative leader, that in 1971, the U.S. commissioned unrealistic economic forecasts for Indonesia designed to permit that country to obtain knowingly usurious loans from the World Bank for the purpose of gaining political control of that country upon its inevitable default on those loans, and that in 1981, U.S. agents knowingly assisted the assassination of the President of Ecuador because he opposed the interests of U.S. oil companies.[1] These propositions, if true, exemplify the danger that arises when political leaders do not make full public disclosure of their acts.

Few members of the U.S. general public were then aware that these courses of action were under deliberation, and even fewer would have endorsed them had those deliberations been disclosed. The examples given were chosen from a litany of questionable political acts that are now being revisited. Ethical concerns aside, these scenarios present difficult questions for political philosophy. Clarification of the sources and uses of legitimate political power in a society predicated on individual freedom is principal among them.

Liberalism is the view that societies should have their foundation in the preservation, to the greatest extent possible, of the inalienable freedom of individual people. Implicit in the axiom of individual freedom is the prerogative to protect that freedom; that is, individuals are naturally endowed with the power to act in preservation of their freedom.[2] And because

liberalism assumes individual freedom to be basic to human nature, any abrogation of that freedom by government must be sufficiently justified. Most permutations of liberalism, therefore, ground political power in the idea of a social contract whereby individuals voluntarily grant a portion of their power to a political régime.

The foregoing description of liberalism entails two restrictive principles of political power. First, liberal governments must act to preserve those things that are required for the exercise and preservation of individual freedom. According to John Locke, these are things such as "the peace, safety, and public good of the people."[3] Second, liberal governments must ensure that the actions they take pursuant to the power granted to them by the people do, in fact, accord with the intent of the people. That is, political leaders must obtain the consent of the people for the courses of action those leaders undertake. Any consent that is obtained from someone who is not fully informed is illusory.[4] Therefore, nondisclosure appears to be inconsistent with legitimate political power; when things are not disclosed, they ipso facto do not enter into the awareness of the general public. Admittedly, however, things are not always this clear for political leaders who must make responsible decisions in complex factual circumstances.

The charm of the nondisclosure option arises for political leaders when they believe that they must take a course of action to preserve freedom and the common good, but they also fear that members of the general public would not consent to those actions because either those members would fail to understand its importance, they would not have the ability to marshal all the relevant data, or simply because their moral intuitions would obfuscate the deliberative process. Confronted with these fears, nondisclosure appears to the leader as a tempting, easy solution. But easy solutions frequently give way to challenging conundrums and paradoxes under critical examination.

The Disclosure Paradox

Consider deliberating about whether or not to take a proposed course of action in the following context. If the act were essential for the common good of the people, and if that act would necessarily fail if the people were fully informed of it, then the decision would always have an unfavorable outcome. Essentially, a political leader must either (i) perform the act without the informed consent of the people, and thus, act for the common good but without legitimacy, or (ii) inform the people fully about the proposed act, and thereby foreclose the possibility of performing that act successfully.

This paradox arises from an uncertainty regarding which of the two previously mentioned restrictive principles for legitimate government power is to be given priority. If the more important principle is that freedom and the common good are secured, then the political leader might appropriately hide some action from public view. Conversely, if greater weight is given to the principle that a leader derives political power only insofar as the people have granted their power to that leader, then the only way to ensure that the leader's actions are legitimate is to require full disclosure of all actions. To resolve this paradox, then, the task of the political philosopher is to determine which of these two important principles should be given priority when they conflict.

Some commentators have written that this is only a concern during war—that in times of peace, political leaders in liberal societies simply do not face decisions with sufficient urgency to encounter the disclosure paradox. In today's global village, however, it is likely that armed conflict is always occurring somewhere. Given the capacity and resolve of the United States government to participate in these conflicts in some manner, regardless of location, we may find the issue of nondisclosure to be of perpetual concern.

Before the 2001 attacks in New York, the nondisclosure issue itself was growing dangerously non-apparent in the day-to-day operation of U.S. politics. Since then, the issue has again come into view. For many, it was inconceivable that the United States should be hated so much that something of that magnitude could occur. Those with this concern naturally wondered what the U.S. government was doing in distant lands, wondered why they were largely unaware of it, and wondered what else had been concealed under the rubric of "national security." We should explore the philosophical justification for either mandatory disclosure or the permissibility of nondisclosure while it remains a patent public affair.

The Socratic Solution

Plato recorded one convincing argument for the permissibility of nondisclosure in The Republic.[5] There, he writes of a dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon wherein he paints a mental picture of people physically bound in a cave. The people must sit facing a wall where they are able to see only shadows of things that move around behind them. Having never seen the actual objects that cast the shadows, these people believe that the shadows themselves encompass the totality of what exists and what is knowable. This is their life, though an entire world of "truth" exists just outside the cave. Socrates describes what it would be like for the person who was somehow freed from these bonds and able to leave the cave.

> Now consider… what their release and healing from bonds and folly would be like if something of this sort were by nature to happen to them. Take a man who is released and suddenly compelled to stand up, to turn his neck around, to walk and look up toward the light; and who, moreover, in doing all this is in pain and, because he is dazzled, is unable to make out those things whose shadows he saw before.[6]

Socrates is speaking allegorically about enlightenment, and his story is known today as 'The Allegory of the Cave.' For him, the cave is where the vast majority of people exist, and only a few philosophers escape the limits of the shadows to see things in their true light. Naturally, Socrates is one of them. He relates that the ascendance from the cave is a painful experience, given the brightness of the light and the perceived newness of the truths. The person who has ascended from the cave is, as Socrates says, in pain and dazzled.

But notice that Socrates began by asking Glaucon to consider the situation where this sort of freeing from bonds and ascending from the cave happens "by nature." That is, one who was freed did so by and through one's own natural endowments, and not through the direction of anyone else. Socrates then considers that alternate possibility: one person actively freeing another from the bonds of the cave by force.

> And if … someone dragged him away from there by force along the rough, steep, upward way and didn't let him go before he had dragged him out into the light of the sun, wouldn't he be distressed and annoyed at being so dragged? And when he came to the light, wouldn't he have his eyes full of its beam and be unable to see even one of the things now said to be true?[7]

It is evident that Socrates believes that enlightenment must be a natural process—that it should not, indeed, could not, be brought about solely by the actions of someone already enlightened. Doing so not only puts those-to-be-freed in pain, it renders them unable to make sense of anything they would then see. The case for nondisclosure becomes clear when we consider how Socrates would direct those whom had been freed by nature to deal with those still bound in the cave: "we will say just things to them while compelling them besides to care for and guard the others."[8]

Socrates' position is one of wise beneficence. Those who are freed from the cave, and therefore, enlightened, should lead the other unenlightened people, but should not force them to see the same truths because it could be hazardous to their well-being. Were this principle applied to the Ecuadorian example in the first paragraph of this paper, the argument would become "U.S. oil companies' access to Ecuadorian oil is imperative for the security and freedom of the people of the U.S., but I, the U.S. President, cannot tell you because you are not ready to see the truths that I see. I will continue to act without telling you about it because Socrates said that I should care for your well being."

As crude as this might sound, there could be a kernel of truth here. There are likely many people who, having never confronted diplomatic processes or received training in international negotiations, and furthermore, having never had an interest in matters of the sort, would experience an immediate rejection of any proposed course of action that set forth the assumptions of U.S. strategic diplomacy. Showing these people the real underlying decisions made and to be made would be analogous to showing them the harsh truth outside the cave, and viewing that truth directly might be painful. So, if a liberal government is to shelter this segment of the general population from the truth and to provide for its common good, that liberal government has some justification for adopting a policy of partial nondisclosure. But if this argument holds, and assuming that not all enlightened people will be able or will desire to go into government service, the difficulty of selective nondisclosure would arise. How does a political leader disclose only to those who can "handle" the truth, while not disclosing to others? Despite this admitted difficulty, Socrates provides one possibly viable argument for the permissibility of nondisclosure in a liberal society.

The Straussian Solution

Twentieth-century political philosopher Leo Strauss also articulates an argument for nondisclosure. Strauss suggests that not all knowledge is good for society. In fact, for Strauss, what keeps society functioning is not the full disclosure of all relevant facts, but a set of popular opinions, which may, but need not correspond with reality. The attempt to destroy these essential opinions would cause the bonds of society to disintegrate and pain to follow. According to Strauss, the indiscriminant broadcasting of knowledge—or truth—is what disintegrates popular opinion and the fabric of modern society. The inescapable conclusion for a well-minded political philosopher who accepts these premises is that political leaders must conceal the truth whenever necessary.

> Philosophy or science, the highest activity of man, is the attempt to replace opinion about "all things" by knowledge of "all things"; but opinion is the element of society; philosophy or science is therefore the attempt to dissolve the element in which society breathes, and thus it endangers society. Hence, philosophy or science must remain in the preserve of a small minority, and philosophers or scientists must respect the opinions on which society rests … They will distinguish between the true teaching as the esoteric teaching and the socially useful teaching as the exoteric teaching.[9]

Strauss sees a strong divergence between the capacity for conceptual reasoning held by enlightened philosophers and the concordant lack of such capacity in the general public. To summarize his position crudely: only philosophers can handle the unencumbered search for truth, so the introduction of truth into the public domain would be disastrous. Hence, Strauss urges all political philosophers to write esoterically by concealing their true message within otherwise benign, exoteric language.

But, one does not find Strauss overtly criticizing the inability of the masses to see the truth or to keep from falling apart when full disclosure is made. Instead, the "esoteric" reading of this passage suggests the inherent requirement that philosophers hide the truth from non-philosophers, lest the truth unravel their known world in a most unpleasant way.

While this may or may not hold for philosophers, Strauss has yet said nothing about political action of the sort with which this paper concerns itself. But he continues his arguments to show that any philosophy must be political philosophy and that all political leaders, by virtue of their position, must engage in political philosophy.

> But philosophy, being an attempt to rise from opinion to science, is necessarily related to the sphere of opinion as its essential starting point, and hence to the political sphere. Therefore the political sphere is bound to advance into the focus of philosophic interest as soon as philosophy starts to reflect on its own doings.[10]

Here Strauss suggests that all philosophy is political philosophy by showing that philosophy begins with one's release from the restraints of societal opinion. Since philosophy is so closely related to the opinions of society, philosophy must take those opinions into account while learning how to interact with those who hold mere opinions.

> So what are the truths that enlightened philosophers see that are missed by public opinion? We may first explore that question by understanding what they are not. Men are constantly attracted and deluded by two opposite charms: the charm of competence which is engendered by mathematics, and the charm of humble awe, which is engendered by meditation on the human soul and its experiences. Philosophy is characterized by the gentle, if firm, refusal to succumb to either charm.[11]

An "esoteric" read of this passage reveals something with which nearly any modern sociologist could agree. Namely, it seems that there is an exclusive and comprehensive dichotomy in the general public between scientific and religious justification for political action. Either people tend toward science in their appeal to a higher source of justification for their opinions, or they appeal to religion. While these are only tendencies, they are overwhelmingly popular. These two sources of justification are comprehensive in that the priority of one over the other is almost always present in any given member of the general public, and the dichotomy is exclusive in that these two sources of justification have become so well engrained in the forefront of public opinion that tertiary considerations are routinely excluded from view. The Straussian position requires political leaders to engage in philosophy to avoid blind deference to either source of justification.

Not surprisingly, Strauss draws upon the writings of Niccolo Machiavelli, which he summarizes thus: "one must lower the standards in order to make probable, if not certain, the actualization of the right or desirable social order or in order to conquer chance; one must effect a shift of emphasis from moral character to institutions."[12] As this statement suggests, in order to maintain the social order as Strauss urges political philosophers, they must "lower the standards" of what is considered acceptable action. In other words, they must lower the threshold of what qualifies for permissive nondisclosure. To enable this lowering of standards, Machiavelli and Strauss seek to free political leaders from the constraints of moral virtue that are commonly required by religious thinkers.

In moving from "moral character" to "institutions" as the primary agent of pol itical action, leaders can eschew ethical judgments in favor of more practical and pragmatic methods of "conquering chance," which simply means effectively wielding governmental power in order to preserve that government and

the people it serves. That is, after all, the purpose of government. In short, for a political leader to discharge the duties of his or her station effectively, that leader must leave behind the ethical intuitions of the ignorant general public and find a more pragmatic wisdom. Machiavelli's point may sound abrasive when restated in this way, but Strauss does not disagree with the substance of this position – and Strauss has already admonished us to be watchful of these silences and omissions when seeking a political writer's esoteric message. One can infer that Strauss is amenable to Machiavelli's point. But, in light of his project of concealing political truth in esoteric writing, Strauss predictably takes issue with Machiavelli's overt nature. "[T]he main reason why Machiavelli's scheme had to be modified was its revolting character."[13] It is clear that Strauss makes an argument for not only the permissibility, but also the practical necessity of nondisclosure by political leaders. But not all philosophers readily agree with the idea that the decision to use nondisclosure is properly within the province of a political leader when wielding political power.

The Lockean Solution

John Locke wrote extensively on the subject of power and corruption in government. A basic Lockean principle is that political corruption is necessarily harmful to the people governed. Since the informed consent of the people provides a safeguard against corruption, the lack of information available to the people when forming their consent makes corruption possible, and for Locke, probable. Locke believes that the political model of an absolute monarchy, for example, is particularly susceptible to such corruption because there are no reprisals for an absolute ruler. Locke writes, "[f]or he that thinks absolute power purifies men's bloods, and corrects the baseness of human nature, need read but the history of this or any other age to be convinced of the contrary."[14]

Locke writes with regard to absolute monarchs, but his

argument illuminates a principle readily applied to any government, whether liberal, monarchical or of another form: "For being supposed to have all, both legislative and executive power in himself alone, there is no judge to be found, no appeal lies open to anyone who may fairly and indifferently, and with authority, decide."[15] 'Legislative' simply means the power to create rules, and 'executive' means the power to enforce and act on those rules. Thus, Locke's passage expresses the claim that no ruler who is both the creator of rules and the executor of rules is impervious to corruption. Without external, unbiased review of that ruler's action by the general public, corruption may too easily obtain. That ruler is, in a sense, arbitrary and above the law.

As Locke suggests, a look at the recent history of the decisions of absolute rulers reveals that corruption runs amuck when checks and balances are omitted from the system. But while this is obviously an issue for absolute monarchists and despotic emperors, it is an issue for liberal leaders as well. Without the liberal political leader's disclosure of relevant facts and issues, public review is just as impossible or ineffective. When the actions of a government become immune to review, that government becomes, in essence, absolute with regard to those undisclosed issues. Therefore, should Locke's premises be true, no liberal government may ever be permitted to practice nondisclosure of the form this paper contemplates.

If nondisclosure is allowed, we may find that the resultant political decisions follow continually lower standards and eventually comprise a vicious network of lies, deceit, cover-ups, and the like. When one considers the positions of Socrates, Strauss, and Locke together in what I will here term the 'slippery slope' argument against nondisclosure, that vicious network can appear inevitable.

The Slippery Slope of Nondisclosure

The slippery slope argument derives its form from

a combination of the foregoing arguments, and proceeds as follows. A political leader only confronts the need for nondisclosure when a proposed political act risks contravening the ethical intuitions of the general public. Otherwise, disclosure would not be a problem because the questionable decision contemplated by the leader would be intuitive for the constituency, who would support that leader—no conflict between the people's views and the leader's views would arise, so the argument goes. Moreover, the people's intuitions about the ethics of foreign affairs generally reflect how they would want to be treated. Assuming that it is impossible for political leaders to make clear distinctions (i) between foreign and domestic affairs in all cases, and (ii) between good and not good in all cases, there will eventually come a point at which the non-disclosing political leaders will fail in both distinctions simultaneously. That is, the political leaders will eventually make poor decisions that treat their constituencies badly. The slippery slope argument contends that the result will be that political leaders, who see themselves as enlightened and see the general public as perpetual shadow-watching cave-dwellers, will assume that it is their Machiavellian responsibility to allay the fears of the general public and preserve the common good by any means necessary. Grounding their actions in a Straussian conception of pragmatic political wisdom, those leaders will lie about, omit, or cover-up their true actions and intentions in exoteric rhetoric. The conundrum exacerbates itself until the level of deceit compromises the security of the people governed, thus making not only the legitimacy of liberal government impossible, but also the fundamental purpose of liberal government impossible as well. As the slippery slope argument goes, the only way to prevent the continual lowering of standards and the exponential increase in government corruption is to require full disclosure in all cases.

The Bottom Line

This paper asks whether nondisclosure is permissible in a liberal society. It might turn out, as Socrates and Strauss suggest, that some form of permissive nondisclosure is appropriate. To be sure, the publication of every scintilla of information and every de minimus decision before political leaders would be too voluminous to be useful. But if it is possible that the U.S. ejected democratically elected leaders of sovereign peoples for commercial benefit, and if it is conceivable that the U.S. conducted preemptive economic warfare against developing nations, then a greater degree of disclosure is certainly warranted.

Notes

1. See generally, Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Imperialism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000); John Perkins, *Confessions of an Economic Hitman* (San Francisco: Barrett-Koehler Publishers, 2004); Michael Ruppert, *Crossing the Rubicon: The Decline of the American Empire at the End of the Age of Oil* (British Columbia: New Society Publishers, 2004).
2. The basic human right to freedom in a state of nature finds expression in most social contract theorists, such as Locke, Rousseau, Hobbes, Kant, Rawls, et al.
3. John Locke "The Second Treatise of Government," *Political Writings of John Locke*. ed. David Wootton (New York: Penguin Putman, 1993), 326, ch. 9, § 131.
4. Justinian. *Corpus Juris Civilis,* trans. Samuel Prescott (Cincinnati: Central Trust Co., 1932), 119, Bk. 1, Title XVIII, § 9.
5. Plato. "The Republic," trans. G.M.A. Grube, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).
6. Ibid., 1134, § 515c.
7. Ibid., 1133, § 516a.
8. Ibid., 1137, § 520b.
9. Leo Strauss, "On a Forgotten Kind of Writing," in *What is Political Philosophy?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 222.
10. "On Classical Political Philosophy," 92.
11. "What is Political Philosophy?," 40.
12. Ibid., 46.
13. Ibid., 47.
14. Plato, 306, § 92.
15. Ibid., 306, § 91.

Nietzsche's Nihilism (aka Toxic Individualism)

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Embedded in his critique of various values, philosophies, theories, and perspectives, Nietzsche seems to espouse a perspective of his own, what I will call nihilism. The majority of this paper is an attempt at an explication of Nietzsche's nihilism, an explication that tries to be as favorable to Nietzsche as possible. Nihilism of the Nietzschean variety, though it is not easy to summarize in a few words for an introduction, can be understood as a philosophy of a world in flux that lacks morality, truth, and even things. It is a view akin to a rudimentary Darwinism that sees humans as permanently stuck in antagonistic categories of strong and weak, powerful and benign, master and slave. In this paper, I take the views Nietzsche espouses in his various works seriously and therefore can't help but conclude that he subscribes to this nihilism, that he believes the world will always be filled with suffering and that consequently it is a waste of time to try and change anything. Ultimately, however, I argue against Nietzsche's nihilism on the grounds that it is based on a false metaphysics and epistemology; where Nietzsche sees only unintelligible flux, I see temporary stability amidst the flux, a fixity that is sufficient for genuine knowledge. Moreover, once we allow room for knowledge—an understanding of how the world actually is—we allow room for understanding why the world is a certain way. With that understanding of why, we open the door for the possibility for the world to be a different way, a world that is worth fighting to change.

Nietzsche's nihilism has three main components. The foundation is a metaphysical view of the world as flux. This foundation generates a specific epistemology of truthlessness

and perspectivism. Together, his metaphysics and epistemology provide a concept of the self as lacking freewill and completely dependent on all that happened before it. His nihilism results as the consequence of all three. In the end, we will have a clear view on what his nihilism critiques and we will try to make sense of what it recommends.

These three main components are intertwined in such a way that to understand one best is to understand all three. His metaphysics and epistemology are inseparable. This should be clear in the following passage:

> The world with which we are concerned is false, i.e., is not a fact but a fable and approximation on the basis of a meager sum of observations; it is "in flux," as something in a state of becoming, as a falsehood always changing but never getting near the truth: for—there is no "truth."[1]

Nietzsche thinks that truth becomes impossible in a world of flux. The "truth" to which Nietzsche refers is a notion of truth as correspondence, the view that what makes our beliefs true is that they correctly describe how the world actually is. A world in flux renders correspondence impossible because there is never a moment in which the correspondence actually occurs. The central problem is one of the incompatibility between the nature of our beliefs and the nature of reality; our beliefs are fixed whereas the world is in flux. Thus, all of our beliefs are false and the specific reason for their falsity is always changing. A fixed falsity (a more commonplace falsity) could be conceived as follows: when our belief is that, e.g., the car is in the garage when actually the car is not in the garage but in the driveway. In this picture, the world is not in flux. This belief is false because it just so happens that the fixity in the world does not correspond to the fixity in our belief. This is not the kind of falsity Nietzsche has in mind. On Nietzsche's view, the falsity is always changing

because the non-correspondence is always changing—i.e., how the world actually is is always changing. Thus, to our example, Nietzsche would not only say that our belief is false, but that it is false because there is no car and no garage in reality. In order for there to be a car, there must be some sort of fixity amidst the flux; there must be enough nonflux in the world for there to be a correspondence between our belief that there is a car and there actually being a car in reality. But Nietzsche denies any sort of fixity. The car is "not a fact but a fable," a reality that we impose on the world. In Nietzsche's view there are no things; "there are no durable ultimate units, no atoms, no monads … 'Beings' are only introduced by us" (WP, 715). We introduce things into the world; we impose things onto the flux.

The epistemological consequence of this metaphysical picture is the impossibility of knowledge, and its substitute is mere interpretation or perspective. A further consequence is the impossibility of the human subject as we may normally think of it. Nietzsche addresses both of these points in the following passage:

> No, facts [are] precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact "in itself": perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing…"Everything is subjective," you say; but even this is interpretation. The "subject" is not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is. — Finally, is it necessary to posit an interpreter behind the interpretation? Even this is invention, hypothesis… It is our needs that interpret the world. (WP, 481)

From the impossibility of facts, of truth as correspondence, it follows that all we are left with is mere interpretation. But it is not interpretation that has the potential of being true and not interpretation as complete, subjective relativism either because Nietzsche makes it clear: subjectivism requires a subject

to which the belief belongs. But there is no such subject; a subject requires fixity and stability, which are impossible amidst the flux of the world. It may seem that Nietzsche's metaphysics render the world a complete absurdity. This is true: "It is our needs that interpret the world" (WP, 481). In other words, the world is unintelligible; it is only out of necessity that we impose intelligibility onto it.

There may seem to be an inconsistency between the concept of the flux and the concept of our needs. Nietzsche claims the world's flux renders facts impossible. Instead of facts we have interpretations that arise out of our needs. Thus, Nietzsche must claim that there are things that have needs. This latter claim is what seems incompatible with the notion of the flux. Nietzsche tries to reconcile this incompatibility through his notion of the will-to-power:

> The will to power is the primitive form of affect, that all other affects are only developments of it…that all driving force is will to power, that there is no other physical, dynamic or psychic force except this…It can be shown most clearly that every living thing does everything it can not to preserve itself but to become more. (WP, 688)

Nietzsche posits this notion of the will-to-power as the most basic of all forces. We can think of the will-to-power as providing some sort of method to the flux. Nietzsche speaks of it as quanta of force that exercise their power against other quanta of force (WP, 689). To exercise power is to "become more." To become more is to change. Thus, the root of all change, of the flux, according to Nietzsche, is the will-to-power insofar as it is a will for some quanta of the flux to subordinate other quanta of the flux. The self is merely the result of a quantum of the flux exercising its power over another quantum of the flux. In order to exercise its power it must interpret the world in various ways. Thus, in the concept of the will-to-power we get the concept of

needs amidst flux: various quanta of the flux need to exercise their power over other quanta.

In summary, the world is in a permanent state of flux, i.e., the world is flux. The primitive force underlying this flux is the will-to-power. The will-to-power is the will for various quanta of the flux to increase their power by taking over other quanta of the flux., At a certain stage in this process, the will-to-power shows up as interpretations. Interpretations show up in order for quanta to continue to increase their power. The notion of the subjective self is one of such interpretations. If we think of the world as a huge mass of liquid, the will-to-power would show up as different currents within the liquid, each trying to force the other currents into its own direction and doing whatever is necessary to achieve this, including making interpretations.

There are several consequences that follow from the above claims (metaphysical, epistemological, and psychological) that form the basis of Nietzsche's nihilism. First, morality is an impossibility. There is no room for a moral 'ought' within the will-to-power; it will do whatever it must to achieve its power. Second, there is no room for teleology either; there is no point in history at which the flux ceases, at which the will-to-power ceases to operate. Absent teleology, human suffering exists only as an outcome of the will-to-power. And lastly, the self is not something that consists of a fixed element that guides all action, a self-mover. Rather, the actions of the self are merely the results of how ever the will-to-power manifests itself in what we call individuals. In short, the world is out of our control; it is "dictated by necessity; it does not depend on whether we desire it or not" (WP, 746).

Nietzsche thinks there are two sorts of reactions we can have to this realization about the world: (a) active nihilism—nihilism as increased power of the spirit; or (b) passive nihilism—nihilism as decline and recession of the power of the spirit (WP, 22). Nietzsche explains the passive reaction as one that is overwhelmed by this realization because "duration 'in

vain,' without end or aim, is the most paralyzing idea, particularly when one understands that one is being fooled and yet lacks the power not to be fooled" (WP, 55). What Nietzsche means by paralyzing is that we don't recognize any reason to go on living, that the realization of the world as such renders the individual incapacitated. This would seem a common reaction to people who came to this realization from the prior perspective that they were in control of their lives within a meaningful, intelligible world.

The sentiment behind active nihilism is difficult to explain precisely because it is a sentiment. In one sense it's simple: it's the sentiment that takes in the reality of the world and is not paralyzed, but is moved to action. Nietzsche sometimes makes this point in relation to his idea of the *eternal recurrence*: "All "It was" is a fragment, a riddle, a fearful chance —until the creating Will saith thereto: "But thus would I have it." Until the creating will saith thereto: "But thus do I will it! Thus Shall I will it!"" (Z; II; XLII)[2]

We should think of this passage as a contrast to the passive nihilist. The passive nihilist looks at the world filled with pain and sorrow and an absence of control and is paralyzed; he sees no reason to will anything. The active nihilist sees the same thing and recognizes its necessity; he decides to keep on living, decides that all previous "wills"—everything in the "it was"—were necessary for him to be whoever he is today. To go on living is to affirm the past and will it as it has been and exactly as it has been. The emphasis in the "Thus I shall will it!" is to demonstrate the activating potential that Nietzsche finds behind this perspective. The reason someone exclaims, "Thus I shall will it," is because they must do so in order to affirm who they are at present. Notice the shift from all three tenses within the quote: (past) "thus would I have it"; (present) "thus do I will it"; (future) "thus shall I will it." This temporal evolution represents three different stages in understanding. First we claim we would

have done it the same way; then we claim we want it the same way; finally we claim we will always want it the same way. We can think of these three stages as corresponding to degrees of conviction vis-a-vis the understanding of the necessity of the past as it is for the present and future.

This same point is made in a different way when Nietzsche writes, "man would rather will nothingness than not will" (BGE, 3, 28)[3]. The "willing of nothingness" to which Nietzsche refers is not the willing of nothing; that would be the same as "not willing." Instead, Nietzsche means the nothingness of existence, the meaninglessness of past and present, the everything that is in one sense nothing. The reason we would rather will that than not will at all is simple; not to will is to die, and to live is to will something, which means willing everything past, i.e., the "thus I shall will it" to which Nietzsche refers. And willing everything is equivalent to willing nothing because there is no meaning in it.

We should think of this merely as a starting point, as the general idea behind active nihilism. Nietzsche does not think there is a precise way to live as an active nihilist. It seems more useful to think of him as describing a sentiment, a perspective of living in the world, as opposed to a prescription on how we should live. Though Nietzsche does not provide the specifics behind this perspective, he does make several remarks that supply the notion with a little more content. Out of efficiency we will focus on Nietzsche's remarks on two topics: (i) the inevitability and necessity of suffering, and (ii) the activating quality of art.

Nietzsche believes that a crucial component of active nihilism is the recognition of the inevitability and necessity of suffering. When we recognize suffering is an inevitable feature of existence, engendered by the essential tension within the will-to-power—the need to press other quanta into one's service—we are freed from wasting our time trying to stop it; we recognize that "we have no choice left, we have to be conquerors."

(WP, 405). Nietzsche characterizes those who seek to diminish suffering as lying to themselves, as creating a pose:

> This pose [is] an invention of [the] last few decades . . . Here the claim is made to judge history, to *divest it of its fatality*, to discover responsibility behind it, guilty men in it . . . For this is the rub: one *needs* guilty men. The underprivileged, the decadents of all kinds are in revolt on *account of themselves* and *need victims* so as not to quench their thirst for destruction by destroying themselves . . . To this end they need an *appearance* of justice, i.e., a theory through which they can shift the responsibility for their existence . . . on to some sort of *scapegoat*. This scapegoat can be God . . . the social order, or education and training, or the Jews, or the nobility, or those who have turned out well in any way. (WP, 765, emphasis mine)

What is the pose this group is guilty of? It is inventing a theory of justice in order to find a scapegoat on which they can blame their decadent existence. Nietzsche does not see suffering as eradicable; he thinks those who suffer are doomed to suffer and are fools to try and stop it because they would be trying to "divest it [namely, history] of its fatality." Nietzsche thinks they are weak people, who say to themselves, "How can I help it that I am wretched! But somebody must be responsible, otherwise it would be unbearable!" (WP, 765). They invent revenge in order to hide their inevitable misery. They despise their situation, which is not merely a circumstance, not something in which they were accidentally placed. Nietzsche thinks they wound up there because of the kind of people they are, because "those who command are recognized as those who command, and those who obey as those who obey" (WP, 55, 11); after all, "what does 'underprivileged' mean? Above all, physiologically" (WP, 55,11). If they recognized that their situation was not circumstantial but a quality of themselves, they would "destroy themselves"

(WP, 765). So, in order to save themselves from destruction, they "need victims" to revolt against.

Thus, Nietzsche sees suffering as inevitable. Another point, which is only a slight variation on the former, is that suffering is necessary. To want love without hate, prosperity without suffering, gratitude without revenge, is to want something one-sided and incomplete because "affirmative acts and negative acts belong together" (WP, 351). The passive nihilist fails to recognize this inevitability and necessity and gives up. We should think of passive nihilists as those who were once the mediocre, who tried to eliminate suffering but then realized its impossibility and gave up:

> What is mediocre in the typical man? That he does not understand the necessity for the reverse side of things: that he combats evils as if one could dispense with them; that he will not take the one with the other—that he wants to erase and extinguish the typical character of a thing, a condition, an age, a person, approving of only part of their qualities and wishing to abolish others. (WP, 881)

The mediocre waste their time trying to change what is necessary; they try to dispense with the indispensable. They want only one side of the whole, the good without the bad, the masters without the slaves, the rich without the poor. When the mediocre finally grasp the futility of what they are doing, they are paralyzed. In contrast, active nihilists have a different reaction:

> Our insight is the opposite of this: that with every growth of man, his other side must grow too; that the highest man, if such a concept could be allowed, would be a man who represented the antithetical character of existence most strongly, as its glory and sole justification. (WP, 881)

Instead of cowering at the realization of the necessity of

suffering, active nihilists justify their own existence by it; they see it as necessarily constructive of who they are.

To summarize, passive nihilists are overwhelmed with what they see as the harsh reality of the world and are hence incapacitated. Active nihilists do not ascribe the value of "harsh" to reality because, in reality, "the sum of its values always remains the same; in other words, it has no value at all" (WP, 708). This recognition, instead of pacifying them, activates them. Think of it as a removal of all guilt, a way of saying to the world, "this is how it is, this is how it will always be." In some sense this can be a liberating phenomenon because it removes all sorrow at how the world is; it doesn't remove all sorrow in general, but all sorrow based on the suffering present in the world. What isn't clear, at this point, is what the active nihilists do. We may have a glimpse into their sentiment, but not into how this sentiment manifests itself in activity. Nietzsche goes out of his way not to prescribe any formula as to what active nihilists do. He does, however, provide further content in his discussion of art.

Nietzsche speaks highly of art for two main reasons. As we mentioned earlier, Nietzsche thinks there is no room for facts, only interpretations. If we are to interpret life, we should interpret in such a way that we don't leave anything out and that we affirm life, we enhance it in someway. This is what Nietzsche thinks art can do: affirm all of life and enhance life. Nietzsche makes this point as follows:

> In the main, I agree more with the artists…they have not lost the scent of life, they have loved the things of "this world"—they have loved their senses. To strive for "desensualization": that seems to me a misunderstanding or an illness or a cure, where it is not merely hypocrisy or self-deception. I desire for myself and for all who live, *may* live, without being tormented

> by a puritanical conscience, an ever-greater spiritualization and multiplication of the senses; indeed we should be grateful to the senses for their subtlety, plenitude, and power and offer them in return the best we have in way of spirit. (WP, 820)

Here Nietzsche describes the artist as the antithesis to the "puritanical conscience," the conscience that tries to restrict sensual pleasures in the name of some illusion of morality. It is true that both the artist and the puritan only interpret life. But Nietzsche wants to make the important distinction that the puritanical interpretation starts from a "self-deception," a belief that there is meaning in suffering; in short the puritan starts from a denial of life, a denial of the will-to-power of existence. The artists, however, start from the recognition that this world has both bad and good; they start from this world and create within it; they "affirm the large-scale economy which justifies the terrifying, the evil, the questionable—and more than merely justifies them" (WP, 852). Their creations offer the senses "the best we have in way of the spirit." In other words, the artists do not deny what is but they take what is and represent it in a way that excites the senses, affirms life.

The art of the active nihilist is peculiar. Nietzsche points out that it is a lie because "we have a need of lies in order to conquer this reality…in order to live" (WP, 853). But he thinks the artist's creation is a lie of a higher order. In contrast, he says, "suppose, on the other hand, that the weak desire to enjoy an art…they would interpret their own value feelings into it; e.g., the 'triumph of the moral world-order' or the doctrine of the 'worthlessness of existence'" (WP, 852). Nietzsche accuses the weak of lying in a worse way. The weak that deny the violent nature of reality and impose a morality onto it also impose that morality when they see art; the passive nihilists, who cower at the violent nature of reality, impose their feeling of "worthlessness" into art. The active nihilists don't do this. They create art

and so they lie too, but in their creations, they do not impose a denial of life but rather an enhancement of life as life is:

> Art and nothing but art! It is the great means of making life possible, the great seduction to life, the great stimulant of life. Art as the only superior counterforce to all will to denial of life…Art as the redemption of the man of knowledge…those who see the terrifying and questionable character of existence, who want to see it…who live it, who want to live it, the tragic-warlike man, the hero. (WP, 853, II)

Art is the means by which we can accept the "terrifying character of existence" and still want to live in it. We want to live in it because, through art, we can "impose upon becoming the character of being—that is the supreme will to power" (WP, 617). Because the artist does not cower from what there is, he can see what is and create it to his liking, by affirming it. We can think of the art of the active nihilist as a strong realism, a way of taking what there is and making it beautiful without denying any of it. Both the active and passive nihilist impose "the character of being"—i.e., a fixity—upon "becoming" or the flux. In other words, in their art they interpret the flux as fixed. Unlike the passive nihilist, however, the active nihilist starts with the flux as it fully is, filled with sorrow, pain, suffering, and power.

This view of art, coupled with Nietzsche's attack on any aversion to suffering, seem to make active nihilism very individualistic and justificatory to the side of those who suffer the least. Nietzsche recognizes this point:

> Against them [i.e., the herd] I defend the aristocracy. A society that preserves a regard . . . for freedom must feel itself to be an exception and must confront a power from which it distinguishes itself, toward which it is hostile, and on which it looks down. The more I relinquish my rights and level myself down, the more I come under the dominion of the average

> and finally of the majority. The presupposition inherent in an aristocratic society for preserving a high degree of freedom among its members is the extreme tension that arises from the presence of an antagonistic drive that arises in all its members: the will to dominate. If you would do away with firm opposition and differences in rank, you will also abolish all strong love, lofty attitudes, and the feeling of individuality. (WP, 936)

Nietzsche concedes the individualism as being present. He thinks that in order to have freedom in society, it can only be a freedom for some; freedom cannot be recognized unless it is distinguished from an unfree, from an enslaved, "on which it looks down" (WP, 936). Moreover, Nietzsche advocates a preference for domination. Since domination is inevitable, Nietzsche prefers the domination of the aristocrat over the herd, because if the herd were to dominate, the individual would become lost to the majority.

In summary, the terrifying nature of reality is the will-to-power—the drive to subordinate the other to oneself. On the micro-level this constitutes the flux. On the macro-level this constitutes all suffering and all prosperity. The necessity of flux denies the possibility of facts and truth and makes possible only interpretations. The necessity of suffering denies the possibility for its removal. Those who can accept this reality and still affirm life constitute active nihilism. Active nihilists are not the unfree, not the slaves, not the oppressed, nor the downtrodden, nor the poor, nor the rabble. They are closest to the aristocrats. The sufferers cannot accept their suffering and hence try to eliminate it, and if they succeed, their success results in their suffering being imposed on others. The sufferers will necessarily waste their time trying to eliminate their suffering, trying to dispense with the indispensable, the voluntary equivalent of Sisyphus trying to push the rock up the hill only to have it eternally roll

back down. Instead of trying to change what cannot be changed, the active nihilists change what can be changed—they create life through art; they take all of reality, affirm the good and the bad, and arrange it in their own way. They do this because they recognize that "this world is the will to power—and nothing besides!" (WP, 1067)

Thus far, most of the passages quoted are taken from The Will to Power, which is not a text Nietzsche ever published. But Nietzsche discusses all of the views I discuss (i.e., his metaphysics, epistemology, critique of the self, eternal recurrence, nihilism, will-to-power, role of art, and disgust with the majority) in most of his works. Therefore, I am confident this is an accurate explication of Nietzsche's perspective, a favorable explication that entitles me to comment.

That being said, I find Nietzsche's nihilism, as I have articulated it here, a myopic justification of the status quo. It is an attempt, almost to the level of absurdity, to remove oneself from any obligation to address social problems, a toxic individualism. I find his discussion of the will-to-power indicative of the level of absurdity required to accomplish such a self-destructive view. Briefly, I will try to explain my reasoning.

Let's start by way of analogy. Imagine the values of the aristocratic plantation owners. There they are eating dinner, enamored by their reflection in the turkey grease all over their neighbors' faces as they stuff themselves with huge chunks of juicy white meat while they lean closer to the fire to warm their feet. Gulping their wine, smacking their meat, drooling on the cotton napkin tucked into their collars, spilling gravy on the cowhide rug and later forcing the servant to clean it up, they feast. A chandelier is dangling above their heads. Their down pillows and rabbit fur blankets await them atop their cotton-filled mattresses. And meanwhile, outside in the quarters, men and women—separated from their families, impregnated from rape, pacified from bludgeoning, imploding with a hunger unsatiated

by the cow intestines they were offered, resting on dirt, with shackles on their feet, choking from the dust kicked up as their neighbor eternally tries to get comfortable—await their next day to slice up their hands picking the cotton to fill those mattress and purchase those turkey dinners.

To this situation, Nietzsche would justify the world from the perspective of the plantation owners. They are masters because they are masters; there will always be masters. There will always be slaves. The masters will do what they can to maintain mastery. The slaves are fools to try and end slavery—suffering is a necessary component of existence.

The best way to defend the existence of oppression is to claim that it is inevitable. Nietzsche would be the first to admit that the oppressing class always justifies its position by dehumanizing the oppressed class, by claiming that people of that sort can do no better and deserve no better. Nietzsche is guilty of the same thing. Living in a time of the effects of the Industrial Revolution, the origins of capitalism, and the origins of the resistance of large groups of people brought together by their similar position in society, Nietzsche justifies his own existence in relation to the other. Nietzsche sides with what he calls the "aristocracy," the group that was born into wealth, wealth that exists at the expense of the misery of the majority of people. He sides with the aristocracy over the majority. He has reasons for it: the oppression of the laboring class is inevitable; there will always be oppression; they are oppressed because of who they are, not because of who the elites are. (In the United States white racists tried to use the bell curve to explain how blacks were inherently intellectually inferior and thereby deserved to be treated as second-class citizens.) Moreover, he prefers this set up with the minority in power; it provides for the greatest level of individualism because, if the majority would rule, individualism would wither away.

All this is mere rationalization, a philosophy of conve-

nience. It is untenable if we were to glimpse at history. If Nietzsche's starting point were really a fair analysis of the possibility to diminish suffering, he would have proceeded much differently. He would have had to look at the circumstances of various instances of oppression and determine the factors surrounding that oppression. And after looking at all of them, he would determine whether they could be removed, just as one assesses the engine of a car that doesn't start. Instead, his starting point is a justification for the existence of the aristocracy, his way of life. He justifies it in a way that makes sense to him. He sees oppression as inevitable and thereby justified. His absurd notion of the will-to-power and the impossibility of truth arise out of the rational requirements of some sort of intelligibility, some sort of surface-level consistency. Complete inconsistency is unintelligible. If Nietzsche asserts the obvious claim that there is truth, that, though the world is in flux, it is still temporarily stable enough for us to make sense of it, then he would not be able to claim there is no meaning to suffering. Since suffering would exist in the world, we could make sense of it where it exists, in those circumstances. So, he must remove meaning from reality; he must impose inevitability—the epitome of meaninglessness. If you are ever having difficulty trying to explain the existence of a phenomenon, just beg the question, and say, "it exists because it must exist; it's inevitable." Preschoolers do it all the time.

If Nietzsche really believes in the extreme flux that he describes, the kind with no things in it, the kind filled only with lies, then I would challenge him to stand in front of a moving train or jump off a cliff or pull the trigger of a shotgun pointed at his skull. He would not. He would be forced to recognize the real "thinghood" within reality, the real fixity amidst the flux, the fixity that allows us to do more than interpret the world, to understand it, not completely but enough to grasp how to change it, how to successfully satiate pangs of hunger, take wood and make fire, build fishing hooks out of metal, build swimming

pools for elites to swim in, printing presses for writers to publish in, airplanes for the wealthy to arrive at island-vacation-resorts on their days off, and so on. This type of fixity amidst the flux is something we cannot deny without some sort of inconsistency and absurdity. We can deny that we ever get the whole story, but not that there is a story to get in the first place, a story we can understand more and more about.

This fixity is what also forces the fear upon the minority when they recognize that their lives depend on the existence of an oppressed majority, but the existence of the oppressed majority does not depend on them. This is the fear that demands the self-justification on the part of the minority that leads to the necessary lies that Nietzsche talks about. These are not necessary lies in general, but necessary lies in particular—the lies that paint a picture to the masses that justifies their oppression.

In short, human history does not provide many examples of the oppressed accepting their oppression. Even in the most impossible situations, people struggle for a better life. Nietzsche would not deny that people have always struggled and will endlessly continue to struggle against oppression, but he would claim that all such struggles are pointless because there is no better life, no life without oppression. Nietzsche's position that struggling is pointless is lost on the Jews in the concentration camp at Treblinka who organized a rebellion and burned it to the ground. It is lost on the North Vietnamese who kicked the U.S. military out of their country, on the Haitian slaves that incinerated every last plantation, on the workers of Russia who overthrew the brutal Czar, and it will be lost on the people of the world when they do away with the bankrupt system of contemporary capitalism once and for all.

Change comes from an understanding of what there is. The countless historical examples are possible only because there is enough fixity in the world for us to understand how to change it. True weakness is to look at the world and accept it;

to accept the world as it is is to accept all of its values. One of the most reactionary contributions of religion is the idea that you can change your values without changing the world that engendered your values in the first place. You can only achieve this separation between world and values when you impose a radical dualism on the world, when you separate mind from body, consciousness from being. This separation is foundational in Nietzsche. He doesn't advocate a reorganization of the organization of society. He advocates a revaluation of all values while maintaining the current organization, the organization of ruling class and exploited class, the organization that engenders the values in the first place. He thinks we can radically change our values while accepting and maintaining where our values come from. He is naïve. To change your values is to change the society that engenders those values. Nietzsche cowers at this idea; it paralyzes him. He must hide and overcompensate for this fear behind his will-to-power and his nihilism. Since the world is eternally oppressive and he happens to live among the elite, he will abstain from rebellion and do art instead—a sickening and cowardly way to live, an individualism of toxic proportions. Moreover, the values Nietzsche espouses are nothing new; they are the values essential to any society that keeps people subordinated in order to sustain itself. This division is what breeds the individualism at toxic levels found in Nietzsche.

In closing, societies in which a minority rules at the expense of the great majority must weed out, to the best of their ability, anything that is antagonistic to the status quo. Any theory that radically challenges the status quo, the ruling elite must always try to keep marginalized. Likewise, the longer a theory remains and the more accessible it becomes, the less it challenges the status quo, and the more it justifies the status quo. Nietzsche's nihilism is a complete justification of the status quo, a world in which a tiny minority lives off the devastation of a huge majority. Nihilism is in no way a challenge to the status

quo and that's why it has survived. It is repulsive that academia represents Nietzsche as a revolutionary thinker. This representation is evidence of the reactionary quality of academia—a necessary quality for any major institution that lasts within an oppressive system like the present one.

Notes

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage, 1968), 616. Hereafter, all references from *The Will to Power* will be cited as "WP, n" where "n" refers to the section heading number.
2. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Random House, 1995), II, XLII. Hereafter, all references from *Thus Spake Zarathustra* will be cited as "Z, N, n" where "N" refers to the chapter and "n" refers to the section.
3. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Beyond Good and Evil," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufman (New York: Modern Library, 2000), BGE, 3, 28. Hereafter, all references from "Beyond Good and Evil" will be cited as "BGE, N, n" where "N" refers to the chapter and "n" refers to the section.

When True Justified Belief is Not Enough: Gettier Counter-Examples and the Justification for War

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The purpose of this essay is to illustrate that the fate and the future of the world rest squarely on the ability of the citizens of the world's democracies to carefully and successfully determine what knowledge and truth is and what it is not. The ever-increasing phenomenon of global and cultural interaction demands that our belief systems are competently structured with inherent firmness and elasticity to accommodate and evaluate explosive situations. Additionally, any hopes of obtaining and sustaining world peace rest solely on our collective ability to secure evidentially justified beliefs. Any war that is fought today is a world war because everyone in the world is affected politically, economically, and environmentally. In other words, the inability to secure knowledge in a critical situation, the entailment of a false proposition, and the belief that one has knowledge when in reality one has the appearance of knowledge can lead to catastrophic consequences.

On March 21, 2003, the United States began its assault on Iraq after it concluded that the Saddam Hussein regime represented an imminent threat to the security of the citizens of the United States. Prior to the attack, Secretary of State Colin Powell, armed with mounds of evidence that included satellite photos of Iraqi sites, surveillance audiotapes, defector testimony, and intelligence sources, addressed the UN and presented the US-British-led coalition's case that a preemptive military strike was justified to rid the world of this problem. Across the Atlantic Ocean, British Prime Minister Tony Blair echoed US

administration sentiment. The collective will of these two nations would not be swayed by record demonstrations throughout the world. The US was convinced beyond all shadow of a doubt that Saddam had a hand in the September 11th tragedies and that Saddam provided shelter, arms, and training for dangerous terrorist organizations. President George W. Bush grew tired of what he interpreted as Saddam's stalling and procrastinations and gave the OK for US forces to begin the campaign named "Shock and Awe."

Months later or more appropriately thousands of casualties later, it is the world and an increasingly agitated and suspicious US public that is "shocked and awed." The weapons of mass destruction[1] charge that was the head of a laundry list of pre-war allegations has apparently evaporated into thin air as an intense hunt for them by specialists from all over the world has yet to uncover them. The program for the production of nuclear armaments has not been found. It seems that the intelligence sources were not as reliable as once perceived. Colin Powell and other high-ranking administration officials have had to recant on the weapons of mass destruction allegation. CIA director George Tenet publicly admitted that the agency did not see Saddam as a threat and advised administration officials of their analysis. The fingers are pointing and the death toll for US soldiers and Iraqi citizens increases every day.

So what went wrong? US authorities appeared to have a solid case against one of the world's legitimate bad boys. Saddam, no doubt, was a ruthless dictator. He did use biological agents to extinguish a Kurdish uprising after the "Desert Storm" campaign (the first Iraq war initiated by erstwhile President and father of the incumbent President, George H. Bush). He also attacked his neighbors, namely Israel and Kuwait, and had serious ambitions of becoming a dominating force in the world. The US-led coalition seemed to have a formidable case for war. I believe that the coalition's position rested on the following

beliefs: (a) Saddam is a ruthless, unmanageable, and untrustworthy despot. And (2) US sources firmly believe that there is substantial evidence that a country in this region of the world is hostile to US interests and has in its possession WMD. I do believe that most Americans who supported the President would have no problem in considering the aforementioned propositions as a legitimate justification for going to war. After all, the propositions appear airtight. They are intuitively and unquestionably true, and they are based on what was believed to be reliable evidence.

But appearances are not always as they seem. As a matter of fact, the US authorities and their believing public were in error. The preceding illustration is an example of what is referred to in epistemology[2] as a "Gettier-type" counter-example. Edmund Gettier argued, in a now-famous paper[3], that the traditional concept of knowledge (typically referred to as the tripartite definition of knowledge) is flawed because one could meet all of its conditions and yet fail to have knowledge. The traditional concept demands that three conditions must be satisfied for a claim to count as knowledge. Those conditions are truth, justification (evidence), and belief. This can be illustrated by the following form:

S knows P IFF[4]

(i) P is true;
(ii) S believes that P; and
(iii) S is justified in believing that P. [5]

Gettier's own counter-examples are designed to show that all three of these conditions are met and yet a person fails to have knowledge. In one example, two men, Smith and Jones, are vying for a job. Smith believes he has strong evidence that Jones will get the job because the president of the company told him that Jones is going to get it. He has also counted ten coins in Jones' pocket. This establishes the conjunctive proposition (x):

Jones will get the job, and he has ten coins in his pocket.[6] The proposition (x) also entails proposition (xx): The man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket. However, Smith finds out that he gets the job, and unbeknownst to him, he has ten coins in his pocket. Proposition (xx) is true (the man who gets the job has ten coins in his pocket); Smith believes that (xx) is true (via entailment); and Smith is justified in believing that (xx) is true. However, Smith does not know (xx) is true because he is totally unaware that he also has ten coins in his pocket. Smith's justification is based on the false proposition that Jones has ten coins in his pocket and he will be the man who will get the job.[7] Therefore, Smith cannot be said to possess knowledge even though all of the conditions have been met. It is by accident or coincidence that Smith happens to know that the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket. According to commonly held intuitions about knowledge, knowledge cannot be acquired by accident or coincidence. In essence what Gettier is saying through his counter-example is that all of the conditions necessary for knowledge may be present and we still may not have a case of knowledge.

Now we look at the Iraq war scenario through the "Gettier" lens to see if the US coalition's call for military action was based on a legitimate case of knowledge or, on the other hand, if all of the sufficient conditions necessary for knowledge were met, but like Smith in the Gettier example, the case for knowledge was based on a false proposition, thus making the case for war questionable at best.

In the Gettier counter-example cited above, Smith was the "knower who didn't know." In order to see if the Iraq war scenario qualifies as a Gettier-type counter-example, I will substitute "US-British-led coalition" for "Smith." Next I will substitute the proposition "Saddam is a ruthless, unmanageable, and untrustworthy despot and US sources firmly believe that there is substantial evidence that a country in this region of the world is hostile to US interests and has in its possession WMD

for "Jones will get the job and has ten coins in his pocket." In the interest of brevity and clarity, let's trim the Iraq war proposition to the following: "Saddam is hostile to the US and has weapons of mass destruction capability." Entailed by this proposition is the following proposition: "There is a leader in this region hostile to US interests that has WMD." In the next paragraph we will see if the sufficient conditions necessary for knowledge were met or if we have another instance of a Gettier counter-example. Later on in this essay we will look at a solutions posed by a well-known philosopher to solve the Gettier puzzle.

Like Smith, the US-led coalition had what they believed to be justified beliefs, which were that Saddam was openly hostile to the US and in the past showed no reluctance to use WMD. Entailed in this initial proposition was another proposition, that there was a leader hostile to US interests that had WMD capability. Now was there evidential justification to support this belief? In the example of Smith, he was told by the president of the company, someone who can be considered as a reliable source, that Jones would be the man who would get the job. Coincidentally, he counted ten coins in Jones' pocket, and so he believed the entailed proposition that the man who would get the job had ten coins in his pocket. In the coalition's case, they had every reason to believe that Saddam had WMD because of intelligence reports provided to them by what they believed to be reputable intelligence organizations. They also believed that Saddam had WMD because he had used them against the Kurds after Desert Storm; he fired SCUD missiles at Israel during the aforementioned war, and it was reported that he used biological agents against the Iranians during the Iran-Iraq war. This case seems to be just about airtight in that the US coalition (1) believed that Saddam was hostile to US interests and had WMD; (1) entails that (2) there is a leader in this region that is hostile to US interests and has WMD; and (3) it was justified in believing that (2) is true. So what is the verdict? While the coalition had in

its possession justified true beliefs, the question is whether these beliefs satisfied the requirements for knowledge.

Well, the verdict is not a good one for the US coalition. It is true that in the past Saddam had shown little or no hesitation to use WMD if he felt it was in his best interest to do so. We have noted earlier in this essay instances where he did use WMD. But according to reports of UN inspectors, Iraq's WMD stockpile had been either destroyed or dismantled after the Desert Storm campaign. Recent published accounts have stated that Iraq has in fact been disarmed since 1994. Iraq had been under UN sanctions for over 12 years and was strictly prohibited from purchasing any weapons not approved by the UN. Any weapons that Iraq did purchase were in accordance with UN regulations. Additionally, any monies paid to Iraq for oil purchases were deposited in a New York bank and under direct supervision of the UN. As stated earlier, no WMD have been found in Iraq, and the justification of the war is being questioned more and more each day.

As in the Smith case, the US-led led coalition's entailed proposition is true. However, it is based on a false proposition. Yes, there is a leader in this region of the world who is hostile to US interests and has WMD. In fact, there are several leaders in this area who possibly fit this description, namely the leaders of Syria, Egypt, Iran (the WMD charge is inconclusive at this time), and on occasion Israel.[8] Israel has a nuclear arsenal while Egypt and Syria have biological and chemical warfare capability. It has been suggested that Iran is in the process of making nuclear weapons, although, as noted earlier, this claim has not been substantiated. Therefore, it can be said that the US-led coalition was correct in believing that there was a leader in this region who was hostile to US interests and had WMD; but this is the case via coincidence or accident or luck because it is based on a false proposition. And as stated earlier, knowledge cannot be derived via accident or coincidence or luck.

One standard response to Gettier's argument is that in his counter-examples justified true belief that fails to yield knowledge is achieved via the entailment from a false proposition.[9] Both instances, Gettier's and ours, fail to yield knowledge primarily because both Smith's and the US-led coalition's reasoning involves a false intermediate step (a false lemma).[10] The false lemma exists as a glitch in the traditional conception of knowledge. Michael Williams makes the following observation:

> Focusing on the idea that a belief can be justified but false leads to a simple proposal, implicit in Gettier's original discussion. This is that justification will not yield knowledge if it depends on reasoning that essentially involves a false intermediate step (or 'lemma'). On this view, falsity in one's (relevant) beliefs does not necessarily destroy their justificatory power; but it does negate their capacity to yield knowledge. Smith's justified true belief that a man who will get the job has ten coins in his pockets fails to amount to knowledge because he reaches it via the false lemma that Jones is that man.[11]

This case, however, involved a hypothetical and rather trivial situation especially when compared to what led the US coalition into armed conflict with Iraq. The fact that Smith's beliefs were justified but did not qualify as knowledge would hardly register a blip on the everyday happenings in the world. Unfortunately, the coalition's false lemma, that Saddam was hostile to US interests and had at his disposal WMD, has resulted in a horrific debacle with thousands of lives lost with the end nowhere in sight. Given the consequences, one can see clearly that disaster awaits nations who embroil themselves in conflicts when true justified beliefs do not transition into knowledge. While indefeasibility of our beliefs is not necessarily a life-and-death issue in everyday life, nations and governments must come as close to indefeasibility as possible when making

decisions that will literally affect the entire globe. Theoretically speaking, knowledge is supposed to be justified on evidence that will indeed qualify it as such. Knowledge is not supposed to be acquired by accident or coincidence as illustrated by the cases above. But when a nation or a government falls victim to a Gettier-type counter-example, mistakes become disasters as we see so vividly in the current Iraq war.

As I ponder the Gettier problem and its formidable challenge relative to what constitutes knowledge, I believe that epistemology is capable of an appropriate response. If this Gettier problem were equivalent to Dodge City during its most troubled times, I believe the sheriff capable of handling the job would be W.V. Quine and his naturalized epistemology. Naturalized epistemology is best seen as a cluster of views according to which epistemology is closely connected to natural science[12]. Quine believed that humans were belief-producing machines: input-output. Often regarded as a reincarnation of the great British philosopher David Hume, Quine believes that everything believable about the universe is empirically knowable. Additionally, Quine believes that traditional epistemology has failed because it is impossible and, therefore should be replaced with a research program that will work, a purely scientific approach. He believes it is impossible because he doesn't believe that theory can be reduced to foundational beliefs[13].

In his view, knowledge is whatever the science of the day tells us is true. Truth is immanent in that it emerges from theory. What we get is theory-relative truth. Truth is a function of meaning and facts; we can't unpack the meaning of sentence until it's embedded in theory. What determines whether a sentence is true or false is its relationship to theory. This is because words can have more than one meaning. For example, if I said, "Mary took my pencil," the meaning of this sentence changes depending on how I define the word 'took.' Which meaning 'took' has will depend on the context.

I particularly like this because according to Quine science plus theory determine truth value. In science, how do we determine what is true? First, we formulate a hypothesis; second we make predictions; third, we design experiments to test our data; and fourth, we compare our results with predictions and determine where to go from there. And if we find that the data do not accord with our predications, we don't throw the baby out with the bath water (that is, we do not simply reject our hypothesis). We go back and determine what is the most appropriate course of action. Assuming that all intentions were honorable, I believe that it is at least probable that the US coalition would have not taken a false lemma if its decision process would have been opened up to at least entertain the defeasibility of their beliefs. Perhaps, their collective will would not have been deterred; however, their justification to go to war would have to have been on much more solid ground than what motivated their original decision.

I believe that we have to use whatever system fits the occasion. In a situation as potentially volatile as war, there must be a sustained and systematic drive towards the truth. Fixation on what is believed to be true even if it is justified begs further validation. Truth via mistake or happenstance will not suffice. Quine is right in that, if we are after knowledge, we need empirical validation. We need a system, a theory that will give us a starting point to extract the truth, thus enabling us to ultimately acquire knowledge. Anything short of that, especially when we are involved on the world stage, will not do.

In conclusion, the Gettier problem is contextually driven like everything else in life. There is a place for casual inferential deliberation like Smith coming to the conclusion that Jones will get the job that he, Smith, is destined for. In the big picture this can be relegated to the harmless bin. But there is also a place for the serious business of scientific analysis of empirical data to validate a system of beliefs, a theory that can have widespread

implications, especially when there is a chance when true justified beliefs do not yield knowledge.

Notes

1. Weapons of mass destruction (also referred to as WMD) are collectively defined as weaponry, be they chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive materials that have tremendous potential to exact devastating loss of human life.
2. Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that studies the limits, requirements, and nature of knowledge.
3. Edmund Gettier, Is Justified True Belief Knowledge," in *Analysis* 23 (1963), 121-123.
4. IFF is the abbreviation for if and only if.
5. Gettier, 121-123.
6. Gettier, 121-123.
7. Gettier, 121-123.
8. There are times when these countries participate in activities that are hostile to US interests in this region, thus substantiating our entailed proposition.
9. I hate to be redundant but it is important to grasp the concept that Smith believed that he had strong evidence that the man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket. In our Iraq war scenario, the US led coalition believed that there was a man in this region hostile to US-led coalition interests that has WMD. In both instances knowledge was achieved via the entailment of a false proposition.
10. Michael Williams, *Problems of Knowledge: A Critical Introduction to Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 48.
11. Williams, 48.
12. Taken from: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology-naturalized/.
13. Foundationalism, often referred to as Cartesian foundationalism, believes that knowledge is infallibly justified beliefs established by deductive inferences only. However, there is a weaker version of foundationalism, modest contemporary fallibilism that is based on fallible inferences and reliably justified truths (justification that points towards truth, but doesn't necessarily dispense the truth).

Reflections on the *Zhuangzi* and the *Tao-te Ching*

Roland Rosas

The *Zhuangzi* is an influential Chinese philosophical text written around 300 B.C.E. by Zhuang Zhou. It uses poetry, logical analyses, dialogues, and narratives giving it a very distinct style with which it communicates. It is written in a personal tone with dramatic characters and characterizations that add to the effect intended by the author. It is debated as to what extent Taoism has been influenced by the *Zhuangzi*, but it is agreed that it has some role in shaping Taoist ideas. The *Tao-te Ching,* on the other hand, by Lao Zi, was written around 500 B.C.E. and consists of 81 chapters. Each chapter consists of a short or long poem. This text, often considered the most influential Chinese text of all time, is the foundation for Taoism.

The *Zhuangzi* and *Tao-te Ching* have had many interpretations associated with them. The often ambiguous and cloudy truths hidden in both texts offer quite an incredible intellectual and spiritual journey that I am sure the authors of both texts intended. My current project is concerned with clarifying the textual meaning and bringing to light my own interpretation of overlapping themes in both texts. The issues that will be discussed are the challenge to conventional ways of thinking and judging, the *Tao* as the source of knowledge and being, and the disciplines and transformation of the sage as related to various Taoist practices.

The Zhuangzi challenges everyday natural conceptions inherent in the untrained mind. In chapter 4, *In the World of Men*, Yan Hui tells Confucius of his plan to influence a young ruler of Wei (a ruler who incidentally "sticks fast to his posi-

tion and [can] never be converted"). Confucius, being critical of his pupil's "plans," advocates the release of these plans in place for a more open-minded and flexible plan of action. Oddly enough this "new plan" of action seems like less of a plan at all. Confucius advocates that the pupil give up his plan to sway the ruler by appealing to the "examples of antiquity" and a strategy of being "inwardly direct" yet "outwardly compliant." Instead, he insists that he fast his mind/heart. Confucius replies, "Goodness, how could that do? You have too many policies and plans and you haven't seen what is needed. How do you think you can convert him? You are still *making the mind your teacher*."[1] In the footnote to this passage, Zhuang Zhou explains that the mind refers to "not the natural or given mind but the mind that makes artificial distinctions." So what is the pupil supposed to do when he meets a stubborn "artificial minded" person like the ruler of Wei? How is he supposed to fast his mind/heart? Bryan Van Norden, in *Competing Interpretations of the Inner Chapters of the Zhuangzi*, explains that it is qi that will guide the young sage into comprehending the ultimate guidance. *Qi* is defined as "energy" or "vital essence". *Qi* circulates through the human body; giving it life and energy. In Taoism, *Qi* ebbs and flows between thoughts and no thoughts as in Taoist meditation, and it connects an individual with the universe. Van Norden stresses that because the sage should not trust what his ears may tell him, since *qi* is more in line with nature and the way of nature, he can be protected against certain doctrines of convention, especially those of antiquity.

Zhou's disdain for conventional thought is also made apparent in his example of carpenter Shi and the oak tree. The conventional thought is identified in the carpenter when he advises his apprentice that it is a "worthless tree!" because it cannot be used in the conventional ways, e.g., for building a boat that would not sink or for making a door that won't "sweat sap." What Zhuang Zhou is trying to instill into the reader's mind is

a sense of perspective, and that it is the "artificial mind" which gives rise to such *universalizing* opinions of *shi*, "that is it", or *fei*, "that is not." *Shi* and *fei* can also be interpreted as "right" and "wrong, respectively." From a certain point of view the tree is useful, however, from its own point of view, its uselessness is useful to itself, i.e., no one will do it any harm. But how does this illustration tie into the example of Yan Hui's error of following *his* plan? It is the fact that both the pupil of Confucius and the carpenter are working with and seeing the world through their own conceptual lenses. The pupil sees "his plan" as the best plan for convincing the ruler of Wei; the carpenter sees his reason as paradigm: " Since the tree is of no use to us, it is of no use at all." But the author of the *Zhuangzi* wants us to break free of this "artificial"way of thinking. This is a core teaching of Taoism: unlearning what one has learned. Thus, the sage is one who can reason and see his own conceptual framework and yet be open to the guiding influences of the *Tao*.

The *Tao* in one sense is what a person comes into contact with during an enlightenment experience. Such an experience has distinct characteristics: feelings of oneness with everything, a sense outside space and time, illumination, peace, etc. All of these attributes vary among individuals, but they seem to be generally similar. What is very common in accounts of these experiences is the fact that when trying to describe them, individuals cannot do so precisely. Some say, "I felt calm, yet excited; I was in the past and in the future; I was where I was, yet not where I was, etc." The claim from these experiences, which is of a central concern with this paper, is the claim that in such an experience, there are no ordinary distinctions. For instance, there is no feeling of pleasure or pain (which requires *fei* and *shi*); it is an experience of something totally other.

The other sense of the word *Tao* is that of an "unmoved mover," to borrow from Aristotle's vocabulary. This unmoved mover is a common underlying principle behind all things in the

world including mankind. We can see the effects and manifestations of it in the forces that the *Zhuangzi* calls *yin* and *yang*. This is the same yin and yang that deforms Master Yu's body and causes him to exclaim, "My, my! So the Creator is making me all crookedly like this!" (109). This process of change is not seen as a flaw or proof that the *Tao* is cruel. The forces of *yin* and *yang* are to be obeyed by the sage just as a child obeys his parents and a piece of metal obeys the blacksmith. Master Yu's utmost faith in accepting this turn of events as a part of "the order of things" is what "frees him from the bound" of things in the world.

What causes the bound of *things* to be so harmful? I think it is the desires that we have that are associated with *things*, i.e., "I desire for this thing or that thing," that causes the harm. In one passage he seems to hint that holding onto grief or joy ultimately is keeping you a slave to these rogue passions. Zhuang Zhou writes, "If you are content with the time and willing to follow along, then grief and joy have no way to enter in. In the old days, this was called being freed from the bonds of Di" (104). *The sage must break out of these binds imposed by the desires in order to be truly free!* This Taoist abandonment of desires is also a prerequisite for enlightenment. This is evident when Confucius says, "If you're identical with it [the *Tao*], you must have no more likes!" (110).

Associated with abandoning desires are meditational practices. This is the main tool of the Taoist sage. It is used as means for becoming in tune with the nature of the *Tao* and its will. Yan Hui says, "I smash up my limbs and body, drive out perception and intellect, cast off form, do away with understanding, and make myself identical with the Great Thoroughfare" (110). I propose that "smashing up the limbs" represents the full-lotus meditative posture. "Driving out perception" may mean "closing your eyes." But to drive out the intellect is to quiet the distracting thoughts of the ordinary, "artificial" mind. This mental state is relative to the state of the body. The

Zhuangzi states, "But if [your body] does not keep still—this is called sitting but racing around" (111). "Racing around" I interpret as "your mind and thoughts racing around." So, it is clear that this passage recommends "knowledge that does not know," or a state of mind that has no thoughts so that the practitioner is able to attain the peace of mind and body necessary for "even the gods and spirits" to come and dwell in him (110).

The *Zhuangzi* makes a great effort to illustrate what its sage is like specifically emphasizing his transformative process. The *Zhuangzi* opens with the account of a fish that turns into a gigantic bird that flies to some Heavenly place. When I interpret this, I view it as an attempt by the author to cause the reader to exercise his/her faculty of perception. My interpretation is supported by the author's literary use of imagery and the symbolism I think that is inherent in them. The first thing the author presents to us is a fish in the sea. The fish turns into a new being—a huge bird—which storms about somewhere in the sky. The reader is invited to contemplate the blueness of the sky and the reasons for it being so blue. This necessitates the reader to take the point of view of the bird and transcend his/her own perspective. Not only is the author introducing different areas under Heaven, but he also does so within the context of certain creatures transforming in each domain. For example, in Zhuang Zhou's world, the fish is a fish when and only when it is in the water; for it to go into the sky, it cannot simply spawn wings and begin flying in the sky as a fish. It must first transform itself into a bird in order to do that. In other words, *a person cannot attain true knowledge without himself transforming into something that can absorb the new type of truth or reality*. My interpretation is supported by the neighboring passages in the Zhuangzi. The passage I am referring to is one that has a cicada and a dove, who upon seeing the Peng (the bird) flying high, laugh and say, "When we make an effort and fly up, we can get as far as the elm or the sapanwood tree, but sometimes we don't make it and just

fall down on the ground" (97).

> And a little quail says, while laughing:
>
> Where does he think he's going? I give a great leap and fly up, but never get more than ten or twelve yards before I come down fluttering among the weeds and brambles. And that's the best kind of flying anyway! Where does he think he's going? (97)

These two passages fit in nicely with my reading. The latter passage suggests that what anchors people into their own view of truth and reality is their own mental chains. For instance, the bird flying high in the sky was once just a fish, and I suppose that the fish might have thought the same thing about another bird, "Swimming is the best activity there is. Why does the bird fly in the sky the way he does?" The cicada, dove, and the quail all encapsulate people that are unwilling and stubborn in their pursuit of knowledge because they cling to what suits them from there own unchanging point of view. Whereas, the Peng glorifies the nature of what it is to be a sage or a practitioner of Taoism, i.e., one that is able to accept his transformation and the reality that it entails.

I take Zhou's use of perspective and his wanting of *us*, *the reader*, to actively take part in this exercise of seeing through different perspectives, to symbolize the first step a person takes to becoming more sage-like or to reaching enlightenment. The cicada fails to even consider the perspective of the Peng. If he does, he does so with spite and is blinded, intellectually, and spiritually by that spite. Thus, the foolish man will not even consider or contemplate the ideas of an enlightened sage; their point of view seems so foreign and strange that it is not even worth thinking about. The fish/Peng-being is like the perfect sage: he has ability to reflect on himself and conceive of different perspectives. He is then able to change into and comprehend something more real.

The *Tao-te Ching* seems to promote a type of conventionality though I do realize it was written in criticism of a previous conventional-based society. It also contains basic Taoist principles like *wu wei* and the epistemological and ethical concepts of the sage. *Wu wei* has had many translations. It means "non action", but its intended meaning does not mean "do nothing" or "be lazy." It means something like "go with the grain of things"[2]. It requires a sage's knowledge and skill in order for *wu wei* to fully materialize because then the sage is exerting the least amount of energy in whatever endeavor he is in, and reaping great results in return—almost by doing nothing!

Throughout the *Tao-te Ching*, the authors promote mirroring Heaven. Since Heaven "aids and protects," compassion, which springs up from the *Tao*, is highly valued. On this issue of compassion, the *Zhuangzi* and the *Tao te Ching* dovetail in their belief that rectitude comes from the guidance of the Tao. The *Tao-te Ching* looks to the sages as a type of professional that has a mastery of meditation and of the *wu wei* concept. The hearts of ordinary people, farmers, artisans, merchants, etc., are considered a part of the sage's heart. The *Tao-te Ching* advocates losing self-interest and love of wealth for a commitment to the community.

> The government is divided,
> Fields are overgrown,
> Granaries are empty,
> But the nobles' clothes are gorgeous,
> Their belts show off swords,
> And they are glutted with food and drink.
> This is called thieves' endowment,
> But it is not Tao.[3]

The losing of selfish desires has a main task of defying the old norms of self-interest. This rejection is replaced by a more compassion-based, community-centered type of government and way of life.

Compassion is a theme that is stressed and taught

throughout the whole work. It is compassion that is deemed the necessary tool for the unification of the empire. The sage in the *Tao-te Ching* is thus an embodiment of compassion and *te*, virtue. Compassion is considered by Laozi the first of three main treasures of a sage (67). It also leads to a belief in non-violence; "a violent man does not die a natural death" (42). Thus the sage is able to "create harmony under Heaven; blending their hearts with the world"(49).

The *Tao-te Ching* makes a strong commitment to rid the prevalent distinctions associated with the effects of an "invented morality"(78) and the educated mind. The *Tao-te Ching* says,

> Recognize beauty and ugliness is born. Recognize good and evil is born" (2). Banish benevolence, discard righteousness: People will return to duty and compassion" (19). Banish learning, no more grief. Between yes and no, How much difference? Between good and evil, how much difference? (20).

Like the *Zhuangzi*, these passages seem to suggest that the educated mind, a mind that naturally seeks distinctions and opposites, is fundamentally flawed and relative once peered upon by a Taoist asking, "how much different?" In this passage, the *Tao-te Ching* promotes a non-traditional ethical stance. This stance is centered around the practice of *wu wei*, non-action, and the belief in the objectivity of the natural order of the universe, i.e., *wu wei* is a tool used by sages to step beyond the limiting and artificial roles of morality. If one were not to practice *wu wei*, one would be interfering in some way with the natural order. So, we can see a similarity between the *Zhuangzi* and the *Tao-te Ching*; both find fault with the human tendency to attribute unwarranted distinctions in the world, and they recommend an "unlearning" of "artificial" knowledge.

The *Tao-te Ching* sage also understands the importance of the concept of the "cyclic principle", e.g., "heavy is the root

of light"(26) and "reversal is *Tao's* movement" (40), and the concept of *the mother of the world*.[4] The cyclic principle is simply the idea that things are created from their opposites and eventually they return to their opposites. Ultimately, Wenyu Xie, a scholar, thinks that Laozi must believe that all the ten thousand things of the world come from an opposite of it and that this opposite has characteristics that are opposite of those things—which happens to be the *Tao*. What Laozi is doing is trying to find some unifying principle for all phenomenal things. He is like a scientist investigating the world and formulating laws of science. This is unlike the *Zhuangzi* in the sense that the *Zhuangzi* does not try to find a universal truth/ethic in the form of "all things come from *x"* or "all things float on water." The *Zhuangzi* supports a particularist view; the *Laozi* supports a generalistic view.

By a particularist view, I mean that there is no real principle guiding our actions or thoughts. What is right or wrong is determined differently for different situations. By a generalist view, I mean simply the view that ethical/epistemological judgements are based on applying the correct moral principle/principle to its appropriate cases. Let us look at the following passage from the Zhuangzi:

> If water is not piled up deep enough, it won't have the strength to bear up a big boat. Pour a cup of water into a hollow in the floor and bits of trash will sail on it like boats. But set the cup there and it will stick fast, for the water is too shallow and the boat too large.(97)

Bryan Van Norden sees this passage as a response to a universalistic question asking, "Can *x* float on water?" Van Norden thinks that Zhou would reply, "under certain conditions, *x* may or may not float on water. It is wrong to say, for Zhou, that a certain thing will *always* float on water." This passage may also be trying to bring to light the inadequacy of language. We should

not say "water" without specifying how much water much the same way that we say "fish". Yet, we are uncertain whether or not it implies one fish or many fish.

Meditation and *wu wei* are also a necessary practice to achieve a union with the mother-of-all or a way to let nature take its proper course of action. This former view is made quite apparent in chapter 20 of the *Tao-te Ching* when Lao Zi suggests he is like "a baby in the womb." The latter is made clear in chapter 3, "therefore the sage rules, … by practicing non-action, and the natural order is not disrupted." For both the *Tao-te Ching* and the *Zhuangzi*, transformation is a necessary path to enlightenment. As we have seen, the *Zhuangzi* sage seeks transformation through fasting his heart and seeing the perspective of the "artificial mind" and taking it for what it is—an illusion! The *Tao-te Ching* also seeks to unite the practitioner with the *Tao* and stresses meditation as the main vehicle for that task. The *Tao-te Ching*, like the *Zhuangzi*, uses "stillness" as a means for achieving a complete meditative state and for controlling the distracting passions. "Fortune and blessing gather where there is stillness."[5] "Stillness is the master of passions."[6] As we can see they are both meditatively in accord.

In conclusion, the *Tao-te Ching* emphasizes a conforming of the mind to a set standard emanating from compassion, the *Tao*, *Te*, and most importantly from the master sages. But the *Zhuangzi* emphasizes a freeing of one's mind from any type of set standard or belief. The *Zhuangzi* is oriented towards epistemological questions and viewpoints for the sake of truth itself, but the *Tao-te Ching* seems to put this ideal on the backburner for the sake of unifying the country. The main difference in the two works is based on perspective. The *Zhuangzi* emphasizes the individual's perspective whereas the *Tao-te Ching* seeks to find a universality in all phenomena, "pervading all things" (25), without presupposing an individualistic view that is connected to this universality.

Notes

1. Irene Bloom, *The Zhuangzi*, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, ed. Joseph William (Columbia University Press), 105.
2. Alan Watts, *Zen: The Supreme Experience,* (Vega Publishing, 2002).
3. Stanely Lombardo, *Tao-te Ching*, (Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.), ch.53.
4. Wenyu Xie, "The Dao: From Lao Zi to Zhuang Zi," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* (December 2000), 469-488.
5. Irene Bloom, *The Zhuangzi*, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, ed. Joseph William (Columbia University Press), 106.
6. Stanely Lombardo, *Tao-te Ching*, (Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.), ch.26.

Global Poverty and Moral Responsibility

Kate Carpenter

For the ancient Greeks, philosophy had to do with how we ought to live. I agree. Philosophy ought not to be simply an abstract pursuit divorced from the living of my life. I want it to inform me about the world and challenge me in my moral decision-making. Thus in this spirit, I ask the following questions. What is my responsibility to the global poor? What are the rationalizations I and others use to avoid acting to alleviate their suffering and how do I respond to these rationalizations?

My rationalizations derive from my moral values and my situatedness (which includes factors such as my culture, ethnicity, socio-economic background, religion, education, and life-style). I have a vested interest in keeping things the comfortable way they are. It is my hope, however, that by wrestling with these questions, I will become clearer about both the underpinning of the global market economy and about my responsibility to the global poor. While the focus in this paper is primarily on individual moral responsibility, this does not exclude institutions from my discussion for the two are not easily separated.

In World Poverty and Human Rights, Thomas Pogge urges us in the affluent Western nations to think seriously about the severe poverty of half of the world's population. He wonders why we do not find the situation morally disturbing. He asks us to examine our reasons for accepting the status quo. Our reasons are connected to our moral values, which arise from our particular culture and individual interests. Within this context, we decide what is or is not morally compelling. Pogge states:

> Unconsciously, at least, people tend to interpret their

> moral values in their own favor and tend to select, represent, and connect the facts so as to facilitate the desired concrete judgments. This rationalizing tendency is stronger in people surrounded by others whose relevant interests coincide.[1]

Personally, I don't know anyone who is suffering from severe poverty or anyone who has died from malnutrition or starvation. I am isolated from the realities in the world, such as the fact that one-third of humankind is living at subsistence or below subsistence level. To truly comprehend this fact feels impossible. I am even isolated from the poor in my own community, because I live in a middle-class neighborhood, go to Whole Foods, and hardly ever go to northwest Pasadena, not to mention going to a poor Third World nation. So I am insulated and surrounded by others pretty much like me. My friends and I may talk about how terrible poverty and many things are, but we continue to have plenty to eat and to enjoy many freedoms (and luxuries). For me, the poor are not individual men, women, and children with needs and hopes for a good life just like me but are an anonymous and abstract mass of humanity.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), drafted in 1948, laid out moral norms that protect the vulnerable worldwide from the ravages of war and exploitation. There are problems with enforcing the UDHR and holding states accountable because the UDHR is not legally binding. Nevertheless, the moral norms embodied in the UDHR place claims on us, the affluent. Claims are burdens that require us to act differently. However, we don't want to feel obligated to these claims (they may constrain our "freedom" in some way), and so we consciously and unconsciously try to get around the norms by not complying with them. One way we do this is by exploiting moral loopholes, such as in tax avoidance.

I don't consciously get around moral norms by tax avoidance, but I may be complicit with others who avoid compli-

ance with moral norms. What are the policies of the companies in which I invest, such as General Electric? What is Chevron, where I often buy gas, doing in Third World nations that I might rather not know about? Are these companies socially responsible in any way? What is my responsibility to find out about their practices? How much do I want to avoid my responsibility?

In what follows, I present five rationalizations for avoiding moral responsibility for global poverty and my responses to them. I use the first person both as a way to dramatize the positions and to reveal my complicity with them (in varying degrees).

1. "No solution" rationalization:

I rationalize that the world's poor have always been with us and will always be with us. Maybe I don't have enough faith in human beings that we will take such problems seriously and try to do something about them. Ricardo Gomez points out that neo-liberal economics (the prevailing theory driving our global market economy) runs on the idea that "the human being has become an egotistic being after a long process of selective evolution."[2] So, unfortunate as it is, people are naturally selfish and that's just the way the world is. Basically there is no solution to the problem: hierarchy and inequality are part of the natural order. This is a good rationalization for living a comfortable but oblivious life in an affluent society.

Response to "No solution:"

To counter this rationalization, I must first realize that things are not fixed deterministically. Social change can and does happen through the will of determined and courageous individuals working together.

Specifically, I challenge the assumed selfishness of human beings. George DeMartino[3] and Gomez both point out that the market economy has created the types of individuals

who thrive in it: selfish individuals. This is not, however, an essential fact about our evolution, but a historically contingent fact. There are many ways to fulfill our humanity besides being selfish, autonomous individuals pursuing our advantage in the market. What about communal, relational ways of being human where we have the goal of caring for one other? Gomez asks us to reflect on how human flourishing can be better fulfilled beyond neo-liberal economics:

> The structure of personality in any market society is endemic to the economy itself, a result produced by the pressures and incentives induced by the free market. If what we are depends on what we have (because of our supposed insatiable desire of accumulation), then there is no other option that to satisfy our interests to the fullest. The critical question is if we want to live in a world that produces that type of human being. And in the economic sphere, what is required is to search for alternative economic systems that promote the flourishing of personality types that generate other and better economic, social and political results, instead of reducing homo sapiens to homo economicus.[4]

Gomez reminds us that there are better ways to organize economic systems that value individuals and allow for their flourishing. We need to free ourselves from the mindset that the market is neutral and objective and simply flows out of the "natural" selfishness of individuals.

2. "No one in charge/no one to blame, but a solution" rationalization:

Another rationalization for globalization and its effects on the poor goes in the opposite direction and claims to offer a solution to global poverty. It is a fact that people everywhere are involved in the global market. This neo-liberal rationalization

states that the market must be allowed to do its thing. How things turn out is naturally just the way things are supposed to turn out. There is no one in charge. Of course there will be winners and losers, but extreme poverty and inequality are just transitional conditions. Eventually wealth will be diffused throughout the world. The free market is the best answer for everyone everywhere, and so it can't be blamed for anything. In fact, we can't blame anyone at all for inequality and severe poverty. This rationalization says that things will work out equitably in the end. DeMartino aptly sums up the neo-liberal solution:

> The market is such an extraordinary institution because it manages to harness this rational, self-oriented behavior in service of the collective good. The market generates growth and prosperity for all, not because any individual actor intends or seeks this outcome, but as an unintended consequence of each agent's determined efforts to secure his own happiness.[5]

The global free market system is painted as a value-neutral mechanism that wants only "growth and prosperity for all." It sounds wonderful that individuals seeking their own self-interests end up creating such a beneficial system.

Response to "No one to blame:"

Neo-liberalists are good at making it seem that neo-liberalism is a natural and normal condition of humankind, but as DeMartino and Gomez point out, this is a false assumption. DeMartino claims that the neo-liberals "have generated the most powerful economic ideology of the past several centuries."[6] Of course, the neo-liberals deny that they have an ideology because they claim to have a value-free scientific economic theory that is the end-all of all theories (which Gomez debunks powerfully in his essay referenced above). But it seems to me that their version of "science" serves the interests of certain privileged people who

can take advantage of the free market system.

I do not believe that "this is just the way things are" and "no one is in charge" and "there is no one to blame." Powerful transnational corporations, along with the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO, are in charge, and real people work for these organizations. It is their ploy to say that "no one is in charge;" it's a way of passing the buck and blaming any unfortunate social consequences on the "system." The free market is not the best answer for poor people who cannot take advantage of it. These organizations are to blame for causing developing nations to have to choose between economic development and social programs, and most often the nations have to cut back on social programs to play the global market game. It is not necessarily a bad thing that nations are losing some of their sovereignty rights if it means they are becoming ethically and socially more globally-minded, but it is a bad thing when social programs disappear due to the coercion of the transnationals.

3. "My country first" rationalization:

This rationalization states that the importance of global poverty is secondary to the priority I give to poverty in my own country. I should help the poor here in America and in Pasadena first before I worry about the poor globally. I have a local duty before a global duty. Other countries are supposed to look after their own poor. It is too much for me and my country to worry about everybody.

Response to "My country first:"

Suffering and death from starvation and disease anywhere in the world are wrong. I think that most people agree with this. Given this judgment, I concur with Peter Singer's formulation of the following argument: "If it is in our power to prevent something very bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything morally significant, we ought, morally, to

do it."[7] Singer further asserts that the proximity or distance of those suffering is irrelevant to our moral responsibility to help them. There is no justification for the claim, "My country first." We might quibble about the ambiguity of the phrase, "without thereby sacrificing anything morally significant," but this is an issue that needs to be worked out; the fact remains that we do have a responsibility to act on behalf of the global poor.

Someone might say that it feels "natural" to want to help the poor in one's own community and then to move on to help people farther away, but this is only because we have been socialized to have nationalistic allegiances and not global allegiances. We need to cultivate global allegiances alongside our nationalistic allegiances because we have become a global village. Problems in my community stem from problems around the world. Illegal Mexican immigrants are here because of the Mexican economy; sweatshop workers from Cambodia are here because of the economy in Cambodia. The neo-liberal economic policies of the US have made the lives of millions around the world miserable. There are other arguments that we are a global community: pollution of the air, land, and water of the planet affects everyone, and nuclear weapons can kill everyone.

4. "I didn't cause it" rationalization:

A further way I can rationalize the existence of global poverty is to say that we in the affluent nations are not harming the global poor because we did not cause the poverty (it was already there). It is true that we might contribute more foreign aid to help alleviate the poverty, but we can't be blamed if people are dying of starvation. Poor countries should be glad for any aid they get from us. We can't be expected to fix the world's problems. Pogge notes our rationalization: "failing to save lives is not morally on a par with killing."[8]

Response to "I didn't cause it:"

Regardless of who or what "caused" global poverty, it is a fact, and we have responsibility for its alleviation. In discussing the moral history of the twentieth century, Jonathan Glover makes the point that people's moral identity is less threatened when deaths are caused negatively.[9] The British embargo in World War 1 caused many people to starve in Germany, but the British did not see these negative deaths (people dying for lack of food) in the same way as they saw directly killing people.[10]

Pogge makes a similar point in discussing the global poor of today; he asks, what is the difference between people dying from not getting food and shooting them? Of course, we think shooting them is worse. Pogge asks us to question this assumption. He sums up our moral irresponsibility for the global poor:

> Our world is arranged to keep us far away from massive and severe poverty and surrounds us with affluent, civilized people for whom the poor abroad are a remote good cause alongside the spotted owl. In such a world [we cannot entertain] the thought that we are involved in a monumental crime against these people . . . [the] best hope [for the global poor] may be our moral reflection.[11]

We in the affluent countries are killing civilians at a distance through our acquiescence to the status quo.

5. "It's the fault of foreign villains" rationalization:

I can rationalize global poverty by connecting it with foreign villains. Corrupt leaders in foreign nations bleed their countries dry and cause severe poverty. They are to blame for their dire internal problems, and when our government gives them money, it often does not reach the people. Pogge states this rationalization:

> The global economic order plays a marginal role in the perpetuation of extensive and severe poverty worldwide. This poverty is substantially caused not by global, systemic factors, but—in the countries where it occurs—by their flawed national economic regimes and by their corrupt and incompetent elites.[12]

It is easy to blame poverty on corrupt foreign leaders and minimize the role of the global economic order. There is no fault with our global economic policies. This rationalization switches responsibility from us to other leaders who become the bad guys.

Response to "It's the fault of foreign villains:"

It is true that corrupt leaders in foreign nations often amass personal wealth and neglect the needs of their people, often causing severe poverty. But our US government shares responsibility for many problems in these countries because it has helped to install many of these leaders, using them for its own purposes. If a leader manages to bring a country under his control (it doesn't matter how), the international community almost always recognizes the government of that nation. This means that the ruling elites can then sell off the country's natural resources (international resource privilege) and can borrow in the country's name (international borrowing privilege). As a consequence, the people in the nation suffer the loss of their natural resources and are run into debt by their corrupt leaders. Pogge points out our complicity with such corrupt foreign leaders:

> A reliable market supply of natural resources is important to the affluent consumer societies, and we therefore benefit from a rule that allows buyers to acquire legally valid ownership rights in such resources from anyone who happens to control them. But this rule fosters bad government in the resource-rich developing countries by giving repressive rulers a source of revenues and by providing incentives to try

to seize political power by force.[13]

We in affluent countries directly benefit from the actions of corrupt leaders and our government's collusion with such leaders.

Conclusion

In summary, it has been a good exercise to work through the various rationalizations for avoiding responsibility for the global poor and to acknowledge my complicity. It is a cop-out to say there is "no solution." I deny the claim that neo-liberalism is a natural and normal condition of humankind. It is a cop-out to claim that "no one is in charge" and "no one is to blame" and "there is a solution"—this neo-liberal position is itself a rationalization for ignoring global poverty. It is not the case that things will all turn out great in the end if we allow the market to do its thing. I recognize that I have both local and global duties to the poor. I cannot solely blame corrupt foreign leaders for the poverty within their borders, because the US government and the global market system support such leaders to get benefits, some of which I enjoy. In response to the rationalization, "I didn't cause it," the distinction between direct and indirect violence is helpful. Direct violence arouses my indignation, but I am cultivating my indignation at the indirect violence of letting millions starve.

Singer claims we have moral responsibility for the global poor up to the point at which we would be sacrificing something morally significant. He challenges our attachment to such things as fine restaurants, nice cars, stylish clothes, and opportunities for artistic experiences and travel. He thinks that, if we took seriously his moral injunction, our way of life in the affluence nations would significantly change. This challenge speaks to me.

In coming to accept responsibility for the global poor, education and moral reflection are the first steps. I am moved by the pain and anger and hope in Gomez's words at the end of his

essay, "Globalized Neoliberalism and Its Plagues:"

> Neoliberal Capitalism has not sent us to Heaven but to Hell . . . At least in Latin America, it seems that we are becoming keenly aware of who is really to blame for our shortcomings and maladies. Slowly and gradually, we are starting to take some steps to move out of the flames. This is real Good News. End of History? Absolutely not. We are moving its wheel again.[14]

I have not been to Latin America to see the effects of neo-liberal economic policies on the poor, but I have listened to Ricardo Gomez speak about his experiences there and I am startled by his accounts. This is part of my education about the global poor. It is my desire that this process of moral reflection moves me to act on this concern beyond my current actions.

Notes

1. Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights* (Malden: Polity, 2002), 4.
2. Ricardo Gomez, "The Myth of the Value-Neutrality of Neo-liberal Economics," in *Energeia: An International Journal in Epistemology and Methodology of Economics* (Buenos Aires, vol. 1.n., June 2002) 52-70, 54.
3. George DeMartino, *Global Economy, Global Justice: Theoretical Objections and Policy Alternatives to Neoliberalism* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 18.
4. Gomez, "Myth," 57-58.
5. DeMartino, 5.
6. DeMartino, 18.
7. Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," in *The Right Thing to Do: Basic Readings in Moral Philosophy, ed. James Rachels* (New York: Random House, 1989), 174-183, 176.
8. Pogge, 12.
9. Jonathan Glover, *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).
10. Glover, 64-68.
11. Pogge, 26.
12. Pogge, 110.
13. Pogge, 22.
14. Ricardo Gomez, "Globalized Neoliberalism and Its Plagues," in *The Impact of Globalized Neoliberalism in Latin America: Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. Ricardo Gomez (Newbury Park: Hansen House, 2004), 156-175, 173.

Wittgenstein Symposium

Upon their initial review of submitted work, the editors of *Philosophy in Practice* quickly realized that they had several good papers related to the twentieth century philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein. This plentitude of scholastically solid and interesting papers on Wittgenstein came as no surprise; Professor Ann Garry had directed an inspiring graduate seminar on Wittgenstein during the 2004 Summer Quarter only a few terms earlier. In addition, Professor Jennifer Faust had recently taught the undergraduate writing course required of philosophy majors, and Wittgenstein was among the several choices she offered students as a paper topic. Professor Faust was not surprised when many of her students elected to write papers on Wittgenstein. After all, no philosopher of the twentieth century is more likely to inspire or incite an intellectual response from philosophy students than is Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein's father was a very successful Viennese industrialist who expected his sons to dedicate themselves to the family business. In preparation for this role, Ludwig, his youngest child, first studied engineering and then aeronautics. However, Wittgenstein veered off this professional course when his interest in the philosophy of mathematics prompted him to visit the German philosopher Gottlieb Frege, who in turn advised him to seek the tutelage of Bertrand Russell at Cambridge. Wittgenstein was now on course to revolutionize our understanding of the relationship between the world, logic and language, and he succeeded in this not once, but twice.

Scholars typically divide Wittgenstein and his work into early and late periods. 'Early Wittgenstein' generally refers to the philosophy of the *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, which was written during his service in the Austrian army in the First

World War. The *Tractatus* expounds the view that language, in the form of elementary propositions, is an isomorphic reflection of all possible facts. This work posits Wittgenstein's conviction that one can know the structure of the world accurately through language and that the limits of language are therefore the limits of what one can know. This view characterizes the structure of language as a necessary consequence of existence such that individuals and societies shape it only superficially. Satisfied that the *Tractatus* adequately addressed all of the soluble problems of philosophy, Wittgenstein retired from the subject and taught school in rural Austria. He returned to philosophy only after fellow philosophers persuaded him that there remained important philosophical problems to solve.

Wittgenstein's return to philosophy marks the beginning of his late period, during which virtually all of his work other than the *Tractatus* was written. The most important of these works is *Philosophical Investigations*, which like the Tractatus, is concerned primarily with language and its implications. However, *Philosophical Investigations* marks a bold and radical shift in Wittgenstein's philosophy of language. No longer does he view language as a static reflection of existence; instead, he now characterizes language as a continually evolving organic manifestation of culture. The late Wittgenstein regards human consciousness, to the extent that it is public or displayed, as the progenitor of language and believes that the preexisting structure of the world is of little consequence in its formation. Whereas the early Wittgenstein characterizes language as a tool by which to know the structure of the world, the late Wittgenstein regards language as a tool by which to explore human culture and consciousness.

Naturally, much of Wittgenstein's discourse on philosophy of mind is found in the late period and is heavily influenced by his views on language. It is at the juncture of Wittgenstein's philosophies of language and mind that much of the persistent

controversy over the interpretation of his writing arises. All of the student papers presented here explore some part of this territory where Wittgenstein's concepts about language and mind coalesce. "Wittgenstein: The Celebration of Our Inner Consciousness" by Christina Ng examines Wittgenstein's description of language-games, as well as what is known to philosophers as Wittgenstein's private language argument, and is primarily interested in what they reveal about Wittgenstein's view of individual consciousness. Ng argues against the popular notion that Wittgenstein is fundamentally a behaviorist or logical positivist who attributes to individuals only the most meager state of consciousness; she claims that "Wittgenstein not only does not deny our inner consciousness as human beings, he celebrates it through his discussion of language games and language-in-use."

"Bringing Clarity to Wittgenstein: Why it is still OK to talk about our Beetle" by Sheldon Schwartz examines the linguistic implications of the private language argument. Schwartz interprets the private language argument such that Wittgenstein denies the possibility of the valid or meaningful communication of private sensations and other subjective experience, and he argues against it. According to Schwartz, if an individual successfully uses a term to describe a private sensation, that term "can refer, and does refer".

"Wittgenstein's Subject: What It Is, Not What It Means" by Marty Felgen argues for two related theses. The first thesis is that Wittgenstein does not discuss what the individual subject is because he requires that all inquiries into the nature of a thing, including the psychological subject, be treated as an inquiry into the meaning of the term that represents it. This argument illustrates the profound distinction between ontology and semantics. The second thesis presents a picture of what Wittgenstein's subject would look like, were he to provide one.

There is little one can state about the philosophy of Witt-

genstein, or about any of the multitude of related interpretations, with absolute certitude. However, the editors of *Philosophy in Practice* are confident that the reader will discover a remarkable degree of intellectual acuity, philosophic insight, and interpretational plausibility in each of our student papers, and that additionally these papers are great fun to read.

Marty Felgen

Wittgenstein: The Celebration of Our Inner Consciousness

Christina Ng

It has been said that to be great is to be misunderstood. Indeed, Ludwig Wittgenstein was such a person. Having written only two books in his life, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations*, his works have catapulted endless discussions and interpretations as well as contributed greatly to many areas of study such as philosophy of language and philosophy of mind. Among his most criticized concepts is the private language argument in which Wittgenstein seems to deny the deep-seated belief that human beings have a unique experience of an inner consciousness or inner process. Closely related to this concept is Wittgenstein's notion of language-in-use, that is, that our language is grounded in our daily use for communication. In this paper I discuss Wittgenstein's private language argument and then look at Wittgenstein's views regarding language-in-use. I will argue that Wittgenstein not only does not deny our inner consciousness as human beings, he celebrates it through his discussion of language-in-use.[1]

We begin with a question of Wittgenstein's in *PI*§244, "How do words *refer* to sensations? [How] is the connexion (sic) between the name and the thing named set up?" With this question, Wittgenstein launched a series of examinations regarding our use of words and their relationship with our sensations. The connection for Wittgenstein lies in our use of language. The words we use in our language describe the physical sensations we experience, that is, "words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation and used in their place."[2]

Critics may disagree with Wittgenstein in that they like to think that human beings are somehow special, that we have an inner consciousness or soul. Hence, they want to treat sensations as an inner object, something that only the individual can experience and know. Granted, Wittgenstein may not have fully acknowledged an inner consciousness, but he does not deny it either, as in this example: "And now the analogy which was to make us understand our thoughts falls to pieces. So we have to deny the yet uncomprehended process in the yet unexplored medium. And now it looks as if we had denied mental process. And naturally we don't want to deny them."[3]

Western philosophy has been greatly influenced by Descartes' notion of mind-body dualism; that is, our body is a physical manifestation of who we are as human beings and our mind is a psychological manifestation. From Descartes' famous dictum, "*Cogito Ergo Sum*" flows a belief within the philosophical and psychological sphere that our mind is a "privileged access"[4] that only the individual can have direct access to and that no other person can know. This includes the person's sensations, thoughts, and emotions. Thus, when a person sees someone holding his cheek and have difficulty talking, the individual can only assume to a certain point of certainty that he has a toothache. One does not really know what a toothache is like unless one experiences it herself. Even then, one would not know *exactly* what the other person's toothache feels like. After all, her experience of a toothache is different than any other person's experience of a toothache.

Wittgenstein finds this argument very problematic. He addresses this issue quite extensively in *PI*. In *PI* §258, Wittgenstein illustrates this point by pretending that he wants to keep a diary about a reoccurring sensation. He needs to invent a word to represent this sensation so that he can write it down. He chooses to represent this particular sensation with the sign 'S'. Now, every time the sensation occurs he writes down 'S' on his

calendar. According to the Cartesian model, this 'S' is a private sign that only Wittgenstein knows the meaning of. It cannot be defined or known by others. However, Wittgenstein argues, it would not help to give it an ostensive definition because he cannot point to the sensation and say, "THIS is 'S'", and that it would not make sense.[5] In other words, 'S' cannot be placed in our hands the way we can put an apple in our hands. Likewise, we cannot point to 'S' and say "THIS is 'S'" the way we can point to the apple and say "THIS is 'an apple'". In our yearning desire to remain special and unique, we may have an admirable reason to elucidate a conceptual link of the physical and the psychological. But, in the end, it remains a false distinction.[6]

Wittgenstein illustrates this further with his famous "beetle in the box" parable:

> Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a "beetle". No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at *his* beetle. — Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing. — But suppose the word "beetle" had a use in these people's language? — If so it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as a something: for the box might even be empty. — No, one can 'divide through' by the thing in the box; it cancels out, whatever it is.[7]

Wittgenstein argues that we are inclined to say that our sensations like pain are private. However, for Wittgenstein, private sensations are not probable because our language is a shared and public activity. Hence, our sensations are shared and public as well. To say that sensations are private is, in a way, wrong and in another way, nonsensical.[8] It does not make sense to say that only I know that I am in pain, because the word

"pain" is an agreed upon word with external factors and language elements involved that allow us to come to the conclusion that someone is in pain. For Wittgenstein, our mentality of treating our sensations as objects is a mistaken fallacy. As illustrated in the beetle parable, it does not matter *what* is in the box; it could be empty for all we know. What is important is that we have a common word that we all agree on and use ('beetle' or 'pain,' whichever the case may be) to designate whatever is in the box. Therefore, when we look at sensation like pain using the 'object and designation' model, we can easily drop the object and that would not affect whatever is in the box or our use of it: "one can 'divide through' by the thing in the box; it cancels out, whatever it is."[9]

For Wittgenstein's critics, his argument against a private language leaves a visible void in their deep-seated belief in an inner process or consciousness. If Wittgenstein argues against a private language, then surely he is also arguing against an inner process as well. However, I think we need to distinguish between Wittgenstein's argument against a private *language,* and his view regarding an inner *process*. Just because we cannot have a private language does not mean that we do not have an inner process. For Wittgenstein, a private language cannot occur because language is a public activity found and used in a public domain. However, that does not necessarily discount an individual's inner process or consciousness. Yes, an individual's experience is unique and special in its own right. But, in the grand scheme of things, we are still social beings in need of social interactions with each other. We do that through the communication medium of language. In fact, Wittgenstein says, "Why should I deny that there is a mental process?[10]; what gives the impression that we want to deny anything?"[11] Wittgenstein does not come right out and state his position and then give a full theoretical position on it (as most philosophers tend to do). Indeed, Wittgenstein's philosophical quest is "not [to] advance

any kind of theory [or have] anything hypothetical in [his] considerations. [He wants to] do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place."[12]

Wittgenstein might not dwell on the topic of consciousness or inner process as much as his objectors might like. However, I think that in his own quirky (and confusing) kind of way, he does acknowledge a certain consciousness or inner process through his elucidations on a subject (as in human being or living being). He began in *PI* §283, by proposing an imaginary scenario in which he is having horrible pains while turning into stone. If that happens, he asks, "in what sense will *the stone* have the pains? In what sense will they be ascribable to the stone? And why need the pain have a bearer at all here?" In other words, the pain does not linger on after he has turned into a stone. It does not have a spatial element to it. Our language-game does not allow that type of concept. Again, in *PI* §286, he states, "if someone has a pain in his hand, then the hand does not say so (unless it writes it) and one does not comfort the hand, but the *sufferer*: one looks into his face (italics mine)." Again, in *PI* §302, "Pain-behavior can point to a painful place —but the *subject* of pain is the person who gives it expression (italics mine)." These statements seem to imply that there is a certain degree of consciousness in human beings to express those sensations, emotions, or feelings we might have—a type of consciousness that a stone does not have. This consciousness is manifest in the subject (in this case, a person) who experiences the sensations, emotions, doubt, or whatever it may be and consequently expresses this consciousness through her use and mastery of language. This topic that Wittgenstein briefly mentioned in *PI* may not be a full-blown philosophical theory on consciousness that many of his objectors would have liked him to establish. Nonetheless, it is a consciousness that is, it seems to Wittgenstein, present, and it is an undeniable part of each living being.

Wittgenstein explores this concept of consciousness

further in *PI* §156. He takes a simple activity like reading and takes his readers on a journey of a reader's mind as she reads, say, a newspaper. Here, Wittgenstein breaks the activity down to tiny possible steps. As the person passes her eyes along the printed words, she may be just reading the words in print. She might say the words out loud to herself or she may be reading silently. As she is reading, however, we do not know whether she is just reading the words like a reading-machine, if she understands the words she is reading, or even if she is simply pretending to be reading the newspaper. I think that Wittgenstein is acknowledging (in his own way) a consciousness or inner process taking place within a person, which in this case is the activity of reading. From this passage, Wittgenstein seems to intimate a notion of a consciousness or inner process. Otherwise, I don't think he would have spent so much time on its elucidation in this section and other sections in the earlier parts of the *PI*. However, consciousness or not, Wittgenstein posits, philosophical problems are solved "by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: *in spite of* [Wittgenstein's italics] an urge to understand them. The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known."[13]

Furthermore, Wittgenstein states in *PI* §281, "only of a living human being and what resembles (behaves like) a living human being can one say: it has sensations; it sees; is blind; hears; is deaf; is conscious or unconscious." Again, in *PI* §284, "[A] corpse seems to us quite inaccessible to pain. – Our attitude to what is alive and to what is dead, is not the same. All our reactions are different. – If anyone says: 'That cannot simply come from the fact that a living thing moves about in such-and-such a way and a dead one not', then I want to intimate to him that this is a case of the transition 'from quantity to quality.'" Having not denied the possibility of a consciousness, Wittgenstein seems to imply that this consciousness is revealed through the medium

of a subject (in this case, a human being) and in turn, is manifested through the medium of language. I think that is what Wittgenstein means when he says, "from quantity to quality", that is, sensations, feelings, and the like are not *things* that we have assumed them to be. They are more like shades of quality or characteristics that can be found within the consciousness of a subject. In addition, our attitudes towards the living and the nonliving constitute different reactions. These reactions, for Wittgenstein, are embedded and revealed through our language. Just as we do not say that a corpse or a stone feels pain, we do not measure the face of a person to see if she is happy or angry. Our language has already established that the corpse or stone does not feel pain or that a person is happy or angry. We *could* say that in a fairy tale the pot can see and hear too. But, according to Wittgenstein, that would be a different language-game spoken on a different level of grammatical intervention. But, we will get back to this later.

It might be argued that Wittgenstein seems to be trivializing our inner process or consciousness and reducing it simply to a grammatical language. However, time and again in *PI* Wittgenstein brings his readers back "from [our] metaphysical to [our] everyday use"[14], that is, to put our focus back to the language-games that we play in daily life. His arguments of language and language-in-use endeavors to bring us back to what "already lies open to view"[15], that is, seeing philosophical questions that is actually grounded in grammatical use in our everyday use of language. Wittgenstein recognizes that language is a complex exercise achieved through a certain degree of consciousness. Wittgenstein describes language as "an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses."[16] Even Wittgenstein's use of words pays homage to the complexity of language. For me, an ancient

city draws to mind a city filled with the hustle and bustle of life, people busy coming and going with the responsibilities of daily living. It draws to mind a city with big roads and many small streets winding in and out through the city like a snake. It draws to mind its unique landscape, architecture, and livelihood. It draws to mind a city filled with incredible history with its distinctive smell, aura, appearance and presence. In effect, an ancient city is one that is distinctive, complex, and unique in its own way.

Likewise, language is like an ancient city. I think one begins to appreciate the profound respect Wittgenstein has for our language and the consciousness of the human mind through his elucidations of language-in-use and language-games. Throughout the beginning of the *PI* Wittgenstein painstakingly demonstrates his language-game and language-in-use concepts through multitudes of detailed examples, examples in which we will not get bogged down in this paper. However, suffice it to say, there are *countless* (Wittgenstein's italics) different kinds of use in our use of language.[17] Language evolves, changes, ebbs and flows, becomes obsolete and new. Through language we give orders, report an incident, describe an event, construct a drawing, and speculate about a person.[18] The list goes on and on seemingly *ad infinitum* (although Wittgenstein probably would not have liked to use this word). So, to get back to our fairy tale pot, we could say that in a fairy tale the pot can see and hear too. But in order to say that, we would be speaking a different language-game based on a different context. Just as in a game of chess, the rules of chess are applied to the game. One would not apply the rules of baseball to play chess. Likewise, we would not say that actual steam is coming out of a pictured boiling pot. If you think of language in the context of Wittgenstein's language game, one can imagine the multifarious situations and contexts in which language can be used and applied. One can also begin to appreciate the complexity of the human consciousness in inventing,

creating, and using language in such a highly creative way.

Fairy tale stories aside, one can apply Wittgenstein's language game to a multitude of real life situations and still see the diversity of our language-in-use. In *PI* §249, Wittgenstein notes, "lying is a language-game that needs to be learned like any other one". When a person comes into the Emergency Room complaining of pain, doctors and nurses generally take the patient's word for it that he is in pain. They generally will do everything in their ability to alleviate the pain and make the patient feel better. Now, if the patient has a long history of drug addiction and is a frequent visitor to this particular ER, then the doctors and nurses might not have believed him as easily because of the possibility of an ulterior motive for painkillers. In this case, a different language-game is spoken in light of a different context. Of course, this is just one example of many to illustrate the multitude of situations in which various language games can be played out. In effect, there are many factors that come into play such as history, personalities, circumstances, and so forth that determine the kinds of language-games we play and the language-in-use that we apply.

In conclusion, I argued that in acknowledging the complexities of language, Wittgenstein is also acknowledging the complexities of the human consciousness. In light of Wittgenstein's private language argument, there is much reservation about his seeming neglect of the human consciousness or an inner process. However, I argued that Wittgenstein does not neglect the human consciousness or inner process at all. In fact, he acknowledges its existence and importance as part of our makeup as social beings in need of social interactions and communication. Wittgenstein rejects the Cartesian notion of a mind-body dualism that has deeply impacted our philosophical and psychological inquiries. In his private language argument and beetle in the box examples, Wittgenstein shows that whatever we may consider unique, special or "only I know what I

am feeling" mentality is not as important in light of our need to communicate and interact with each other in a public domain. For Wittgenstein, it is not that this "inner" consciousness is not important at all. It is just that it does not tell us anything we need to know in an observable or public way; that is, it does not help us in our communication and understanding of each other. However, Wittgenstein does acknowledge the idea of consciousness through his elucidations of language-games and language-in-use. Through his multiple and painstaking examples in the *PI*, Wittgenstein demonstrates the complexities and intricacies of our human consciousness through our language-in-use in everyday life. In *PI* §203, Wittgenstein describes language as "a labyrinth of paths. You approach from *one* side and know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and no longer know your way about." Language, like a labyrinth, has many starting points with many different possible paths and many different possible destinations. It is because of these many different possibilities, I think, that make our "form of life" so complex and interesting.

Notes

1. Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Philosophical Investigations,* trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1958). In this paper, *Philosophical Investigations* will be referred to simply as *PI.* As noted by the author in the Preface, *PI* is written as thoughts or remarks in short paragraphs form. The symbol § designates the paragraph number in the book, not the page number. Thus, the reference *PI* §244 refers to remark #244 or paragraph #244.
2. *PI* §244.
3. *PI* §308.
4. Alan Donagan, "Wittgenstein on Sensation," in *Wittgenstein: Philosophical Investigations*, ed. George Pitcher (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 324.
5. Wittgenstein defines "ostensive definition" as establishing an association between the word and the thing. See *PI* §6.
6. Marie McGinn, *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations* (London: Routledge, 1997), 153.
7. *PI* §293.

8. *PI* §246.
9. *PI* §293.
10. *PI* §306.
11. *PI* §305.
12. *PI* §109.
13. *PI* §109.
14. *PI* §116.
15. *PI* §92.
16. *PI* §18.
17. *PI* §23.
18. *PI* §23.

Arguments Against Wittgenstein: Why It is Still OK to Talk about Subjective Experience

Sheldon Schwartz

Ludwig Wittgenstein was a philosopher from the early 20th century who is known primarily for his assertion that philosophy, particularly phenomenology and other fields related to the Cartesian problem, was marked by a gigantic linguistic confusion. His idea rested in his core assertion that philosophers had over-stepped an invisible boundary separating the communicable public world from the incommunicable private world. In other words, Wittgenstein would have argued that the moment philosophers started using language to describe the incommunicable, philosophy became one big twisted mess. The goal of this paper is three-fold. First, Wittgenstein's view will be explicated through examples from *Philosophical Investigations*. Second, the view that the subjective is incommunicable will be challenged. This should not be confused with the goal of proving that another can somehow, using language, transmit with complete accuracy his own subjective experience to another. Rather, discourse, discussion, and relation about subjective experience will be proven to be communicable, normal, and practical in regards to the field of philosophy and other fields. Third, this paper will show how Wittgenstein, in asserting his theories on the subjective, ends up contradicting himself.

In *Philosophical Investigations*, one can infer that the following is one contention of Wittgenstein's: The only way one can use a certain word in a sentence is if that word obeys the way it is used by the majority of the people who are members of the language community the sentence is written in. If that

word is used in a sentence in a way that does not adhere to the way it is used in the language community it is a part of, then the sentence the word is used in becomes uncommunicative—that is, the sentence is uninformative precisely because the word embedded in it is meaningless. Wittgenstein accuses his philosophical contemporaries of misusing countless words in their pursuit of knowledge relating to phenomenology. For example, the word 'red' had not been used in so many different ways until the modern period. Philosophers discussed whether "redness" was in objects, in one's brain, in one's eyes, or if "redness" even existed. Wittgenstein would argue that the meaning of 'red' is precisely the way one uses it in their language. He would argue that you could most likely find the definition of 'red' in a common dictionary. In addition, he would argue that his philosophical contemporaries make this mistake due to the harmless tendency of knowledge seekers to "learn to know a process better" (§ 308).[1] That is, they would attempt to communicate the incommunicable, the subjective experience. Furthermore, Wittgenstein maintains that to even assert an idea about subjective experience is equivalent to describing the subjective experience itself, and thus incommunicable. In §304, he gives his response to the objection that he does not believe in subjective experience. He states that he does believe subjective experience exists, but you cannot really talk about it. He describes that his "conclusion was only that a nothing would serve just as well as a something about which nothing could be said".

However, one can argue that Wittgenstein's claim about the invalidity of assertions about subjective experience is an assertion about subjective experience in itself. One might object that his assertion is not about subjective experience, but only about the limits of language. However, to say that language cannot communicate a certain thing is also to say that that thing's nature is such that it would be "incompatible" with language. The following analogy would be the following: Let's say one is

walking around in the dark without knowledge of his surroundings. If, upon walking straight, one runs into a physical barrier, one can reasonably assume that this barrier is a part of his surroundings. One can still object that he might have created the barrier himself, that for some strange reason he created a psychokinetic wall. However, this person can walk backwards, walk left, walk right, walk in a number of remembered directions, and test for the barrier. Upon finding that at this particular dark place and at these particular remembered coordinates, there is a physical barrier that he always bumps into, it would be absurd not to deduce that the physical barrier he ran into was a feature of the environment he was in. In the analogy, the dark place represents the subjective and the person represents language. The person can now make a very meaningful assertion that there is a linguistic barrier somewhere in the subjective. Thus, to say that any proposition which intends to derive information about or from a subjective experience is invalid only derives a great deal of information from subjective experience. That is, the fact that there is something that exists, which cannot possibly coincide or be communicated directly in a language system, is a very specific assertion about the nature of that thing. One can only use language to assert this. This is significant because language is the very thing Wittgenstein argues that cannot communicate assertions about subjective experience. For Wittgenstein, all assertions about private, subjective experience are meaningless.

Wittgenstein argues that in their attempt to understand mental processes, his contemporaries unknowingly stumbled upon the truth that subjective knowledge could not be communicated in a language community. In other words, since language systems are designed to work with tangible, communicable, and objective ideas, the subjective experience, only truly known to the one who experiences it, cannot be communicated to others, as it is by definition subjective and therefore private. Essentially, Wittgenstein contends that as separate beings, we cannot

possibly prove, using language, the internal experience of one to another. For example, most members of a language community have the ability to make distinctions between colors; however, one can never describe the subjective experience of a specific color. Wittgenstein asserts that his contemporaries continued using words previously meant for communication of the publicly knowable, for the communication of subjectively knowable but incommunicable experience.

However, one can argue that the fact that one's subjective experience of the color red, for example, is impossible to describe in itself should not be a deterrent from discovering anything else that can be communicated about the color red. One can, without much difficulty, concede that Wittgenstein's contemporaries would have agreed that to describe the sensation of red in itself would be impossible. They were not seeking an answer to the question "How do I communicate the sensation of the color red?" Rather, they were trying to understand that knowledge can be derived from the very existence of the sensation of the color red. Wittgenstein, however, argued against the meaningfulness of statements about subjective experience. His argument is that even if one were to conceivably create a theory about redness, that theory would be so removed from the original usage of 'red' in the language community, that it would be akin to a wheel moving in solitude, away from the mechanism. As Wittgenstein remarks: "a wheel that can be turned though nothing else moves with it, is not part of the mechanism" (§271).

One might assert that 'red' is being used ambiguously in this paper's criticism of Wittgenstein. Indeed, the author of this paper is discussing red in two contexts: first, the subjective experience of light emitted by objects in the external world, and second, any past philosophical discourse involving the differentiation and identification of 'red' as either a property, perception, or a combination of the two. However, one must remember that all metaphysical theories of red have ramifications on our view

of the subjective, private world Wittgenstein was writing about. Whatever one's metaphysics, Wittgenstein was arguing that any theory about 'red' that would involve claims about subjective experience was meaningless. Thus, all metaphysical theories of 'red', as used above, are relevant to the discussion.

Essentially, one can interpret Wittgenstein to be arguing that theories about subjective experience—that is, conjecture that involves what it is like to experience X—are meaningless. Theories about subjective experience, however, have lent themselves to other areas of knowledge in very practical ways. Understanding that pain is separate from actual biological damage to one's body has lent itself to the fields of psychology and physiology. The study of color-blindness requires an understanding of the subjective reality of color in itself. Can someone who is born color-blind be cured? How do you give "therapy" to someone who has a problem perceiving color? What happens if a person's set of rods and cones, the photonic receptors that separate wavelengths of light in the eye, become degraded and dysfunctional? Imagine if our experience of red was suddenly switched with our experience of blue. One consequence among many is that the glowing redness of metal heated to extreme temperatures might lead to some very painful accidents. To solve the problem, one would have to literally relate to and linguistically communicate knowledge about their own subjective experiences to another. One, assuming he has knowledge of the other's dysfunctional color perception faculties, would have to say something to the effect of "from now on, if metal objects look like a bright glowing blue, that is, the same color you used to perceive when you looked at the ocean, you should assume that the metal is very hot." One can see that rational statements of the kind that reveal information about the nature of subjective experiences can be practical. If they are practical, provide change and development, and are a part of our language community, how then are they "wheels moving in solitude"?

Wittgenstein argues that we cannot talk about our subjective experiences. That is, if something is red, that is its color, end of story. He argues that philosophers took it further than this, trying to create theories about what it is like to experience the color red. However, if one truly analyzes the theories of the philosophers Wittgenstein was addressing, one would realize that they were not trying to prove that the very experience was the same. Rather, they were dealing with the nature of properties. The debate about red itself pitted realism, the idea of red existing as a universal, against nominalism, the idea of the absence of universals, all "reds" being different. Either way, the conjecture taking place was not seeking to prove that the very experience of redness was completely identical. Rather, the debate was about forming a logical system in which the sensations of properties and the properties themselves could be explained. There are no individuals who would say, "I can prove that your experience of color, your red, your blue, and your yellow, are the exact same thing as mine." Instead, you might find individuals saying, "I can prove that the system in which your experience of red, blue, and yellow relate to the exact same thing as mine." Thus, the example given of how one person would coach another whose experience of colors becoming dysfunctional comes into play. They both agree to a system in which their experience of colors are concordant, fixing the problem at hand.

In making his argument against the possibility of language referring to experience, Wittgenstein presents a thought experiment in which everyone has a box that contains something that everyone has agreed to call a "beetle." The nature of the box is such that nobody can look in anyone else's box, and "everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at his beetle" (§ 293). He argues that even if the word 'beetle' had a use in a particular language community, it would not be to describe that existence inside that box since the "thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as a something: for the box

might even be empty" (§ 293). Here, because there is either an indeterminate referent or no referent at all for 'beetle,' Wittgenstein claims that 'beetle' is meaningless in language. One can interpret that Wittgenstein is doing precisely what he accuses his contemporaries of doing: twisting language to assert problematic truths. If in one or more instances, a vacuous space, that is, no matter or energy save a cubic section of the universe, exists inside the box, the mere existence of that empty space is what stands for the word 'beetle' for one or more individuals (whoever else might possess an empty box). The word can refer, and does refer, for to deny its reference is to deny the truth that there exists a section of the universe inside a box that everyone possesses. One can object that Wittgenstein was not trying to say that the 'beetle' does not exist. In effect, one would probably object that Wittgenstein did not deny the existence of subjective experiences. However, the example used to describe the resolution of the person afflicted with dysfunctional color blindness can be used to assert that talking about subjective experience has use in the language game. Additionally, the argument here is not that Wittgenstein does not believe that subjective experiences exist; rather, it is that denying that language can refer to them can be problematic.

The idea that the model of "object and designation" cannot be applied to words that stand for subjective data is asserted by Wittgenstein in his beetle box metaphor. To conclude the metaphor, he writes "if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of 'object and designation' the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant." (§293) Wittgenstein seems to be saying that statements of the form "X is true about P", where X is a property and P is a subjective experience, are problematic in that P is irrelevant. How can our subjective experiences, when communicating about them, be anything but relevant? Again, in the example of dysfunctional color perception, statements that assert idea X about P, where P is a

subjective experience, are an utter necessity (e.g., "My red is the same as your blue" or "The color you used to perceive when you looked at the ocean is now the color you perceive when you look at hot metal objects"). In the statements required in the context of the color blind person, the designated object, sensation, remains relevant, thus proving an instance where a proposition with the "expression of sensation" as the object, communicates information.

Going back to the main argument of this paper, Wittgenstein effectively refutes himself at this point; he asserts that the model of "object and designation" cannot be used for subjective data, but he is using the "object and designation" model to state this very fact. He designates "subjective experience" as an object, and asserts ideas about it. One can argue that Wittgenstein is excused in this particular case because he is correcting a language problem. However, this can only be akin to fighting fire with fire. What if Wittgenstein has something else to say about the internally knowable? In fact his Investigations concerns itself with the nature of the internally knowable, epistemology, and how they intersect with the philosophy of language. This objection does not hold because "fixing a language problem" or even just being Ludwig Wittgenstein is not a justification to break such a big rule. It is almost as if Wittgenstein's rule is: "Nobody can make assertions about subjective experience except me."

One can, without difficulty, assert that the beetle metaphor could stand for one of the many metaphysical/epistemological problems that Wittgenstein was criticizing. The subjective experience of red is a good example. Questions such as "Where does the perception of red originate?" and "Does red exist outside or inside of us?" are not invalidated as a result of red's subjective nature, although one can infer that Wittgenstein would disagree. If, for example, all of the "beetles" were identical, that would have a drastic effect on our understanding of metaphysics and epistemology. Wittgenstein argues that trying to explore

the nature of the "beetle" is irrelevant. Scientifically, we have discovered that the experience of red occurs when the rods and cones are stimulated by wavelengths of light. Thus the 'experience' of red does not exist in an object but in the visual sense of the perceiver. In designing equipment that works with light, one cannot conceive of a way in which knowing that 'red' is separate from an object would not be valuable. Hence, understanding more about our "beetle" is practical. Wittgenstein condemns practicality by condemning the study of the space inside our beetle boxes.

He further argues in §303 that the statements "I believe he is in pain" and "He is in pain" are equivalent, and the former is only used in philosophy because it is the more "appropriate one." However, one can argue that there are, in fact, some differences between the two statements. The first one declares a state of belief about a certain condition, and the other simply asserts truth. Wittgenstein (in §303) jests at his contemporaries by asking them to give a real case in which they "doubt someone else's fear or pain." However, in hospitals the determination of strong pain-killer administration relies on understanding the distinction between believing that someone is in pain, and someone actually being in pain. In fact, most modern hospitals in the United States include a pain assessment board for patients, asking them to gauge their own levels of pain. With pain tolerance and sensitivity varying across patients, pain assessments would logically vary according to various treatments and conditions as well. Thus, here is an example where the subjective plays a very big role in a practical situation. Not only are some people forced to make rational judgments about another person's "beetle box," but others are forced to make an attempt at expressing a value derived from their own "beetle box."

Ultimately, the contradiction of Wittgenstein's argument against philosophical contemplation on the subjective can be summarized into a key point. In essence, Wittgenstein is

telling us not to talk about subjective ideas because our language community cannot bear words that communicate the subjective. However, in asserting this rule, Wittgenstein must use the word 'subjective,' which stands for everything he seeks to erase from our language game. In other words, he includes the set of data classified by himself as publicly unknowable in a statement saying that we should no longer talk about the publicly unknowable. Imagine a puzzle, that when put together has written in bold blue letters that take up many whole blue pieces the statement: "ANY PUZZLE WITH SOLID BLUE PIECES CANNOT COMMUNICATE INFORMATION." The only thing that does not communicate information in this analogy is the puzzle itself. If puzzles with blue pieces cannot communicate information, then the puzzle above cannot communicate information. If the puzzle above cannot communicate information, then the original message, that puzzles with blue pieces cannot communicate information, is false. This is the very problem of Wittgenstein's rule about the reference to subjectivity in communication. He references subjectivity, which would stand for the blue puzzle pieces in the above analogy, to explain that any given sentence that uses the subjective as an object does not communicate information. His original message would then be invalid, as it uses subjectivity to communicate the message.

In summary, the points made in this paper were the following: a) it is rational to have linguistic discourse about subjective experience: b) discourse about subjective experience is useful; and c) Wittgenstein himself, though he was against discourse about subjective experience, engaged in discourse about subjective experience to assert his own theories.

Note

1. All citations in this paper will be to Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, <http://www.handprint.com/SC/WIT/philinv.html> (15 May 2005). (§ X), where X is the paragraph number in *Philosophical Investigations*, will be used to notate references.

Wittgenstein's Subject: What It *Is* – Not What It Means

Marty Felgen

An Introduction and Overview

There does not seem to be much point in asking what Wittgenstein means by 'subject' or 'self' or 'person'. Wittgenstein instructs us that the meaning of any term is determined by its use within the language-games of our forms of life, and that its use depends upon circumstances and corresponding criteria.[1] Master the appropriate language-game, we are told, and we will know what a particular term means in any given context.[2] Therefore, to ask what Wittgenstein means by these terms is to ask either for personal definitions, which he regards as meaningless, or for a recitation of common usages, which tell us nothing about his ideas of what a subject is.[3] However, it does make sense to ask whether Wittgenstein believes there is such an entity as that meant by the term 'subject' or 'self' or 'person,' or to ask what the nature of such an entity is, or the extent to which its meaning corresponds to what it is. These are the questions—the ones regarding Wittgenstein's view of being, rather than his investigation of meaning—that are addressed within this paper.

This paper explores first why Wittgenstein does not discuss what a subject is, thus making the explication of his views necessary. The exploration develops naturally in two ways: first, it expounds the thesis that Wittgenstein's bifurcation of empirical and linguistic methodologies constricts the scope of philosophy to linguistic analysis. This constriction precludes the examination of what a thing is, except where its nature is defined by rules (e.g., an algebraic operation), and it ultimately leads him and us to an untenable view of what the subject is. The develop-

ment of this thesis provides a foundation and initial insight into the subsequent, primary thesis about what the Wittgensteinian subject is, rather than merely what it means.

The second and principle thesis of this paper reveals Wittgenstein's view of the subject that results from the constricted methodology explained by the first thesis. This view is presented here as a verbal portrait, and since Wittgenstein's subject rarely poses, this portrait is assembled primarily with myriad psychological perspectives from his work. The criteria for selecting these perspectives of his subject are comprised from philosophical definitions of several psychological terms, including 'subject', 'self', 'person' and 'consciousness.' A few personal remarks of Wittgenstein's about his philosophy of mind are applied to the portrait. The finished rendering is not quite a portrait, but not a still life either. It depicts a psychological subject that is odd, quite static and mostly flat. It is a product of misguided methodology and constricted view. It is not the objective of this paper to thoroughly critique Wittgenstein's concept of mind or to discuss the relative merits of various philosophies on this subject. Rather, this paper seeks to establish what Wittgenstein thinks and why he thinks it.

The contrast of a term's meaning with the actual thing to which it refers is a minor theme that continues throughout much of this work. This contrast is unavoidable because most of what Wittgenstein says about the subject and related issues is characterized by the meaning of the terms involved; thus, if we are to learn what he believes something is, his belief must be explicated from the meaning of the term or terms that represent it. The issue of the contrast between these contrary views of reality, while not a principle thesis in particular, helps to elucidate Wittgenstein's conception of the individual subject and is therefore relevant and essential to this paper.

What Something Is and What Something Means

Imagine asking a zoologist, "What is a bison?" and hearing in response about how the Native Americans of the Great Plains revered them, depended on them, and even how they were hunted virtually to extinction by profiteers. You would be surprised to hear all about what 'bison' means to the inhabitants of North America and to hear nothing about what a bison is. Now imagine saying to the zoologist, "What I am really interested in is the animal's massive size and incredible strength and how it survives the long, snowy winters on the plains." You would be disappointed if the zoologist admonished you, "Do not seek to understand 'bison' by studying a bison! It is not the business of zoologists to study bison. Our function is to understand how the term 'bison' is used in everyday language and to apply grammatical analysis when confusion arises."

Certainly, Wittgenstein does not suggest that zoologists should divert themselves from their subjects to focus on terminology, and he believes that the world of objects is the proper domain of scientists. Nevertheless, this scenario is precisely analogous to how Wittgenstein views his role as a philosopher with regard to the world of objects. This is so, whether the objects are palpable like slabs or psychological like sensations.[4] Although it is not the business of philosophy to examine objects, it is, he believes, the business of philosophy to dispose of philosophical problems and questions, and these tasks invariably involve the analysis of meaning.

"The philosopher's treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness."[5] Whatever the question, Wittgenstein diagnoses some form of linguistic diversion, perversion or obfuscation of meaning, as though all questions related to meaning exclusively. It is no wonder Wittgenstein asserts that philosophy—the philosopher's "treatment" of a question—does not utilize introspection and "consists of methods, like different therapies."[6] Superficially, this seems an apt simile. However, to

treat a question solely with methods and without regard for the object it refers to, suggests that philosophy treats the question as a symptom rather than as an organic illness. In medicine, treating the illness rather than merely alleviating symptoms requires that the doctor examines and understands the patient, not merely what 'patient' means. It is true that some illnesses, like rashes, can be cured through symptomatic treatment, and some philosophical questions, such as "what does 'pain' mean?" can be dissolved through the application of language-games within the appropriate forms of life (social environments). However, not all illnesses are rashes and not all philosophical questions are about meaning.

Wittgenstein seems clear about what the function and purpose of philosophy should and should not be: "our considerations could not be scientific ones. It was not of any possible interest to us to find out empirically 'that, contrary to our preconceived ideas, it is possible to think such-and-such'—whatever that may mean."[7] Clearly then, it is not his responsibility to know or explain what a bison is. The problems of philosophy are not empirical problems; "they are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language."[8] Science examines things to discover what they are, whereas philosophy investigates language to identify and dissolve corruptions in meaning. Ultimately, "Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language (thus, it is cure and disease, clarity and confusion, subject and object)."[9]

Wittgenstein knows that his distinction between the roles of science and philosophy is appealing and that few philosophers (and fewer scientists) believe that philosophers should be involved in the investigation of empirical matters. Furthermore, Wittgenstein seems to demonstrate insight by stating the limits of his expertise, as well as the purpose and parameters of his field. That he defines his intellectual and professional boundaries to accord with his insight seems admirable. If, however, we do

not recognize the implications of this comparison of science and philosophy, we have been bewitched. When Wittgenstein says that philosophical problems are not empirical problems, that "they are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language," we are mislead to believe that there exist only two ways in which to understand the world. One way is through empirical investigation, which he believes is not the domain of philosophers, and the other way is by examining language.[10] From this dichotomy, it follows that the philosopher's sole task is to understand the world through the meaning of the terms that represent it. In philosophy, even questions that ask what something is, such as "What is a piece in chess," are answered in terms of meaning and the rules that determine it (e.g., a chess piece is that which does such and such). By comparing the realms of science and philosophy as he does, Wittgenstein seeks to convince us that only physical objects and language can be examined and that the philosopher's only method by which to understand the world is the investigation of the meaning of language.[11] Wittgenstein directs us to understand the subject accordingly.

As we have seen, there are significant reasons why Wittgenstein seems to neglect the issue of what the subject is. He prescribes a dichotomous approach to understanding the world that relegates the task of determining what something is to science and what something means to philosophy. The implications are obvious: what the subject is can be answered only through empirical investigation, that is, by examining its physical properties—if it has any—and what the subject means must be answered linguistically.

Now we may say that Wittgenstein forgoes the question of what the subject is because he does not concern himself with what any thing is. However, we may also ask why he does not declare simply that the psychological subject is entirely a physical entity and, therefore, outside of his purview. There are two reasons why

Wittgenstein might resist such an acknowledgement. First, he does not wish to induce any quasi-scientific examinations of the nature or essence of the subject through the application of language. He fears that when philosophers use words that refer to the psychological subject and "try to grasp the essence of the thing," they act contrary to their purpose, which is "to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use."[12]

Wittgenstein's concern about our human proclivity to conjure a psychological subject through language is discussed particularly in *The Blue and Brown Books*. Here he says, "Now the idea that the real I lives in my body is connected with the peculiar grammar of the word 'I', and the misunderstandings this grammar is liable to give rise to."[13] Wittgenstein explains that because "I" as subject is not used to identify any particular person by their bodily characteristics,

> it creates the illusion that we use this word to refer to something bodiless, which, however, has a seat in our body. In fact this seems to be the real ego, the one about which it was said, "Cogito, ergo sum."[14]

Evidently, Wittgenstein wants to prevent the confused, problematic and metaphysical conceptions of the psychological subject that he believes are caused by the pursuit of its essence, and to do this he shunts our investigation of the psychological subject down the unalloyed linguistic path to meaning.

A possible, second reason is that he does not wish to completely and irrevocably commit the psychological subject to the physical and linguistic realms. His denial of a metaphysical realm might appear to leave him no other choice, but Wittgenstein might entertain notions of a third, non-metaphysical realm. This is not ridiculous when one considers his view of what language is: "We are talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm. [Note in margin: Only it is possible to be inter-

ested in a phenomenon in a variety of ways] (sic)"[15] It is possible that Wittgenstein imagines a spatial and temporal realm in which the psychological subject might function. Perhaps the limits of his language are not the absolute limits of his world.

Establishing a Subject as the Reference

Before attempting to identify the many pieces of this portrait, a general meaning of subject is established for use as a reference. No one can say for certain what a subject is, or even if it is. Therefore, Wittgenstein's views cannot be identified by comparison with an actual example. Furthermore, the meaning of 'subject' is too narrow to describe everything we wish to understand about Wittgenstein. Although the term 'subject' is used by Wittgenstein (mostly in the Tractatus), there are several other psychological terms applied to the standard meaning by which this paper seeks to understand him. The resulting composite concept is referred to as the psychological subject. The psychological subject is divided into several psychological categories that correspond to topics addressed by Wittgenstein. In addition, a few of Wittgenstein's direct, relevant statements will be explicated and applied to the portrait. The finished portrait of Wittgenstein's subject will be compared with the psychological subject developed here.

The following are definitions from *The Oxford Universal Dictionary*, Third Edition, from which a composite standard meaning is formed. (1) Subject: "The mind as the 'subject' in which ideas inhere; that to which all mental representations or operations are attributed; the thinking or cognizing agent; the self or ego."[16] This definition captures only some of what we might regard as a psychological subject. What we really want to know is, to what extent does Wittgenstein view humans as persons rather than biological versions of robots? We need a model with more dimensions with which to compare his perspectives. (2) Person: "The actual self of a man or woman; individual

personality."[17] This adds 'personality' to the composite, but much remains to be added. (3) Self: "That which in a person is really and intrinsically he (in contradistinction of what is adventitious); the ego (often identified with the soul or mind as opposed to the body); a permanent subject of successive and varying states of consciousness."[18] The addition of 'self' provides nearly every remaining characteristic we might attribute to a fully functional, psychological subject. However, some of these qualities are contained within the term 'consciousness'. Thus (4) Consciousness: "The state or faculty of being conscious, as a concomitant of all thought, feeling, and volition."[19] A few common and technical concepts, such as self-consciousness, qualia, inner states, mental process, mental states and intention contribute further to a reasonably dimensional psychological subject.

The resulting composite psychological subject is the model used to identify and compare Wittgenstein's concept of what a psychological subject is. It is not intended to represent psychology, neurology, cognitive science or any other technical field. It serves instead as a simple, broad description of what the concept 'psychological subject' or 'self' means within our everyday language-games as informed by the relevant technical fields.

A Potrrait of the Wittgensteinian Subject

Our established psychological subject, whom we call Jane, consists in a place where all mental activities take place, called the mind. Jane is segmented into a few broad categories of mental activities with which Wittgenstein's relevant remarks are compared:

(1) Memory:

(a) Jane's active memory is experienced as a mental state of varying depths, clarity and intensity. Her long-term or passive memory is neither evident nor inert, and it influences her without

her awareness.

(b) Wittgenstein says he does not deny that remembering is a mental process. However, the following passages indicate that he does not regard this mental process as more dynamic than mere dispositions:

> Why should I deny that there is a mental process? 'There has just taken place in me the mental process of remembering' means nothing more than: 'I have just remembered'. To deny the mental process would mean to deny the remembering; to deny that anyone ever remembers anything.[20]

Although Wittgenstein does not refer to long-term memory directly, his comments regarding private language – indeed the entire argument – suggest that this type of memory is unreliable and unsophisticated. This is discussed in the context of pain defined by ostensive definition. Wittgenstein says that, despite one's effort to remember a particular pain sensation, in the future "whatever is going to seem right to me is right."[21] He then discounts the possibility that human memory is sophisticated enough to employ backup systems. An individual using one sort of memory to verify another is as effective "as if someone were to buy several copies of the morning paper to assure himself that what it said was true."[22]

(2) Understanding:

(a) This refers to Jane's experience when she realizes the relationships of things and how they fit together or interact. Most of us agree that Jane continues to understand a particular thing after she is no longer conscious of it. We commonly believe that even the most obscure and least accessible aspects of Jane's understanding can influence her and that each bit of understanding is significant, even if she never recalls it again. When active, Jane's understanding functions as a dynamic mind state with depth, texture and varying duration, and it interacts with

other faculties such as memory.

(b) According to Wittgenstein, understanding is not a mental state of any sort. Rather, it is a behavioral demonstration that must meet deliberate criteria. Wittgenstein advises:

> Try not to think of understanding as a 'mental process' at all.—For that is the expression which confuses you. But ask yourself: in what sort of case, in what kind of circumstances, do we say, 'Now I know how to go on', when, that is, the formula has occurred to me?—In the sense in which there are processes (including mental processes) which are characteristic of understanding, understanding is not a mental process.[23]

Now, here is an example of how Wittgenstein's philosophical constriction prevents us from understanding the mind and psychological subject: "We are trying to get hold of the mental process of understanding which seems to be hidden behind those coarser and therefore more readily visible accompaniments. But we do not succeed; or, rather, it does not get as far as a real attempt."[24] There again is the message about methodology: do not attempt to examine what a thing is.

Wittgenstein regards 'knows' as similar to 'understands' and says it is closely related to 'can' and 'is able to'.[25] This means he acknowledges a dispositional or inactive meaning of both words. Therefore, despite its persistence, he does not acknowledge that 'knowing' something has any effect on Jane except, perhaps, at the instant at which she remembers or conceptualizes it. Wittgenstein's view that knowledge is a potentiality or, when manifest, little more than a point on a temporal plane is illustrated further in this example:

> When do you know how to play chess? All the time? Or just while you are making a move? And the whole of chess during each move?—How queer that knowing how to play chess should take such a short time, and a game so much longer![26]

Here, Wittgenstein suggests that knowledge can be regarded as a continuous potentiality and not merely an instantaneous insight. However, neither description provides any real content to the act of knowing. For Wittgenstein, Jane's potentiality of an insight is little more than an inscribed set of instructions that may (or may not) be read in the future; such knowledge is without contour and depth and has no effect upon Jane. Wittgenstein acknowledges that the form of Jane's knowledge changes when, upon its reactivation, Jane realizes, "Now I know!" or "Now I can do it!" or "Now I can go on!"[27] But this form—this instance of knowing - has no more content through time than Jane's continuous potentiality has through space.

(3) Self-consciousness:

(a) This consists in Jane's knowledge of her other mind states and suggests interactivity between them. This is commonly regarded as the hallmark of personhood that distinguishes people from other animals.

(b) Wittgenstein discusses self-conscious behavior without referring to it as such: "But what can it mean to speak of 'turning my attention on to my own consciousness?' This is surely the queerest thing there could be!"[28] This phenomenon is for Wittgenstein little more than a form of introspection. He does not regard it as an indication of a psychological subject, as illustrated here:

> And James' introspection shewed (sic), not the meaning of the word 'self'… nor any analysis of such a thing, but the state of a philosopher's attention when he says the word 'self' to himself and tries to analyze its meaning.[29]

(4) Attitudes About Things:

(a) When Jane believes that, for example, the iron is hot, she is processing and interrelating information about herself

with an object beyond herself. This phenomenon, described by Wittgenstein as "certain forms of proposition in psychology, such as 'A' believes that 'P' is the case' and 'A' has the thought that 'P'" indicates that Jane has a particular kind of relationship with something beyond herself.[30] In folk psychology and some theories of mind, these constructions of consciousness demonstrate a complex, profound mentality.[31] When, for example, Jane thinks, believes, desires or hates something, it is thought she is affected by a connection to the object, and this implies a level of consciousness that is above and beyond what is manifest physically or observable in behavior.

(b) In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein attacks this view of propositional attitudes as an instrument of mind-body dualism. He states that, despite the semblance of a juncture of objects (psychological subjects) with facts within Jane, there is no psychological subject intermediate between Jane's body and the objects of her attitude. From his analysis of the form, 'A (psychological predicate) p', Wittgenstein asserts, "there is no such thing as the soul---the subject, etc.—as it is conceived in the superficial psychology of the present day."[32] Later, within *Philosophical Investigations*, he indicates that these kinds of statements, e.g., "He thinks that birds are descended from dinosaurs," are actually reports about the reporter rather than about external facts.[33] This latter view of Wittgenstein's acknowledges that something significant occurs within Jane when she acknowledges an attitude or thought about a proposition regarding an object beyond her. However, he does not think this indicates anything dimensional or otherwise complex about the state of Jane or her relationship to the object. The implication of this revised view is only that Jane momentarily experiences something different when conscious of a psychological predicate and not that she is different while experiencing it.

(5) Pain and Perception:

(a) Jane processes perceptual sensations and pain sensations. They vary in duration, intensity and quality, and they constitute mental states and processes.

(b) This is among the few psychological characterizations with which Wittgenstein agrees. Although he does not say much about this, what he says is clear: "A pain's growing more and less; the hearing of a tune or a sentence: these are mental processes."[34] In another example, he includes attitudes:

> "Depression, excitement, pain, are called mental states. Carry out a grammatical investigation as follows: we say "He was depressed the whole day," "He was in great excitement the whole day," "He has been in continuous pain since yesterday."[35]

It should be remembered, however, that Wittgenstein previously degraded the nature of a mental process when he said, "There has just taken place in me the mental process of remembering…" means nothing more than: "I have just remembered …".[36] The difference is that, unlike memory, the processes of seeing, hearing, depression, excitement and pain can rarely be described as instantaneous. This means Wittgenstein has attributed some substance and dimension to Jane, but not much. After all, of these only depression is a principally human quality. In addition, he describes the feeling 'expectation' as "imbedded in a situation, from which it arises."[37] This description suggests very little psychological shape or autonomy about this attitude. The act of forming or having an opinion is similarly flattened in this example: "One would like to say that an opinion develops. But there is a mistake in this too."[38] Here, the mental process and vitality of "opinion" is denied.

The UnVeiling

The portrait of Wittgenstein's psychological subject

is nearly complete and it appears more like a still life than a portrait. He denies qualities of duration, intensity and dimension to all cognitive functions, and this renders them little more than flat forms of inert storage that suddenly and mysteriously sublimate in action, like dry ice to CO2. That he can "imagine that the people around [him] are automata, lack consciousness, even though they behave in the same way as usual"[39] forcefully confirms that he believes in an unexplainably vapid, shapeless and shallow subject, or something like it. It is equally evident that his single-minded pursuit of meaning diverts him from asking what a thing is, and this precludes all but the most superficial examination of the psychological subject. The following excerpt confirms the fear that drove him to pursue meaning exclusively:

> The first step is the one that altogether escapes notice. We talk of process and states and leave their nature undecided. Sometime perhaps we shall know more about them—we think [This is pure condescension—he does not really believe this]. But that is just what commits us to a particular way of looking at the matter. For we have a definite concept of what it means to learn to know [by direct examination] a process better [what it is]. (The decisive movement in the conjuring trick has been made, and it was the very one we thought quite innocent.)[40]

If Wittgenstein had looked directly at the nature of the mind—not as a scientist, but in the enquiring manner of many contemporary philosophers who study the mind—he would have seen the possibility of a continuously functional, multidimensional, brain-powered subject. Had he looked directly at it and asked, "what is it?", this paper would reveal now a Wittgensteinian portrait instead of a still life.

Notes

1 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), § 17. In § 7, Wittgenstein describes language-games roughly as the continual process of instruction and use through which terms and their meaning or referents are established.
1 Wittgenstein's early denial of a self in *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* is replaced in *Philosophical Investigations* by his rejection of the meaning of the word "self", characterized by William James (PI 413).
1 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, § 162.
1 Slabs" refers to structural components used in building construction and it is a part of the vernacular of a hypothetical tribe of builders created by Wittgenstein. This scenario is meant to illustrate the direct and public process by which language develops and the use and limitations of ostensive definition.−
1 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, § 255.
1 Wittgenstein, § 133.
1 Wittgenstein, § 109.
1 *Ibid*.
1 *Ibid*.
10. *Ibid*.
11. Wittgenstein, § 108.
12. Wittgenstein, § 116.
13. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), 69.
14. *Ibid*.
15. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, § 108.
16. *The Oxford Universal Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v. "subject." (The four definitions provided are philosophic definitions from this source).
17. *Ibid*, s.v. 'person."
18. *Ibid*, s.v. "self."
19. *Ibid*, s.v. "consciousness."
20. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, § 306.
21. Wittgenstein, § 258.
22. Wittgenstein, § 265.
23. Wittgenstein, § 154.
24. Wittgenstein, § 153.
25. Wittgenstein, § 150.
26. Wittgenstein, § 59.
27. Wittgenstein, § 151.
28. Wittgenstein, § 422.
29. Wittgenstein, § 413.
30. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routedge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1961), 5.542.
31. Paul M. Churchland, *Matter and Consciousness*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1988), 63.

32. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 5.5421.
33. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 190. The example given here, which is supported by the text, is that of the author.
34. Wittgenstein, § 154.
35. *Ibid*.
36. Wittgenstein, § 306.
37. Wittgenstein, § 581.
38. Wittgenstein, § 639.
39. Wittgenstein, § 420.
40. Wittgenstein, § 308.

A Mystery

Kate Carpenter

This poem was inspired by Nietzsche's Prologue to *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

Jester leaping over slow stuck man.
I do my leaping. I rage.
I am camel and lion, master and slave.
I am obligation, a burden of tradition.
A lion of rage. "No!"
Not broken free. I am still raging.
Leaping could be over me.

I have not leapt, says the stuck one honestly.

Ideas.
Who is master? Who is slave?
I need to free myself.
Forwards, backwards, or down (why not up?)
Not known, the rope.
A tightrope walker balances between past and future.
He loses his head, I plunge, the Dionysian and die.

But I have not been daring. Stuck.
Lash out in frenzy, could I?
The rope. Apollonian and directional.
I'm still on it but the jester is prodding me, cajoling me, gaining on me.
Rage.

Performance Philosophy at the Tate Modern Gallery

Marty Felgen

An inspired college freshman visited the Tate Modern Gallery in London to view Marcel Duchamp's "ready-made" sculpture of a urinal, entitled "Fountain". As he studied the sculpture intently and contemplated its significance, the stranger beside him declared suddenly, "This is *not* art!" The student, having recently completed three semester units of "History and Aesthetics of Art", felt qualified and compelled to enhance the appreciation of the anonymous critic. He explained, "If by 'art' you mean an object that is consciously created to appeal to one's aesthetic sensibilities, then you are correct; this is *not* art. However, *I* think this *is* art, because art is *any* manifestation of a creative process that evokes an *essential, human response*"[1]. A moment after receiving his lesson the anonymous critic whipped it out and proceeded to pee in the urinal, i.e., "Fountain".

When done, the critic zipped his fly, nodded slowly and announced solemnly, "You are quite right… this *is* art".

As you might expect, the critic did not remain anonymous.[2]

Notes

1. Here our freshman makes the correct mistake of saying, "…an essential, human response" rather than, an essentially human response.
2. Since assembling this bit of didactic fiction (originally set at MOMA, NYC), I learned that a pair of Chinese-British artists did, in fact, pee in a replica of Duchamp's "Fountain" at the Tate Modern Gallery, London in September of 2002.

Movie Reviews

The Hours

Nicole Kidman, Meryl Streep, Julianne Moore, Allison Janney, Ed Harris

The Hours (based on the novel by Michael Cunningham) is a movie reflecting the lives of three unrelated women: Virginia Woolf (Kidman), Laura Brown (Moore), and Clarissa Vaughn (Streep) in three separate eras. All three women are linked by the book Virginia Woolf is writing, Mrs. Dalloway. Laura Brown is reading it and in some way living it, but Clarissa is character who is actually experiencing it. This movie depicts classic existentialistic theory in that the search for one's self and happiness are eclipsed by despair, uncertainty, and perhaps fate.

The movie opens with the three women getting ready for the new day. For Woolf, however, this day will not be an ordinary one (1941). She has decided to commit suicide to end the torment of the mental disease (manic-depression), which has plagued her for the better part of her life. Woolf and her husband moved to a small town away from London because it was thought that London was a factor that aggravated her illness. But in this small town, she feels suffocated. As she grapples with her identity, independence, and sanity, she writes the novel Mrs. Dalloway. During a heated confrontation with her husband regarding the move back to London, she eloquently states: "…one cannot find peace by avoiding life." Through her anguish, she inevitably wants to explore and experience the meaning of her life.

Laura Brown also begins her day waking to flowers from her husband (even though it is his birthday) and her young son Richie. It is 1951. On the surface, this scene depicts a typical event in the life of a suburban family. It almost has a Leave It to

Beaver feel. However, the superficial appearance is not indicative of the underlying issues Laura is battling: she is a very unhappy woman. She married a man (a war veteran) that she does not love and ultimately gave him a son. Now, she is pregnant again. This was not the life she had planned. Laura Brown gave into what society deemed she should: be a dutiful housewife and mother. After all, it was the 1950's. Interestingly enough, it is apparent during one scene when a friend visits Laura that we discover she is a lesbian. Laura Brown kisses her friend passionately which is witnessed by her son Richie.

Later, she decides that she will commit suicide, as she feels trapped by her present circumstance. The dichotomy of her true self is juxtaposed with the false persona that she is presenting to the world, and she can no longer contend with this. She inevitably does not commit suicide, but rather abandons her family after her second child is born so that she may pursue her own existence and discover happiness.

Clarissa is a lesbian living in New York City (2001) with her partner Sally (Janney) of ten years. Clarissa, however, is numb to this relationship as it seems mechanical and routine, lacking passion. Rather, she focuses her attention on attending to Richard (Harris) who is dying from AIDS complications. Richard is Clarissa's true love. On this day, she is finalizing the plans for a party she is throwing in honor of him as he is about to receive the lifetime achievement award for his poetry. He recognizes that he has been a burden to Clarissa and that she has no real life outside of his world. Richard, who has no quality of life at this point, commits suicide to free himself and Clarissa from the unyielding mental and emotional pain of what will never be. Clarissa will finally meet Richard's mother, Laura Brown. Here, she will understand and inexplicably see her life mirrored.

> *"...To look life in the face, always to look life in the face, and to know it for what it is. At last, to know it,*

to love it for what it is, and then to put it away…"

The Hours represents the existential struggle for identity, peace, and ultimately happiness. It questions the meaning of one's existence in a world that can be disengaging, chaotic, and riddled with obstacles that preclude us from the fulfillment of those ideals.

According to Heidegger, people must create their own meanings in life in order to attain an "authentic" existence (da-sein). Each of the characters in The Hours is in constant search of this "authentic" existence. But the search is a life-long journey that will perhaps never reach a final conclusion since we are limited by own mortal existence. Virginia Woolf sums up this idea by saying: *"…Someone has to die in order that the rest of us will value life more. It's contrast."* These words seem to go deeper than just mere dialogue; perhaps, they hold some truth.

Reviewed by Donna Albanese

I ♥ Huckabees

Dustin Hoffman, Lily Tomlin, Jason Schwartzman, Jude Law, Naomi Watts, Mark Wahlberg, Isabelle Huppert

Environmentalist Albert Markovski (Schwartzman) hires "existential detectives" Bernard and Vivian Jaffe (Hoffman, Tomlin) to investigate a coincidence in his life. He believes three chance meetings with a Sudanese doorman might hold the key to the meaning of life. Believing that everything is connected (though not always meaningful), the Jaffes take Albert's case and follow him around, monitoring every aspect of Albert's life (including brushing his teeth) in order to find the connection. Other clients of the Jaffes include corporate executive (and Albert's nemesis) Brad Stand (Law), Brad's girlfriend, Dawn (Watts), and fireman, Tommy Corn (Wahlberg). Enter

Caterine Vauban (Huppert), a nihilist and former associate of the Jaffes. Vauban infiltrates the investigation and persuades Albert and Tommy to follow her philosophy that everything is not connected and the world is full of nothingness. What ensues is a wacky race between competing philosophies to solve Albert's case. Additionally, Brad and Dawn display strange behavior as each comes to terms with their own nature (which hilariously includes Dawn, a spokesmodel, forgoing bikinis for baggy overalls and an Amish bonnet). Categorized by some as "pop philosophy", *I ♥ Huckabees*, in fact, never really explores or explains any philosophical concept it brings up, such as "infinite nature." Rather, it provokes the viewer to assess their position on the extreme views presented by the Jaffes and Vauban. The movie offers more questions than answers, which is rather apropos, no?

Reviewed by Sarah Diaz

Adaptation

Meryl Streep, Chris Cooper, Nicolas Cage

Philosophy in a Hollywood film? That was my initial reaction when I heard that Adaptation was a postmodernist film. However, after watching the film several times, I am convinced that while it has a post-modernist sensibility, it is still a Hollywood film. By postmodernist, I mean the philosophical movement that emphasizes subjectivity and avoids resolution and clear cut moral standards. Hollywood films emphasize sex, guns, car chases, resolution, and a glorification of individuals of a certain class, race, and gender.

Adaptation centers on Charlie Kaufman, a Hollywood screenwriter, "adapting" a book, The Orchid Thief, by Susan Orleans. The movie's most engaging character is John LaRoche, the orchid thief. LaRoche is an orchid specialist that enters a state preserve to steal endangered orchids. Apprehended by

the state police, he is placed on trial, which sparks the interest of New Yorker writer, Susan Orleans. She travels to Florida to interview LaRoche and ends up fascinated by his obsession with orchids. La Roche initiates Orleans into the mystery of orchids. LaRoche is both a postmodernist and existentialist, "The only barometer is the human heart."

The two go into the Florida Everglades in search of the mysterious ghost orchid. After a long exhausting search, they fail. On a subsequent trip, they discover the illusive flower, which to Orleans is "Only a flower." Orleans is the jaded New York intellectual with a mid-life crisis. LaRoche changes Orleans with his odd charm and provides her with orchid cocaine. The pollen of the orchid supposedly is a psychedelic substance.

This is the story that Orleans writes and that Kaufman must translate into a screenplay. When initially offered to write the screenplay, Kaufman wants to remain true to the story and just write about a flower. No sex, no guns, no chases and all the stuff of the typical Hollywood film. However, he soon learns that it is difficult to make a film about a flower. Kaufman wants to portray life how it really is: no resolution and no characters learning profound life lessons.

So he goes in search of Susan Orleans to become inspired. Kaufman and his twin brother, Donald, also a screen writer, follow her to Florida to discover her affair with LaRoche and her addiction to orchid cocaine. (Donald Kaufman represents the Hollywood screenwriter interested in simple films that gross high income, while Charlie represents the individual authentic screenwriter.)

When Charlie is apprehended by LaRoche and Orleans, they decide to kill him in the Florida swamp. At this point, the film converts to the Hollywood film of sex, guns, and car chases. Indeed, a film without these elements would not be a film to many. The film ends with LaRoche and Donald dead, Orleans possibly incarcerated, and Kaufman learning a profound life

lesson.

Susan Orleans becomes the classic object to Kaufman that he must see, pursue and understand. Native-Americans are portrayed as mystical and docile, possibly from all the orchid cocaine they inject. The central issue of the film is the sexual and intellectual frustration of a wealthy writer. Although the film has postmodernist elements in the presentation of gender, race, and class, it remains a more sophisticated version of the Hollywood film.

Reviewed by Jay Navas

Million Dollar Baby

Clint Eastwood, Hilary Swank, Morgan Freeman

Million Dollar Baby was marketed as an underdog story. The protagonist (Swank), a lower-class white female heading nowhere, starts training as a professional boxer. She eventually competes professionally, and climbs the ranks all the way to the top. Unfortunately, at her title fight, her opponent cheats and hits her after the bell rings, causing the protagonist to fall on a stool. Her injury causes her to become a paraplegic, and the rest of the movie follows her trainer (Eastwood) as he wrestles with her request that he kill her.

Philosophically, the movie explores the issue of euthanasia. Frankly, the arguments presented for the situation in the movie were poor. It was through pathos, not logos, that the movie seemed to play the role of a powerful pro-euthanasia cinematic art piece. However, should emotional appeal through cinematic dressing and good acting be used to argue for something as sensitive, and I daresay dangerous an issue as euthanasia?

In *Million Dollar Baby*, the arguments presented to end the life of the protagonist was that she had accomplished what many others would have failed to do, and that killing her slowly,

that is, letting her live out her paralysis, would have been worse. That was it. That she had accomplished what others had not been able to do is hardly a reason to end her life. Why should one's accomplishments have any affect on the sanctity of one's life? The movie doesn't even address this. The nearest philosophical worldview that comes to mind when trying to reconcile this type of argument is Nihilism. Nietschze might say something to the effect of "since life is meaningless, and morality is something that people should not be enslaved to, and not everyone gets a chance to become an uber-mensch, the protagonist can die if she wants since she already fulfilled that." A statement like that would take a thesis to defend. Solemnly delivered lines by Clint Eastwood just do not cut it when it comes to proving that murdering the protagonist was the correct thing to do. The "prolonging her pain" argument doesn't hold because there are many people who are: 1)Alive and 2)In pain. The issue of why their pain would alter the sanctity of their life is another vast philosophical topic that cannot be stomped down in tear-jerking boxer/trainer dialogs.

Unfortunately, when dressed with the cinematic appeal of pathos, unclear, unargued, and even morally abstruse philosophy, can be allowed to "punch below the belt". We need more people to stand up to the trickled down philosophy that shows up in movies. "Million Dollar Baby" reminded me of another movie with an almost identical plot: In "I Accuse You", a woman with multiple sclerosis asks her Doctor to kill her. He agrees to put her out of her misery, kills her, and defends himself in court. "I Accuse You" was a Nazi propaganda film for the Euthanasia movement which resulted in the deaths of over 70,000 innocents. I would like to end this review with a cinematic commandment I am morally compelled to declare: Watchers should be aware of the origins, sources, and societal affects, of the philosophies presented in glorified films.

Reviewed by Sheldon Schwartz

Contributors

Donna Albanese is pursuing an M.A. in Philosophy at Cal State L.A. with an emphasis in epistemology and metaphysics. She currently teaches Chemistry and Physics at a private high school in Sierra Madre. Next year at the high school, she will also be teaching a course in Philosophy and Ethics. She received a dual B.A. in English Education and Speech Communication Education at the University of South Florida in Tampa with a minor in Math and Science. She had a six year stint in the military as a Chemical, Nuclear, and Biological Defense and Warfare Specialist, was a Senior Database Administrator in corporate America, and loves the tenor sax, a snifter of cognac, and reading Sartre.

Kate Carpenter is currently an M.A. student at CSULA. In the early 90s, she received a teaching credential and an M.A. in Early Childhood Education (1994) from the university. She also has a M.F.A. in painting from UCLA (1975). She taught art at community college and later first grade for many years. Currently, she is enthusiastic about the field of philosophy. She is considering working with older (than seven-year old!) students to engage them with critical philosophical questions about life. In 2005, she received the philosophy department's Glathe Graduate Scholarship Award and the James Bright Wilson Scholarship Award, as well as the university's 2004-2005 Alumni Certificate of Honor for outstanding and distinguished academic achievement. She is interested in ethics (including environmental ethics), aesthetics, philosophy of religion, and comparative philosophy. She is involved in the animal kinship concern (animal rights) at her Quaker meeting and is working to bring awareness about the adverse affects of animal agribusiness.

Sarah Diaz was, at press time, in the midst of her second quarter at Cal State LA. While she enjoys her Philosophy classes, she sometimes wonders if she should have majored in a subject that's a little bit easier on the brain, like quantum physics. To counteract all the thinking, Sarah spends her free time singing, dancing, annihilating Scrabble opponents, and coming up with creative answers to the question "What are you going to do with a degree in Philosophy, anyway?"

Fahmee El Amin is a senior at California State University, Los Angeles. Additionally, he gleefully anticipates entering the ranks of senior citizenship early next winter. In addition to pondering the savings that his pending membership will bestow on him, his interests are epistemology, ethics, and fishing. He can be reached at efahmee@hotmail.com for comments.

Marty Felgen was born and raised in Long Island; he later traveled upstate to Rochester to experience some of the rainiest and snowiest weather in the country and to earn his B.S. in Professional Photography from Rochester Institute of Technology. A few years later, he relocated to Los Angeles where he worked in admissions and outreach for several colleges. His last full time position before resuming his education was as Associate Director of Admissions for the medical and veterinary schools of Ross University. He is currently pursuing his M.A. in Philosophy at CSULA.

Marc Lispi graduated with a B.A. in philosophy from UCLA in 2001. He is in the final stages of his M.A. in philosophy from CSULA. He is interested in revolutionary political philosophy in the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky—people who were revolutionaries first, philosophers second, and academics never. He plans to teach philosophy at the community college level.

Michael Meyer received a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Cal State L.A. in 2002 and a Juris Doctor from Loyola Law School in 2005; he is currently completing a Masters of Arts in Philosophy at Cal State L.A. His graduate thesis includes a discussion of non-disclosure in the context of distributional justice. Michael plans to teach philosophy and practice law in Los Angeles.

Jay Navas is a graduate student in philosophy, who came to the program after 10 exhaustive years of political campaigns. The study of philosophy is a consolation for electoral debacles. He hopes to return to the political game with renewed vitality and humor. His interests include politics and languages. Future plans include running for office and more importantly being able to recite Plato in Greek.

Christina Ng is a self-described professional student. She has a couple of degrees, is working on a few more, and is thinking of working on a

few more. She is a graduate of Azusa Pacific University (a long time ago) and is currently a student of Cal State LA (for many years now). Christina has a broad range of interests from psychology to the occult and everything in between. Interests in philosophy include Chinese philosophy, feminist philosophy, philosophy of religion, philosophy of mind, and epistemology (to name a few). Eventually, she hopes (at least in this lifetime) to pursue a PhD in Chinese literature and/or philosophy in Taiwan as soon as she can get her thesis paper off the ground and running.

Roland Rosas, born in Los Angeles, July 7, 1978, received his education at Pasadena City College and Cal State L.A. He earned his B.A. in philosophy and graduated with honors from CSULA. His love for philosophy started under PCC professor Dr. Justus Richards from whom he learned of the impact of philosophical ideas on world events. Roland's favorite philosophers are Kant and Descartes. In his spare time he teaches autistic children at a local YMCA and he plays bass in his newly-formed rock band.

Sheldon Schwartz lives by his oath to combat the forces of relativism, destroy the onslaught of nihilism, conquer the attack of postmodernism, and fix the computers at his workplace, where he works as an IT manager. Schwartz plans to take his philosophy education to law school, where he will specialize in intellectual property and constitutional law.

Andrew Udvarnoki received a B.S. in Business Management from Cal State Northridge in 2003. He is the founder and President of Shining Bright, Inc., a successful luxury automobile detailing service, whose principle interest is "keeping the game clean." He has decided to broaden his horizons by continuing his education, and is currently studying to be a jack-of-all-trades. His goals in life include becoming wise and effectively mixing business with pleasure. His plans for the future include heading a multi-national philanthropic empire, and wandering the earth in a robe and sandals.

A man sets himself the task of portraying the world. Through the years he peoples a space with images of provinces, kingdoms, mountains, bays, ships, islands, fishes, rooms, instruments, stars, horses, and people. Shortly before his death, he discovers that the patient labyrinth of lines traces the image of his face.

[Jorge Luis Borges “Dreamtigers”]

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