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Pittsburg State University Philosophical Society

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LOGOS-SOPHIA
THE JOURNAL OF THE PITTSBURGH STATE UNIVERSITY
PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
Volume I, Fall 1988

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THE JOURNAL OF THE PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
Pittsburg, Kansas
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INTRODUCTION

The Pittsburg State University Philosophical Society (PSUPhil) is proud to publish the first issue of LOGOS-SOPHIA, the Society's journal of philosophy. In accordance with the PSUPhil constitution, the purpose of LOGOS-SOPHIA is to address "philosophical questions through published writings by members [of PSUPhil]." The editorial board consists of five students and two faculty members, all chosen by PSUPhil members. Members of the board recognize that philosophers have presented their ideas in a variety of literary styles—for example, dialogues, essays, short stories, and poems. Thus, both technical and nontechnical writings were invited, and appear in this number. In this way, the board hopes that the two-fold meaning of LOGOS-SOPHIA—reason and wisdom—may be promoted.

The PSUPhil was formed in May 1987, partly as a result of a field trip taken by six students and a faculty member to Edmond, Oklahoma to hear a lecture given by Charles Hartshorne (a tape of the lecture is on file in the PSU Instructional Media Office under the numbers 4464A and B). In its brief history the PSUPhil has been an active and visible presence at PSU and the community of Pittsburg. The organization has sponsored several fund raising projects and has supported both the Southeast Kansas Humane Society and Safehouse in Pittsburg. During the winter holidays members devote time to caroling at local Care Homes. The Society sponsored a trip to the Southwestern Philosophical Society meeting in Wichita, Kansas in November 1987 and is responsible for the PSU Library continuing to order the journal Faith and Philosophy. In addition, the Society sponsored a public lecture by Dr. Charles Brown of Emporia State University in December 1988 on "The Philosophy of Mind and Artificial Intelligence." In the coming year, the PSUPhil will be active in helping to plan and organize the Midwestern Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers which will meet on the PSU campus in October 1989.

Tametha Homan Gimlin was the President of the PSUPhil for its first year. Her tireless efforts at organization and intense interest in philosophy have been instrumental in the Society's success. The office of Vice-President was held first by John Blanken and then by Curtis Isom. Mr. Isom's knowledge of student government and his devotion to PSUPhil have also been important to the Society's success. The office of Secretary has been ably filled by Kim Hazen and Nishua Bendt. The cover of this issue was designed by Frank H. Kuhel, the Society's Creative Director. The gorilla logo on the first page was designed by J. Todd Gimlin, who was the Creative Director until his graduation.

As the Faculty Advisor and Treasurer for PSUPhil, I happily present the first issue of LOGOS-SOPHIA to the reading public.

Donald Wayne Viney

Must Meaning Intentions Be Conscious?

Albert Miller, Jr.

Is it always true that when a person makes a statement s/he is consciously aware of what s/he intends to mean? It seems to me that this is the case, if certain qualifications are kept in mind. This essay will briefly discuss why and how this is the case.

First, a distinction must be made between the meanings of individual words and the meanings of propositions. The distinction here is that while meaning intentions must be conscious for the latter, this is not necessarily true for all the words used in expressing the proposition. This is because, in the course of learning to communicate, people learn to express complex propositions with series of words that are understood by convention to represent the desired meaning. Similarly, as the mind builds a broad vocabulary, it is capable of immediately drawing on that store of words (without the speaker being conscious of the process) to express propositions.

Thus, if a person wishes to communicate that the four legged furry animal sitting on the floor is called a cat, s/he will merely say, "That is a cat." Whether the speaker could provide a precise definition of the words "that," "is" and "a" isn't relevant to the fact that s/he clearly knew what s/he meant to say. The memory or vocabulary immediately provided the words to convey the message.

There are certainly specific kinds of phrases and sentences that do not have conscious meaning intentions. However, these are typically instances in which the utterance had no propositional content. The most obvious example of this is ignorant parrot-like speech. That is, the kind of statement that is only a repeated sound, in which the speaker had no comprehension of what the sound represents.

Less obvious examples of phrases which lack any significant meaning are the kind that are said as conditioned responses. The statement, "I am fine," can serve as an example. At first, this seems like an assertion about one's well being (as it could be if the meaning intention was conscious, such as in the case of responding to a medic looking for casualties). However, as an automatic response to the customary "How are you?" the statement does not necessarily provide information as to the speaker's condition.

Also to be considered are unconscious additions or deletions that may affect the meanings of statements. In many cases, there are countless feelings and associations linked to a topic of thought that may result in the intended message being clouded or colored unintentionally.

Only the conscious meaning intentions are relevant when talking about what

one actually means by speech. When analyzing a statement, it is important to consider the meanings of all the words used. The degree to which the meanings of the individual words correlate to the intended meaning of the given proposition is an important indicator of how well language is being used. Also, the meanings of the individual words are important for the purpose of understanding what the speaker intends to express.

To conclude, while it is clear that meaning intentions should be conscious at the time a statement is made, there are instances in which that isn't the case. With further analysis, many of the exceptions are simply not propositions at all. They may be either unconscious parrot talk, memorized conventions, or something along that order. Finally, the consciousness of meaning intentions is most realistically a matter of degree. Thus the degree of significant propositional content will correlate to the degree of conscious meaning intention. As such, while there will always be cases that seem clearly one way or the other, borderline cases will always exist.

Reincarnation and the Bible

Susan Schimmel

The concept of reincarnation, to me, is like an annual flower in a well-tended garden. The gardener plants the bulb and with tender care, rain, and a little fertilizer, the bulb buds, blossoms, and then fades and dies, only to return again the next spring. Our soul (the bud) is created by God (the gardener) and placed here on earth (the garden). While here we experience love (the tender care), sorrow (the rain), and lessons to learn (the fertilizer). Like fertilizer, the lessons are fetid and hard to take sometimes, but enrich our characters so our soul blossoms like a flower. As the flower dies, only to grow again, our bodies die and live again. But the soul, like the bulb, never dies.

No other explanation of human destiny has survived as long as reincarnation. And though the word reincarnation is not mentioned in the Bible, neither is the concept condemned. The idea of reincarnation seems new because it is so old. Reincarnation has been in religion since the beginning. But men, trying for more control over their fellow man, through fear, have removed most of the proof from the written word.

In 553 AD the Council of Constantinople pronounced belief in the pre-existence of the soul to be heretical. But the changing of God's laws started way before this. In Matthew 19:7-8: "They say unto Him, why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them. Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so."

Many people believe that in many places in the Bible the word reincarnation may not be used but the concept is inferred. In examining the scriptures, they suggest that reincarnation was generally accepted in those days and that our Lord himself believed in it. In Malachi 4:5 God prophesied: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." In Matthew 11:13-15 Jesus told the multitudes: "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John, and if you will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." In Matthew 17:12-13 Jesus told his disciples: "But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." Is Jesus not saying that John the Baptist is Elijah? In Isaiah 40:3 God said: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." In John 1:21-23: "And they asked him, what then, art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered no. Then they said unto him, who art thou? That we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in

the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord as said the prophet Esaias." Some say that if Jesus is right about John the Baptist being Elijah, then why doesn't John remember? In Psalm 146:4 we find our answer. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish." Isn't this saying that on returning to earth (reincarnation) our thoughts of previous lives perish? This would explain why John the Baptist doesn't recall his former life as Elijah. But Jesus knew it to be so. Think about it. Can you remember what you did in detail all of what you did as a child, even all you did last week, or even yesterday? Most people can't. If you can't recall events this recent, how can you possibly hope to recall a former life? It is not the memory of events or experiences that shape our life and destiny, but what effect they have on our character that shapes our destiny. Character is the part of our soul that acts as a recording secretary. Every deed, fleeting thought, event, is recorded, forever making our character and only when our character is Godlike can we escape the eternally turning wheel of life.

In Revelation 3:12-13 Jesus tells us: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from my god: and I will write upon Him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches." Aren't we being told that when we have overcome the trials of living on earth that we won't have to come back again, and will return to God from whence we came? Going out from God and returning over and over is reincarnation. As Jesus said: "He that hath an ear, let him hear!"

In Matthew 5:48 we are told: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." In the original Greek and the revised version it becomes a statement of fact. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect." If God has granted us only one life to accomplish perfection, almost all of us would fail. Since God's wisdom is perfect, it is unlikely he would give us a task at which we have such a slim chance of achieving success. It seems more reasonable that, being the just, fair God he is, he would give us every opportunity and unlimited time to return to him. This being the case, God's words become not a command but tell us of our destiny.

John 9:1-3: "And Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind. Jesus answered, neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." This gives the impression that the disciples believed in the concept of karma and reincarnation. If Jesus didn't believe in the concept of reincarnation and karma, and it was wrong according to God's law, why didn't Jesus rebuke the disciples for asking such a question?

The parable of the prodigal son, Luke 15:11-32, is explaining to us the journey of the soul. From the Father's house you are born into the tribulations, sorrows,

experiences and trials, of life on the physical plane (the son who took his inheritance and left home), compared to the peace and glory of a purely spiritual life (the son who stayed home). The soul feeds and grows by experiencing the passions, ambitions, desired, hates, lusts, and sorrows of the physical plane. The wisdom gathered through living numerous personal experiences eventually leads the soul back to the Father's house, (the prodigal son returns). He is welcomed back as one who has conquered (and by this time in his evolution he has conquered the physical world). The prodigal is again accepted as even better than the other son (the one who did not experience incarnation in the physical plane). Or, to express it simply, from others we obtain information but not real knowledge. Thus in allegory have profound truths been veiled.

Edgar Cayce thought that the failure of most religious leaders to recognize reincarnation comes from emotion and motivation rather than by reasoning and the scriptures. He felt that they hold the hope that by belonging to a certain organized belief they can obtain special favor with God, thereby returning directly to Him when they die. Edgar Cayce believed that it is only by God's grace that our path is unfolded only when we are capable of understanding and handling the problems, talents, and lessons we need to learn in order to remember the total soul that we are. Only then can we return from where we started.

John 10:9,16: "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." Since we think of God as being all-loving, all-forgiving, all-patient, all-fair, and all-merciful, it stands to reason that He would give us a way and all the time we need so every soul can get the experience and lessons needed to return to His fold.

Reincarnation cannot be proved like a mathematical problem. The truth can only be found through inner searching and experience.

As a seeker all I can tell anyone is as Buddha said: "Believe nothing, no matter where you read it, or who said it, unless it agrees with your own reason and your own common sense."

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Wants, Possessions, and the Self

Cindy A. Fehrenbach

As human beings, there is no denying we have a penchant for possessions, whether it be the tangible or the intangible. On the tangible side, we may want to possess nice clothes, a new car, or an abundance of money. Our wants are not limited to merely inanimate, non-living objects. We may revel at another's mind and/or body and want to unite with him or her. On the intangible side, we may want understanding, contentment, happiness, a sense of purpose, and satisfaction, to name but a few.

Some deny their possessiveness at all costs. The ascetic may renounce all material possessions except for the bare necessities needed for survival. Even food and human interaction are kept to a minimum. By repudiating these wants, such persons strive to purge themselves of possessiveness. But this has never been fully achieved, inasmuch as this goal remains the paramount possession of their lives.

Contrary to the emaciated ascetic, most do not find fault with such wants. In fact, if we did not act upon some wants, we would not survive. For instance, if a physical anomaly prevented us from experiencing hunger or thirst and we made no effort to nourish our bodies or quench our thirsts, we would assuredly die. Or if a large portion of the human race failed to procreate, even with today's overcrowding, the human species would inevitably face extinction. Surely the only person who could find such wants contemptuous would be the one who denounces the goodness of life itself.

Of course, as human beings, most desire more than just the bare essentials of life. Through the faculty of our minds, we are able to create and enjoy diverse works of art, literature, architecture, etc. We are even capable of improving the human condition through advances in agriculture, medicine, and the sciences. This being the case, the active pursuit of such wants to enrich our lives is noble, indeed.

Unfortunately, though, many people throughout the world do not even have their basic needs cared for, let alone do they enjoy any fringe benefits afforded the affluent. This discrepancy raises many pertinent questions. How can we, as moral human beings, justify overt consumption in relation to the dire straits confronted by many? Is there a "happy" medium we should strive for, both figuratively and literally?

In contemporary industrial societies, for the most part, no such middle ground exists. Quite to the contrary, an influx of material wants appears to be the norm. The various advertising mediums perpetuate the message that a materialistic orientation is the path one should follow. Countless masses may spend nearly their entire lifetimes amassing or attempting to amass the latest status symbols.

Are such pursuits so heinous, one might ask? Undoubtedly, the answer depends upon whom you are asking. Some would herald that they find great pleasure in their

quest of "living the good life." To be sure, such heraldings may be of the utmost truth. The individual may very well feel quite content in living this lifestyle. But such contentment invariably comes at a cost to the individuals, both monetarily and metaphorically. As the hand is to the arm, so too their possessions are to their personhoods — an extension of who they are. Without their worldly wares, the individuals would feel ineffectual, even maimed.

Another human being may also come into play as a material commodity. This is best exemplified by the oft-heard lamentations that such and such is no one without their loved one by their side. Instead of maintaining two unique beings united by a common bond, the individual defines his or her existence by reference to the other.

The quest for overt possessiveness does serve a purpose to human beings, albeit a negative one. One's life is much easier lived when one can find solace in one's wares. The prospect of existing with only one's body and mind as the sole possessions of an individual does tend to make one a little shaky. In all actuality though, the only thing which you can ever wholly possess is exactly that - yourself.

Although you can own and behold innumerable objects, you can never possess them in the totality that you possess yourself. For instance, you may be very attached to your clothes (you should if you're wearing them correctly) but they still remain as possessions external to your person. Even though they are distinguishable from your being, this does not malign their importance. It is doubtful that in some climatic conditions the human being would be able to survive without their clothes (possessions) as a shield against the harsh world.

In all realms of our lives, we continue to brandish our possessions as shields of protection against the anxieties of existence. Undeniably, security and safety come to those with full stomachs and the bountiful trappings of life. If such be the case, and possessions serve as an alleviator of anxiety, then is not such ownership a benevolent quest?

Momentarily, the individual with one's accouterments by one's side may be content and fairly anxiety free (no one is ever fully free of all vestiges of conflict and anxiety). But what occurs when said individual, through some calamity, loses his or her wares? For the most part, a giant tailspin and loss of sense of self ensue.

This raises an even more important point. Whether or not an individual ever faces a loss of possessions, either voluntarily by repudiation or against one's will, does not change the fact that the act of possessing in itself alienated the individual from his or herself. The self as a single entity is fractured into many selves and housed on many shelves in the form of possessions. The individual entity does not lie within the mind and body of the person. Instead, it is dispersed throughout many rooms.

Such a stand does come with inherent queries. If an individual becomes alienated from oneself as he or she takes on a multifarious identity through the act of possessing, this presupposes that the individual was at one time a self unto

oneself. It is possible though, that such a presupposition is not true and the individual has always been a duplicitous self and never a singular entity. It may be argued, quite reasonably then, that having a multifarious self through our possessions is not so bad after all, since we have never been a singular entity housed within the confines of our body. Thus, we have never lost our true self because we never had one to begin with. Such an argument, to my mind's eye, destroys and maligns the importance of the individual human being as a possible, although not probable singular self.

Besides the subjugation of the individual being, society at large suffers the ill effects of an overt, materialistic culture. As aforementioned, humans need and want more than just bread and water to appease the soul (and the palate). The problem lies when only the finest bread and water from the Fountain of Youth are held to be worthy. No day-old bread or tap water will suffice. Such extravagant goods are few and far between and only attainable to the select. Much time and money are wasted indulging the elite while many do without even a crumb.

Those less fortunate may feel deprived, relative to the affluent. Understandably, when the necessities which facilitate a productive life are missing, the individuals should feel angst. Surely the victims of drought and famine are not jumping for joy over their predicament (most could not expend enough energy to jump). Unfortunately enough, though, these very same victims often feel that all of life's woes would miraculously disappear if only they, too could partake of "the good life."

It is hoped that as the human condition improves, allowing greater economic freedom, one will face the gnawing reality that one's wares are not one's essence. By avariciously pursuing material wealth, the individual may gain riches, but never share in the richness of life.

Happy Hour at the Purgatory Bar and Grill

J. Todd Gimlin

I was washing spaghetti off the dishes when he came in, a young guy, not more than twenty. He was bug eyed and slack jawed, the kind of astonishment never seen on Earth. I've seen that look on countless faces before. I knew he had just arrived. I answered his first question before he could ask it.

"Purgatory, son. The crossroads of eternity. The place you end up if you're neither real good or real bad."

"But I'm not Catholic."

I laughed, partly because of the answer, but mostly because I knew he was going to say what he did. It's amazing how many times you can have the same conversation in eternity.

"It doesn't have anything to do with religion, it just makes sense. If there wasn't a place like this, where would the smartasses of the world go? We're certainly no saints, but we also don't deserve eternal damnation either. There has to be a grey area, else it gets too hard to judge someone. Oh, there's the easy ones like Hitler, but most of us are about the same in terms of sin. Take yourself, for instance. You probably led a fairly normal life. But there was something that kept you from being a Class A person."

"A what?"

"Somebody good enough to bypass this place and get directly into Heaven. We're Class B people, the average person. And I'm sure you know what happens to the rest of the unfortunate ones."

He sat down at a stool, still looking dazed. I remember the same feeling, the shock that comes from finding out that a lot of what you were taught was wrong.

"But how was I supposed to know there really was a God?"

You weren't supposed to know. If there was solid proof there was a God, everyone except the incredibly stupid would believe, and where is the test in that? God wants us to believe out of faith, not out of proof. But I'm sure you're at least agnostic, or you wouldn't be here." I gave him a knowing wink.

"Oh, you mean 'Down Below'."

"Give me a break. 'Down Below' is crude oil and dinosaur bones. I really don't expect you to understand multi-dimensional physics yet, so let's just say that everything, Heaven, Hell, and here too, are all at the same place. That's how we can see what's going on everywhere."

"What do you mean?"

"You see, the purpose of Purgatory is to let us see both Heaven and Hell and what goes on there. We can see the joys of Heaven and the suffering of Hell. That way we can make up our minds as to where we want to end up. No one stays in purgatory forever."

As he looked around the bar, I could tell he still didn't get it. I didn't blame him though, things of this nature are infinitely complex. It takes quite a while to

understand even the smallest part.

"It looks just like any other diner on Earth. I at least expected clouds and harps, is it like that in Heaven?"

"I suppose you think God's an old man with rays coming out of his head. No, Heaven's a lot like Florida without the hurricanes. Nice weather, lots of sun, and no one feels any pain."

"But this is eternity, right? Doesn't everyone get bored?"

"No, that's the beauty of Heaven. You can forget what you've done so you can do it over and over. Nothing gets old that way."

"What about Hell? It isn't fire and brimstone?"

"No, Hell is much more clever than that. Everyone there has their own separate Hell according to what got you there in the first place. Gluttons who placed food above anything else in life might have to spend eternity having spam and Velveta sandwiches shoved down their throats. Horrible things like that."

"And you sit here and watch while it goes on. Is that all there is to do here, sit and watch what goes on?"

"Well, we don't have any influence over Heaven or Hell, but we can make our presence known on Earth."

"You can see Earth, too?"

"Yep, it's the biggest form of entertainment here. Me and some friends get a kick out of playing practical jokes on the people on Earth."

He looked up at me in shock. "You mean you play a part in determining the future. That's terrible."

"Oh, now. Don't get so excited. If people are fooled by our jokes, it's because they're stupid or gullible. Like when we sent that dream to Oral Roberts. At first it was just to scare him. It's not our fault he actually got people to believe him. Anyway, I think we're doing the world a favor in trying to educate it. Being stupid isn't a good way to get to Heaven. A lot of people who thought they were in line for a suite in Heaven never made it. And don't go thinking that we dictate things enough that we determine the future. Anyone that tries to go that far gets an appointment with Satan."

He sat back in his seat and sighed. "This is too much to take in one day. Just an hour ago I was alive and everything seemed so clear."

"Well, if you hadn't been so wrapped up in how happy you were, you might have seen that bus coming."

"What, you mean you saw me get killed and you didn't do anything to stop it?"

"Now that really would be interfering, now wouldn't it? That bus had your name on it. I couldn't do anything if I wanted to."

"You're not telling me that everything is causally determined, are you? If that's true then everyone in Hell was doomed from birth and this whole system wouldn't be fair."

"Jeez, can't you take a joke? Some things are determined, like what age you live in, and some things are freewill, like deciding to have eggs or bacon for breakfast, provided you have both eggs and bacon. For every event there is a set of possible

outcomes. Everyone chooses where they end up in eternity. And it's not just obeying commandments, either. You see, it's not the act, it's the reason behind the act that counts. Murder is bad, of course, but it's not always evil."

"I think I'm beginning to understand now. But what am I supposed to do now?"

"You really don't have to do anything. Since you're dead, you don't need food or water, so you don't need a job. I do this just for the hell of it. Oops, I'm not supposed to say that."

"Don't you have a time limit as to how long you can be here?"

"We all have until the final conflict between God and Satan, although I've heard that Satan isn't even going to show up since it's been determined that he doesn't stand a chance."

"So how do I go about getting into Heaven?"

"Well, they have classes. The apostle Paul is teaching a class in humility, something I never quite got the hang of. First you have to find out why you didn't get there and then work on it. It's easier for some people than others."

He stood up and looked outside. I knew he was about ready to go out and face eternity. "It's funny, it looks just like my old hometown."

"It looks that way to everyone."

"What's the difference between Heaven and Purgatory?"

"Well, the weather's not too great, and we can still feel pain. And it seems that people here aren't as happy, guilt I guess."

He nodded and turned to leave. When he got to the door, he turned back. "Just one more question. When I was coming in, was that a green, three-legged man I saw?"

"You didn't think we were alone, did you?"

"I guess I've got a lot to learn." He walked out the door slowly, taking cautious steps. It's like being born again, I told myself. I went back to the dishes and waited for the next person to come in.

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Tametha Homan Gimlin

Look at that snow. Beautiful, glistening snow. But cold. It's so tempting--it looks so soft. But it's cold, too cold.

David used to love to play in the snow. We'd have snowball fights--I'd move slow and aim bad, of course--on purpose. He looked so cute in his little, blue coat and black boots. It didn't take him long to get soaked to the skin, though--making angels in the snow.

I remember our Christmas trees--Larry and David and I decorating them with handmade things.

We went out and cut our own Christmas trees--sneaked them off of Old Man Johnson's land, laughing all the way. It was always so much fun! I'll never forget the year I saw Old man Johnson watching us from behind a big evergreen! He was just smiling away--the only time I'd ever seen the old man smile--the only time he wasn't griping and complaining. I remember him lifting his finger to his mouth when he'd noticed I'd seen him. I never told Larry and David either; I never did.

Oh, our Christmas trees! Making ornaments out of clothes pins and glue and colored cloth--cotton for Santa's beard--little twigs for reindeer antlers. I'd string the popcorn. We'd string lights--that was the only thing we'd bought. It was so warm and wonderful--knowing we'd made everything (except the lights) on the tree. David's kept some of the ornaments. The others.... I wonder if they make homemade ornaments for their tree? I saw David's wife twice. I can't believe he's grown up so. What is her name? Martha? Margaret? Melody! That's it--Melody! I haven't seen them for years. Melody was pregnant with her second when I saw her last. Peters was their first born. He was only a baby. I wish I could have held him. He reminded me so much of David.

I bet they're coming to see me this Christmas! It's been so long! Two--no, Three years. Time passes so painfully slow.

Yes, he'll come see me! And bring the children--and...uh, Melody! Yes, and Melody! He'll come in and hug me and give me a kiss on the cheek--and tell me how much he's missed me--and tell me everything that's happened: the babies, Melody. Have the children talked yet? Can they say "Grandma"? Is the second a boy or a girl? Where do they live now? Do they make their Christmas ornaments? Did he keep ours? Does he remember Old Man Johnson? How is he? Is he eating well? Is he the businessman he'd always wanted to be? Of course he is. Is he--well, where does he work? He does work, doesn't he? Maybe he's not doing well financially. Maybe Melody's a maid or laundress in her spare time. My poor baby!

No, mustn't think that way. He's doing fine! My baby's fine!

Oh, I miss him so. With Larry gone and all--are you watching me from up there, Larry? Can you see David? They're pulling up the drive, aren't they, Larry? Are they here?

I feel so empty here. So alone. Especially now--when we used to laugh and play

and sing together—like everyone else is now. I can see children out there playing in the snow, hear them laughing and singing all around me. My heart is like one of those Christmas balls you buy in stores for your tree—empty—so empty—and it feels like it could just fall off its little hanger and break.

Don't you love me anymore, David?

"Good morning, Mrs. Wills! Let's move your wheelchair away from the window for a minute."

"We'll be going down to lunch with the others in a minute, Mrs. Wills, but first I have a surprise for you!"

David? My David? Where is he?

"Oh, I see your eyes lighting up! Are you ready, Mrs. Wills?"

David!

"Look, Mrs. Wills! Look at the card! It's from your son David. Do you remember David, Mrs. Wills?"

My David didn't come to see me.

"Here, Mrs. Wills! Look at the picture! See the mountains and the little cabin in the middle with smoke coming out of the chimney?"

"You look droopy, Mrs. Wills. Are you tired? Well, we'll put you down for a nap after lunch."

"See the pretty red letters inside the card? Yes! I'll read it to you. Can you be a good girl and listen?"

"It says, 'Merry Christmas and best wishes for now and always! Love, David & Melody, Peter, Rachel, and Danny'."

Rachel. It was a girl. And Danny.

"Wasn't that nice of them to write to you? You really are tired, aren't you, Mrs. Wills? Well, time for lunch."

"You should see the Christmas tree we have up front. It was donated by a local merchant. People are so thoughtful this time of year—Love everywhere! Like the song says—it's just 'the most wonderful time of the year'!"

ALLEGORY

Frank J. Kuhel, Jr.

Helios rose.
my eyes opened.
Unchained, I climbed
from the darkness.
Was it to truth?
or to madness?

Others escaped
the illusions,
ants from the storm.
Many more are
cattle trapped by
dancing shadows.
I must free them.

If I then die
a traitor's death
know my teacher
tasted hemlock
without any fear.
the truth must fight
the silent cave.

Questions at Bedtime

Tametha Homan Gimlin

How old would I be in Heaven, if I were to die today?

And if I were to go to Heaven, could I bring some friends to play?

Could Heaven be like a playground, if that's what I want it to be?

And how do you know when I die, that there'll still be room in Heaven for me?

Will our doggie be a puppy and play and run around?

And can I have wings and stuff and never hafta touch the ground?

Do I have to wear those white dresses, or can I just wear jeans?

And in Heaven don't you think that there just couldn't be lima beans?

Will there be candy bars, cake, and cookies and, to drink, some soda pop?

Will you have to clean our house in Heaven, work, or go to shop?

Will everybody be friendly, and nice to everyone, too?

But, Mommy, when we get there, how will I find you?

Death

Nishua Bendt

The colors of death are very simple.

Yellow is first

But

never recognized.

I know, I've seen it.

Then mustard

t Then rose.

Then violet---

no

CRIMSON.

red adn finally

purple

Folowed by an

unmistable ashen grey

As the thrashing quits and the last
hand is left hanging loosely offofthe gurney as he 'spusedout of
the livingroom door

to

the

am

bulance

iknow he'll neverbeseen

agian.

The colors of death are very simple.

religion
Nishua Bendt

Looking at the world through a glass curtain
Being slightly different but not noticeably so

Awkwardly and unknowingly I have become
Dull and insipid

Only the lonely mind seems to grope

religion
Nishua Bendt

Looking at the world through a glass curtain
Being slightly different but not noticeably so

Awkwardly and unknowingly I have become
Dull and insipid

Only the lonely mind seems to grope

Lonely

Not for companionship nor love but friendship
Such a ship of friends nit with others
Conclusively, but with the self too.

egotistically needing the knowledge no
the Warmth of a friend

"In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst
me with strength in my soul."

I found my friend.

"And god said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee:
for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly
therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power
of Christ rest upon me.

"Therefore I take pleasure in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities,
in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake:
for when I am weak, then am I strong." KJV

Being slightly different but not noticeably so
Looking at the world through a glass mirror.

religion

Nishua Bendt

Looking at the world through a glass curtain
Being slightly different but not noticeably so

Awkwardly and unknowingly I have become
Dull and insipid

Only the lonely mind seems to grope

THE MIND

Nishua Bendt

This is a hot and sweaty place
full of grass and tall trees
sitting in my yard
watching a baseball game next door
growing up
laughing, crying, and kind of silent.

When you're laughing, or crying or kind of silent
in this place
growing up
is intolerable, kind of hard. Not easy like talking to the trees.
I've often wondered what's behind the farthest door sitting in my
yard

Sitting in my yard
laughing or crying or kind of silent
I'm amazed at how few of us actually can think of the door
the door that hides the very place
with twinkling waters, thick carpets of grass, and beautiful trees
and growing up.

Growing up,
I used to make up little games to play sitting in my yard.
games that didn't involve other people, just me and maybe a tree.
If I felt like laughing or crying or being kind of silent
I could pretend myself to another place.
Somewhere past the door.

What's behind the door?
Being grown up?

O maybe somewhere the playing of my games will stay with trees or some
such place
That makes it nice to be sitting in my yard
Laughing or crying or being kind of silent
A place full of warm sunshine but not too many trees.

Is Moderation Always Wise? Comments on Charles Hartshorne's Wisdom As Moderation

Albert Miller, Jr.

The intent of this essay is to discuss the value of moderation in philosophy and everyday life. It is in particular a response to Charles Hartshorne's Wisdom as Moderation: A Philosophy of the Middle Way, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988). My own point of view coincides in some ways with Hartshorne's, though I feel that there may be important exceptions to moderation. Additionally, Hartshorne departs from his own doctrine of moderation in some respects. The main example of this is his view of death and afterlife.

In general, the philosophy of the middle way is the assertion that to find truth and beauty it is necessary to locate a "golden mean" between extreme points of view. For example, Hartshorne develops the idea that in the question of materialism versus idealism, a doctrine which absolutely favors either position is unacceptable. Or for instance, the mean can be seen in terms of beauty. Neither pure order nor pure chaos can be beauty; rather, beauty lies somewhere between.

As another example, in his chapter on transcendence of animality, Hartshorne applies the mean to determinism and indeterminism. He points out that if either position is taken without qualification—it isn't possible to account for the experiences one encounters in the world. On the one hand, it is clear that at least many things in the world have causes, and there are limits on the range of choices an individual can make. On the other hand, things do happen by chance. There is both individual freedom, and a degree of randomness in organic and non-organic phenomena.

Hartshorne also applies his philosophy of the middle way to areas constituting common aspects of life. In his chapter on the subject, he proceeds to illustrate how a lack of moderation leads to diverse problems such as illegal drug use and the squandering of valuable energy resources. Hartshorne is objecting to the extreme of Western individualism, which appears to be growing in predominance.

It is interesting that Hartshorne attempts to apply his idea of the mean to such common practices as coffee and alcohol consumption. This is interesting, as most individuals in our society seem to take these as near necessities. In fact, perhaps the question that should be asked is whether Hartshorne's position on these minor vices is in fact one of moderation. Most individuals feel that moderation in alcohol, etc. consumption means limiting the amount one consumes rather than eliminating them entirely.

There are circumstances where it is good to take a principled, assertive position that deviates somewhat from moderation. An area where moderation may not be philosophically right is that of social change. An example is the philosophy of non-violent direct action as developed by Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Without attempting to discuss the histories of these leaders or their movements, I would summarize that both these leaders were in positions of confronting superior, yet morally wrong, institutional powers.

In a situation of oppression, moderation may not be reasonable. At times it is necessary to take a radical moral position which, in terms of the prevailing attitudes is extreme. While it could be argued that non-violent direct action is in fact a middle path between violent revolution and conciliation, that is not persuasive. Non-violent direct action entails confrontation and realization that sacrifice is a likely outcome.

At this point, I would like to shift emphasis to the most important area in which Hartshorne departs from his philosophy of moderation—that is, with respect to the nonexistence of an afterlife. I am not sure if there is a position of moderation on this subject; if there is, it might be that of agnosticism. However, Hartshorne's view that there is no afterlife is one of extremism, not moderation.

Life after death appears to be a good issue with which to use the principle of a philosophy of moderation, as it must be addressed primarily by intuition and argumentation. It isn't possible to simply refer to the available data to solve the problem. As such, perhaps the views of religion in general should be taken seriously in addressing the issue.

Looking at religious history, it appears that most cultures have developed some view of an afterlife at a certain point. And, technological achievement has not universally eliminated these views. Most individuals who have strongly disagreed with the concept of afterlife represent a firmly held philosophical viewpoint. Thus, life after death appears to be an issue where attempting to find a golden mean is very difficult if one wishes to take a position at all.

In conclusion, the philosophy of the middle way is most useful when applied to the more abstract divisions of philosophy such as determinism/indeterminism. Yet when it comes to focus on issues that affect the day to day life, the doctrine is less successful. In this respect, Hartshorne departs from moderation himself on the issues of minor vices and on the issue of afterlife.

Review of

Thomas Davis, *Philosophy: An Introduction Through Original Fiction & Discussion* 2nd edition, New York: Random House, 1986.

by Kim Hazen

This book is a very creative way to introduce students to aspects of philosophy. The areas covered are ethics, logic, the problem of free will vs. determinism, proofs for the existence of God, etc.

The reader is presented moral problems, problems of logic and other questions (e.g., omniscience) in extremely engrossing and imaginative original stories and dialogues written by Dr. Davis.

The major questions of philosophy are treated topically and historically. All of the basic arguments are presented and continually contrasted by counter-arguments. In this manner the reader, while becoming acquainted with the arguments, is exposed to other points of views and encouraged to come to their own conclusions.

Although (as I'm sure you can tell) I enjoyed this book immensely, in the context of basic philosophy, the book had two major shortcomings.

One, this book does not cover important early philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, Xenophanes, etc. In my opinion basic philosophy should be just that—basic.

Two, I feel that even though all the material is interesting and additional readings are provided from original sources (Descartes, Russell, etc.) there could be more. If this book were to be used I would strongly recommend supplemental readings be added.

Despite these shortcomings I believe this to be an excellent introductory book. It would introduce students to philosophy in an innovative way. I believe this to be the author's intention.