



Social Practice Theory: Variations on Wittgensteinian, Heideggerian, and Confucian Themes

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- ¶1. In this paper, I propose to discuss a sense of social practice in Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Confucianism. The paradigm of social practice for Wittgenstein (and Wittgensteinians) is language-game. For Heidegger, hammering stands out as an example of understanding (know-how) which is a matter of social practice. For Confucianism, the paradigm of social practice is ritual or propriety (*li*). What I am proposing is interpreting across boundaries. For there are themes of mutual resonance in their ways of dealing with the sense of social practice.

- ¶2. I begin with Wittgenstein. The basic Wittgensteinian position on “rule-following” is incisively expressed by Wilfrid Sellars. Sellars rejects the false dichotomy of obeying rules and merely conforming to rules.^[1] On the one hand, the notion of obeying rules associated with regulism (the platonic theory of interpretation) which says that either explicit formulation and/ or explicit awareness of rules is a necessary condition for following rules entails infinite regress. On the other hand, the notion of merely conforming to rules associated with regularism does not do justice to distinctly human “rule-following” behavior. Uniformities of “rule-following” human behavior are not uniformities of awareness-as-discriminative behavior as exemplified by parrots, computers, and sun flowers. This is how Robert Brandom phrases the false dichotomy that Sellars-cum-Wittgenstein rejects: “The Scylla of regulism is shown to be unacceptable by the regress-of-rules argument. The Charybdis of regularism is shown to be unacceptable by the gerrymandering-of-regularities arguments.”^[2] Humans are,

as Sellars phrases the matter, in the “logical space of reasons,” which leads the Wittgensteinian Sellars, after avoiding the false dichotomy, to suppose that norms are implicit in practices. The answer to avoiding the false dichotomy is given “by belonging to a custom (PI 198), practice (PI 202), or institution (RFM VI-31).”^[3] At this juncture, Sellars introduces the notion of pattern-governed behavior. There are uniformities in pattern-governed behavior, “but the uniformities are not mere uniformities, for they are grounded in rules in a way most difficult to analyze, but which involves the causal efficacy of rule expressions.”^[4] For Sellars, the non-parroting sort of pattern-governed linguistic behavior may be said to be “grounded” in “tacit” understanding of the relevant rule(s). Apart from linguistic behavior, one could readily think of a number of examples to illustrate the notion of pattern-governed behavior. When one uses one’s base language, one does not have to look up a dictionary constantly. One looks up a dictionary only if one runs into difficulties with vocabulary. Unless one is a beginner or a very poor dancer one does not have to try to remember every step one has to take while dancing. Experienced dancers normally dance unreflectively. One simply gets attuned to the rhythm of a dance. Would a concert pianist try to remember consciously and explicitly every relevant note of music while playing a Beethoven sonata? Would a person become particularly conscious or mindful of a rule (or rules) except in an exigency? Has Wittgenstein ever insisted that explicitly formulated rules are essential to learning how to play games including learning language? Has he not suggested that one need not know that there are explicit rules guiding the playing of a game? Has he not suggested that what matters is that playing a game is a matter of practice and it can be characterized as rule-governed, which does not require that we be explicitly aware of the rules while, say, playing with a ball in the field?^[5] Understanding something is primarily a matter of knowing how rather than knowing that.^[6]

- ¶3. Sellars’ rejection of regulism and his criticism of concept empiricism constitute an integral part of his “linguistic turn.” Instead of assuming, as the concept empiricist or “the private linguist”^[7] does that (private) mind is prior to language, following Wittgenstein, Sellars says that (public) language is prior to mind. Now let us take up Sellars’s criticism of concept empiricism. According to Sellars, if one is able to recognize the circumstances in which to apply a rule, then one does not need explicit formulation of the rule which, according to regulism or the platonic theory of interpretation of rules, presumably “guides” the application of the rule, for we have already what we need, namely the requisite ability (or skill) for applying the rule, which is acquired through practice. But if one is not able to recognize the circumstances in which to apply the rule, then one could not bring about the necessary correlation between a symbol (which is “meaningless”) and the appropriate object, quality, or relation which presumably is the “meaning,” according to concept empiricism, of the symbol unless one presupposes the platonic notion of non-linguistic (or pre-linguistic) ability for apprehending abstract entities. But, according to Sellars’s psychological nominalism, all awareness is linguistic. Therefore, the concept empiricist’s idea that the (empty) mind acquires ideas in virtue of having sensations is either pointless (superfluous) or impossible.^[8] The regress-of-rules

argument is intimately connected with Sellars' criticism of concept empiricism because what Sellars is saying is that if the ability (skill) to apply a rule is not acquired in practice,^[9] abstract formulations of rules which do not presuppose norms in practice would not help "guide" the application of the rules.^[10]

- ¶4. Regulism says that the correct application of rules presupposes explicitly formulated rules whose normative character is prior to the application of the rules. It is the normative character of such abstract principles and rules that "guides" the application of the rules. According to Sellars, regulism entails a vicious regress. The particular sort of regulism Sellars evidently has in mind (though he does not make the point explicit) is the sort associated with the private language argument. According to the Sellarsian reconstruction of the regress-of-rules argument, the ability to use a language (L) presupposes explicit formulation and/or explicit awareness of the rules which one obeys. But explicit formulation of the rules of (L) is metalinguistic, and explicit awareness of the rules of (L) is metaawareness. By the parity of reasoning, being able to use (ML) presupposes explicit formulation and/or explicit awareness of the rules of (ML). But explicit formulation of the rules of (ML) is meta-metalinguistic, and explicit awareness of the rules of (ML) is meta-metaawareness, and so on. (Here it is apposite to remember Hobbes' criticism of Cartesian consciousness discussed in footnote 10 of this paper.) "But this is impossible (a vicious regress). Therefore, this thesis is absurd and must be rejected."^[11] Could the regress be stopped if a given language at any level were to be used as the base language (the language in use) into which every other language can be translated in terms of correspondence rules (translation rubrics). But there is no language of the sort in the present case. As Wittgenstein phrases the matter, "in the present case, I have no criterion of correctness."^[12] The reason why "I have no criterion of correctness" here is that the language in question (the object language) is a private language. But a private language is a language in name only for which there is no criterion for correct application. Sellars says: "We saw that a rule, properly speaking, isn't a rule unless it lives in behavior, rule-regulated behavior, even rule-violating behavior. Linguistically we always operate within a framework of living rules... In attempting to grasp rules as rules from without, we are trying to have our cake and eat it. To describe rules is to describe the skeletons of rules. A rule is lived, not described."^[13] For the Wittgensteinian Sellars, a private language is not a framework of living rules. And describing a language is not living the language. The application of a rule is better done than talked about. In fine, to keep the regress from getting started, it must be assumed that norms implicit in practice are prior to norms explicit in rules. A rule can be given explicit linguistic expression only *ex post facto*.^[14]

- ¶5. Wittgenstein says: “. . . every interpretation, together with what is being interpreted, hangs in the air; the former cannot give the latter any support. Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning.”^[15] By “interpretation,” Wittgenstein means “the substitution of one expression of rule for another.”^[16] The meaning of a rule cannot be determined by a purely verbal formulation of the rule. “What this shews is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, but which is exhibited in what we call “obeying the rule” and “going against it” in actual cases.”^[17] Then he goes on to say: “And hence also ‘obeying a rule’ is a practice. And to think that one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule ‘privately’: . . .”^[18]
- ¶6. Suppose I say the following to John Doe who is a native speaker of English but who does not understand either German or French: “Rot” (in German) means “rouge” (in French). Here both the word “rot” and the word “rouge” are mentioned. To John this formula may serve as a sociological piece of information which, however, he could not put to use for the purposes of communication. For him, one expression is merely “substituted” for another. For John Doe, the word “rot” “hangs in the air,” as it were, along with the word “rouge.” But suppose I say to him: “Rot” (in German) means red. Now he would understand that on the other side of the Rhine, people would use the word “rot” under the sort of circumstances in which he would use the word “red.” Here the word “red” which belongs in his base language is used, and the German word “rot” is being mentioned. The formula being used here is what Sellars calls a correspondence rule or a translation rubric. The word “red” belongs in John’s metalanguage (in a pragmatic sense), namely the language he uses to talk about the object language.”The meaning of a word is its use in the language.”^[19] For John, one word is not being merely “substituted” for another here. Rather the meaning of a word which belongs in the object language (in this case a foreign language), which is being talked about in this context, is being explained by relating it to its corresponding expression in his base language (the language in use), which John has acquired through practice. How does one explain the use of one’s base language? “I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: “This is simply what I do.”“^[20] At this juncture, one is strongly tempted to say with Wittgenstein: “You must bear in mind that the language-game is . . . not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable). It is there—like our life.”^[21] Playing a certain language-game is “what has to be accepted.” And “what has to be accepted, the given—it might be said—are facts of life.”^[22] This sort of view is what Richard Rorty calls epistemological behaviorism. The epistemological behaviorist is keen on social practice.

- ¶7. Here there is no cause for alarm for a vicious regress. The distinction between the object language and the metalanguage is drawn on the basis of a move made for pragmatic purposes of translation, and this move is not necessitated by a compulsion for making the vacuous sort of merely formal moves, as is the case with the vicious regress Sellars talks about. One's base language is where "the buck stops," as it were, to paraphrase President Truman. One's base language, which is the bedrock, is the pragmatic linguistic counterpart of Aquinas's Unmoved Mover. Of course, what is used as the base language has only contextual significance.
- ¶8. Richard Rorty praises Wilfrid Sellars for having pioneered social practice theory, though, in Rorty's view, Sellars turns out to be, unlike Davidson, a "backsliding "social-practises" theorist." Sellars's strategy, as a "social-practise theorist," "consists in letting self-referential indexicals play a role in philosophical explanation. Sellars, to my mind, is the great pioneer in this area. . . . More specifically, Sellars suggested that we explain what it is to be a language by reference to what we do . . . in the sense of what you and I are currently doing. . . . The claim that reference to the practises of real live people is all the philosophical justification anybody could want"[23] is, according to Rorty, central to Sellars's strategy. Inspired by Sellars and Wittgenstein, Rorty advances what he calls epistemological behaviorism, which is his version of "social-practise theory." He explains his epistemological behaviorism as follows: "Explaining rationality and epistemic authority by reference to what society lets us say, rather than the latter by the former, . . ."[24]
- ¶9. To locate the archetypal source of inspiration for epistemological behaviorism, let us quote the following passage from Wittgenstein: "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?" It is what human beings say that is true and false; and they agree in the language they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life." [25] Wittgenstein says: "Here the term "language-game" is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life." [26] "To imagine a language means to imagine a form of life." [27] Wittgenstein identifies imagining a use of language with imagining culture. [28] For Wittgenstein, a use of language, a form of life, and a culture hang together. And using language in various ways (e.g., commanding, questioning, recounting, chatting) is "as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing." [29] A particular form of life and use of a particular language go hand in hand with each other. And different languages are incommensurable with one another. Each language-game and each form of life and each culture may be said to have a sense of its own coherence and rationality in the context of its own natural history. Thus "I want to say: an education quite different from ours might also be the foundation for quite different concepts." [30] "For here life would run on differently. What interest us would not interest them. Here different concepts would no longer be unimaginable." [31] Living a form of life and using a language is not subject to constraints of any authority external to the form of life and the language-game. There

is no neutral “rational” standpoint from which a language-game can be criticized. If we are to try to give an alien, whose form of life-cum-language-game is incommensurable with ours, “our picture of the world, this would happen through a kind of persuasion.”^[32] And “we must do away with explanation, and description alone must take its place.”^[33] Here Wittgenstein is expressing a sense of social practice.

- ¶10. We now move on to Heidegger and Confucianism. Heidegger says that Dasein’s “average everydayness” can be defined as “Being-in-the-world which is falling and disclosed, thrown and projecting, and for which its ownmost potentiality-for-Being is an issue, both in its Being alongside the ‘world’ and in its Being-with Others.”^[34] Being-alongside with non-human things (tools) and being with other human beings are equiprimordial.^[35] “Being-in-the-world is a structure which is primordially and constantly whole.”^[36] Care is Dasein’s way of being-in-the-world (Sein-in-der-Welt), and thus Heidegger talks of concern (Besorgen) in reference to Dasein’s dealings with ready-to-hand (zuhanden) things (e.g., hammers and shoes) and solicitude (Fuersorge) in reference to Dasein’s attitude to fellow beings. Care has three inextricably interwoven components: Being-ahead-of-itself, Being-already-in, and Being-alongside. These three components are coupled with understanding (Verstehen), state-of-mind or situatedness (Befindlichkeit) and falling (Verfallen). Dasein finds itself thrown into what is given, which is facticity and past. Being born into a given culture to which one is attuned is the sort of thing one finds oneself thrown into. Confucianism has an apt term for this sort of thrownness: ritual or propriety (li) which constitutes the framework of established social customs or of patterned behavior. When Dasein finds itself dealing with ready-to-hand things and with fellow beings, it is inauthentic. In other words, it falls. Dasein falls because it “remains in the throw.”^[37] “Dasein is proximally and for the most part alongside the ‘world’ of its concern. This “absorption in . . .” [Aufgehen bei . . .] has mostly the character of Being-lost in the publicness of the “they.” Dasein has, in the first instance, fallen away [abgefallen] from itself as an authentic potentially for Being its Self, and has fallen into the ‘world.’ “Falleness” into the ‘world’ means an absorption in Being-with-one-another, insofar as the latter is guided by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity.”^[38] Being-alongside implies living inauthentically, that is, carrying on routine affairs in the capacity of the “they” or anyone (das Man). As Richard Polt observes, “falling is so pervasive because it is a direct result of thrownness.”^[39] Then he goes on to say: “But we are always thrown into the world from a past that provides us with conventions and with the “they”.”^[40] When Dasein projects viable possibilities (Seinkoennen) thus becoming authentic, it does so against an intelligible and meaningful background of thrownness. Hence “thrown possibility.” Dasein qua alongside is what George H. Mead would call the “me,” namely “a conventional, habitual individual.”^[41] In meeting new challenges from environments, human beings find it necessary to respond to them creatively. “Such a novel reply . . . constitutes the “I” as over against the “me”.”^[42] The Meadian “I” resonates with Heidegger’s Dasein qua ahead-of-itself. In being ahead-of-itself, Dasein becomes

authentic. Needless to say, for Heidegger, both state-of-mind and understanding are communal in significance.

- ¶11. Heidegger uses such expression as “Being-with (Mitsein),” “Dasein-with (Mitdasein),” and “with-world (Mitwelt)”. Heidegger says: “The Self of everyday Dasein is the they-self, which we distinguish from the authentic Self, from the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way . . . “they” itself prescribes that way of interpreting the world and Being-in-the-world which lies closest. Dasein is for the sake of the “they” in an everyday manner, and the “they” itself Articulates the referential context of significance.”[\[43\]](#) There are twin notions in Confucianism which resonate with thrownness and projection: the interlaced notions of ritual (li) and righteousness (i). If ritual is a shared background of culture and form of life in which one finds oneself thrown, righteousness has to do with projecting possibilities thus evincing creative “freedom.” Even being authentic by virtue of projecting possibilities is communal in significance. “Authentic Being-one’s-Self does not rest upon an exceptional condition of the subject, a condition that has been detached from the “they”; it is rather an existentiell modification of the “they”—of the “they” as an essential existentiale.”[\[44\]](#) “Authentic existence is not something which floats above falling everydayness; existential, it is only a modified way in which such everydayness is seized upon.”[\[45\]](#)
- ¶12. Heidegger’s functional conception of equipment is crucial for understanding his social practice conception of the way in which Dasein deals with equipment and fellow members of a community. “Taken strictly, there ‘is’ no such thing as an equipment. To the Being of any equipment there always belongs a totality of equipment. . . . A totality of equipment is constituted by various ways of the ‘in-order-to’, . . .”[\[46\]](#) “To say that the Being of the ready-to-hand has the structure of assignment or reference means that it has in itself the character of having been or refereed (Verwiesenheit).”[\[47\]](#) “The “for-the-sake-of-which” signifies an “in-order-to”; this in turn, a “towards-this”; the latter, an “in which” of letting something be involved; and that in turn, the “with-which” of an involvement. These relationships are bound up with one another as a primordial totality; they are what they are as this signifying [Be-deuten] in which Dasein gives itself beforehand its Being-in-the-world as something to be understood. The relational totality of this signifying we call ‘significance’.”[\[48\]](#) What makes a piece of equipment the piece of equipment it is is the functional role it plays in the context of relational totality. “The ready-to-hand is always understood in terms of a totality of involvements. This totality need not be grasped explicitly by a thematic interpretation.”[\[49\]](#) Understanding is tacit.

- ¶13. For Heidegger, there is a parallel between the functional role(s) of equipment and the functional role(s) of human beings. On behalf of Heidegger, Richard Schmitt says: “In order for gear to exist there must be a gear context.”^[50] Similarly, I would say that for Heidegger, in order for a person to exist, there must be a social context. Hence Mitsein or Mitdasein. Just as what makes a piece of equipment the piece of equipment it is is the role it plays in the context of relational totality, what make a person the person he/she is is the role(s) he/she plays in the context of the relational totality of the human world. Charles B. Guignon gives a functional characterization of Dasein as follows: “Dasein, as concrete Being-in-the-world, always exists as a specific role “for the sake of which it is.” . . . The fact that Dasein just is the roles it takes over in existing carries with it certain implications. Roles do not exist in isolation; they gain their definition and meaning from their relations to other roles. . . . Being-with characterizes Dasein as essentially related to others in the field of meanings of the social world.”^[51] This passage resonates with the Confucianist sense of personhood as regards performance of socially fitting roles within the framework of ritual. And performance of such roles presupposes a background of culture and form of life in which “we think of one another as sharing the community intentions,”^[52] sharing practices, norms and goals with fellow beings.
- ¶14. If Wittgenstein helps to bring about the “linguistic turn” as against the view that the mythical tabula rasa is prior to (public) language and if Dewey and Mead help bring about the “social turn” as against the view that the mythical (isolated) individual is prior to society, then according to Heidegger who undercuts the “Cartesian model,”^[53] we encounter equipment (signs), as Heidegger would phrase the matter, proximally and for the most part, as ready-to-hand (zuhanden).^[54] Heidegger says: “the sign-structure itself provides an ontological clue for ‘characterizing’ any entity whatsoever.”^[55] In reference to signs, Heidegger makes it clear that a sign is a sign not because we merely stare at an object but because it is used as a sign in the context of the relational totality of equipment. Heidegger says: “A sign is not a Thing which stands to another thing in the relationship of indicating; it is rather an item of equipment which explicitly raises a totality of equipment into our circumspection so that together with it the worldly character of the ready-to-hand announces itself.”^[56] The meaning of a sign is its use as a sign in its proper equipmental context. There is a remarkable sort of affinity between Heidegger and Wittgenstein on meaning as use.^[57] When playing a game of chess, we might use pieces of wood or pieces of ivory on the chess board. The Wittgensteinian Sellars says: “Thus, ‘piece’ words might be syntactically related to expressions mentioning various shapes of wood in New York, and to expressions mentioning different makes of cars in Texas—pawns being Fords, the king a Cadillac, squares counties—and yet the game be ‘the same’.”^[58] What makes a particular piece of chess the particular piece of chess is not the particular embodiment of the piece but the particular use to which it is put.^[59] If I may phrase the point the Wittgensteinian Sellars is making in a mixed language of Heideggerese and Wittgensteinese, a piece of wood or a Ford is “not a Thing which stands to

another Thing.” When it is put to use as “an item of equipment” in the context of relational totality, it is given life,[\[60\]](#) as Wittgenstein would phrase the point.

- ¶15. The south wind “is never present-at-hand proximally” but is discovered in its Being “by the circumspection with which one takes account of things in farming, . . .”[\[61\]](#) When we encounter entities “as closest to us” in our “dealings,” “this kind of dealing” is “not a bare perceptual cognition, but rather that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use; and this has its own kind of ‘knowledge’.”[\[62\]](#) When we deal with things and use them, “this activity is not a blind one; it has its own kind of sight, by which our manipulation is guided and from which it acquires its specific Thingly character. Dealings with equipment subordinate themselves to the manifold assignments of the ‘in-order-to.’ And the sight with which they thus accommodate themselves is circumspection.”[\[63\]](#) This sight is the sight of looking around (umsehen) to see what can be done in dealing with equipment. Circumspection (Umsicht) is a skill acquired through social practice. This know-how is “understanding as common sense.”[\[64\]](#) “The view in which the equipmental contexture stands at first, completely unobtrusive and unthought, is the view and sight of practical circumspection, of our practical everyday orientation.”[\[65\]](#) In this setting, pieces of equipment “are not given thematically.”[\[66\]](#) In this setting, “the functionality that goes with chair, blackboard, window is exactly that which makes the thing what it is. . . . A specific functionality whole is pre-understood.”[\[67\]](#) Heidegger’s circumspection is inextricably interwoven with his functional interpretation of the equipmental contexture. Circumspection is the “sight” of, to use Sellars’s expression, “pattern-governed” behavior, except that Heidegger and Heideggerians seem less keen on rules than Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinians.[\[68\]](#) A person with a sharp sense of circumspection is indeed, to use Wittgenstein’s expression, “master of a technique.”
- ¶16. For example, “the hammering itself uncovers the specific ‘manipulability’ [“Handlichkeit”] of the hammer.”[\[69\]](#) which is its readiness-at-hand. The world is a referential totality in which each constituent item is related to others in such a way that the south wind is taken as a sign of rain. Thus, “the environing Nature [die Umweltnatur] is discovered and is accessible to everyone. In roads, streets, bridges, buildings, our concern discovers Nature as having some definite direction.”[\[70\]](#) Just as hammers are encountered as ready-at-hand, so is nature. In the surrounding environment (Umwelt), “things” “are encountered as ‘in themselves’ in the concern which makes use of them without noticing them explicitly.”[\[71\]](#) What figures prominently here is the significance of referential totalities. The referential totality is arranged in terms of relations which find expression in “for-the-sake-of-which,” “in-order-to,” and “towards-which.” Ready-at-hand pieces of equipment or things of nature belong to relational totalities. Thus Heidegger states: “The referential whole of the world is a whole of meaningful connections, meaningfulness.”[\[72\]](#) The world is a totality of meaningfulness.[\[73\]](#) For Heidegger, how we understand and interpret a piece of equipment in a pragmatic and holistic way in the network of

significance is social.

- ¶17. “Dasein finds ‘itself’ proximally in what it does, uses, expects, avoids—in those things environmentally ready-at-hand with which it is proximally concerned.”^[74] And “the world of Dasein is a with-world [Mitwelt]”^[75] “In everyday terms, we understand ourselves and our existence by way of the activities we pursue and the things we take care of.”^[76] “To exist then means, among other things, to be comporting with beings [sich verhaltendes Sein bei Seiendem]”^[77] Heidegger’s “nonthematic circumspective absorption”^[78] is tied up with ‘practical’ behavior, that is, our “dealings” with things and fellow beings. “‘Practical’ behavior is not ‘atheoretical’ in the sense of “sightlessness.”^[79] But ‘practical’ behavior is not “theoretical behavior” either because “theoretical behavior is just looking, without circumspection.”^[80] “By just looking” one could not acquire circumspection, which is a skill acquired through social practice. This line of thinking echoes something in the Wittgensteinian criticism of regulism, for according to both Heidegger and Wittgenstein, practical skills cannot be acquired by mere “theoretical cognition” and without being connected with social practice. At the same time, as Dreyfus observes, “‘carpenters do not hammer like robots’ because one’s comportment manifests dispositions that have been shaped by a vast amount of previous dealings, . . .”^[81] Here Dreyfus rightly rejects regularism on behalf of Heidegger. Thus there is a discernible feature of resemblance between Heidegger’s comportment and the Wittgensteinian Sellars’ pattern-governed behavior. And for both the Heideggerians and the Wittgensteinians, it may be said that “norms are discerned where attitudes—acknowledging in practice of the bindingness of those norms—play a mediating role in practice.”^[82] We can see that both the Heideggerians and the Wittgensteinians are making the apposite moves not to be impaled either on the horn of regulism or on the horn of regularism of the (false) dilemma.^[83] Hence social practice theory.
- ¶18. For Heidegger, concern (Besorgen) and solicitude (Fuersorge) are two inseparable manifestations of care (Sorge). Heidegger says: “Not only is Being towards Others an autonomous, irreducible relationship of Being; this relationship, as Being-with, is one which, with Dasein’s Being, already is. . . . One’s own Dasein, like the Dasein-with of Others, is encountered proximally and for the most part in terms of the with-world with which we are environmentally concerned. . . . In that with which we concern ourselves environmentally the Others are encountered as what they are; they are what they do.”^[84] For Heidegger, Dasein is necessarily social. “Dasein in itself is essentially Being-with.”^[85] What determines the membership of a community is, among others, what each member does and this fact presupposes mutual recognition of the role(s) each member plays. And what one does is a matter of social practice. By way of building a bridge between the Heideggerian model and the Wittgensteinian model for construing personhood, Brandom makes the following comment: “To belong to a community, according to this model, is to be recognized as so belonging by all those one recognizes as so belonging.”^[86] This characterization of what it means to belong to a community is clearly neo-hegelian and evidently inspired by the

Wittgensteinian Sellars's conception of personhood. For Sellars, as the passage was quoted earlier in part, "the conceptual framework of persons is the framework in which we think of one another as sharing the community intentions, . . ." [87] For Sellars, as his criticism of regulism and his concept of pattern-governed behavior suggest, to share the community intentions is to share social practices, norms, and goals. To flesh out Brandom's Sellarsian-cum-Wittgensteinian interpretation of Heidegger, let me quote the following passage: "The community, Mitdasein, then differs from the ready-to-hand in that its members are constituted not only by being recognized or responded to in a certain way, but also by their recognizing and responses as recognizers." [88]

- ¶19. But mutual recognition entails communication. Heidegger states: "Communication' in which one makes assertions . . . is a special case of that communication which is grasped in principle existentially. In this more general kind of communication, the Articulation of Being with one another understandingly is constituted. Through it a co-state-of-mind [Mitbefindlichkeit] gets 'shared,' and so does the understanding of Being-with." [89]
- ¶20. Let us relate communication to assertion. If for Heidegger interpretation develops out of understanding, "assertion is derived from interpretation, and is an extreme case of it." [90] "Assertion has the characteristic double signification that it means both asserting and asserted. Asserting is one of the Dasein's intentional compartments. In essence it is an asserting about something and thus is intrinsically referred to some being and beings." [91] As Brandom aptly phrases the matter, "asserting and the practices of giving and asking for reasons which make it possible are themselves a special sort of practical activity." [92] But "asserting and practices of giving and asking for reasons" is precisely what Sellars means by "placing" an episode of knowing "in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says." [93] Being able to justify what one says is conducive to successful communication. But then to make an assertion is, as Wittgenstein and Sellars would assert (with echoes of agreement emanating from, among others, Kant and Peirce), to be able to draw appropriate inference. For Heidegger and Heideggerians, "because assertions are primarily tools for communicating interpretations, they are fundamentally useful for inferring." [94] "For predicates come in inferential families: . . ." [95] The reason why a parrot or simple computer cannot make assertions is that even if they respond to stimuli, they are not in "the logical space of reasons." [96]

- ¶21. “‘Assertion’ means communication. . . . It is letting someone see with us what we have pointed by way of giving it a definite character. That which is ‘shared’ is our Being towards what has been pointed out—a Being in which we see it in common.”^[97] To make an assertion about an object (e.g., a hammer) is to treat it as present-at-hand (*vorhanden*) Assertions communicate propositionally (explicitly) the interpretations they express. Assertion is “a pointing-out which gives something a definite character and which communicates.”^[98] What is communicated in an assertion leads to pointing out and predication. Heidegger says: “Assertion is not a free-floating kind of behavior. . . . Like any interpretation whatever, assertion necessarily has a fore-having, a fore-sight, and a fore-conception.”^[99] Making an assertion (like understanding) presupposes fore-structure as well as as-structure. Making an assertion presupposes a form of life, a definite (e.g., biological or sociological) perspective, and a definite vocabulary used for a definite purpose. To make an assertion is to play a language-game. As Brandom and Okrent point out, for Heidegger, language is a tool for communication like a sign-post. The sort of language we use for talking about things present-at-hand is, however, a ready-to-hand tool. Heidegger gives a functional interpretation of assertion which bears a feature of resemblance with Wittgenstein’s functional interpretation of concepts discussed earlier.
- ¶22. Thus making an assertion about an object present-at-hand is a matter of social practice. Brandom uses the expression “Heidegger’s ontological pragmatism” in talking about “the self-adjudicating nature of *Mitdasein-in-the-world*” and “the social genesis of the criterial authority (the self-adjudication of the social, given pragmatism about authority).”^[100] What Brandom refers to as “Heidegger’s ontological pragmatism” is precisely what Rorty means by epistemological behaviorism. As regards epistemological behaviorism, Rorty says: “Explaining rationality and epistemic authority by reference to what society lets us say, rather than the latter by the former, is the essence of what I shall call “epistemological behaviorism,” . . .”^[101] On behalf of Heidegger, Brandom says: “fundamental ontology (the study of the origin and nature of the fundamental categories of things) is the study of the nature of social being—social practices and practitioners.”^[102] To locate a link between Heidegger and Wittgenstein on epistemological behaviorism, it is apposite to recall at this juncture the following sentence from Wittgenstein: “We must do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place.”^[103] It is evident that in talking of “Heidegger’s ontological pragmatism”, Brandom helps to let Heidegger mate with Wittgenstein-cum-Sellars-cum-Rorty. Which helps to interpret across boundaries on matters concerning social practice theory.

- ¶23. Confucianism has its way of studying “the nature of social being—social practices and practitioners.” The Confucian way finds expression in the notion of li (ritual). Ritual “in the widest sense is the totality of social conventions.”^[104] The word “li” “embraces all rites, custom, manners, conventions, from the sacrifices to ancestors down to the detail of social etiquette.”^[105] For Confucians, li in a broad sense is the (good) form of personal and social behavior and manners achieved through self-cultivation, and the form of comportment is attuned to long practiced patterns of customs, culture, and tradition, that is, form of life. Rituals often get connected with music and dance.^[106] The point of emphasizing the importance of music and dance as an integral part of the Confucian syllabus for training aspiring civilized persons is that there is a patent similarity between patterns of performing music and dance and patterns of performing rituals. Both of them are performed in the field(s) of group activities. Performing rituals is, just as performing music and dance is, a skill acquired through practice. Once one is initiated into patterns of a group dance, one gets attuned to the the patterns of the dance which become increasingly complex and sophisticated. Those who get attuned to the patterns of the dance play their roles unreflectively but not blindly. They develop a “sight” (in the Heideggerian sense). For their behaviors are, as the behaviors of ritual performers are, pattern-governed behaviors.^[107] By playing cognate roles, dancers and musicians develop a sense of harmony. So do performers of rituals. Ritual is “a field of remarkably subtle communication.”^[108] “There is in ritual, a significant overlap between the ethical and aesthetic. In ritual activity, what is “right” to do is often what is in “good form.””^[109] Heidegger talked of the “sight” which “guides” carpenters. Similarly, “The Master said, “What can a man do with the rites who is not benevolent? What can a man do with music who is not benevolent?””^[110] For Heidegger, carpenters are “guided” by a “sight.” For Confucius, meaningful performance of ritual or music is “caused” (in the Sellarsian sense) by jen, that is, inspired by jen.
- ¶24. Hsun Tzu makes the following insightful observation: “The rules of proper conduct (li) are to educate and nourish.”^[111] Whether human nature be good or bad, Confucius does not speak amiss in remarking that “men are close to another by nature. They diverge as a result of repeated practice.”^[112] Hence Confucius says: “Do not look unless it is in accordance with the rites; do not speak unless it is in accordance with the rites.” Being engaged in li activities is a matter of practice. Herbert Fingarette says: “For Confucius moral education consists in learning the codes of li, . . .”^[114] Even if engagement in ritual activities is code-governed (in a causal sense), a code (rule) should be lived, not described. Ritual activities are better done than talked about. A well trained Confucian should be “master of a technique.” Engagement in li activities should be, for the most part, unreflective if not blind. For Confucians, as Eno aptly observes, “wisdom is not “knowing-that”; it is “knowing-how.””^[115] It would be rather embarrassing to have to have the “codes of li” explained to oneself in explicit (and metalinguistic) terms. Need for some such explicit explanation of the “codes of li” should not arise unless one is dealing with

either a barbarian or a child. Or the explainee must be suffering a lapse of propriety, which is comparable to a breakdown of a piece of equipment for Heidegger.

- ¶25. To deepen our understanding of the Confucian notion of norms in practice, it is helpful to introduce an allusive metaphor. According to Confucianism, the word “li” here meaning “reason” or “principle” implies ““to carve jade according to its veins” and not following the veins could ruin the jade.”[\[116\]](#) It is also observed that here the “underlying rationale–li” is associated with use and means “an inner structure towards usefulness, . . .”[\[117\]](#) What this entails is that the “underlying rationale” is immanent in social practice; it is neither abstract nor transcendent. Clearly there are affinities between the Confucian notion of norms in practice and their Wittgensteinian and Heideggerian counterparts; for Wittgensteinians, Heideggerians, and Confucians alike, meaning is use.
- ¶26. Earlier in this paper, it was observed that for Heidegger, what determines the membership of a person in a community is what he/she does and the mutual recognition thereof. The same is true of the Confucian notion of personhood. David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames are quite right in saying: “The classical Chinese tradition presumes that the human being is something that one does rather than is. The individual is how one behaves within the context of the human community.”[\[118\]](#) They continue to say: “The particularity of the individual is realized in the observance of ritualized roles and practices.”[\[119\]](#) Hall and Ames find affinity between the Confucian notion of personhood and Dewey and Mead’s notion of the social individual and conceive of the Pragmatist-cum-Confucian notion of personhood on the focus/field model of persons.[\[120\]](#) Both Confucianism and Pragmatism (Dewey and Mead in particular) can be viewed as maneuvering to escape between the Scylla of overarching collectivism and the Charybdis of atomic individualism. At this juncture, it seems apposite to add that in a similar vein, Heidegger’s notion of authentic existence is to be viewed as genuinely individual and genuinely integrated with the communal whole. And for Confucians, Heidegger, and the Pragmatists, a person is a process in becoming rather than a fixed substance.
- ¶27. For both Confucians and Heidegger, possibilities are prior to actualities. What is important for a human being is what he/she can be. Hence Seinkoennen (potentiality-for-being or what one is able to be). The Heideggerian expression “thrown possibility” is quite relevant to the Confucian notion of “person making” (to borrow the expression from Hall and Ames) as well as to Heidegger himself. For Heidegger, projection is the function of understanding. Understanding is having possibilities of what Dasein can be while being thrown into what is beyond Dasein’s control. “Understanding is the existential Being of Dasein’s own potentiality-for-Being; and it is so in such a way that this Being discloses in itself what its Being is capable of. . . . The understanding has in itself the existential structure which we call “projection.” . . . Dasein always has understood itself and always will understand itself in terms of possibilities.”[\[121\]](#) Understanding thus understood is exercising

creative freedom in context.[122] For Heidegger, exercising freedom is not a “free-floating” activity. Heidegger objects to “freedom of indifference.” Heidegger refers to “the power of” Dasein’s “finite freedom... This is how we designate Dasein’s primordial historicizing, which lies in authentic resoluteness and in which Dasein hands itself down to itself, free for death, in a possibility which it has inherited and yet has chosen.”[123] Being mindful of Being-with-Others, Heidegger also talks of “co-historizing” and says: ““Our fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities.”[124] “Only an entity which, in its Being, is essentially futural . . . can, by handing down to itself the possibility it has inherited, take over its own thrownness and be in the moment of vision for ‘its time.’ Only authentic temporality which is at the same time finite, makes possible something like fate—that is to say, authentic historicity.”[125] It is clear that understanding, which is a creative and novel way of coping with a situation, involves individual initiative[126] “in the moment of vision” and yet individual activity always has communal relevance and involves “co-historizing.”

- ¶28. According to Confucianism, a person is born into and nurtured by tradition, culture, and form of life. When a person gets acclimated and attuned to the Way, the person learns how to assume his/her responsibility of his/her own accord. Hence the importance of tzu te and tsu jen. [127] These twin notions lie at the heart of the Confucianist conception of “moral individualism” (to borrow the felicitous expression from W. T. de Bary). [128] The human being is what one does rather than is. According to Confucius, one should review and keep in mind the old to cope with and know the new. [129] One can introduce new patterns of behavior creatively only in the context of culture, tradition, and form of life into which one finds oneself thrown. Hence the relevance of the Heideggerian expression “thrown possibility” to Confucianism. There is a sense of continuity between the past and the future. According to Hall and Ames, the “authoritative person” (or the jen person) who performs righteous (yi or i) action in a “context-dependent” way is responding to new and challenging situations in a creative way by fashioning novel patterns “uniquely suited to concrete circumstance.” [130] True, “ritual actions have their origin in the givenness of tradition.” [131] If we are to keep patterns of tradition and culture from becoming rigid and dead, however, we need to infuse the world with novelties; we need to show “a creative advance into novelty” (appropriately to appropriate the phrase from A. N. Whitehead). And the authoritative person, that is, the Confucian gone authentic, should play the role of showing “a creative advance into novelty.” And Confucianism teaches that the authoritative person is what every human being can be (Seinkoennen).

- ¶29. Confucianism teaches that what one is able to be depends largely on what one makes of oneself. One must take consequences, for good or ill, of one's own deeds. "If the blue water is clear It is fit to wash my chin-trap. If the blue water is muddy It is only fit to wash my feet." [132] If one is not quite equal to others in talents and environments, it is only fitting for him/her to double or treble efforts to overcome the disadvantages. For in the end, every human being is capable of being a sage, that is, being fully human. For one's own failure, one should not murmur against Heaven or blame others. One should rectify one's own errors in all honesty in virtue of self-censure, self-reflection, and self-efforts. One's life is contingent, and one should project possibilities in given circumstances. But life is largely what one makes of oneself by being engaged in the world with one's fellow beings.

END NOTES

1. See "Some Reflections on Language Games" in Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*, New York: Humanities Press, Inc. (1963), 325.
2. Robert Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1994), 29.
3. *ibid.*, 29.
4. Wilfrid Sellars, *Notes on Intentionality* in *Philosophical Perspectives* Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher (1967), 310.
5. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford, UK/Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. (1997), ¶83.
6. Cf. *ibid.*, ¶ 153, 154 Kripke is noted for imputing a form of skepticism to Wittgenstein. (Cf. Saul A. Kripke, *Wittgenstein On Rules and Private Language*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1982)). Why does Kripke impute skepticism to Wittgenstein? Norman Malcolm says that that is because Kripke assumes that when one uses a word, one is guided. (Cf. Norman Malcolm, *Wittgenstein: Nothing Is Hidden*, Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell (1988), 159.) But when an experienced driver drives a car in a city he/she is familiar with, does he/she pay close attention to signposts and is guided by them? When one does tax returns, does one try to remember the relevant series of numbers? So does Malcolm ask the rhetorical question. In other words, when one is carrying on routine affairs, even if there is a sense in which one's behavior may be said to be rule-governed, one is not guided by the rules. True, when one is trying to

learn a new language, one should learn the relevant rules of the grammar of the language. When one is trying to learn how to drive a car, one should consciously remember the rules governing every driver. When one is trying to learn how to play a new game one needs to learn and hence is guided by the relevant rules of the game. But while playing a familiar game, one's behavior is, though in some sense rule-governed, is not guided by the rules of the game. PPPAccording to Malcolm, Kripke should have distinguished between the two types of situations discussed here: the situations in which one performs routine affairs, that is, being engaged in pattern-governed behavior(s), and the situations in which one needs to become consciously aware of the rules (e.g., learning situations). One may be guided by the rules in the latter type of situations but not in the former type of situations. Here is Malcolm's reconstruction of Kripke's diagnosis of Wittgenstein's "radical skepticism." 1. In order for a word to have meaning there must be something in one's mind that guides one's application of the word. 2. Wittgenstein has shown that there is nothing in one's mind that guides one's application of a word. 3. Therefore, Wittgenstein has shown that no word has any meaning. (Cf. Malcolm, 162) PPP Malcolm thinks that Kripke should not have granted (1) as true. One of the reasons why Kripke grants (1) as true is that Kripke's model of language is that of mathematics, which is not that of the later Wittgenstein. Kripke is not talking about our daily unreflective customary use of ordinary language.

7. Marie McGuinn, *Wittgenstein and the Philosophical Investigations*, London/New York: Routledge (1997), 128.
8. Cf. Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*, New York: Humanities Press, Inc. (1963), 312-313, 333.
9. As an alternative to concept empiricism, Sellars proposes S-R conditioning theory to explain the process of language acquisition. According to Sellars, the learning of a language involves "(1) The acquisition of habits pertaining to the arranging of sounds and visible marks into patterns and sequences of patterns. The acquisition of these habits can be compared to the setting up that part of the wiring of a calculating machine which takes over once the 'problem' has been 'punched in'. (2) The acquisition of thing-word connections. This can be compared to the setting up of that part of the wiring of a calculating machine which permits the 'punching in of information'. These connections are a matter of being conditioned to respond to kinds of situation with kinds of verbal pattern, e.g. to respond to the presentation of a green object with 'This is green'; it is not a matter of 'learning to say "...' when one observes that the situation is thus and so.' Observing that the situation is thus- and-so already involves the use of a conceptual frame."

ibid., 313.

10. The regress-of-rules argument has its ancestry in Hobbes's observation that Descartes's idea that having consciousness of a thought marks off a thought from things physical results in infinite regress. [Cf. Third Set of Objections with Replies in Rene Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, J. Cottingham (Ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1985), 122-123 In Principles of Philosophy, Descartes says in part: "By the term 'thought', I understand everything we are aware of as happening within us, in so far as we have awareness of it." (Pt I, 9; Volume I, 195). Descartes's reply to the objection that he has never made some such point as alleged by Hobbes (Cf. Volume II, 124) places Descartes, as Anthony Kenny observes, in a dilemma. (Anthony Kenny, *Descartes: A Study of His Philosophy*, New York: Random House (1968), 74-78). If Descartes removes consciousness of a thought as the distinctive characteristic of thought, Descartes could not maintain his dualism. But if he wants to maintain his dualism, then he is stuck with the alleged characterization of thought. Kenny also says: "The criticism I am making of Cartesian consciousness was suggested by a famous argument of Ludwig Wittgenstein to show the impossibility of a private language." (78) Kenny goes on to observe: "How do we even know what is the content of that belief?" (78) As Kenny suggests, the Wittgensteinian regress-of-rules argument is closely related to the impossibility of a private language. And Sellars's criticism of concept empiricism-cum-platonism is to show, among others, the impossibility of a private language.
11. Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*, New York: Humanities Press, Inc. (1963), 321.
12. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford, UK/Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. (1997), ¶258.
13. Wilfrid Sellars, *Pure Pragmatics and Possible Worlds: The Early Essays of Wilfrid Sellars*, Atascadero, CA: Ridgerview Publishing Company (1980), 155. The passage is found in the essay entitled "Language, Rules and Behavior": LRB hereafter.
14. Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*, New York: Humanities Press, Inc. (1963), 333.

- [15.](#) Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford, UK/Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. (1997), ¶198.
- [16.](#) *ibid.*, ¶201.
- [17.](#) *ibid.*, ¶201.
- [18.](#) *ibid.*, ¶202. That what Wittgenstein means by practice is social is evidenced by the fact he compares a rule to a sign-post. (Cf. ¶85) The point of distinguishing between thinking that one's obeying a rule and obeying (following) a rule is that following a rule or being rule-governed, still better, being engaged in pattern-governed behavior, can be measured only against what other members of a community do. The distinction between thinking that one is following a rule and following a rule would collapse if following a rule were not social practice. Colin McGinn advances the interpretation that for Wittgenstein, practice need not entail anything social. McGinn says: "I am saying only that Wittgenstein does not hold that the very notion of a rule of language must needs be explicated in social terms—that we cannot make sense of rule-following on the part of a given individual unless we relate that individual's behavior to the behavior of some community of rule-followers." [Colin McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 91. This passage is quoted by Malcolm, p171.] However, Wittgenstein compares a rule to a sign-post of which people make repeated use in a communal setting. As Malcolm ably observes, "In speaking of 'a regular use of sign-posts, a custom', Wittgenstein plainly is not talking about an isolated individual 'repeatedly' doing something." (Malcolm, p172). There cannot be a language unless members of a community share the practices of the language. "Disputes do not break out (among mathematicians, say) over the question of whether a rule has been obeyed or not. People don't come to blows over it, for example. That is the part of the framework on which the working of our language is based (for example, in giving descriptions)." (¶240) "If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgments." (¶242) The agreement among members of a community "is not agreement in opinions but in form of life." (¶242) "To obey a rule, to make a report, to given an order, to play a game of chess, are customs (uses, institutions). To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique." (¶199) A solitary person cannot follow a rule any more than a solitary person can carry on a trade.

- [19.](#) [ibid.](#), ¶43.
- [20.](#) [ibid.](#), ¶217.
- [21.](#) Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, G. M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (Eds.), translated by Dennis Paul and GE Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell (1969), ¶559.
- [22.](#) Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, G. M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (Eds.), translated by GE Anscombe, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1980), ¶630.
- [23.](#) Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Realism, and Truth, Vol. 1* , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1993), 156-157.
- [24.](#) Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* , Princeton: Princeton University Press (1979), 174. The reason why Rorty calls Sellars a "backsliding "social-practise theorist"" is that Sellars is not content with merely describing what we actually do. He wants "the extra dimension which relates social practises to something beyond themselves, In Sellars's case this non-human something is "the world." In Heidegger's case it is Being." (Rorty, Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Realism, and Truth, Vol. 1* , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1993), p152) I disagree with Rorty's interpretation of Heidegger's Being. Rorty gives an interpretation of Heidegger's Being along a platonic line. (See Richard Rorty, *Overcoming the Tradition: Heidegger and Dewey, Review of Metaphysics*, 30(2) 1976. In my view, Heidegger's Sein resonates with the East Asian sense of Nothingness. I find a kindred spirit in Michael Zimmerman who in effect says that Tao, Logos, Ereignis, and Sunyata are virtually "the same," giving expression to "the Void" (Emptiness). [Cf. Michael Zimmerman, *Eclipse of the Self* , Athens: Ohio University Press (1981), 260] In Reinhard May, *Heidegger's Hidden Sources: East Asian Influences on His Work*, translated by Graham Parkes, London/New York: Routledge (1996), May discusses, among others, Heidegger's sense of Nothingness (Being), emptiness and clearing as well as his interest in Dao.
- [25.](#) Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford, UK/Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. (1997), ¶241.
- [26.](#) [ibid.](#), ¶23.

- [27.](#) *ibid.*, ¶19.
- [28.](#) See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell (1000), 134.
- [29.](#) Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford, UK/Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. (1997), ¶25.
- [30.](#) Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, G. Anscombe and G.von Wright (Eds.), translated by G. E. M. Anscombe, Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press (1967), ¶387.
- [31.](#) *ibid.*, ¶88.
- [32.](#) Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, G. M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (Eds.), translated by Dennis Paul and GE Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell (1969), ¶262.
- [33.](#) Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford, UK/Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. (1997), ¶109.
- [34.](#) Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers (1962), 225. This is a translation of Sein and Zeit, (Tuebingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1963); Hereafter SZ. For the German original of the passage, see p181.
- [35.](#) Cf. *ibid.*, 225; SZ, 181.
- [36.](#) *ibid.*, 224; SZ, 180.
- [37.](#) *ibid.*, 223; SZ, 179.
- [38.](#) *ibid.*, 220; SZ, 175.
- [39.](#) Richard Polt, *Heidegger: an Introduction*, Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press (1999), 76.

- [40.](#) *ibid.*, 76.
- [41.](#) George H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (1962), 197.
- [42.](#) *ibid.*, 197.
- [43.](#) Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers (1962), 167; SZ, 129.
- [44.](#) *ibid.*, 168; SZ, 130. Also Cf. 224; SZ, 130.
- [45.](#) *ibid.*, 224; SZ, 179.
- [46.](#) *ibid.*, 97; SZ, 68.
- [47.](#) *ibid.*, 115; SZ, 84.
- [48.](#) *ibid.*, 120; SZ, 87.
- [49.](#) *ibid.*, 191; SZ, 150. With regard to readiness-to-hand, Heidegger says: "The kind of Being which equipment possesses— in which it manifests itself in its own right— we call "readiness-to-hand" [Zuhandenheit]." (98; SZ, 69)
- [50.](#) Richard Schmitt, *Martin Heidegger on Being Human: An Introduction to Sein und Zeit*, New York: Random House (1969), 242. On the same page, Schmitt also says: "Involved in any gear context are standard techniques, practices, customs."
- [51.](#) Charles B. Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company (1983), 105-106.
- [52.](#) Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*, New York: Humanities Press, Inc. (1963), 40.
- [53.](#) I adopt the phrase "the Cartesian model" from Guignon.

- [54.](#) Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers (1962), 111; SZ, 80.
- [55.](#) *ibid.*, 108; SZ, 78.
- [56.](#) *ibid.*, 110; SZ, 80.
- [57.](#) Wittgenstein's functional interpretation of concepts can be found in his *Tractatus*. After rejecting what Wittgenstein characterizes as a platonic view as evidenced by the views of Russell and Frege who conceive of concepts as objects, Wittgenstein advances a functional interpretation or a "syntactical" interpretation of all concept words. Just as a logical constant is a logical constant in virtue of the essential role it plays in the context of logical inference, a non-logical (material) concept is a material concept in virtue of the essential role it plays in the context of material inference.[Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, translated by D Pears and B McGuinness, Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press (1961)]. See in particular *Tractatus*, 4.0621, 4.0312, 5.4, 3.326 and 3.327. There are also passages in his Blue and Brown Books relating to his criticism of the reification of the meaning of a word. See, for example, Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell (1000), 5, 18, 36 and 1. Though Wittgenstein's "syntactical" interpretation of concepts should not be equated without qualification with his later view on meaning as use to be found in his *Philosophical Investigations*, it would not be misleading to classify what I have called Wittgenstein's functional interpretation of concepts as a theory of meaning as use in one sense of the term "use." For a discussion of Wittgenstein's functional interpretation of concepts, see Kwang-Sae Lee, [Kant and Wittgenstein on Empirical Concepts](#) in R. Haller and W.Grassl (Eds.), *Language, Logic and Philosophy: Proceedings of the 4th International Wittgenstein Symposium 28th August to 2nd September 1979, Kirchberg/Wechsel (Austria)* Wien, Austria: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky (1980), 269-271. For a related discussion of Kant's functional interpretation of concepts, see Kwang-Sae Lee, [Kant on Empirical Concepts, Empirical Laws and Scientific Theories'](#), *Kant-Studien: Philosophische Zeitschrift der Kant-Gesellschaft*, 72(4) 1981, 398-414.
- [58.](#) Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*, New York: Humanities Press, Inc. (1963), 344.

- [59.](#) In my view, the main source of inspiration for Sellars's Wittgensteinian-cum-Kantian functional interpretation here is the Paralogisms chapter of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.
- [60.](#) Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell (1956), 4. Here Wittgenstein equates "the life of the sign" with "its use." Wittgenstein says: "But if we have to name anything which is the life of the sign, we should have to say that it was its use."
- [61.](#) Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers (1962), 80-81; SZ, 80-81.
- [62.](#) *ibid.*, 95; SZ, 66-67.
- [63.](#) *ibid.*, 98; SZ, 69.
- [64.](#) *ibid.*, 187; SZ, 147.
- [65.](#) Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, translated by Albert Hofstadter, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press (1988), 163.
- [66.](#) *ibid.*, 163.
- [67.](#) *ibid.*, 164.
- [68.](#) On behalf of Heidegger, Hubert L. Dreyfus says: "There is no reason to think that there are any rules involved; rather, we have a skilled understanding of our culture. Indeed, if one tried to state the rules for distance-standing, one would require further rules, . . . and the application of these rules would in turn require further rules, and so on, . . ." Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-In-The-World*, Cambridge, Massachusetts/Cambridge, England: The MIT Press (1997), 18-19. Dreyfus seems to think that the application of rules necessarily entails explicit formulation (stating) of the rules which, in turn, entails infinite regress. That the correct application of rules need not and should not entail explicit formulation of the rules, except in exigencies, has been shown in connection with the Sellarsian way of handling the regress-of-rules argument and Malcolm's way of handling Kripke. So it would be sensible for Dreyfus simply to observe that Heidegger and Heideggerians (including Pierre Bourdieu) seem to be

keen on practices and skilled understanding but are not particularly keen on rules without relating this fact to its possible connection with the regress-of-rules argument. To stress the point that "rule-following" is embedded in social practice, Wittgenstein who talks of "obeying a rule blindly" says: "When I obey a rule, I do not choose. I obey the rule blindly." (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford, UK/Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. (1997), ¶219) We do not choose because we find ourselves, to use Heideggerese, thrown into (already-in) the social world of practices, which he calls form of life. And understanding presupposes a background of norms in practice. Dreyfus seems to think that Wittgenstein "sometimes talks" as if we need to make "a network of beliefs" and principles always explicit "to make sense of anything." while for Heidegger "there are no beliefs to get clear about; there are only skills and practices." (Cf. Dreyfus, 22) But that making beliefs and principles always explicit to make sense of anything is not the Wittgensteinian view. We need to make rules explicit only in exigencies. And explicit formulation of rules presupposes norms in practice. For Wittgensteinians and Heideggerians alike, we carry on routine affairs unreflectively. However, problematical situations occasion reflection. For Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinians, exigencies call for rendering rules explicit. For Heidegger and Heideggerians, when things break down and routine operations are interrupted, *Vorhandenheit* appears on the scene. In my view, the sort of difference Dreyfus seems to see between Wittgenstein and Heidegger is not as "radical" as he seems to suppose.

- [69.](#) Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers (1962), 98; SZ, 69.
- [70.](#) *ibid.*, 100; SZ, 71.
- [71.](#) *ibid.*, 105; SZ, 74.
- [72.](#) Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, translated by Theodore Kisiel, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press (1985), 209-210.

- [73.](#) For Heidegger, the word "world" is not univocal, however. In one passage, he says: "'World' . . . signifies the totality of those entities which can be present-at-hand within the world." Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers (1962), 93; SZ 64. Then he goes on to say: "'World' can be understood in another ontical sense . . . as that 'wherein' a factual Dasein as such can be said to 'live'." (93; SZ, 65)
- [74.](#) *ibid.*, 155; SZ, 119.
- [75.](#) *ibid.*, 155; SZ, 118.
- [76.](#) Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, translated by Albert Hostadter, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press (1988), 59.
- [77.](#) *ibid.*, 157.
- [78.](#) Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers (1962), 107; SZ, 76.
- [79.](#) *ibid.*, 99; SZ, 69.
- [80.](#) *ibid.*, 99; SZ, 69.
- [81.](#) Humbert L. Dreyfus, *Being-In-The-World*, Cambridge, Massachusetts/ Cambridge, England: The MIT Press (1997), 68.
- [82.](#) Robert Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1994), 35. Even if it may be conceded that Heidegger and his like-minded beings are not noted for taking particular interest in rules, it should be admitted that they must acknowledge norms in practice.

- [83.](#) So Heidegger says: "We do not always and continually have explicit perception of the things surrounding us in a familiar environment, . . . The presupposition for the possible equanimity of our dealing with things is, among others, the uninterrupted quality of that commerce." Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, translated by Albert Hostadter, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press (1988), 309
- [84.](#) Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers (1962), 162-163; SZ, 125-126.
- [85.](#) *ibid.*, 156; SZ, 120.
- [86.](#) Robert Brandom, *Categories in Being and Time* in H. L. Dreyfus and H. Hall (Eds.), *Heidegger: A Critical Reader* Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell (1995), 53.
- [87.](#) Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*, New York: Humanities Press, Inc. (1963), 40. See footnote 52. I receive the strong impression that Brandom's interpretation of Heidegger is very Sellarsian. To me, Brandom's essay is a superb example of interpreting across boundaries. For he seems to find a theme of mutual resonance in Heidegger and the Wittgensteinian Sellars, who belongs to the Analytical tradition (in a broad sense of "Analytical"). It is not by accident that Brandom dedicates his *Making It Explicit* to Wilfrid Sellars and Richard Rorty.
- [88.](#) Robert Brandom, *Categories in Being and Time* in H. L. Dreyfus and H. Hall (Eds.), *Heidegger: A Critical Reader* Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell (1995), 54.
- [89.](#) Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers (1962), 205; SZ, 162.
- [90.](#) *ibid.*, 203; SZ, 160.

- [91.](#) Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, translated by Albert Hostadter, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press (1988), 207.
- [92.](#) Robert Brandom, *Categories in Being and Time* in H. L. Dreyfus and H. Hall (Eds.), *Heidegger: A Critical Reader* Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell (1995), 59.
- [93.](#) Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*, New York: Humanities Press, Inc. (1963), 169.
- [94.](#) Mark Okrent, *Heidegger's Pragmatism: Understanding, Being, and the Critique of Metaphysics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press (1988), 70.
- [95.](#) Robert Brandom, *Categories in Being and Time* in H. L. Dreyfus and H. Hall (Eds.), *Heidegger: A Critical Reader* Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell (1995), 57.
- [96.](#) See
- Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton: Princeton University Press (1979), 182-183. I impute a similar interpretation to Okrent. See Mark Okrent, *Heidegger's Pragmatism: Understanding, Being, and the Critique of Metaphysics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press (1988), 70.
- [97.](#) Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers (1962), 197; SZ, 155.
- [98.](#) *ibid.*, 199; SZ, 156.
- [99.](#) *ibid.*, 199; SZ, 156-157.
- [100.](#) Robert Brandom, *Categories in Being and Time* in H. L. Dreyfus and H. Hall (Eds.), *Heidegger: A Critical Reader* Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell (1995), 62.
- [101.](#) Rorty explicitly ascribes epistemological behaviorism to Dewey and Wittgenstein, but I assume that Heidegger as well as Sellars is a source of inspiration for the view.

- [102.](#) Robert Brandom, *Categories in Being and Time* in H. L. Dreyfus and H. Hall (Eds.), *Heidegger: A Critical Reader* Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell (1995), 2.
- [103.](#) Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford, UK/Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. (1997), ¶109.
- [104.](#) A.C Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China*, La Salle: Open Court (1989), 258.
- [105.](#) *ibid.*, 11.
- [106.](#) For a useful discussion of the topic, see Robert Eno, *The Confucian Creation of Heaven*, Albany: State University of New York (1990). Also see *The Works of Hsuntze*, translated by Homer Dubs, London: Arthur Probsthain (1928). For example, take the following passage: "In the Way (Tao) of the early Kings, rules of proper conduct (Li) and music were exactly that in which they excelled" (250). Again, "The 'union' of the rules of proper conduct (Li) and music embraces the whole 'heart' of man" (254).
- [107.](#) It is apposite to recall at his juncture that Sellars uses the dance pattern of bees as an analogue of human pattern-governed behavior. In reference to the dance pattern of bees, Sellars says: "it is open to us to give an evolutionary account of the phenomena of the dance." Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*, New York: Humanities Press, Inc. (1963), 326. What Sellars is drawing our attention to is a possible analogy we might draw between the evolutionary pattern of the dance of bees and the evolutionary pattern of human behavior. Sellars states: "What would it mean to say of a bee returning from a clover field that its turnings and wiggings occur because they are part of a complex dance? Would this commit us to the idea that the bee envisages the dance and acts as it does by virtue of intending to realize the dance? If we reject this idea, must we refuse to say that the dance pattern as a whole is involved in the occurrence of each wiggle and turn? Clearly not." (326) Clearly bees are not humans. Yet there might be, however remote, interspecific similarity between the dance pattern of bees and the evolutionary pattern of human behavior. In both cases, it might be said that increasingly complex patterns emerge and develop from "the phenomena of the dance" (in the case of bees) and human activities (in the case of humans). In commenting on Heidegger's Being, Rorty says: "There is no way, and no need, to tell the dancer from the dance, nor is there any point in looking around for a

hidden choreographer." (Richard Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1991), 36) Mutatis mutandis, we could observe that there is no point in looking around for a choreographer for the dance pattern of bees or the evolutionary pattern of human behavior. "For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that when the learning to use a language is viewed against the above background, we readily see the general lines of an account which permits us to say that learning to use a language is coming to do A in C, A' in C', etc., because of a system of 'moves' to which these acts belong, while yet denying that learning to use a language is coming to do A in C, . . . , with the intention of realizing a system of moves." (327) Similarly, comparing rituals to the dance implies that there is no point in looking out for a choreographer for rituals. Patterns of rituals are woven out of activities of rituals.

- [108.](#) Robert Eno, *The Confucian Creation of Heaven*, Albany: State University of New York (1990), 34.
- [109.](#) *ibid.*, 36. Further, it is supposed that "music . . . can turn the people's hearts to goodness. (*The Works of Hsuntze*, translated by Homer Dubs, London: Arthur Probsthain (1928), 251). Again, it is said: "For when music plays", the will "is clear," the rules of proper conduct (li) are cultivated and the character is perfected." (*Ibid.*, 253)
- [110.](#) Confucius, *The Analects*, translated by D Lau, New York: Penguin Books (1992), 3:3.
- [111.](#) *The Works of Hsuntze*, translated by Homer Dubs, London: Arthur Probsthain (1928), 213.
- [112.](#) Confucius, *The Analects*, translated by D Lau, New York: Penguin Books (1992), 17:2.
- [113.](#) *ibid.*, 12:1.
- [114.](#) Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: the Secular as Sacred*, New York: Harper & Row (1972), 27.
- [115.](#) Robert Eno, *The Confucian Creation of Heaven*, Albany: State University of New York (1990), 66.
- [116.](#) Edward J. Machle, *Nature and Heaven in Xunzi: A Study of the Tian Lun*, Albany: State University of New York Press (1993), 128.

- [117.](#) [ibid.](#), 128.
- [118.](#) David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *The Democracy of the Dead Dewey, Confucius, and the Hope for Democracy in China*, Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court (1999), 190.
- [119.](#) [ibid.](#), 198.
- [120.](#) For a similar discussion, see Kwang-Sae Lee, [Confucianism and Pragmatism - Self, Process, and Rites/Rights](#), *Philosophy and Culture*, 1 (1) 1999, 51-89.
- [121.](#) Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers (1962), 184-185; SZ 144-145.
- [122.](#) Michael Gelven, for example, says that understanding "provides the basis for Heidegger's theory of freedom, . . ." Michael Gelven, *A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time*, Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press (1989), 86.
- [123.](#) Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers (1962), 435; SZ 384. In "On the Essence of Truth," Heidegger says that freedom is not mere absence of constraint. Rather "freedom is engagement in the disclosure of beings as such." (Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, W. McNeill (Ed.), Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University of Press (1998)) "Freedom for what is opened up in an open region lets beings be the beings they are. Freedom now reveals itself as letting beings be" (*Pathmarks*, 144). Heidegger' notion of freedom as "letting beings be" is precisely what Heidegger means by Ereignis in SZ and Gelassenheit later. Zimmerman is right in saying: "Hence Ereignis refers to mutual appropriating of the elements of the world" (Michael Zimmerman, *Eclipse of the Self*, Athens: Ohio University Press (1981), 236). Zimmerman sees a close parallel between Heidegger and Buddhism-cum-Taoism and relates Heidegger's sense of Ereignis to the Buddhist sense of dependent co-origination. At this point, it is fitting to recall the Buddhist metaphor of the jewel net of the god Indra, suggested by the Hua-yen school, into which are set an infinite number of gems illuminating and mirroring one another, thus symbolizing the dependent co-origination of myriad things. Here the field is the very happening (Geschehen, to appropriate Heidegger's term, which Macquarrie and Robinson translate as historizing) of mutual mirroring of gems. Even if individual gems become "selfless" in the sense

of being interdependent, each gem is a focus which reflects the field (Tao, Sunyata, Ereignis, Logos) in its unique way. In this setting, there is no one overarching order or principle. The co-happening (Mitgeschehen, again to appropriate Heidegger's term, which Macquarrie and Robinson translate as co-historizing) of the gems is what the East Asians have called Nothingness. Thus "the "field" corresponds to the Void" (Zimmerman, 257). Zimmerman observes that there is etymological affinity between the word "Entschlossenheit" ("resolution") and the word "Erschlossenheit" ("disclosedness"), both of which occur in *Sein und Zeit*. The word "entschliessen" also means opening with a key, that is, unlocking. So Zimmerman says: "To follow the Tao and to hearken to the Logos mean "the same": to be cleared of the ego and attuned to the cosmic play which is hidden from the rational intellect" (Ibid., 256). According to Zimmerman, "all great thinking involves the attempt to give expression to the Void (Tao, Logos, Ereignis, Sunyata), . . ." (Ibid., 260). Further, as observed earlier (in footnote 13), May also observes that by "Sein", Heidegger means Nothingness.

[124.](#) *ibid.*, 436; SZ 384.

[125.](#) *ibid.*, 437; SZ 385.

[126.](#) See, for example, the following passage: "How does the anticipatory understanding project itself upon a potentiality-for-Being . . . ? . . . Anticipation utterly individuates Dasein, and allows it, . . . , to become certain of the totality of potentiality-for-Being." *ibid.*, 310 (SZ 265-266).

[127.](#) The textual context from which the concept of tzu jen (assuming responsibility of one's own accord) originates the Book of Mencius, 5B:1. The textual text from which the concept of tzu te (finding the Way in oneself) is the Book of Mencius, 4B:14. *Mencius*, translated by D Lau, New York: Penguin Books (1970). In regard to a gentleman steeping himself in the Way, it is said that "when he finds it in himself, he will be at ease in it" (4B:14, 130). The whole notion of assuming responsibility of one's own accord is closely related to the notion of differentiated moral responsibility (li fen). According to the Confucianist notion of the rectification of names, each person should assume the sort of responsibility commensurate with his/her function(s) and/or role(s). Moreover, the assumption and fulfillment of one's role(s) and responsibility (responsibilities) should be self-motivated. And it is assumed that self-motivation is nurtured by self-cultivation in the context of culture and tradition. In other word, tzu jen presuppose tzu te. This is the core the Confucianist functional interpretation of persons.

- [128.](#) Cf. Wm T. de Bary, *The Liberal Tradition in China*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press (1983).
- [129.](#) Confucius, *The Analects*, translated by D Lau, New York: Penguin Books (1992), 2:11, 64.
- [130.](#) David Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius*, Albany: SUNY Press (1987), 105.
- [131.](#) *ibid.*, 108.
- [132.](#) *Mencius*, translated by D Lau, New York: Penguin Books (1970), 4A:8, 121.

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