

Decisions on Rhetoric



*A Playful Response to
Amy, Wittgenstein & J. Derrida*

Ralph C. Ennis

Why do I write this way?

*“It is not our aim to refine or complete the system of rules for the **use of our words** in unheard-of ways. For the clarity that we are aiming at is indeed complete clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should completely disappear. The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. – The one that gives **philosophy peace**, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring itself in question.”*

– Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations 133.

*“It is at the price of this **war of language against itself** that the sense and question of its origin will be thinkable ... Language preserves the difference that preserves language.”*

– Derrida, Speech and Phenomena p. 14

In response

- to Wittgenstein’s originality and authenticity,
- to Wittgenstein’s search of a peaceful end to philosophy,
- to Derrida’s war of language against itself,
- to Derrida’s understanding of presence, and
- to Amy, my daughter, whose question was heart-felt

I pen a playful rhetoric.

This subject matter will rarely engender a complete reading, so let me briefly overview the main parts.

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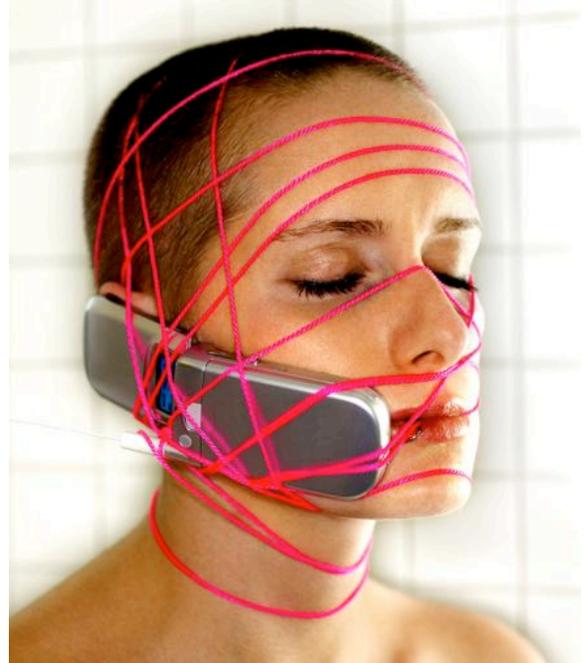
Ralph C. Ennis 2009

Decisions on Rhetoric: *A Playful Response to Amy, Wittgenstein & J. Derrida*

Greetings

Such a strange collection of people to pen words to. It is to you, my daughter Amy, I begin because it was your question that most demands my response, but not to you alone. Others besides the greeting list may indeed listen but note that not all on the greeting list may. A strange letter with words to the living and the dead, to the familiar and to strangers – to people who will read out of honoring our relationship and to others, living and intended readers, who may see these words and fragments for a vast variety of reasons.

Yet it is especially to you Amy that I write for it is your question I seek to belatedly address with so feeble an attempt that some might scoff at my efforts – silence might be more preferred than dullness, clumsiness, inexactness, and brutality of formal language rules which I confess not to have mastered and without which I have managed to exist and survive, albeit with questionably richness of soul and breadth of human experience. Anyway I know you are quite capable of editing my words to reflect my thoughts – and, if you choose, to improve them.



Your question, posed years ago, resonated in my being – first because of the tender, vulnerable, and soulful way in which you posed it as my eight year old daughter and second by my inadequacy to answer for myself and third by the astonishment of my inadequacy to put in simply words an answer as thoughtful and understandable to you as your question was to me. Surely one who is capable of expressing a clear question deserves the honor of a better answer than the bumbling maze of words that proceeded from my lips – spoken with all the authority and fear of a dad to his young daughter.

Some critics, who if only in my imagination, would honor me with reading these words, might call to question my motives. “Why does he write his daughter? Has he no wife, no sons, no other daughters? Does this limited audience not belie his dysfunctions, his fears, his arrogance, his inadequacies?” To all such plays of doubt I can only reply that it was you, my daughter of eight, seated around our dinner table without the props of similar conversations, who revealed *the disquietness of your soul by exclaiming in tears “How can I know if I know anything?”* Few before or since has so eloquently and with such passion delivered such a piece of their soul trusting that my prior experience and our relationship justified such trust. And so many years later, I wish to reshape my answer to you.

But why bother? Admittedly you don’t remember the event and furthermore you have found a suitable solution for your soul in order to move forward into the ordinary affairs and complexities of life. You’ve done so much so young – lived in Russia, learned several languages including the language of love and commitment to a wonderful soul mate and marriage partner and incredible children. You’ve mastered some of the language of the natural and social sciences. Your ability to traverse the slopes of Shakespeare while tolerating the poetry of your father demonstrate your will to live well without belaboring your soulful question of knowing to the point of depression and the paralysis of doubt – a preferred philosophical diseases. And yet the question doesn’t flee so easily – if only in my soul.

If however, I thought you incapable of re-entering this soil, I would be foolish and mocking you as if you had subsequently retreated from soul anguishing questions. You haven't retreated I think but rather done the act of bravery – looked clearly and with certain aim at a human dilemma capable of slaying the most sane among us and have chosen trust and humility over doubt, arrogance or ignorance. The apologetic for my belief in your choice lies in the beauty of your soul, the bravery of your heart, the acuteness of your mind and reasonableness of your life decisions.

Again to the skeptics who challenge the accuracy of my perception of your being – have you never seen human integrity wrapped within the human dual dilemmas of dependence and depravity if only from the ideals of human imagination? For such I perceive is her integrity from a father's perspective.

Why do I continue – for you, for me, for others? How can I know if I know such a thing as my motives? But first how might I trust you could perceive what I know – if I become persuaded I know anything, if only a motive? Our shared presence in our family of six increases the probability of the transference to you Amy. Our shared heritage of genes for human nature lays an attractive and compelling groundwork for transference of meanings among us all. That's enough for now to begin – almost. Still, why do I continue – is there no stated utilitarian benefit for such an effort – only implied!

I first confess I believe your question is not the frothing of insanity, or the result of unreasonable doubt birthed in inadequate bonding with caregivers, or simply the reflections of a bored mind. Your question reflects the heart-felt exploration of many of the young among us (throughout millennia) who seek to integrate their thoughts about life in a constructive, workable reality that stands the test of time and experience while molding to the future-present with the benefits of lessons from real time-space consequences. Most my age have decided by fleeing the discussion if for no other reason than that the necessary pursuit of survival has overshadowed this pursuit – yet it still seems to pursue us to our graves.

I believe I will, poorly with words, address your concern. *But let's first reduce our discussion to giving an account for meanings in words.* This will lay a foundation for conceptualizing how you can know if you know anything.

And I believe when all is said, few will labor to understand my meanings. Such honor may be due to one more honorable than me. I don't demand that which I don't deserve unless in my wounded spirit I require such nourishment and rely on my own devices to seek it.

If ever the critical analyst subjects his or herself to my words, please tread slowly – for the souls of youth are on the playing field. Yet I submit to your fair critiques my inadequacy to think, to articulate, to transmit meanings with such clarity that all souls are satisfied and knowing – not even my own soul, for such is my perception of the limits of language which relies on the notion of useful sense in both everyday and critical thinking.

Onto the playspace of words, meanings and usages – no further delay!

Immediately the problem of presence and intent arises. The further from the source of the words (his or her presence), the fewer clues as to the intent of the author and therefore less probability of accurately knowing the meaning of the words for which the author intended (this includes the distance a person has from his own previously spoken or written words and thoughts). All of this would seem to lead us to a conclusion – the revealing of the improbability of certainty for any text and into a hyper view the autonomy of the reader/listener to assign meanings to words by dispelling not the existence of intent but the improbability of the listener/reader to ascertain the intent of the author and thereby diminishing the relevance of a pursuit of intended meanings by the author. Even in these few pages my intent has varied: serious, humorous, endearing, affirming, honoring, etc. Are the transitions obvious or even relevant?

We will not go into the discussion of the nature of signs only to say that meanings are wrapped not in objects alone or the signs alone. External objects have no exact internal meaning to humans (“no exact meaning” doesn’t imply without consequences but does imply without recognized universal consequences). Utterances (a sign) are but sound modulations of which only a few are audible to the human ear. Arrangements of stokes on a paper (another type of sign) provide infinite possibilities with only a very limited number of these revealing any culturally recognizable meaning. *Meaning has something to do with innate human nature, human relationships and culture and is constructed within a feedback system of probabilistic consequences in the regularities of language usages.*

What then is needed to account for meanings? I will seek to construct a means by which the human mind employs a process of generating meanings. The means is a process and to employ the process is a decision, and every meaning generated and refined through feedback is a decision. It is in uses that meanings are decided – and usages are decisions of rhetoric.

Of Wittgenstein & J. Derrida

To convince my saluted audience of my expert understanding of their works and the volumes of critiques they have spawned is as impossible as convincing honeybees that I understand why their choreographed dance resembles the strange world of quantum mechanics (Frank, 1997). But then again, they are dead – Wittgenstein, J. Derrida, not Amy or all bees.

I do not know the intent of your minds or the emotional and intellectual patterns within that allow your words to make sense to you and others with similar orientations while many without such philosophical predilections remain perplexed. That said, allow me to quote some of your words and attempt to explore them in a way that might enrich my soul and the readers (whoever they may be). This is not intended to be a thorough and efficient literature search but rather a selected few thoughts seemingly central to your accounting for meanings.



Let’s begin with Ludwig Wittgenstein’s first and concluding words from his Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus written in 1921. “Of what we cannot speak we must be silent.” Let’s back up and place this comment into a context. (Note: all italics within citations throughout this letter are by the author and/or translator. All bold letters are mine.)

1 The world is all that is the case.

1.1 The world is the totality of facts, not of things.

1.11 The world is determined by the facts, and by these being all the facts.

1.12 For totality of facts determines all that is the case and also that is not the case.

1.13 The facts in logical space are the world.

6.53 The right method in philosophy would be to say nothing except what can be said using sentences such as those of natural science – which of course has nothing to do with philosophy – and then, to show those wishing to say something metaphysical that they failed to give any meaning to certain signs in their sentences. Although they would not be satisfied – they would feel you weren’t teaching them any philosophy – *this* would be the only right method.

6.54 My sentences are illuminating in the following way: to understand me you must recognize my sentences – once you have climbed out through them, on them, over them – as senseless. (You must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after you have climbed up on it.) You must climb out through my sentences; then you will see the world correctly.

7. Of what we cannot speak we must be silent.

What was your intent Dr. Wittgenstein? What were the motives of your heart concerning your lack of silence – to explain, to conclude, to mystify, to humor? Of what can we speak? And if meanings are outside that realm of language, why should we speak of anything – even science, if certainty is a requisite for speaking? Silence then would be the privileged stance of meanings. You did not rest here but went on to speak more in your later work Philosophical Investigations. You have declared your intent in philosophy:

Philosophical Investigations 133. It is not our aim to refine or complete the system of rules for the use of our words in unheard-of ways. For the clarity that we are aiming at is indeed *complete* clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear. The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. – The one that gives **philosophy peace**, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question.

Such an honest expression of your aim – peace from torment through complete clarity. The sense of peace and its pursuit seems a pervasive underlying intent in your works. But how have you come to peace – with silence or does peace precede silence – or death?

Philosophical Investigations 203. **Language is a labyrinth** of paths. You approach from one side and know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and no longer know your way about.

Philosophical Investigations 309. What is your aim in philosophy? – To shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle.

Philosophical Investigations 432. Every sign *by itself* seems dead. *What* gives it life? – In use it is *alive*. Is life breathed into it there? Or **is the use its life**?

And so you have nudged closer to constructing a view of meanings. “Is the use its life?” Now your peace is intrinsically linked with usages.

So our conundrum continues. Words have meanings as they are used. But use may not yield believable accuracy to everyone’s experiential reality. Can meanings in words create a reality – or a deceptive reality? Is ultimate reality a reality – is it within the human grasp?

What does J. Derrida have to say on these matters? He goes for the jugular as if to clinically arrest all theory of knowledge and thereby all knowledge – maybe even his own shall we say non-theory of knowledge or theory of non-knowledge.

In the few lines just touched upon, **distrust of metaphysical presuppositions is already presented as the condition for an authentic “theory of knowledge,”** as if the project of a theory of knowledge, even when it has freed itself by the “critique” of such and such speculative system, did not belong at the outset to the history of metaphysics. Is not the idea of knowledge and the theory of knowledge in itself metaphysical? (Speech and Phenomena p. 5)

By what mean does he relegate a theory of knowledge to metaphysics and thereby to speculating about what we should remain silent? It is the means of presence.

This nonworldliness is not another worldliness, this ideality is not an existent that has fallen from the sky; its origin will always be the possible repetition of a productive act. In order that the possibility of this repetition may be open, ideally to infinity, one ideal form must assure this unity of the indefinite and the ideal: this is the present, or rather the presence of the living present. The ultimate form of ideality, ideality of ideality, that in which in the last instance one may anticipate or recall all repetition, is the living present, the self-presence of transcendental life. Presence has always been and will always, forever, be the form in which, we can say apodictically, the infinite diversity of contents is produced. The opposition between form and matter – which inaugurates metaphysics – finds in the concrete ideality of the living presence its ultimate and radical justification. (Speech and Phenomena p. 6)

And so we exist as present in the living presence – nothing more, nothing less. Our sense of repetition, of the infinite, of eternity, of ideality is all wrapped not in other worldliness and a time continuum with cause and effect and within the purview of metaphysics, but it is all wrapped in the ever living present which is ever transcendent – according to J. Derrida.

Ideality is the preservation or mastery of presence in repetition. **In its pure form, this presence is the presence of nothing existing in the world;** it is a correlation with the acts of repetition, themselves ideal. (Speech and Phenomena p. 10)

And so the line of existing is drawn by presence – the ideality of repetition. But first language must be toppled. For in language we construct cause and effect that begs for a metaphysical explanation.



It is at the price of this **war of language against itself** that the sense and question of its origin will be thinkable ... Language preserves the difference that preserves language. (Speech and Phenomena p. 14)

We shall have to grasp what happens inside language when the closure of metaphysics is announced.

With the difference between real presence and presence in representation as *Vorstellung*, a whole system of differences involved in language is implied in the same deconstruction: the difference between the represented and the representation in general... The presence-of-the-present is derived from repetition and not the reverse. (Speech and Phenomena p. 52)

But this ideality, which is but another name for the permanence of the same and the possibility of its repetition, does not exist in the world, and it does not come from another world; it depends entirely on the possibility of acts of repetition. It is constituted by this possibility. Its “being” is proportionate to the power of repetition; absolute ideality is the correlate of a possibility of indefinite repetition. (Speech and Phenomena p. 52)

Now let's return to hear Derrida extend these ideas of presence.

I have a **strange and unique certitude** that this universal form of presence, since it concerns no determined being, will not be affected by it. The relationship with *my death* (my disappearance in general) thus lurks in this determination of being as presence, ideality, the possibility of repetition. The possibility of the sign is this relationship with death. The determination and elimination of the sign in metaphysics is the dissimulation of this relationship with death, which yet produced signification.

The dominance of the now not only is integral to the system of the founding contrast established by metaphysics ... It therefore designates the locus of a problem in which phenomenology confronts every position centered on nonconsciousness that can approach what is ultimately at stake, what is at bottom decisive: **the concept of time**. (Speech and Phenomena p.63)

And so all knowledge and all theories of knowledge are thus rendered non-knowing in an absolute sense. Our language games and the phenomenological reduction of our senses are fraught with time as conceptualized by Aristotle (p.61) and others and not as the ideality of repetition.

In the openness of this question *we no longer know*. This does not mean that we know nothing but that we are beyond absolute knowledge (and its ethical, aesthetic, or religious system), approaching that on the basis of which its closure is announced and decided. Such a question will legitimately be understood as meaning nothing, as no longer belonging to the system of meaning. (Speech and Phenomena p. 103)

What then remains, if not to speak.

It remains, then for us to *speak*, to make our voices *resonate* throughout the corridors in order to make up for [*suppléer*] the breakup of presence. (Speech and Phenomena p. 104)

Still what would it mean to not “no longer know”? Can one not say with absolute certainty that to know at any level requires one to trust? Are all knowings hinged between trust and doubt with choice in between and delayed aftereffects to come? And what of Derrida’s curious admission “I have a strange and unique certitude...” Does a “strange and unique certitude” not speak of trust in the face of others’ doubts – are not one person’s paradoxes another’s contradictions? Can these knowings become clear without the reason of emotion? And then is there certitude – even to oneself over a lifetime?

Of Rhetoric – Regularities of Use

So where are we left? It seems we are left with the demise of metaphysics through a new perceiving of presence as the ideality of repetition and the demise of certainty of transferable meanings by the privatization of that presence. Where do we now go? “One might say: the axis of reference of our examination must be rotated, but about the fixed point of our real need.” (Philosophical Investigations,108).

It would seem the rotation from logic (is it logically reasonable?) and grammar (is it clearly stated?) to rhetoric (is it decisively stated?) may be the axis of reference we seek.

Newton Garver in his preface to Jacques Derrida’s Speech and Phenomena states,
... a vigorous discipline of rhetoric ... (is the) detailed study of the rules and **regularities** and presuppositions **of the use** of linguistic expressions in the circumstances in which they actually are used ... p xvii

Is there a means of constructing the “regularities and presuppositions of the use of linguistic expressions in the circumstances in which they are actually are used?” These regularities would address Wittgenstein’s question “... is the use its life?” What criteria for an attempt would have to be satisfied?

It is to this task I wish to explore with you. First the attempt must satisfy a culture-general critique. Whatever might emerge must be accurate when viewed from the use of language across all cultures.

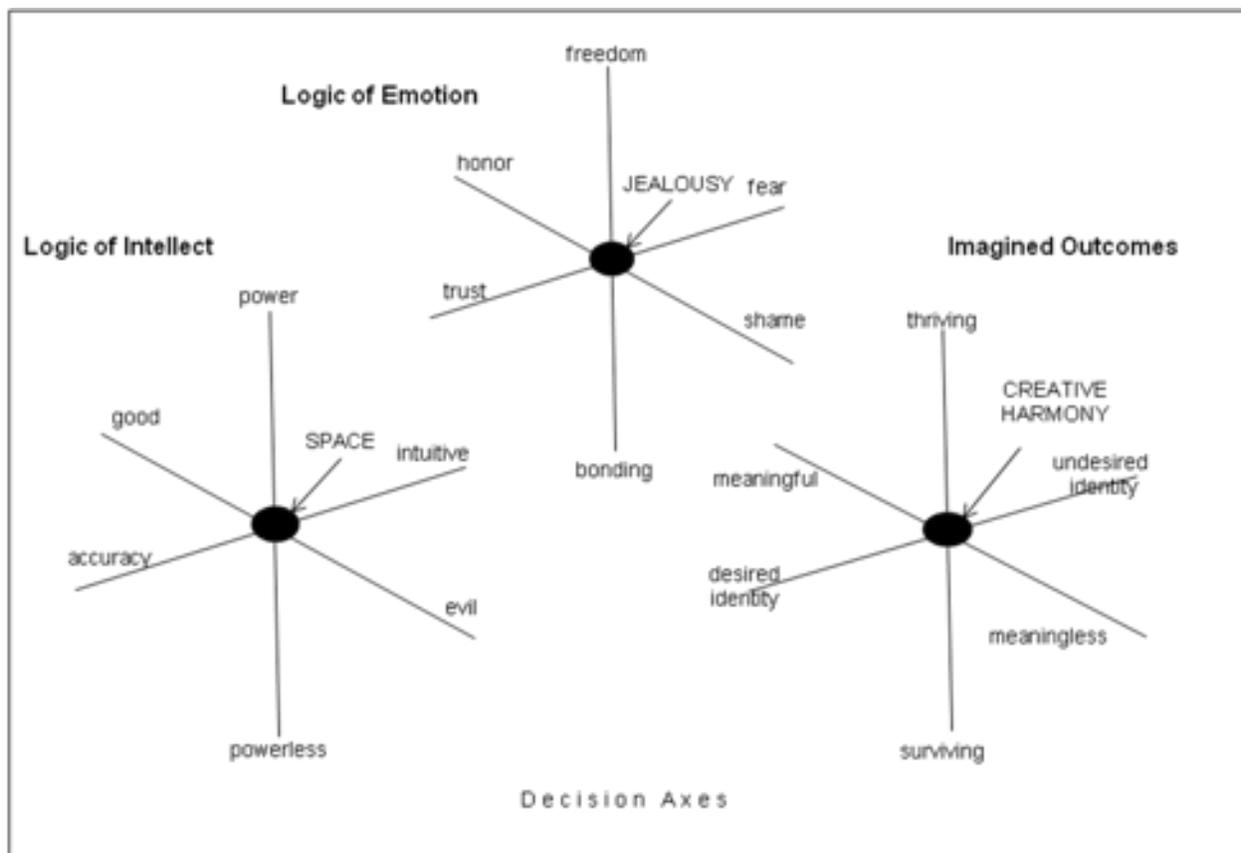
Let’s explore some regularities in use. These regularities can be visualized as three sets of axes in 3-d conceptual space of how and why (to what end) we logic - not the rules of logic. The first set we will call the logic of intellect. The second is the logic of emotion. And the last is the imagined outcomes of language

decisions. In all, decision making is a key aspect to usage – to rhetoric. We decide by some means and for some purpose how language is actually used and how language and life intersect.

These axes are put forth as culture-general axes. However, as one explores a specific culture, the wording of the axes may be changed to better reflect the cognition of the culture toward that particular axis. For instance, in some cultures the concepts I will put forward regarding power may better be talked of as benefit. However this does not invalidate the model for the power to bring benefit and the benefit of power are intricately linked. Again central tendencies, not absolute categories, are an essential part of the regularities of uses.

The axes of the logic of intellect are the axis of certainty, the axis of power and the axis of morality. The axes of emotion are the hierarchical axis, the liberty axis, and the relational axis. The axes of imagined outcomes are the identity axis, adaptive axis and the meanings axis. The three axes systems can be seen as overlapping and interacting to influence the regularities of rhetoric.

These regularities involve many elements we will not directly discuss. However, let’s briefly look at the axes of intellect and emotion and of imagined outcomes with probabilistic effects.



We all make decisions including the decisions in using language. Each decision has its own combination of logic to it. We use both our intellect and emotions in making decisions. Every thought is wrapped in intellect and emotion.



Some decisions seem to be based primarily on the logic of remaining consistent with patterns of certainty – a continuum of accuracy to intuitive. Other decisions have a type of inner logic that seeks to ensure a continuum of power to powerless – the logic of power. And there is the logic of goodness – a sense of good and evil.

The logic of certainty asks such questions as “Do the historical and scientific fact support such a decision?” “Based on factual data what decision should I make?” “What is a fact?” “What do I intuitively believe to be true?”

The logic of power undergirds such questions as, “How can I gain more power?” “How can I gain more pleasure while minimizing pain?” “Which of the choices promote my health – physical, spiritual, mental?” “What will be the results – harmful or helpful?”

The logic of morality addresses such questions as, “What is fair?” “Is this decision morally right?” “Is this in line with the moral principles of my culture or

some other moral system?” “What is evil?”

These three axes intersect with the concept of space – accurate space, powerful space and good space reflected apart from powerless, uncertain, evil space. It may seem a stretch to say that all intellect is involved with space, but what words aren’t linked to space at some level of abstraction?

Emotions are linked to all thought since we are always in some emotional state. The intensity of those emotions may vary drastically depending on the circumstances. Highly pleasurable and highly painful states tend to solidify certain thoughts more than others. For example, childhood abuse has a lasting impact on interpersonal relationship well into adult life, while other experience may carry less emotional weight.

Attempting to organize emotions is a precarious task since different cultures emphasize the emotional world linguistically differently. The concept of general tendencies may help us. Although Japanese culture seems to emotional revolve around the emotion “*amae*” which has no translatable equivalent in American English, the description of *amae* is perceivable to some extent by Americans.

As problematic as it may seem, I still wish to organize emotions around three axis: relational axis, hierarchical axis and liberty axis. The emotions of the relational axis are trust and fear. Hierarchical axis deals with honor and shame. And the liberty axis deals with the continuum of freedom and bonding.

So where does *amae* fit in this construct? Doi (1974:307) defines *amae* to mean “to depend and presume upon another’s benevolence.” “To depend” implies trust. “To presume upon another’s benevolence” implies a hierarchy associated with honor and goodness and giving power and freedom to another. Therefore I would plot the emotion of *amae* in the quadrant of accurate-trust, good-honor, and power-freedom.

And what of jealousy? One can be jealous *for* or jealous *of* another. Jealous *for* involves a sense of honoring, trusting and freeing while jealous *of* involves a sense of bondage, fear and shame.

We make decisions (internal and external) with an imagined probabilistic cause and effect outcome in mind (to varying degrees of clarity). Those ends can be described by three axes of imagined outcomes: identity, meanings and adaptation.

Each person and each culture has significant life events that help mold their thinking and decision making. Economic depression, awards, war, natural disasters, abuse, achievements, etc. all impact our reason, emotions and behavior. The probabilistic cause and effect feedback loop of pain and pleasure in the short and long term is a cementing stamp within culture.

Overlapping the axes of emotion and intellect and imagined outcomes, one has creatively harmonious jealous space as a central construct of rhetoric.



Am I stating this as if three visual axes could be extracted from the mind if the mind could be opened (which it cannot)? Of course not. I am suggesting that the workings of the mind, the rhetoric of meanings and knowings (the dynamic flow of living words in use), can be conceptualized using the mental imaginary of geometrical axes, interloping and interacting with one another and readjusting as would a gyroscope to the probabilistic outcomes enacted.

Much more could be said of each axis. But I believe the only apologetic for this set of regularities would be an analysis of some of the work of literature through the ages. Are these axes evident in the rhetoric or not?

Let's first begin the analysis with Wittgenstein and J. Derrida. Below are selected passages from each. It would seem that some, though not all, of the axes would be apparent in any passage and that no passage would be unexplained by this constructed system of regularities for the use of language.

I have indulged in the most random act I can without the mathematics of random numbers. I have opened *Philosophical Investigations* and typed the following without first sorting through the book to find a passage that best illustrates my point.

Philosophical Investigations 476-479.

476. We should distinguish between the object of fear and the cause of fear.

Thus a face which inspires fear or delight (the object of fear or delight), is not on that account its cause, but – one might say – its target.

477. “Why do you believe that you will burn yourself on the hot-plate?” – Have you reasons for this belief; and do you need reasons?

478. What kind of reason have I to assume that my finger will feel a resistance when it touches the table? What kind of reason to believe that it will hurt if this pencil pierces my hand? – When I ask this, a hundred reasons present themselves, each drowning the voice of the others. “But I have experienced it myself innumerable times, and as often heard of similar experiences; if it were not so, it would: etc.”

479. The question: “On what grounds do you believe this? Might mean: “From what you are now deducing it (have you just deduced it)?” But it might also mean: “What grounds can you produce for this assumption on thinking it over?”

It is not the purpose of this critique to analyze what Wittgenstein is saying but rather upon what rules he is employing in the uses of his words. It would seem that in this particular passage he is reasoning primarily along the relational axis of emotional logic (trust and fear), the intellectual logical axis of certainty (accuracy

and inaccuracy) as well as the imagined outcome axis of meaning (meaningless and meaningful). The pursuit of certainty is inherent in this philosophical discourse. An exact parsing of “Why do you believe” is at the intentional heart of the passages. The content of the passage deals with fear and believing. In a central tendency way of viewing this, believing can be viewed as an outcome of trust – trusting enough to believe. Within this passage is the pursuit of meanings (“But it might also mean ...”) – or the flight from a meaningless existence.

“This shows nothing,” you might say. And does not even that complaint surrender to the logic of accuracy, trust and meanings? Or rather can we not reframe your objection to say, “This logic is *inaccurate*, and it shows nothing *trustworthy* in the pursuit of *meanings* wrapped within the labyrinth of the war of language against itself.” On to Derrida.

In searching for a passage from Derrida, I employed a less random means. I restricted myself to Speech and Phenomena and exclude any passage in which Derrida quoted Husserl. A passage I found to meet this criteria is below.

If the possibility of my disappearance in general must somehow be experienced in order for a relationship with presence in general to be instituted, we can no longer say that the experience of the possibility of my absolute disappearance (my death) affects me, occurs to an *I am*, and modifies a subject. The *I am*, being experienced only as an *I am present*, itself presupposes the relationship with presence in general, with being present. The appearing of the I to itself in the *I am* is thus originally a relation with its own possible disappearance. Therefore, *I am* originally means *I am mortal*. *I am immortal* is an impossible proposition. We can even go further: as a linguistic statement “I am he who am” is the admission of a mortal. The move which leads from the *I am* to the determination of my being as *res cognitans* (thus, as an immortality) is a move by which the origin of presence and ideality is concealed in the very presence and ideality it makes possible. P. 54.

Again our attempt is not to understand what is being said but what regularities of use are being employed. The logic of intellect appeals to the human sense through certainty and power. Derrida asks us to enter his logic as he accurately describes the “possibility of my absolute disappearance (my death)”. This certainty pursuit leads us into the logic of power – the discussion of death, mortality and immortality. Power is not just a subject matter (as the subject of discussing life and death), it is a logic that leads us to greater trust in his accurate intellectual reasoning. Also the emotional logic of trust is pursued. But for what ends? In this passage the imagined outcome of intellectual and emotional logic is the ends of relational identity - the *I am* in relationship to presence.

A mere finding of the axes within philosophical accounts hardly justifies a generalized trust that these axes can be found within all language games in all cultures. So let’s expand the pursuit of accurate regularities of rhetoric to other works of literature.

Here’s a passage written in the first century by Paul, a follower of Jesus. Paul was raised in a bi-cultural context. His family and religious heritage was Jewish, his educational training employed the methods of the Greeks and his citizenship was Roman.

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

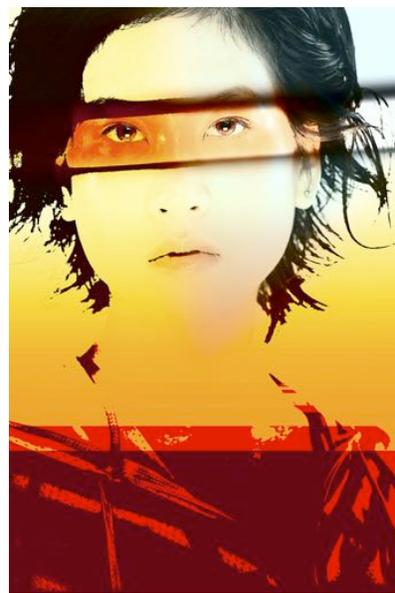
Obviously, this is a religious writing. If the axes of rhetoric in the constructed model are accurate, they should transcend religious writings as well. The intellectual logic of morality is everywhere in this passage. The appeal to good and evil is evident. This appeal leads into the logic of power for the benefits of morality are put forth as sensible. Sowing yields a reward – a powerful or powerless benefit. Certainty is also an intellectual axis within the passage. Deception is to be avoided. To reason accurately is to avoid deception. The emotional axis of hierarchy (honor or pride and shame) is expressed in the appeal for self-pride through self-comparison rather than other comparison. The axis of liberty is contained in such wordage as “caught” and “burdens”. Trust is inherent in Paul’s instruction “Anyone who receives instruction.” The act of voluntary receiving is an act of trust. The imagined outcomes of this passage are identity, meaning and adaptation. The identities of “brothers”, “spiritual”, and “family of believers” are outcomes to be negotiated. Adaptation to survive and thrive in life is conditioned on not being deceived and being morally faithful. And meanings are inherent in a broader view of life beyond physical existence – “eternal life” carried with it the possibility of eternal meanings. And so in this short passage Paul used all the axes of rhetoric.

Is a regularity forming? Within the writings of Wittgenstein, an early 20th century Austrian philosopher, Derrida, a late 20th century French philosopher, and Paul, a first century bi-cultural religious leader, we can see the regularities of these axes at play within the language game. Let’s turn eastward and to poetry.

Ascending a Tower at a Town in Hopei

A small village upon the Fu Cliff
 Travellers’ bower among cloud-mists.
 Tall city to view the sundown.
 Distant water’s reach reflects fume-green hills.
 Lights on banks: alone boat at anchor.
 Fisherman’s homes: evening birds return.
 Vast loneliness: sky-earth dusks.
 Mind and wide river at leisure.

Wang Wei (Yip translation)



I am not capable of reading Chinese (nor French or German) so my comments pertain to the translated work at the risk that there are rhetorical axes untranslatable into English that are functioning within this language usages.

In the above poem the logic of certainty is employed by creating images of space – “small”, “tall”, “distant” “vast”. The relational logic of trust and fear come to play as “mind and wide river at leisure” find a harmony conducive to each. And that leisure reveals an imagined outcome of adaptation that is thriving within the balance of humankind and nature.

Do these axes describe the regularities of rhetoric? Are they culture-general axes? What would it take to convince you – to go beyond all reasonable doubt and to use a rhetoric which was self-validating to persuade you to trust the sense of it? Should we analyze (intellectual certainty) twenty or thousand passages from twenty or thousand cultures, would the force (intellectual power) of such evidence appeal to your sense of reasonableness (emotional trust) to such a degree as to freely embrace (emotional liberty) its conclusion – regularities of rhetoric? Would you then seek to honor me (emotional hierarchy) with your trust or shame me with disgust for my insufficient accuracy? Would you question my motives (logic of morality) for writing to you or to my daughter or to dead men? Would you imagine my writings to be a vain attempt to control my sense of *meaning* by striving for an *identity* within society which would bring a *thriving* profit to my bank account? Will you privilege doubt or trust as you proceed and on what basis?

Can I truly comprehend all these logics and imagined outcomes simultaneously in order to regulate their usages in the present? I think not. And for this very admission one is led back through the labyrinth of language to the question of "If these axes are accurate, how can these things be? Are they innate to the human mind?" Further are these axes applicable to non-written languages - the languages of tones, eye winks, music, etc. It is sensible to me that the axes apply. Is it sensible to you?

A Signature and Closing

It is time to sign my name to this event. Derrida did it with a J. I wish to sign it Ralph C. Ennis. For C. has significance to me and somewhat to Amy and not to most others without the unwarranted honor of research not demanded by such a one as me. And I close with an indulgence of mine – poetry.

Knowing

Knowing what to know
is survival

Knowing how to know
is education

Knowing I don't know
is humility

Knowing not to know
is fear

Knowing when to know
is discretion

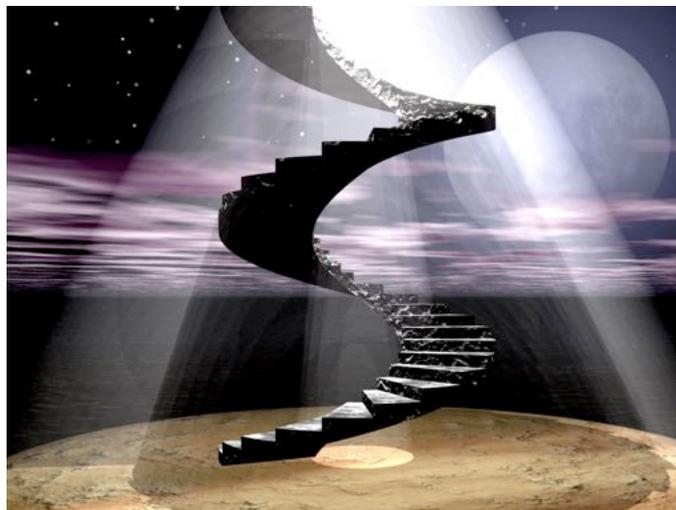
Knowing that I know
is wisdom

Knowing that I'm known
is powerful

Knowing to be known
is vanity.

Knowing meanings
 meaningful knowings
 living meaningful knowings
 knowing the difference
 knowing the sameness
 such is the swirl.

A swirl of
 creatively
 harmonious
 jealous
 space ...
 of useful knowings.



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