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3 Philosophy as Articulation

Austin and Deleuze on Conceptual Analysis

Richard Eldridge and Tamsin Lorraine

I

Whether doing thought experiments from their armchairs, consulting intuitions, or investigating possible worlds, contemporary philosophers often describe what they do as *conceptual analysis*. This seems reasonable enough, since philosophy is often concerned with highly general cognitive claims and since the use of experimental and archival data is not as central as it is in the natural and social sciences. The distinctive contribution of the philosopher beyond the special sciences seems to involve an effort to make plausible or compelling a way of looking at things that can be expressed in a highly general, conceptual claim: the essence of matter is extension; the right thing to do is whatever will produce the most net good consequences; preferences are transitive; art is embodied meaning, and so on. Claims like these are debated among philosophers, tested by reference to cases (often imaginary ones), and revised, refined, and tested for coherence with other claims, both general conceptual ones and more obviously empirical ones. If one wants a name for these activities, *conceptual analysis* seems about as good a candidate as there could be.

But are we clear either about what concepts are, about how they come about, or about what, exactly, the activity of analyzing them is? In 1903, near the dawn of analytic philosophy, G.E. Moore first formulated a version of what has come to be known as the paradox of analysis.¹ Consider a putative result of conceptual analysis expressed in a claim of the form "Concept-word or phrase *F* is (essentially, necessarily) concept-word or phrase *G*." [$\Box(x) (Fx \equiv Gx)$]. Any object correctly characterized by concept-word or phrase *F* is (essentially, necessarily) an object correctly characterized by concept-word or phrase *G*. Alternatively, *F* and *G* are not synonymous; in this latter case, the conceptual claim that all *F*s are *G*s seems, at best, accidentally true or true as things happen to be, not necessarily true. As a claim about necessary relations among concepts (or about relations between essences) it seems false. Hence it seems difficult to formulate the results of conceptual analysis in a way that is both informative and true.

One way to block this result is to appeal to Frege's distinction between sense and reference.² Consider the expressions "the sum of 19 and 8" and "the cube of 3." These two expressions mean different things or have different sense.³ (A child who had learned to add but not to multiply might fully understand the first but fail to understand the second.) Yet they have the same referent—the number 27—and necessarily so. Perhaps, then, the philosophical analysis of concepts might be comparable to the activity of mathematical proof in yielding results (necessary truths about concepts) involving same referent, different sense. By carefully inspecting, as it were, the senses of two different concept words (an activity analogous to mathematical proof in its abstraction from particular data), the philosopher as analyst of concepts might arrive at results that are all at once true, informative, and necessary.

Yet while this is an attractive suggestion, it also faces considerable difficulties. First, in mathematics there are clear, shared standards for counting a sequence of mathematical statements as a proof. Mathematicians know how to check for failures of valid argumentation, involving unconsidered possibilities and the like. It is not clear that there are similar clear, shared standards for successful conceptual analysis. Second, as Frege frankly holds, thinking of mathematical truth as he does involves a commitment to senses (and numbers) as Platonic entities, standing eternally in relations to one another independently of human practice. This may seem, on the face of it, plausible enough for numbers and shapes, say. Hasn't it always been true that $3 \text{ plus } 8 = 11$? But one may also wonder: were there (always already) those relations *among numbers as abstract objects*, over and above the fact that a certain pile of eleven acorns is exactly eight acorns bigger than a pile with only three, and so on for similar cases?⁴ We adopt " $3 + 8 = 11$ " as a convenient norm of representation that applies to a very wide range of objective facts. But is there a matter of eternal mathematical fact over and above the many empirical facts (and norms of adding) that are thus representable? Third, even if we accept a Platonist construal of mathematical objects, it seems yet more strained to suppose that, say, in the Precambrian Era, four billion years ago before there was any life on earth, the *sense* (of the concept-word) *squirrel* was already necessarily both contained in that of *mammal* and waiting around to refer to the furry nut-gatherers who haunt our temperate parks and gardens. And then it seems yet more strained to hold that something like this is true of the interesting concepts that stand in need of philosophical analysis precisely insofar as they are essentially related to various human practices: *justice*, *courage*, *art*, *decency*, *belief*, and so on.⁵

These difficulties—lack of standards comparable to those in mathematics for determining necessary truths, alternatives to mathematical Platonism, and complex, non-natural kind concepts as the natural foci of philosophical analysis—likewise trouble more empiricist approaches to the analysis of

concepts as essentially psychological entities in the mind or brain. While this latter approach is free of worries about the nature and existence of abstract objects, it also faces difficulties in construing full-blooded necessity with respect to interesting concepts, as well as worries about how to identify concepts 'in' either the mind or brain, as entities that underlie and determine the correct uses of concept-words. How could standards of correctness of use and necessary relations of implication be established by merely empirically existing entities with roles governed, at best, by empirical laws?⁶

Perhaps, then, rather than thinking of concepts as some sorts of fixed entities (Platonistic or psychological) whose natures and relations are open to some kind of 'inspection,' it would be apt and useful to consider concepts as *essentially* the meanings of concept-words *as those words have complex, sometimes changing, and sometimes contested uses in practice*. This would amount to thinking of the nature of concepts as determined by practice (which might well have its own forms of reasonableness, groundings, and responsiveness to reality in some cases), rather than vice versa, and thinking of concepts in this way would yield a significantly different picture of conceptual analysis as itself essentially practice-directed. What might conceptual analysis then look like?

II

In this view of conceptual analysis, the increasingly blurry line between analyzing words as they have been used in practice and articulating new uses of those words in the midst of living suggests that a notion of conceptual articulation may be more appropriate. Plausibly, philosophers sensitive to the difficulties we have just surveyed do not simply analyze how words are used; they also put those words into use in ways they hope will affect our perspectives and further thinking.

In fact, the idea that conceptual analysis is essentially practice-directed, verging upon a practice of conceptual articulation and even conceptual creation, was significantly developed in the middle third of the twentieth century, primarily by Austin, Wittgenstein, and Ryle, before the developments of Quinean naturalism, Chomskyan psychologism, and Kripkean essentialism, and then again by Deleuze in the latter part of the twentieth century. Within the Anglo-American tradition, however, the relevant understandings of conceptual analysis as essentially practice-directed, together with the reasons for them and the sorts of results such a practice might yield, have been largely forgotten or ignored, largely under the pressures of naturalism, psychologism, and essentialism. Likewise, under the pressures of historicism, it is often not recognized within the Continental European tradition that the notion of philosophy as an activity of conceptual creation put forward by Deleuze is in some ways akin to conceptual analysis in the styles of Austin and Wittgenstein. Hence, comparing and elaborating different developments

of conceptual analysis as essentially practice-directed not only can uncover surprising affinities and points of significant internal debate within otherwise suppressed traditions, but also can potentially reinvigorate conceptual analysis itself and bring two otherwise distinct lines of development into more intimate and productive relation to one another.

III

Among developers of conceptual analysis within the Anglo-American tradition, Austin has been particularly ignored, neglected not only in the wake of the developments of essentialism and psychologism, but also in virtue of falling under the shadow of Wittgenstein. Yet Austin's arguments, while in some respects parallel to Wittgenstein's, are frequently compact, anti-gnomic, and forward-looking toward results in ways that Wittgenstein's are not.

Austin's earliest published essay, his 1939 "Are There *A Priori* Concepts?" inaugurates both his attacks on concepts-as-entities and his practice-oriented understandings of concepts and conceptual analysis. Pointedly, Austin criticizes "the nonsense into which we are led through the facile use of the word 'concept,' in particular the nonsense of treating a concept "as an *article of property*, a pretty straightforward piece of goods, which comes into my 'possession,' if at all in some definite enough manner and at some definite enough moment," so that "whether I do possess it or not is, apparently, ascertained simply by making an inventory of the 'furniture' of my mind."⁷ The reasons why this is nonsense are, first, that we possess no direct intellectual, intuitive, or introspective access to concepts as entities (Platonic or psychological). The only thing that can show whether anyone 'possesses' a concept is whether that person consistently and reliably uses a concept-word within a roughly identifiable and bounded practice of words-in-uses. Or as Austin puts it, "It seems clear, then, that to ask 'whether we possess a certain concept' is the same as to ask whether a certain word—or rather, sentences in which it occurs—has any meaning," which question is, Austin adds, "likely to be ambiguous" and at least in some cases not to admit of a simple and straightforward yes/no answer.⁸ Second, the sentences in question, the uses of which may establish mastery of a concept word and thus possession of a concept, are themselves sentences that are available and intelligible within an ordinary, roughly and indefinitely bounded common linguistic practice. "Does *he*, or do *they*, understand this word?" . . . means, speaking roughly, ['does *he*, or do *they*] use [it] as we, or as most Englishmen, or as some other assignable persons use [it?].'⁹ Hence, trafficking in concepts, in the only sense we can give to this notion, involves participating in a roughly and indefinitely bounded practical life with other language users.

When we turn our attentions to actual uses of words, then what we find is a range of phenomena that do not fall neatly under the model of

concept-as-entity together with an extension. First, there is the conceptual priority of sentence meaning over word meaning, in the sense that one must accomplish a range of entire linguistic acts—calling attention to, exclaiming, asserting, laughing at, wondering whether, and so on—before one is properly creditable with mastery of concept-words.¹⁰ Second, the fact that all sentences are in some rough sense “about things” (in the broadest and most indeterminate possible sense of “thing”) does not imply that every individual word denotes *a thing*.¹¹ Prepositions, adverbs, logical connectives, and so on are best conceived of not as names at all (and so not names of functions), but rather as words that have systematic roles in contributing to the meanings of the complete sentences in which they occur. Even for words that are plausibly conceived of as (general) names—that is, for one-place predicate expressions—it is a mistake to suppose that there is for each one a single referent or extension, sharply bounded in the same way from case to case. There is, Austin observes, “no reason whatever to accept” the principle “*unum nomen unum nominatum*. . . . Why, if ‘one identical’ word is used, *must* there be ‘one identical object’ which it denotes? Why should it not be the whole function of a word to denote many things? [Footnote: Many *similar* things, on a plausible view: but other views might be held].”¹²

In fact, Austin goes on, in “The Meaning of a Word” (1940), to analyze seven different varieties of “obvious cases where the reasons for ‘calling *different* sorts of things by the same name’ are not to be dismissed lightly as ‘similarity.’”¹³ These seven varieties of cases of uses, in which correct applications of concept words are *not* bounded by any single, obvious, simple, and univocal rule, are:¹⁴

1. paronymous uses: e.g., “healthy body” (a “nuclear sense”) vs. “healthy food” (productive of a healthy body) vs. “healthy glow” (resulting from a healthy body); the body, food, and glow are not in any single, obvious way alike.
2. analogous uses: e.g., “foot of a mountain,” “foot of a page.”
3. nontransitive uses: e.g., Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* and Mozart’s *Requiem* are both profound, and so are Mozart’s *Requiem* and Beethoven’s Sonata #8 (“Pathetique”), but the Bach and the Beethoven are not in any obvious way like one another.
4. uses of terms with multiple, independent criteria: e.g., “fascism,” “cynicism.”
5. determinates of determinables: e.g., “ultramarine blue” and “indigo blue” are both blue, but otherwise quite different; more radically, “pleasure in solving quadratic equations” and “pleasure in drinking Belgian beer” are both pleasures but otherwise unlike.
6. quality/object ambiguities: “love” (“A’s love for B,” “my love”), “youth” (“early in a developmental history” vs. “the youths”).
7. activity-related terms: “cricket bat,” “cricket umpire,” “cricket pitch” (two senses), “cricket sweater.”

Given such varieties of uses of single terms, where no clear, single rule for application is evident, it is reasonable to conclude, as Austin does, that "An *actual* language has few, if any explicit conventions, no sharp limits to the spheres of operations of rules, no rigid separation of what is syntactical and what semantical."¹⁵ About any particular use of any particular word in a particular circumstance, it is possible to ask reasonably for clarification. Or, as Austin puts it, we may ask, "What-is-the-meaning-of (the word) 'rat'?" either in this case (rodent vs. informer) or with a specific, more general range of cases or field of comparisons in view. But it is nonsense to ask, "What is the-meaning-of-the-word-'rat'?" as though the expression containing dashes were the name of a fixed, univocal, and normatively dispositive substantive lying somehow behind our motley of uses.¹⁶

The consequences of this view about the multiplicity and context- and comparison- sensitivity of criteria for the correct usage of many terms are immediate and powerful. Conceptual analysis cannot be any sort of inspection (intellectual, intuitive, etc.) of a fixed 'meaning-body' behind or beyond usage. We should instead pay attention to the complex criteria and commitments by which our usages are normatively governed, in multiple ways, within our courses of practical responsiveness to the objects and phenomena of our world. Clarification of cloudy or uncertain uses of concept-words is likely to be piecemeal and field-of-comparison specific. "If we rush up for a demand with a definition in the simple manner of Plato or many other philosophers, if we use the rigid dichotomy 'same meaning, different meaning,' or 'What *x* means,' as distinguished from 'the things which are *x*,' we shall simply make hashes of things."¹⁷

Despite, however, his arguments and warnings against a certain picture of conceptual analysis, Austin nonetheless himself clearly practices a form of it. He devotes himself to "examining what we should say when,"¹⁸ including both actual and "imagined cases,"¹⁹ with the aim, for example, of undoing significant confusions about freedom and responsibility.²⁰ At the same time, in practicing his form of conceptual analysis, Austin concedes that sometimes "people's usages do vary, and we do talk loosely, and we do say different things apparently indifferently,"²¹ and that "it cannot be expected that all examples will appeal equally to all hearers."²² Moreover, ordinary usage, even when it is relatively clear and shared, is not sacrosanct. "It *equally* will not do, having discovered the facts about 'ordinary usage' *to rest content* with that, as though there were nothing more to be discussed and discovered. There may be plenty which might happen and does happen which would need new and better language to describe it."²³ Yet Austin is practicing a form of conceptual analysis, not doing empirical linguistics in the sense of simply tabulating (sometimes loose, sometimes divergent) usages. What exactly then is Austin doing, when he is displaying cases in which we would clearly call one thing an accident and another a mistake, one thing a case of succumbing to temptation and another quite different thing a case of losing control of oneself?²⁴

This is not an easy question to answer. But one helpful suggestion, made by Stanley Bates and Ted Cohen, following up on work by Stanley Cavell, is that Austin, along with anyone who enters a claim about *what we say when*, is speaking "with a universal voice," in Kant's sense of this phrase in *The Critique of the Power of Judgment*.²⁵ According to Kant, when someone calls something beautiful, then that person does not postulate or predict the agreement of others, but rather demands and ascribes it.²⁶ Such judgments are, Kant later adds, arguable by reference to reasons but not disputable by means of proofs or other decisive evidence.²⁷ One might say that the judgment that something is beautiful expresses a sense of having experienced something in a certain way, as a certain kind of achievement of distinctively pleasurable intelligibility, coupled with a sense that it must be so experienced, that others must experience it likewise (if they pay attention to it in the right way).

Adapted, then, to the judgment of the ordinary language philosopher about *what we say when*, the thought is that making such a claim is both enabling others to hear and say likewise and demanding that they do so.²⁸ Such a claim can always fail, just as a critic's claims directed at the enabling of aesthetic experience can fail or be repudiated. (Perhaps the critic has paid attention in the wrong way, or perhaps the work is simply inaccessible to some others.) But such failures do not impugn the reasonableness of the procedure, which sometimes leads to success in the form, in the case of claims about *what we say when*, of felt satisfaction and rightness in what one, along with others, clearly and confidently says and means.

This picture of the possible achievement arrived at via claims about *what we say when* thus implies that, prior to such achievements, one, along with others, may have been judging and speaking in a kind of incoherence, in a fugue state of half-meaning or not fully meaning what one had said or thought, as though one were a living victim of cliché and inattentiveness. Hence the claim of the ordinary language philosopher as analyzer of concepts is directed at furthering a kind of awakening to one's own judgments, thoughts, and experiences, directed toward a kind of heightened, more fluent and apt responsiveness to the things of one's world. Both awakening and heightened fluency and responsiveness can be shared with others with whom one shares a language and world, and, in following the ordinary language philosopher's claim with their own ears and minds, its hearers or readers may arrive at such shared fluency and responsiveness for themselves. Or, of course, they may not. But what is at stake in the ordinary language philosopher's entering of a claim about *what we say when* is the achievement of a kind of heightened life as a responsive subject in relation to things, under conditions in which, always, that life is liable to become sterile and unthinking. Since such threats are permanent, philosophy is centrally less a body of theory than it is centrally an ongoing critical activity in the service of life.

IV

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze, with Guattari, approvingly states with respect to Austin's pragmatic approach to language that "the meaning and syntax of language can no longer be defined independently of the speech acts they presuppose."²⁹ Deleuze and Guattari's theory of language will ultimately challenge traditional notions of the speaking subject by considering speech acts as effects of what they call "collective assemblages of enunciation"—ways of meaning-making with implicit rules that change over time—rather than of the particular subjects making the speech acts.³⁰ Furthermore, they characterize philosophy as a practice that, along with creating concepts, creates what they call "conceptual personae" in defiance of the personal identities of embodied philosophers.³¹ Nevertheless, they, like Austin, consider philosophy to be a critical activity that can help us to achieve a heightened response to life.³²

According to Deleuze, thinking is part of life; a philosophy that would freeze thinking into propositions that it proclaims to be timelessly true is a philosophy that becomes increasingly out of step with the need to make sense of the life in which we are immersed. Just as life cannot be reduced to the forms we perceive at a given moment, so the wisdom philosophy seeks cannot be reduced to propositions that fixate moments of thinking. Life is always more than what is manifest to our conscious awareness—it is also the intensities that are moving what is manifest into new forms, the imperceptible forces insisting in the most fleeting moment that are even now moving whatever is toward something else.

To counter the notion of a philosophical concept as a word or term with a fixed meaning that can be cashed out in a set of propositions, Deleuze posits it as an event.³³ Like any word, a concept may be attributable to specific states of affairs, but the sense of the concept is always in excess of any given state of affairs; not only are there always other states of affairs to which it may also apply, but the meanings of the concept will reverberate differently in keeping with shifts in the internal relations of its components and its relations to other concepts. Deleuze characterizes concepts in a way that not only attempts to shake us out of the ruts of conventional movements of thought, but also conceives them as integrally related to and yet in excess of the empirical movements of thinking that actualize them.

Deleuze's conception of the time-image that appears in modern cinema presents some aspects of what he thinks philosophical thinking can do. While the perspective of the camera can be taken up by the spectator as a gaze with which the spectator can identify, cinema is also capable of going beyond any one gaze and, by virtue of deliberately playing with the "irrational cuts" made possible by film, evoking a multiplicity of perspectives that cannot be assimilated into one rational whole. Cinema is an art form that can access what Deleuze calls the virtual—what we might here describe as the transcendental field of virtual relations conditioning what actually

appears—by going beyond any one perspective in order to intimate a whole of multiple perspectives that can no longer be contained within one totalizable whole.³⁴

While the cinematic time-image intimates the intensities that haunt the specific moment in space and time rendered by the cinematic shot, philosophy deliberately confronts the transcendental field of infinite meaning. A philosopher creates a novel perspective from a plane of immanence—a pre-philosophical plane constituting a problem to which thought responds by breaking out of the constraints of common sense perception and opinion.³⁵ This perspective travels from the specific lived experiences of the philosopher back up to a realm of meaning unfettered by the common and by the good sense of a philosopher and her personal identity. The philosopher's concept, by virtue of its access to a stratigraphic time in which all words are connected to all other words, taps resonances, echoes, and intensities that can incite novel trajectories of meaning out of the transcendental field of sense that conditions specific acts of meaning.

Working with sense—paying attention to the components of meaning that make up a particular concept, playing with those components until the concept attains a kind of fullness—a self-referential quality that stabilizes it out of a sea of possible meanings—allows one to move away from a particular state of affairs in order to make generalizations that apply to more than that one state of affairs without losing touch with the actual situation out of which it emerged. A philosophical concept attempts to get at meanings that can be applied to more than one situation, meanings haunted by implicit trajectories that could unfold in more than one way. It is thus an event rather than a representation of a state of affairs, a constellation of meanings that actualize some rather than others of the virtual relations of a transcendental field of sense. It entails tendencies toward further movements of thought that may or may not actually unfold, and it is a configuration of meaning that can be ascribed to multiple states of affairs.

A philosopher in doing philosophy breaks from her personal identity and creates perspectives on a plane of immanence drawn from her pragmatic situation—the situation she lives as an embodied individual immersed in the life of a specific social field. The meaning of words plays out against a transcendental field of sense where the meaning of particular sentences stabilizes in the context of the referents and speakers of pragmatic situations. That meaning, however, could always have played out otherwise with different inflections, thus actualizing other nuances in connection with the discursive and non-discursive practices informing the social field from which those meanings emerge. A plane of immanence emerges with the creation of concepts that condense components of thought and link up to other concepts. The self-referential connections that form within and between concepts constitute new forms of meaning that allow one to leave behind the constraints of a conventional perspective on life and yet to stabilize meaning out of the chaotic possibilities of sense.

If language can never completely capture truth in relation to life it is because truth unfolds in time. And time entails the continual unfolding of the new, as well as the repetition of patterns familiar to us due to our experience with the past. If we consider the truth of this moment here and now—this moment of life that I am living—we know that we can never do it justice. Any articulation of this moment must fail because this moment is always unfolding into the next and, even if we can detect patterns that we can recognize as equally true of the past as of the present, those patterns can never capture the truth of this moment.

According to Henri Bergson, who is an important influence in Deleuze's work, in order for conscious perception to be that of a living organism able to act in ways that will ensure its survival, it must suppress the greater part of the complicated enmeshment of material life in order to discern what is of practical interest from the perspective of a particular organism with particular needs. In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson considers the relationship of material objects to our perceptions of them; he conceives a material object apart from our perception of that object as an image among a universe of images, all of which are material points without perspective that implicate and impact one another. He contrasts "the image which I call a material object" to the represented image that is a conscious perception of that material object: "That which distinguishes it as a present image, as an objective reality, from a represented image is the necessity which obliges it to act through every one of its points upon all the points of all other images, to transmit the whole of what it receives, to oppose to every action an equal and contrary reaction, to be, in short, merely a road by which pass, in every direction, the modifications propagated throughout the immensity of the universe."³⁶ As Alia Al-Saji puts it, such "an unperceived and unperceiving point *virtually* implies the rest of the dynamic and interpenetrating universe in its complexity and richness, with its infinite and impossible relations. Its vision is a non-selective and indifferent kind, which registers everything but discerns nothing."³⁷ A conscious perspective requires "a process that limits and diminishes the virtual whole. It is in this way that representation and consciousness come about."³⁸

The futility of attempting to capture life with a static image is apparent when one stares at a photograph of a loved one who has passed away. Words likewise inevitably fail to capture the living presence of one who is no longer with us. What "truth" about a loved one refuses distillation into a form we can grasp even when she or he is gone? It is toward art that we may look to capture something of the truth of concrete forms of life. Deleuze's books on Francis Bacon, Marcel Proust, and cinema develop an intriguing understanding of this kind of aesthetic truth that is an illuminating counterpart to Deleuze's conception of philosophy as a thought form that entails creating concepts.

If we consider Bergson's comparison of a material image to the represented image of conscious perception, we can see that anything that we can

call a perspective is in a sense haunted by interpenetrating influences that always exceed those that emerge in relation to the needs of a particular organism. The force of these influences constitutes a kind of ontological unconscious that is the virtual reality inflecting any actualized present.

In his book on the painter Francis Bacon, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, Deleuze distinguishes between sensation and perception; sensation refers to a kind of experience that is imperceptible, since it refers to forces impinging on unreflective awareness (and also entailing our own impingement on what's around us) that affect how we experience the world but that lie just beyond the edges of what we can pin down in perceptions stable enough to describe.³⁹ According to Deleuze, art composes monuments of sensation that intimate a visceral becoming-other that haunts our conscious awareness without becoming overtly manifest.⁴⁰

In *The Logic of Sensation*, Deleuze describes how Bacon talks about capturing a likeness in a portrait that goes beyond appearance and evokes the intensity of the real; instead of doing portraits that rest with the form of a particular human being as she is present in appearance at a given point in time, Bacon hints at the forces making up that human being—forces that are always in the process of unfolding.⁴¹ Thus, Bacon moves beyond the conventions of perception and through his paintings evokes sensation—an experience of visceral affect inarticulable in words and eluding familiar forms of perception and instead evoking a sense of discomfort and unfamiliarity that allows us to experience something about those human beings and the human condition that we had not before.

By opening up an aesthetic articulation of the world of the novel through an exploration into the depth of events, Proust similarly investigates the virtual past of those events in a way that shows us the intensity of time.⁴² His series of novels evokes life in terms of a memory that exceeds any one perspective or a multiplicity of perspectives that can be correlated into one homogeneous whole and instead posits what Deleuze calls “fragments” that cannot be put together and instead are put alongside one another.⁴³ These fragments evoke a past that may not have become explicit to consciousness, but that insists itself in the present in terms of what would have to change in the present, actualized situation in order for it to move over thresholds into a different situation. These fragments cannot be assimilated into one whole because they compose different fragments of duration that could unfold in ways that are incompatible with other durations. Because how each fragment unfolds with respect to other fragments exerts its own effects, there is no way to organize them into a linear chain of cause and effect. Instead, each fragment could set off a whole series of unfoldings, each of which would interact with other series in unpredictable ways. To stay with the appearance of what has already actually unfolded is thus for Deleuze to overlook a crucial aspect of the real.

Philosophy, unlike art, does not look at the becoming of specific things—of a specific human body or the portrait of an individual. But according to

Deleuze, it, like art, provides access to a chaotic world that defies containment of the world within categories that we have applied to past events. Philosophy—like art and science—is a distinctive form of thought that creatively grapples with life’s novelty. While art composes monuments of sensation—percepts (perceptions that evoke becoming-other) and affects (emotions that evoke becoming-other)—and science invents functions on a plane of reference, philosophy creates concepts.⁴⁴

It is a paradox that, even when philosophy is conceived as a set of timeless truths waiting to be discovered, it is never satisfied with its answers; philosophy is an open-ended process in which one must inevitably question the truths one has arrived at and continue the process of thinking. Deleuze’s conception of philosophy as a thought form that creates concepts entails the notion of a concept as an event rather than a fixed truth. A concept as an event of thought is a virtual multiplicity whose internal links among components of meaning and external links to other concepts make up a plane of immanence that evokes the restless movement of thinking as a generative process. Our contemporary situation—one of rapid change and unprecedented problems of almost unthinkable scale—is perhaps one that demands this Deleuzian conception. Only a philosophy that includes a temporal as well as spatial dimension can speak to a thinking that arises from and keeps pace with the accelerating speed of life’s movement.

V

Austin, by articulating a notion of concepts as practice-directed, turns our attention from concepts as reified entities to which our conceptual activity refers (more or less well) to embodied practices in and through which concepts evolve. Philosophical activity as conceptual analysis becomes a practice-directed by immanent rules in which we attempt to become ever more aware and more precise about how we articulate meanings we share. Such activity demands attention to those rules in the living contexts in which they are applied, rather than accepting past applications as automatically transferable to present circumstances.

Austin’s particular style and point in cultivating this active attention are a function of his sense that we are sometimes captivated by impossible images of absolute control in thinking and judging that are associated with metaphysical philosophy. We often enough fail to think clearly and have instead rushed into a theoretical stance that counterfeits our interests by running against the grain of ordinary life that is often meaningful enough. As Austin puts it in “A Plea for Excuses,” “ordinary language is *not* the last word: in principle it can everywhere be supplemented and improved upon and superseded. Only remember, it *is* the *first* word,” in virtue of embodying “the inherited experience and acumen of many generations.”⁴⁵

Deleuze, with his characterization of concepts as events, indicates something of the past of meaning-making as it informs its present evolution.

philosophical activity, by attending to shifts in meaning according to a principle of consistency, settles on some ways in which meaning in particular times and places can unfold, given its past, in keeping with the problems life poses.⁴⁶ Conceptual analysis, in Deleuze's view, becomes not just a philosophical practice that attends to meaning in precise ways, but a practice that deliberately unfolds some meanings rather than others from the chaotic field of sense conditioning specific practices of meaning. Deleuze's particular style and point in this practice of unfolding are largely aimed at uncovering new possibilities of practice against the grain of a common life that is all too likely to be ossified or constrained by implicit rules that refuse life's experimentation with the new.

For both Austin and Deleuze, however, philosophical activity is a form of practice in the articulation of concepts that can break with ritualized ways of thinking by attending to the virtual echoes that inevitably emerge as we articulate our responses to life. If Austin enacts a contemporary sense that human life is both chaotically fragmented and over-intellectualized, Deleuze enacts a contemporary sense of being frozen in one-sidedness and subject to the sedimented patterns of the already said and done. Both senses strike us as reasonable perceptions of threats posed to human flourishing in current circumstances. Given the nature and difficulty of these partly opposed, partly complementary threats, it is clear why, in the view of both Austin and Deleuze, the practice of philosophy as conceptual articulation not only is inevitably open-ended, but also plays a crucial role in the ongoing attunements of humanity to life.

NOTES

- 1 See Moore (1903), p. 442. Moore's stalking horse example is the Idealist analysis of the concept *yellow* that is expressed in the claim (Moore calls it a formula) "yellow is the sensation of yellow."
- 2 Frege (1892). Following the opening discussion of the problem of cognitively informative identity statements, the sense/reference distinction is introduced on p. 200.
- 3 The sense of an expression is, roughly, its linguistic meaning *plus* any further information that is relevant and available in virtue of its context of use. Since the context of mathematics is (usually) completely general, contextual specificities can normally be discounted there and sense can be identified with linguistic meaning.
- 4 Thoughts like this might suggest a structuralist conception of mathematics: a common pattern is instanced in various groups of acorns, pebbles, kernels of corn, etc., and mathematics might be about such patterns, rather than about independently existing, eternal abstract objects.
- 5 Similar points haunt a Kripkean approach, in the spirit of Frege, to empirically knowable necessary truths. When does empirical inquiry yield strong, more than pragmatic necessity with regard to natural kinds? And what about the important, complex non-natural kind-concepts that are the traditional concerns of philosophical analysis?
- 6 Frege's criticisms of psychologism are to the point here, even if his own Platonist alternative is not free of problems of its own.

- 7 Austin (1939), p. 41.
- 8 Austin (1939), p. 43. Note the plural “sentences;” multiple compliant and coherent uses, not a single use only, are necessary before we will credit anyone with mastery of a concept-word as opposed to the issuing of a happenstantial noise.
- 9 Austin (1939), p. 42.
- 10 See Austin (1939), p. 40 as well as Austin (1940), p. 56.
- 11 Austin (1939), p. 40.
- 12 Austin (1939), p. 38.
- 13 Austin (1940), p. 71.
- 14 The following seven points summarize Austin’s discussion in Austin (1940), pp. 71–74.
- 15 Austin (1940), p. 67.
- 16 Austin (1940), p. 55.
- 17 Austin (1940), p. 74.
- 18 Austin (1957), p. 181.
- 19 Austin (1966), p. 274.
- 20 See the discussions of the importance of Aristotle in having recognized that questions of who is responsible for what (and who may be excused for what) are more natural than and prior to (artificial) ‘theoretical’ investigations of the freedom of the will in Austin (1957), p. 180, and Austin (1966), p. 273.
- 21 Austin (1957), p. 183.
- 22 Austin (1940), p. 66.
- 23 Austin (1940), p. 69. Compare Austin (1957), p. 185.
- 24 These distinctions appear in Austin (1957), pp. 185n. and 198n.
- 25 Bates and Cohen (1972), p. 22. Kant introduces the idea of speaking with a universal voice in §8 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* in order to capture the unique kind of claim that is made in calling anything beautiful. Kant (2000), V: 216, p. 101.
- 26 The postulate/demand and predict/ascribe distinctions are laid out in Kant (2000), §§7, 8, V: 212–13, 216; pp. 98. 101.
- 27 Kant (2000), §56, V: 338, p. 214.
- 28 Stanley Cavell develops the parallel between the judgments of the critic of the arts and the claims of the ordinary language philosopher in “Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy,” in Cavell (1969), pp. 88–96.
- 29 Deleuze and Guattari (1987), p. 77.
- 30 “It is the illocutionary that constitutes the nondiscursive or implicit presuppositions. And the illocutionary is in turn explained by collective assemblages of enunciation, by juridical acts or equivalents of juridical acts, which, far from depending on subjectification proceedings or assignations of subjects in language, in fact determine their distribution,” (Deleuze and Guattari (1987), p. 78).
- 31 “The face and body of philosophers shelter these personae who often give them a strange appearance, especially in the glance, as if someone else was looking through their eyes.” Deleuze and Guattari (1994), p. 73. For more on conceptual personae see chapter 3 of Deleuze and Guattari (1994), pp. 61–83.
- 32 Since the following discussion is framed through Deleuze’s work rather than through that of Guattari, the references to *A Thousand Plateaus* and Deleuze and Guattari’s book, *What is Philosophy?* (Deleuze and Guattari 1994) will henceforth be referred to as Deleuze.
- 33 “Concepts are events” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994), p. 36. Deleuze and Guattari also here characterize the concept as “speaking” or “knowing” the event (pp. 21, 33) and philosophy as drawing concepts from states of affairs “inasmuch as it extracts the event from them” (p. 52). “The concept is neither denotation of states of affairs nor signification of the lived; it is the event as pure sense that immediately runs through its components” (p. 144). The

- concept of the event is developed by Deleuze, and Deleuze with Guattari, in multiple places. For some relevant examples see Deleuze and Guattari (1994), pp. 156–178 and Deleuze (1990), pp. 12–22, 52–57, and 148–153.
- 34 Deleuze develops the concept of the time-image with respect to Henri Bergson's notions of the actual and the virtual in his book, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (Deleuze 1989). See p. 74 and pp.105–11 for Deleuze's characterization of the images related to the mystery of Kane's dying word, "Rosebud," in Orson Welle's film *Citizen Kane* as an example of an early depiction of the direct time-image in modern cinema.
- 35 See ch. 2, "The Plane of Immanence" in Deleuze and Guattari (1994), pp. 35–60.
- 36 Bergson (1991), p. 34.
- 37 Al-Saji (2004), p. 220.
- 38 Al-Saji (2004), p. 220.
- 39 See Bogue (2003), pp. 116–121, for more on Deleuze's distinction between sensation and perception and its sources in the work of Henri Maldiney and Erwin Straus.
- 40 "We attain to the percept and the affect only as to autonomous and sufficient beings that no longer owe anything to those who experience or have experienced them: Combray [the town evoked by Proust's madeleine] like it never was, is or will be lived; Combray as cathedral or monument" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, p. 168).
- 41 "But in the end, it is a movement 'in-place,' a spasm, which reveals a completely different problem characteristic of Bacon: *the action of invisible forces on the body*" (Deleuze 2003), p. 36.
- 42 The connection made here between the concept of sensation that Deleuze develops in *The Logic of Sensation* and the concept of the fragment he develops in *Proust and Signs* is indebted to Miguel de Beistegui's lucid commentary in chapter 6 of his book, *Immanence: Deleuze and Philosophy* (de Beistegui 2010), pp. 160–191.
- 43 "Even when the past is given back to us in essences . . . what is given us is neither a totality nor an eternity, but 'a bit of time in the pure state', that is, a fragment (Proust, *À la Recherche du temps perdu*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, III, p. 705)" (Deleuze, 2000, p. 122). "By setting fragments into fragments, Proust finds the means of making us contemplate them all, but without reference to a unity from which they might derive or which itself would derive from them" (Deleuze (2000), p. 123).
- 44 Deleuze and Guattari (1994), p. 197.
- 45 Austin (1957), p. 185.
- 46 "[T]he concept in philosophy expresses an event that gives consistency to the virtual on a plane of immanence in an ordered form" Deleuze and Guattari (1994), p. 133.

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