

[http://www.shakespeare-online.com/plays/macbeth/soliloquies/diedhereafter.html HYPERLINK "http://www.shakespeare-online.com/plays/macbeth/soliloquies/diedhereafter.htmlhttp://www.shakespeare-online.com/quotes/macbethquotes.html"http://www.shakespeare-online.com/quotes/macbethquotes.html](http://www.shakespeare-online.com/plays/macbeth/soliloquies/diedhereafter.htmlhttp%3A//www.shakespeare-online.com/quotes/macbethquotes.html)

**PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS**

Maurice Stanley

Copyright 2018 Maurice Stanley

All rights reserved.

 DEDICATION

**CONTENTS**

Meaning as Use

1. Idealism and Meaning as Use

2. Religious Language (Scripture)

 3. Scientific and Mathematical Equations (2+3=5)

 4. Poetry (Shakespeare)

5. Political Language (Rights)

 6. The Language of Reconciliation

7. Philosophical Language

8. Conclusions

**MEANING AS USE**

My primary intent in this essay is to show how meaning-as-use applies to the writings of the idealists T. H. Green and William J. Mander, and to their respective materialist opponents, J. S. Mill and Isaiah Berlin. My intent is to make plain their real practical meanings, what they were trying to get done with their words. We can find out what their statements “really mean” if we translate their references to objects (mental and physical) into their use-meanings. When the ontological objects are subtracted, philosophers still have a lot to say.

 Wittgenstein’s doctrine is that meaning is not reference to objects, but is an activity of will, a practical use of words, an intention to get something done. This means pains, thoughts, minds, numbers, etc. are not ‘things,’ and (I argue) neither are physical objects. Not that there are no geese, or planets, or rocks – but this does not mean that there are physical objects, which is a metaphysical move in the context of philosophical-argumentation language game. Wittgenstein’s theory of meaning-as-use can be captured quite well, I think, in these quotes: “For a large class of cases – though not for all – in which we employ the word ‘meaning’ it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language.”

 (1953, Philosophical Investigations, p. 20e, sec. 43). And, “Just try – in a real case –to doubt someone else’s fear or pain.”

 (p. 102e 303)

 This does not mean that people do not suffer or tremble fearfully, only that to take meaning as reference to a pain or a sensation is a mistake we should avoid. Suppose I see someone writhing, groaning, etc.: If his pain were a thing (like a physical object) hidden in his head, it might make sense to doubt whether it was there. But it doesn’t, usually, so pains (and sense data, etc.) are not things. Wittgenstein gives a short (but quite inclusive) list of examples of how language really secures meaning: “Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples, and others:

Giving orders, and obeying them

Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements

Constructing an object from a description (a drawing)

 Reporting an event

Speculating about an event

Etc.”

(1953, p. 11e, sec. 23)

In the same way Wittgenstein treats ‘pains,’ we can also treat minds, sensations, times, rights, etc. To say, ‘I have a pain in my hand’ is not just a reference to a thing, but it may be a verbal substitute for a cry of pain. In an analogous way, to say, ‘I am of two minds about so-and-so’ is not about two countable ’mental objects’ at all, but might only mean that I have not decided. These are simple, obvious points about ordinary, everyday language. But this doctrine can be extended to the language of philosophy as well, and, indeed, to all kinds of verbal communication. All language is an expression of practical will, from newspaper headlines and science texts to Christmas cards, Bible verses, Koran surahs, or the sayings of Buddha. Meaning-as-use applies to them all.

To ask, ‘How much time do we have’ is not usually a scientific question about the hands of a clock or the spatial relation of the sun to the surface of the earth, but is more likely an attempt to hurry someone, or oneself, or to remind them that it’s near dinner. (Although it can be a question about what a watch says, of course.) In any case it is an assertion of purpose of some kind, a try at getting something done, an activity of will. [See esp. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Grammar, pp. 215 ff., and The Big Typescript pp. 281e ff. (sec. 81) and p. 300e ff.

“You have a right to cheat, rob and kill to get ahead in life” is not a reference to things called rights, and is probably a wicked thing to tell someone. It would seem to be an expression of ill will, and the person who says it seems, at least on most occasions, to be trying to get the listener in trouble. Still, it is a kind of encouragement.

Importantly, too, mere encouragement is not enough to enjoin the vocabulary of rights, which implies definite moral justification. For example, “You are my son, therefore I’ll stand behind you, whatever you’ve done, right or wrong.”

Meaning-as-use therefore seems incompatible with any commitment to minds, times, numbers, or rights because it rejects reference to objects in favor of language as a practical activity of will – indeed for Schopenhauer, speech is a bodily action, a move.\*

\*Footnote: But, importantly, W’s doctrine is also incompatible with material, physical objects, forces, particles, energy packets. etc. (Not that there is no sunshine, gravitational attraction, etc.!). Wittgenstein, because of his animosity toward academic philosophy, did not emphasize this. Do you have a quarter in your pocket?” does not have to commit you to materialism. It might mean you are hungry, or want to buy a gumball. Will is not a ‘thing,’ either, not a mental object of reference. “Her heart is full of good will” might simply mean you can trust her. There need be no ontological commitment here. Schopenhauer was quite influential on Royce, and on Wittgenstein’s view, language as an expression (not so much of consciousness as) of will – although direct evidence of this influence is not easy to find. (But see Wittgenstein, Philosophical Grammar pp. 215-218, and this remark from MS 158, p. 34v, in The Big Typescript, p. 300e, in which Wittgenstein quotes Schopenhauer in English:

“Schopenhauer: ‘If you find yourself stumped

trying to convince someone of something and

not getting anywhere, tell yourself

that it’s the will & not the intellect you’re up

against.’”)

Talking is an activity of will, a movement of the body. Moreover, dogs bark, kittens meow -- all expressing a will to live, a yearning to exist. I can feel that yearning within myself, too, as definitely as I can my own consciousness. It is essential, it is what drives communication. Consciousness, Schopenhauer believed, is not all that’s needed to explain the world; there must also be motivation, action generated by will, otherwise no world could ever come to be. This seems quite true. But Mander himself pointed out that the expression, ‘will to live,’ is so general it would be meaningless, unless we give it specific content. Furthermore, if everything is will, as Schopenhauer thought, then you could say that nothing is.

But there are two answers to this: (1) The same can be said of consciousness – if everything is, or has an element of, the mental, or if nothing is wholly separable from the experiencing of it, then nothing is. (2) Furthermore, the specific content of the claim that, for example, nothing is inseparable from will, lies in the myriad of its specific instances – the will to get a bit of food, light, warmth, to avoid specific threats, etc. And there is, as well, its obvious polarity with non-being, or death, or darkness. Arguably, the will to exist is exhibited from the ‘big bang’ onwards. It sounds peculiar to say, ‘The world exists because it wants to,’ but it sounds equally dubious to say that the existence of the world is unthinkable without any conscious experience of it …!

Can the whole “external world” be entirely “in my mind”? Isn’t my mind, my self, my little world, just a part of the external world, the big world? The idealists have answered this question already, esp. Kant and Schopenhauer. The world exists for me only in my consciousness. It – the “external world” – is quite real, but it is present to ‘only in my own mind. My ‘big world’ exists for me only in my consciousness, my mind. The Big Bang exists for me only in my little world, just as the goose I feed in the park exists for me (even as a physical goose) in my world, my mind. I can tell the difference between a real goose and an imaginary goose, between a real star and a picture of a star, between the real Bertrand Russell and the idea of him.

One might feel that even Wittgenstein’s famous statement, ‘the meaning of a word is its use in the language,’ taken out of context, could be as tautologous as ‘Meaning is something you do with words.’ But Wittgenstein specifies a multiplicity of ever more specific practical uses of words. There is nothing vague or vacuous about his list – giving orders, reporting events, speculating about events, and on and on. It includes, between the lines, misreporting events, lies, promises, encouragement, hate speech, love poems, prayers, newspaper stories, books, ad infinitum.

So, again, although Wittgenstein’s meaning-as-use undermines ontological claims such as “There are pains,” “There are minds,” “There are sense-data,” and so on, it also shows that claims about material objects, physical objects, as objects of reference, are suspect as well. Therefore, such claims as “There are material objects,” “Consciousness arises out of physical brain events,” “The world is material and nothing more,” must also be rejected. Wittgenstein did not stress this, and neither did the analytic philosophers, including W. V. O. Quine. And even Austin and Ryle. But Quine was aware of the situation, and remarked on it: “Both kinds of entities [physical objects and gods] enter our conception only as cultural posits. The myth of physical objects is epistemologically superior to most [other myths].” (W. V. O. Quine, From a Logical Point of View, p. 44). But of course he could not quite forsake physicalism. Still he was aware that it didn’t matter.

**SECTION 1: IDEALISM AND MEANING AS USE**

**Applying Meaning-as-Use to Idealism and Materialism**

What does meaning-as-use mean for metaphysics in general, and for the idealists and materialists, in particular?

T. H. Green argued that a central concept of ethics, and therefore of political obligation, was that of a person, and that one could only be a person in the full moral sense within a community or a State. Like Josiah Royce, Green was an absolute idealist who asserted that a finite human mind wants to lift itself up into an infinite, absolute mind. The limited individual, the untrue, partial self, is merely a partial fulfillment of this mind.

Following Kant, Hegel, and to some extent Schopenhauer, Royce and Green (and now Mander, Tyler, and others) have argued that the world is mental. (They actually more often say such things as that ‘all reality has an element of mind in it,’ or ‘nothing is wholly separate from the experiencing of it,’ avoiding such blatant claims as ‘Everything is mental.’ But their practical use-meanings remain.); both insisted, that there is, in their sense, a God. The True Self is, effectively, God.

The idealists believe that consciousness, self-consciousness, is prior to the physical universe. Reacting to the empiricist conception of human beings as just parts of the material world of Nature, Green insisted that the world is present to us only through our conscious experience, our rationality, and that consciousness is more than just a stream of sensations, as their opposition thought. We are, as Kant argued, persons only within the context of a community or a State. The point of the State is to provide, as Aristotle said, for the common good of the people (rather than the rulers). Kant’s concept of a person, as one who acknowledges the freedom and dignity of oneself and of other people, is central to Green’s metaphysics\* and therefore to his political philosophy of rights.

What can meaning-as-practical-use tell us about this metaphysical passage from Green’s Prolegomena to Ethics?

Green says:

The human spirit cannot develope itself

according to its idea except in self-conscious subjects, whose

possession of the qualities – all implying self-consciousness – that

are proper to such a spirit, in measures gradually approximating

to the realization of the idea, forms its development. The

spiritual progress of mankind is thus an unmeaning phrase,

unless it means a progress of personal character and to personal

character – a progress of which feeling, thinking, and willing

subjects are the agents and sustainers, and of which each step

is a fuller realization of the capacities of such subjects. It is

simply unintelligible unless understood to be in the direction of

more perfect forms of personal life.

-T. H. Green, Prolegomena to Ethics, 185: pp. 194-195, 1883.

Furthermore, Green says about consciousness and will:

151. … There is always thinking in willing. A thoughtless will would be no will.Without the thought of self and a world as mutually determined, of an

object present to the self in a desire felt by it, but awaiting

realization in the world, there would be no will but only blind impulse. Even in cases where the will is said to be governed byanimal appetite, it is still the realization of an idea that is the object willed.

-T. H. Green, Prolegomena to Ethics, Thomas Y. Crowell

Company, Inc., 1969, p. 156.

\*Footnote: Both Schopenhauer and Green were, I believe, confused about the concepts of will and desire: Schopenhauer thinks will is sex and should be suppressed; it’s just the universe keeping the race going and making us humans miserable by pushing us to marry people unsuited for us, etc. Green, in beautiful passages in the metaphysical chapters of Prolegomena to Ethics, insists that consciousness is prior to will and that will always must have a conscious object. He asks whether will can overcome desire, which it can, but he acknowledges that desire can wear away at will, etc. The subject is fascinating, but I must resist delving any deeper here. But will must be prior, or no communication or language, even to oneself, could happen. Thinking is an act of will. Will is not anterior to thought. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When Green asserts the existence of self-consciousness as essential to personhood, he wants to set the stage for his political theory, the common good – personhood, rationality, what is good (by his lights) for our characters, our true selves – as opposed to the materialistic view of Mill, James and (later) Berlin, that the universe is meaningless, valueless, determined, not free. Green wants us to look at life and the world as not just a collection of meaningless material objects in a valueless series of events in time. He is trying to push us to work toward human fulfilment, not just out of curiosity but out of care, love. A purely materialistic universe is deterministic, with no possibility of free will. (Thanks again to Mander for this insight). That would make morality, value, rights, and political obligations impossible, as well.

But here is an opposing metaphysical passage from William James.

James says:

I believe that ‘consciousness,’ when once it has evaporated to this

estate of pure diaphaneity, is on the point of disappearing altogether.

It is the name of a nonentity, and has no right to a place among first

principles. Those who still cling to it are clinging to a mere echo, the

faint rumor left behind by the disappearing ‘soul’ upon the air of philosophy.

During the past year, I have read a number of articles whose

authors seemed just on the point of abandoning the notion of con-

sciousness, and substituting for it that of an absolute experience not

due to two factors. But they were not quite radical enough, not quite

daring enough in their negations. For twenty years past I have mis-

trusted ‘consciousness’ as an entity; for seven or eight years past I

have suggested its non-existence to my students, and tried to give

them its pragmatic equivalent in realities of experience. It seems to me

that the hour is ripe for it to be openly and universally discarded.

- “Does Consciousness Exist?” p. 169, *The Writings of William James*.

Edited, with an Introduction, by John J. McDermott, 1968, Reprinted 1904.

James is very ‘tough-minded,’ here, admirably clear and direct (and not as murky and dialectical as Green).

One fundamental motive of the metaphysician is to make sense of the world. Science has a similar motive. Most philosophers since Aristotle go on to recommend social policy as well, and so metaphysics thus explodes into political philosophy, which Isaiah Berlin, as a historian of ideas, appreciated. His ontology includes ideas, of course, and the power and force of ideas in the physical world. His language is ontologically committed to ideas and to an external physical reality. Ideas have power, cause change in the world, His words are essentially a warning that some ideas lead to horrors in the “real world” – the non-mental world of Nazi death camps and the Soviet Gulag. This warning makes sense to me. Of course, it does to Mander, too, but it is just as clear that coercion is necessary to provide for the common good. If idealists can show that this coercion can be somehow implemented without leading to the horrors Berlin warns us of, perhaps contemporary idealistic metaphysics can withstand its opposition. But how can the idealists’ invitation to Kantian rationality find any welcome in the hearts and minds of madmen? terrorists?

Here we apply meaning-as-use to the political philosophies that grow out of metaphysics.

J. S. Mill writes:

I have dwelt on this point, as being a necessary part of aperfectly just conception of utility, or happiness, consideredas the directive rule of human conduct. But it is by no meansan indispensable condition to the acceptance of the utilitarianstandard; for that standard is not the agent’s own greatesthappiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether;and if it may possibly be doubted whether a noble characteris always the happier for its nobleness, there can be ndoubt that it makes other people happier, and that theworld in general is immensely a gainer by it. Utilitarianism,therefore, could only attain its end by the general cultivationof nobleness of character, even if each individual were onlybenefited by the nobleness of others, and his own, so far ashappiness is concerned, were a sheer deduction from thebenefit. But the bare enunciation of such an absurdity as thilast renders refutation superfluous.

-John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 1859, pp. 10, 22

This is political philosophy developed out of a materialist/determinist ontology. The metaphysical contentions of Mill, James, and Berlin -- that we can know nothing of transcendent values, that the world is a collection of physical facts and measurements, evolve into the ‘*aggregate* good’ political philosophical view that social policy should be established upon “the greatest good for the greatest *number* of people,” (the “aggregate good” in terms of pleasures and pains) – are not at all acceptable to Green, and he wants us to find them unacceptable, too. That is *his* will, *his* intent, what he uses his words to get across.

In general, all these philosophers are trying to persuade us to look at things their way. That is the practical use-meaning of their words. This is what they are really trying to accomplish.Such expressions of will to *persuade* are perhaps not as dramatic as cries of pain. But the meaning of these metaphysical assertions is obviously *not* simply reference to such mental objects as “minds,” “persons,” “consciousnesses,” etc. These ontological commitments drop out like imaginary beetles in boxes or escape like flies out of fly-bottles (of course material objects drop out, too). But in a way Green is crying out to us, to look at the world his way. That is the cry of the philosopher.

Green, especially, said a lot about rights and political obligation. He insisted that a *person* in the *full moral sense must be a member of a community or a state*:

Our ultimate standard of worth is an ideal of personal worth.All other values are relative to value for, of, or in a person. Tospeak of any progress or improvement or development ofa nation or society or mankind, except as relative so somegreater worth of persons, is to use words without meaning.

- T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 193, 1883.

(*Prolegomena to Ethics*, p.193)

Rights are not *things* or *objects* that you can keep in your pocket, or archived in a written Constitution, or “in your mind.” Rights are not *objects*, mental or material.

So Green is committed to the existence of consciousness, divine consciousness, ideas, etc. – mental objects. But we see, in the following passage from *Utilitarianism*, J. S. Mill says :

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals

“utility” or the “greatest happiness principle” holds that

actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote

happiness; wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.

By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence

of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure.

To give a clear view of the moral standard set up by the

theory, much more requires to be said; in particular, what

things it includes in the ideas of pain and pleasure, and to

what extent this is left an open question.

 - John Stuart Mill, Edited by Oskar Piest, *Utilitarianism,* p. 13 Mill clearly wants to persuade us that something measurable and countable is enough to make sense of reality. More reasonably than Bentham, he considers both quality and quantity of pleasures, but completely rejects any divine, unitary consciousness. He is an advocate of individualism, *and* he ultimately advocates the aggregate happiness of everybody. Here is a passage from William Mander’s recent essay, “The Concept of the True Self,” in which he disputes the views of Isaiah Berlin. (Mander here is disputing the view of Isaiah Berlin that idealism and idealist philosophy is alien to freedom and leads to coercion, enslavement, and worse). Mander says: “But Caird’s central point -- if we compare living outside to living within

 the moral structures of rationally organised society, with respect

to the possibilities of life which each opens up and closes

off to us, then the greater freedom lies with the latter

– is surely a plausible one. But (turning to the second question) does

such ‘social’ freedom really reveal anything to us about our ‘true selves’?

Arguably, it does. One way to appreciate this is to think about the connections

between freedom, rationality, interest and selfhood. Following

the broad lead set by both Kant and Hegel on the Idealist scheme of

understanding, to be free is to be rational; reason is precisely the sphere

of autonomous self-determination. But there can be no rational demand

for self-realisation, no rational concern for self, which does not recognize

the equally legitimate claims of other rational beings to the same thing

and which is not equally concerned with the aims and desires of all. A

rational being, therefore, must have wider interests than simply his own.

A rational being must place value on the satisfaction of all purposes and

desires.

-from *British Idealism and the Concept of The Self*, edited by

 W. J. Mander and Stamatoula Panagakou, page, 297, 2016. Isaiah Berlin, an early proponent of analytic philosophy, was also an Oxford philosopher. His essay “Two Concepts of Liberty” was called by his biographer (Michael Ignatieff) a “plea for human freedom against even the best intentioned socialist paternalism.” Berlin says: …[O]ur own attitudes and activities are likely to remain obscure to us, unless we understand the dominant issues of our own world. The greatest of these is the open war that is being fought between two systems of ideas which return different and conflicting answers to what has long been the central question of politics – the question of obedienceand coercion. ‘Why should I (or anyone) obey anyone else?’ ‘Whyshould I not live as I like?’ ‘Must I obey?’ ‘If I disobey, may I becoerced? By whom, and to what degree, and in the name of what, and for the sake of what?’

 He then defines negative liberty: I am normally said to be free to the degree to which no manor body of men interferes with my activity. Political liberty in thissense is simply the area within which a man can act unobstructedby others. If I am prevented by others from doing what I couldotherwise do, I am to that degree unfree; and if this area icontracted by other men beyond a certain minimum, I can bedescribed as being coerced, or, it may be, enslaved. -Isaiah Berlin, *Two Concepts of Liberty* (in *Four Essays on Liberty*), pp.121-122.

 Coerced? Enslaved? This is as serious and dramatic as philosophy gets! Berlin is accusing idealists of things hateful and fearful

 Berlin thinks idealism (“monism” – a “caricature,” as Mander says) leads from coercion to authoritarianism, totalitarianism. But obviously Berlin’s ideas do as well – they can lead from pluralism to the tolerance even of terrorism. How can one tolerate, try to reason with, someone who intends to *kill* you if you do not convert to their religion? *Coercion* apparently cannot be avoided. Does it lead inevitably to authoritarianism, enslavement, death camps? Surely common-good political philosophy does not have to lead to such evils. But it does seem to lead to the welfare-state, for both Green and Mander. Both are motivated by good will. But the best-intentioned words and actions can yield disastrous results

 **Conclusions**Materialism seems the most basic threat to any sound political theory of rights. Materialism implies determinism, and determinism implies no freedom, and no freedom means no morality. So, materialism is unacceptable to Green and to Royce, because they are trying to *persuade* us that the universe is permeated with value! But, with the advent of Marxism, idealism became infected by materialism as well. Since Green (and Marx) social welfare has been interpreted as material egalitarianism and the redistribution of material goods. In the real world, *coercion* seems to become necessary right away. *Citizens* have rights, liberties positive and negative, which must be protected by laws, by the police, the community, the city, the nation. The idealists *must* express “common good” politics in such a way that it blocks this tendency toward totalitarianism from both the left and the right

 Not surprisingly, Berlin sounds much like Mill, and Mander sounds much like Green.

A major problem with utilitarianism is that it offers *aggregate* benefits – the greatest good for the greatest number. What’s worse, it is unfair in that the individual’s happiness can be sacrificed by the state for the happiness of others. In fact, the happiness of the many can be traded for that of a few. Moreover, due to a legitimate concern for religious tolerance, it has become too tolerant of religious extremism. The Qur’an, Surah IV (XXX translation, p. 57) verse 91 says 91. You will find others who desire that they should be saffrom you and secure from their own people; as often as they aresent back to the mischief they get thrown into it headlong; therefore if they do not withdraw from you, and (do not) offeryou peace and restrain their hands, then seize them and kill themwherever you find them; and against these We have given you a

clear authority.

 The Islamic State interprets such scriptures with fanatical severity. Infidels must submit and accept Islam, or be killed. This attitude bodes ill both for Berlin’s plea for tolerance as well as for Mander’s invitation to Kantian rationality. On the other hand, these “Five Pillars of Islam,” do not support this fanaticism.

1. **Faith** – To believe in no God but Allah and that Muhammad is his prophet and the Messenger of Allah.

2. **Prayer** – To pray five times a day – before sunrise, early afternoon, late afternoon, after sunset, night.

3. **Fasting**- To give up food and drink during daylight hours in the month of Ramadan.

4. **Almsgiving**- To give a share of personal wealth to help people in need and support the Muslim community.

5. **Pilgrimage** – To perform a pilgrimage to Mecca (Makkah) at least once in a lifetime. -<https://asrsworldfiles.wordpress.com/2015/06/pillars-of-islam-jpgBerlin> and Mill stress *negative (political) rights* – do as we wish, but do no harm, avoid coercion. Mander and Green stress *positive rights* – life, liberty, property. So, this concern with motives is not new, but with Wittgenstein’s theory we see something of the importance of real, practical uses – what they are *trying* to get done in the world, and something even of the unintended effects of their acts of speech. When Berlin says that “Everyone has negative rights,” he intends to encourage individualism, trying to persuade us to leave people to be free to do as they wish (insofar as they are doing no harm). When Mander says “You have positive rights,” he means to persuade us to be wary of too much individualism, to expect some coercion, etc. in achieving the highest good. To reiterate the main point of this essay: the practical use-meaning of the idealists’ *and* the materialists’ words is the work which the writers are trying to accomplish: warn, persuade, exhort, exhibit, challenge, and so on. Philosophical language is a context, a language-game, like any other. It is motivated in a multiplicity of ways. I conclude that meaning-as-use shows that it is *materialism*, (Marxism) the ontological commitment to physical objects, that has blocked the development of coherent political philosophy in the present century.

 **SECTION 2: RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE**

 **(SCRIPTURE)**

 Meaning is not reference to objects, but is an activity of will, a practical use of words, an intention to get something done. This means pains, thoughts, minds, numbers, etc. are not ‘things,’ and (I argue) neither are rights. Moreover, although Wittgenstein did not stress this, material objects -- forces, waves, etc. are illegitimate, too. Wittgenstein’s theory of meaning-as-use can be captured quite well, I think, in these quotes: “For a large class of cases – though not for all – in which we employ the word ‘meaning’ it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language.”

 (1953, Philosophical Investigations, p. 20e, sec. 43)

 and “Just try – in a real case –to doubt someone else’s fear or pain.”

 (p. 102e 303)

 This does not mean that people do not suffer or tremble fearfully, only that to take meaning as reference to a pain or a sensation is a mistake we should avoid. Suppose I see someone writhing, groaning, etc.: If his pain were a thing (like a physical object) hidden in his head, it might make sense to doubt whether it was there. But it doesn’t, usually, so pains (and sense data, etc.) are not things. Wittgenstein gives a short (but quite inclusive) list of examples of how language really secures meaning *“Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples, and others: -- Giving orders, and obeying them–Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements–Constructing an object from a description (a drawing)– Reporting an event–Speculating about an event–Etc. (1953, p. 11e, sec. 23* We could add many other examples: advertising a product, telling a joke or a lie,

encouraging, threatening, terrorizing, harassing, and on and on. Language is not always, or even

usually, reference to objects (although that can be accomplished). [We could also add scientific

talk, mathematical equations, religious language, and even philosophical essays such as this.] Likewise, I argue, talk about rights is not about any moral or legal objects carried about bsomeone in his/her mind or head or stored in some law book or written-down constitution

 **The Old Testament**

Abraham from the Bible (The Old Testament) is an important character in Islam, Judaism, and Christianity By the time Abraham lived, God was already disappointed with is creation of man. God had destroyed the earth with a flood except for Noah and his family and the animals saved by Noah’s building the ark In the Tower of Babel story the people were all of one language and planned to build a tower “whose top would reach unto heaven.” (Genesis 11:4) Now nothing would be restrained from man, so God confounded their language, and that put an end to tha

 God made a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17: 2-4) 2. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly 3. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked to him, saying 4. As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations So, God called Abraham to leave his home and travel to new land that God would show him. God also promised Abraham children. Abraham became impatient with God and had a son, Ishmael by Hagar, Sarah’s handmaid. Sarah was Abraham’s wife. Late in their lives, Sarah and Abraham had a son, Isaac, which was God’s plan for all nations to be blessed by Abraham’s descendants God tested Abraham by telling him to sacrifice Isaac, and Abraham was prepared to do that, but God intervened by providing a goat as the sacrifice. Abraham and his children blessed the world because Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise. 

**The New Testament**

The New Testament is the second part of the Christian Bible, the Old Testament being the first part, which I discussed in Section II. The Old and New Testaments are sacred scriptures to Christians. The New Testament tells about the life and teachings of Jesus, as well as His death and resurrection. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke tell of Jesus’ genealogy and they differ. Matthew begins with Abraham and follows the lineage of Joseph, while Luke begins with Adam and follows the lineage of Mary.

 Plaque of the Eight beatitudes, St. Cajetan Church, Lindavista, Mexico

**The eight Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3–12 during the Sermon on the Mount.[4][5]** Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew 5:3) Blessed are those who mourn: for they will be comforted. (5:4 Blessed are the meek: for they will inherit the earth. (5:5 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: for they will be filled. (5:6 Blessed are the merciful: for they will be shown mercy. (5:7 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they will see God. (5: Blessed are the peacemakers: for they will be called children of God. (5:9 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (5:10 Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. 5:11-1**Revelation – Chapter** 4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne 5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood 7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, A-men 8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. 11Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Eph’-e-sus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Per’-ga-mos, and unto Thy-a-ti’-ra, and unto Sar’-dis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto La-o-i-ce’-a. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I say seven golden candlesticks; 13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

 14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; 18 I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, A-men; and have the keys of hell and of death. 20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. **Revelation – Chapter** 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. **Revelation – Chapter 13**

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name 18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore *and* six.

 **Revelation – Chapter 2**20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. A-men. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. A-men.

What do these phrases really mean:

Resist not evil Means avoid, turn away from it. Don’t get hurt.

Turn the other cheek. Means let him slap you again if he can seriously hurt you. If you confront, fight him, you’ll get hurt.

If someone forces you to go with him a mile, go with him two miles; if he takes your coat, give him your cloak as well. Means he might shoot you if you don’t, so stay away from such people.

 **The Koran**Here I will discuss the tenets of Islam. The Koran (also, Quran or Qur’an) is the central text for Islam which Muslims believe is a revelation from God (Allah) to the prophet Muhamma The Koran is like the Holy Bible in that it is divided into chapters (*Surah)* and then into verses (*ayah*) The first *Surah* (also, *sura*) of the Koran is seven verses and is used most often in daily prayers and other occasions SURAH I The Openin1. In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful 2. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds 3. The Beneficent, the Merciful. 4. Master of the Day of Judgment. 5. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help 6. Keep us on the right path 7. The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favors. Not (the path) of those upon whom Thy wrath is brought down, nor of those who go astray. -The Qur’an, Translated by M.H. Shakir, Published by Tahrike Farsile Qur’an, Inc. Elmhurst, New York, page 1

**The Five Pillars of Islam.**

 **Faith –** To believe in no God but Allah and that Muhammad is his prophet and the Messenger of Allah

 **Prayer –** To pray five times each day – before sunrise, early afternoon, late afternoon after sunset, night.

 **Fasting –** To give up food and drink during daylight hours in the month of Ramadan. **Almsgiving –** To give a share of personal wealth to help people in need and support theMuslim community.

 **Pilgrimage –** To perform a pilgrimage to Mecca (*Makkah*) at least once in a lifetime -<https://asrsworldfiles.wordpress.com/2015/06/pillars-of-islam-jp>

What does ***pray*** mean? In Islam

 **Buddhism**

Meditation is very essential to the Buddhist way of life. It is meditation that helps a person learn to see the negative mental states and learn to develop peaceful and positive mental states, or “virtuous minds.” This step by step path – known as the Eightfold Path – will help lead one from delusions of hate, greed, and ignorance to the happiness of full enlightenment Since Buddhism does not have a Creator god, some people do not see it as a religion, but it is a major world religion in China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand and other Asian countries Even though the word “God” is not used in Buddhism, many people, Christian and Jew, find that the ethical precepts and meditative practices can supplement and enrich their own faith and practices The founder of Buddhism was Siddhartha Gautama. He gave up a life of luxury to find the path from suffering caused by attachment to worldly things to enlightenment and liberation.

**Teachings of Siddhartha Gautama**: [http://knowthyselfdelphi.co](http://knowthyselfdelphi.co/)

Control your thought

 Practice meditation

 Say nothing to hurt others

 Know the truth.

 **Resist evil** Free your mind of evil Work for the good of others. Respect life.

 **Buddhism: The Noble Eightfold Path.**

**Right View –** Understanding the nature and cause of suffering and the method of release’

**Right Intention –** Readiness to begin renouncing attachment and cultivating compassion.

**Right Speech –** Using language impeccably, avoiding lying, slander and verbal “violence”.

 **Right Action –** Avoid harming ourselves and others (needless killing, stealing, sensual

obsession)

**Right Livelihood –** Earning a living in a way that honors ourselves and others.

**Right Effort –** Cultivating sincere discipline, but not over-doing it.

**Right Mindfulness –** Cultivating the habit of gently monitoring and shaping mental content.

**Right Meditation –** Developing a practice of focused, intentional consciousness- [***https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/***](https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/)

***Conclusion***

***All religions are the same, all are different. All have a God but Buddhism, but Buddhism has Nirvana. All have a messiah, a 2nd coming. Same commandments, advice about how to live. (Except Islam)***

***(Resist evil for Buddha means what?)***

**SECTION 3: SCIENTIFIC and MATHEMATICAL EQUATIONS (2+3=**I)

 I argue here that the real meaning of the equations of mathematics and physics is not reference to numbers or “physical objects”, but that these are assertions of will, as all communication is. This insight derives mainly from Wittgenstein, influenced by Schopenhauer, and from the logician Willard Quine While I think this extension of meaning as use actually is implicit in Wittgenstein’s philosophy, he had such a contempt for academic metaphysics, especially of the idealist kind, that he drew back from attacking material objects, mass, spacetime, curvature of spacetime, etc.

**writhing, groaning, etc.: If his pain were a** thing (like a **physical object) hidden in his head, it** might make sense to doubt whether it was there. But it doesn’t, usually, so pains (and sense data, etc.) are not things Wittgenstein gives a short (but quite inclusive) list of examples of how language really secures meaning *“ Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples, and others -- Giving orders, and obeying the–Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements– Constructing an object from a description (a drawing)– Reporting an event– Speculating about an event– Etc.” (1953, p. 11e, sec. 23)* I would extend this statement to include *all* linguistic activity – words, phrases, statements, whole essays like this one, books, newspaper stories. Furthermore, I want to stress the influence

of Schopenhauer, to the effect that *speech* is a personal, bodily act of will: Schopenhauer says this about will: The body is given in two entirely different ways to the subject of knowledge, who becomes an individual through his identity with it. It is given as an idea in intelligent perception, as an object among objects and beholden to the laws of objects. And it is also given in quite a different way, as that which is immediately known to everyone, and is signified by the word will. Every true act of will is also at once and without exception a movement of the body: he cannot really will the act without being at the same time aware that it manifests itself as a movement of his body. The act of will and the movement of the body are not two different things objectively known, which the bond of causality unites; they do not stand in the relation of cause and effect; but they are one and the same, although given in two entirely different ways – immediately, and again in perception for the understanding. The action of the body is nothing but the act of the will objectified, i.e., passed into perception. It will be shown later that this is true of every movement of the body, not merely those which follow upon motives, but also involuntary movements which follow upon mere stimuli, and, indeed, that the whole body is nothing but objectified will, i.e., will become idea. *-The World as Will and Idea,* Arthur Schopenhauer*, Book Two, pp. 32-33.\**

*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

\*Footnote: Schopenhauer influenced Wittgenstein, as is evident in Notebooks 1914-1916, p.37e.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_The meaning of the assertion “F=ma” is the use it is put to: asserting a prediction of what the experimental measure of the force will be. There need be no reference to *numbers*, or to physical objects, or universals or abstractions, at all, but to real things like bricks, trees, people, dogs, and so forth. Another example: I am talking (to myself) about how many times I’ve changed my mind today. I am *not* referring to numbers. The meaning of 2+3=5 here is the use *in* the context (language-game, “form of life”) of my concern with being wishy-washyWhile I think this *extension* is implicit in Wittgenstein’s philosophy, he had such a contempt for academic metaphysics, especially of the idealistic kind, that he drew back from this kind of generalization, and was ill-served by the “analytic philosophy” that emerged after his death. Indeed, some philosophers (Anscombe, Grayling) have suggested that he was something of a metaphysician himself – even an idealist Importantly, W. V. O. Quine also hesitated to give up his materialist ontology. In *From a Logical Point of View* he said that our ontological commitment to material objects is only a “myth,” but a useful one. (p. ) **The Meaning of the Equations of Mathematics and Physics:**

* The meaning-as-use of ‘2+3=5According to Wittgenstein, pains, minds, thoughts, etc. are not things or mental objects to which we refer when we say such things as “I am in pain,” “What time is it?,” “I have changed my mind,” etc. Such statements do not refer to my mental objects but usually only mean that I need help, or that you should hurry, or that I once believed a certain way but now I do not believe that any more, I am wavering, and so on “I changed my mind twice before lunch, and then after lunch I changed it three more times. Since 2+3=5, that means I’ve changed my mind five times so far, today!” Here I am not referring to any numbers, classes of classes of objects, abstractions, or universals. In this context -- there is *always* a context (language-game, form of life) -- I am asserting that 2+3=5, the meaning of which is not reference to objects but an expression of my concern that I am too indecisive. I am complaining to myself that I can’t make up my mind. The ontology of numbers is not at issue I took 2 pills before lunch and three more afterwards. I’m not supposed to take more than four a day, so *that’s* what I am really talking about – pills (to insist that pills are “physical objects” is a metaphysical ontological assertion). I am not thereby ontologically committed to the existence of “material objects.” And when I say or write “2+3=5,” I am not referring to numbers.

 In the same way, the equations of physics are not references to material objects, either. When a scientist or a teacher tells his students “F=ma,” the context (‘language-game,’ ‘form of life’-- in a classroom lecture, a conversation among scientists, etc.). *Outside* such a context the equations are only sounds or marks on paper or a chalkboard, he/she are not using language. The teacher is performing an activity of will, asserting something. Its meaning is its use in the language, one of a great multiplicity of such contexts. Some are ordinary, some are extraordinary So I am extending Wittgenstein’s doctrine of meaning as use The teacher might go on to say that if the mass of this brick, or tree, or person, is 150 lbs, and the acceleration is 10 ft./ sec2, then, since F= ma, the force at which it hits the ground will be 1500 lb-ft/sec2. The meaning is the use the assertion is put to is a prediction. There need be no reference to numbers or ideas or physical objects, but to bricks. The meaning of a statement is its use in the language – words, statements, whole essays like this one, books, news reports and on and on Newton’s Laws of Motion:

 3. Sir Isaac Newton’s law of gravitation says:

 Newton believed in *forces*, which was an ontological commitment. Is Newton referring to material objects in this formula? No. He is asserting that if you plug in certain values for the

variables you’ll get a certain *prediction.* If, on the other hand, you want to insist that an *apple*, say, or a goose, is a *physical*, *material object*, you are doing metaphysics/ontology! What does Meaning-as-Use say about the famous equations of modern physics? It means that certain predictions should turn out a certain way. There need be *no commitment* to the existence of *spacetime*, or numbers, or any such thing. To insist that the equation commits you to believing the metaphysical claim that there are gravitational waves, warps in spacetime, wave-particle, etc. is not here in the equation. The meaning of the equation is to use in the language of the people who assert it. You use it to explain, make predictions, etc. That is its meaning: how it is used in doing the work of physicists, teachers, etc.

4. Einstein

Here is a version of Einstein’s General Relativity Equation, which is about curvature of space in the vicinity of big stars, etc.

5. Schrodinger

Schrodinger’s wave equation, about particles, seems to contradict Einstein’s Theory of General Relativity equation:

 6. Hawkins:

For metaphysical bias the most blatant offender is Stephen Hawking. (This image is a mention, not a use.)

This equation is about physical particles, gravity, spacetime curvature – *everything* physical. But Hawking is talking metaphysics/ontology, not physics! Not that anyone is forbidden to talk metaphysics(!), but Wittgenstein was (understandably) prejudiced against that language-game, which is as permissible as any other, more “ordinary” kind of language. There is an admixture of metaphysics, *ontological* talk in this context.

 Einstein wants to refer to curvatures in space-time, to *fields*; and Schrodinger wants to talk about *particles* – actually, *probabilities* Both *fields* and *particles* are ontological posits, which Wittgenstein’s Meaning-as-Use theory rejects. Is a *probability* a material object? It is plain, I think, that the two equations are not referential or descriptive of material objects and do not need to involve ontological commitments to objects – wave or particles – but must be translated (a la Quine) in different ways, and do not *contradict* each other, except metaphysically.

 Ancient gods, numbers, forces, curvatures of space-time, wave particles, probability densities, black holes …? Do these equations really refer to such “things?” Only experiments, predictions, observations, calculations, really count. **Conclusions**The *meanings* of these equations, in the context of getting the job of science done, are the activities of will to make sense of the world. This statement perhaps needs explanation. That’s the basic intent of these assertions. That’s how they are actually used. It is not irrelevant to ask for the broader *motive* of scientific assertion. Einstein said it had to do with the *joy of discovery*, the absorption, rising above one’s low, ordinary concerns (as Socrates believed). It takes you up and away. Consciousness – self-consciousness – fades into … the inquiry into the “external world,” *out* of subjectivity. Einstein was not naïve about metaphysics

 Here is a plain (but Wittgensteinian) argument for why I think materialism, the ontological commitment to physical objects, is wrong: I feed crackers to a friendly goose in the parking lot of a local mall (I think I’m not supposed to). Is the goose a material object? That is a *metaphysical* question. He (the goose) is a GOOSE, the cracker is a cracker. *This interaction of me and the goose does not prove any ontological thesis.* This goose has a family which he cares about, etc. A person who sees him as a physical object made of tinier physical objects, or a cluster of sense data, obeying purely deterministic physical laws, is blinding himself to the non-physical realities of our world (freedom, will, etc.). Size, weight, color, etc. – measurable, observable qualities – are *not* the whole truth about reality.

 Science is one thing; materialism is something else. Theontological commitments of materialism are no more scientific than those of idealism. We cannot *observe* ‘material objects’ (forces, gravitons, wave packets, etc.) any more than you can observe minds or pains or souls. But we *can* observe a change (a wobble, a precession) in the perihelion of Mercury, and then look to see whether our equations have predicted it accurately. That is what equations are all about.

 SECTION 4: POETRY (SHAKESPEARE)

Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. **(5.1.55)**

She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word,
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. **(5.5.16)**

 SECTION 5: POLITICAL LANGUAGE (RIGHTS)

 **SECTION 6: THE LANGUAGE OF RECONCILIATION**

**Reconcile –** 1. To re-establish friendship between 2. To settle or resolve, as a dispute 3. To bring to acquiescence: *reconcile oneself to defeat* 4. To make compatible or consistent. Often used with *to* or *with*: *reconcile my way of thinking with yours*- *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, William Morris, Editor, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1981

 In the examples given here, I will summarize a situation and use the language of reconciliation to try to come to some resolution of the problem.

 **Example 1**: How do a husband and wife avoid divorce when the husband is convinced that his wife is cheating on him? His wife claims that the relationship is innocent. If they talk about it, the conversation turns into a shouting match and she threatens divorce How can they reconcile this relationship

 **Example 2**: Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was president of Yemen for 33 years, was killed on Monday, Dec. 4, 2017, by Rebels. Mr. Saleh’s death could make things much worse in Yemen – the conflict may become worse with the Houthis in control of the capital and millions of people are at risk for starving.

 Will the conflict deepen and the humanitarian crisis become worse -*The New York Times*, Dec. 5, 2017, “Mayhem in Yemen as Rebels Kill Ex-Strongman,” by Shuaib Almosawa and Ben Hubbard.

 **Example 3**: Senator Al Franken announced Thursday that he is resigning from Congress, succumbing to a torrent of sexual harassment allegations and lack of support from fellow Democrats. But he fired a defiant parting shot at President Trump and other Republicans he said have survived much worse accusations. “I am leaving while a man who has bragged on tape about his history of sexual assault sits in the Oval Office and a man who has repeatedly preyed on young girls campaigns for the Senate with the full support of his party,” Franken said. -*StarNews*, Friday, December 8, 2017, “Combative Al Franken quits,” by Alan Fram, The Associated Press

 **Example 4**: President Trump tweeted his thanks to Senate and House Republicans as they now begin trying to reconcile differences in legislation passed by both chambers, a behind-closed-doors process that is expected to move swiftly. Trump is aiming to sign the tax package into law before Christmas. “Biggest Tax Bill and Tax Cuts in history just passed in the Senate,” he tweeted inaccurately. The overhaul is significant but far from the largest…The measure focuses its tax reductions on businesses and highest-earning individuals, gives more modest breaks to others and offers the boldest rewrite of the nation’s tax system since

1986 …Republicans said the package would benefit people of all incomes and ignite the economy. Even an official projection of a $1 trillion, 10-year flood of deeper budget deficits couldn’t dissuade GOP senators from rallying being the bill …-*StarNews*, Sunday, December 3, 2017, “Tax bill clears Senate in big boost for Trump, GOP,

 By Alan Fram, Marcy Gordon and Stephen Ohlemacher, The Associated Press.

 **Example 5**:

 **SECTION 7: PHILOSOPHICAL LANGUAGE**

SECTION 8: CONCLUSIONS

The True SelfFor meaning as use there can be no such thing or object to refer to as a “self,” a “mind,” or any objects in the mind or self – such as sensations, pains, times, rights to refer to. Wittgenstein rejects the theory of meaning-as-reference. Equally importantly, there can be no material objects, atomic facts, a physical universe, and so forth. Ontology (metaphysics) based on a commitment to such things is effectively undermined. The old idealism and the old naïve materialism can be dropped out like so many beetles in boxes This does not mean (as Quine discerned) that we cannot continue to speak normally. It means that where I say “I have a headache or a pain in my foot” my meaning or my sentence is not a reference to any object but that I am crying out for help or sympathy – depending on the context (“form of life”) of the act of utterance or assertion, and when I say I’ve changed my mind I don’t mean you should look into my brain but that I no longer think a certain way. And when I ask what time it is I am not talking about the position of the hands of a clock or the position of the sun in the sky. And I would argue that when I say “you have a right to be angry, or to hit or hug someone,” I am not referring to a something, a “right,” found in my head or in a written constitution, but instead I am more likely trying to encourage you, even (with legal rights) almost promising you the support of a community or state or some individual, me. That is the meaning of my words,

the objective I am trying to attain, the job I intend to do – again, always, depending on context. That’s what talk about rights is all about. If I say, “I am not myself today,” I don’t mean I am someone else. I am saying I am behaving not up to my normal standard. There is nothing mystical or metaphysical or ontological about any of this. This does not mean “there is no self,” which would be saying something outlandish – you could give it a meaning in a multiplicity of ways, of course, but that would just be a kind of silly image-mongering, which (according to Wittgenstein) is the essence of ontology/metaphysics. We do not have to accept any “ontological commitments” except perhaps to further converse. “2+3=5” is not a reference to “numbers” considered as universals, or “classes.” We do not have to go that far. We can talk about wave packets, warps in space time, “black holes in space” and on and on, but we don’t have to commit ourselves to anything except getting the job (of making sense of the world, the universe,) done. Dr. William Mander takes on Isaiah Berlin’s assertion that we don’t want totalitarian government by arguing that we can make sense of the world by talking about the true self, the ideal self, or God, by talking about Green’s the “common good,” Caird’s “God,” Royce’s “Beloved Community,” the way idealists like Green and Royce have done. [From my point of view both are “right.”] It is true that totalitarianism is despicable, and it also seems true that people have an ideal self which is the aspiration to be a part of a common good. To assert either – to assert that one proposition is true and the other false is to fail to appreciate the basic actual meaning (motive, use) of each assertion. We must not employ a failed theory of meaning in assessing this situation. There is a common good, a true self, but totalitarianism is an evil. This insight does not mean we must give up the true-false distinction. I agree with Mander’s view of freedom: a person is one who acknowledges in himself and others, free agency, rationality, personhood, a “self.” I do not agree with Berlin that the world is deterministic, that we have no actual free will. A recent article in Psychology Today ( ) represents where Berlin’s pluralism comes out: “We are tricked into thinking we have free selves,” the writer says, which is, on meaning-as-use, a meaningless sentence. It gets no work done, because it leaves the speaker in a contradiction. I can assert nothing except through my free will …! It seems clear to me that Berlin, like most philosophers in the analytic tradition, is a naturalist, like Quine, like Marx, handicapped with materialism, determinism, and dismal scientism, a monistic (!) view of the universe as wholly, hopelessly bereft of spirit or personhood, and worse, mind, will or spirit. To insist that we must somehow hold such a bifurcated universe together only extols irrationality. On the other hand, Berlin’s cautions over totalitarianism (Hitler, Stalin, et al) do make some sense to me. Does political liberalism lead to an absolute state? Does idealism lead inexorably from Plato, to Fichte’s German Nationalism, to a Stalinist, communist welfare state? Is that a historical, a political or a religious question?