

PHILOSOPHY NEWS

The Unexamined Life Is Not Worth Living

Edited by Michael Mulnix and Severin Kitanov



The Mulnix vs. Mulnix Battle Royal, March 1, 2010 [left to right: Michael Mulnix, Jennifer Mulnix, Krishna Mallick, Severin Kitanov, William Cornwell, Michael Deere]

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WELCOME ADDRESS

The latest volume of the philosophy newsletter signals the end of a very productive and exciting academic year – a year of reflection, dialectical encounter and self-examination. Thanks to the determination and hard work of the Salem State College philosophy club, the help of the philosophy faculty and the generous support of Dean Jude Nixon and the Salem State administration, our department hosted the 2nd Annual North Shore Undergraduate Philosophy Conference. The conference was an event of foremost significance for both our students and faculty. The success of the conference is just another sign of the lively interest in philosophy on campus. The officers of the philosophy club, assisted and guided by dedicated philosophy professors, have invested precious time and effort in nourishing the student interest in philosophy's many wonders. The club has consistently and painstakingly maintained a busy schedule of events and activities – movie nights, lecture series, and discussion groups. We would like to share with the wider college community a small portion of our department's vibrant life. We invite you to read about our conference and the Philosophy Club events.

Please, join us in congratulating our graduating philosophy minors and applied ethics/philosophy of art concentrations majors. In the spirit of an already firmly rooted tradition, we include in our newsletter the winning essays of our Annual Philosophy Essay Competition – William Kidder's *Lewis's Possible World Theory and the Possibility of Free Will* and Hillary Mackay-Smith's *It's a Metaphor, Literally*. Dr. William Cornwell, for whose classes the winners wrote their essays, has kindly provided an informative commentary on the students' work. Our newsletter also includes a color centerfold featuring Cayla Thompson's incredible artwork crafted under the spell of Dr. Michael Deere's philosophy classes. Enjoy our students' contribution to the life of philosophy at Salem State!

PHILOSOPHY CLUB EVENTS

The Salem State College philosophy club (est. Spring 2009) is completing its first year as an official student club. The club has enjoyed a very vibrant campus life. The past academic year was extraordinarily rich in club activities and events. The philosophy club officers are a very active group of students who care greatly about philosophy. During the past academic year, 2009–2010, the officers organized movie nights at least 3–5 times each semester. The tradition is to show movies on various philosophical themes. The movie viewing is followed by a rigorous discussion guided by Dr. Michael Mulnix, the current philosophy club advisor. The club has also sponsored talks by the philosophy faculty members. In addition to the movie nights, the club has scheduled Nihilism Night discussion events, keeping with the legacy of Dr. Michael Deere who gave birth to the Nihilism Night idea. All of the club events and activities are well attended, often by 20–30 people, most of them students. The club maintains a Facebook page and log. For anyone who is interested in the club, please check Facebook and join the students and faculty who contributed immensely to the presence of philosophy in campus life.



Mulnix vs. Mulnix



Go Mulnix!

MOVIE NIGHTS

1. "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" _____ September 2009
2. "Dark City" _____ October 2009
3. "A Scanner Darkly" _____ November 2009
4. "Harold and Maude" _____ December 2009
5. "Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium" _____ January 2010
6. "Jacob's Ladder" _____ February 2010
7. "The Fountain" _____ March 2010
8. "The Box" _____ April 2010

LECTURES

1. Dr. William Cornwell – "Human Nature Unbound: Why Becoming Cyborgs and Taking Drugs Could Make Us More Human." _____ October 5, 2009
2. Dr. Severin V. Kitanov – "Is There Freedom in Heaven? Peter of Candia's Discussion of the Contingency and Necessity of Enjoying God." _____ October 26, 2009
3. Dr. M. J. Mulnix – "Is Happiness a Feeling: John Stuart Mill and the Concept of Pleasure." _____ November 16, 2009
4. Dr. Severin V. Kitanov – "The Ominous Wisdom of the Philosopher." _____ April 26, 2009

NIHILISM NIGHT

1. "What is the Nature of Time" _____ October 5, 2009
2. "What is the Nature of Identity" _____ November 2, 2009
3. "What is the Nature of Love" _____ November 30, 2009
4. "What is Philosophy for? Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations" _____ February 18, 2010
5. "Patient Autonomy vs. Medical Paternalism" _____ March 1, 2010

2010 UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM PHILOSOPHY PRESENTATIONS



1. Kelsey Dunn, "It's a Moral Question"
– Sponsored by Dr. Krishna Mallick



2. Devin H. McDonald, "Constructive Empiricism's Failed Solution"
– Sponsored by Dr. William Cornwell



3. William Kidder, "A Critique of the Use of the Inference to the Best Explanation Method in Science"
– Sponsored by Dr. William Cornwell

THE FOLLOWING STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN THE UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM WITH A POSTER:

1. Thomas Collins, "Implications of Bottled Water"
– Sponsored by Dr. Krishna Mallick
2. Megan Farmer, "The Great Transformation: Amazon Rainforest to Devastated Desert"
– Sponsored by Dr. Krishna Mallick
3. Joel Rojas, "Marine Pollution in the Pacific Ocean"
– Sponsored by Dr. Krishna Mallick
4. Erin Sweeney, "Deforestation in Brazilian Amazon: An Ethical Debate on the role of cattle ranching"
– Sponsored by Dr. Krishna Mallick

FACULTY RESEARCH: CONFERENCE/SYMPOSIA PRESENTATIONS, INVITED TALKS AND PUBLICATIONS

DR. WILLIAM CORNWELL

Presentations

"The Ethics of Cognitive Augmentation," Gordon College, Philosophical Psychology Lab, January 19, 2010

Publications

"Human Nature Unbound: Why Becoming Cyborgs and Taking Drugs Could Make Us More Human," in Gabriel Ricci, ed., *Values & Technology* (Religion & Public Life vol. 37), Piscataway, NJ: Transaction, forthcoming.

DR. MICHAEL DEERE

Presentations

Panel presentation for the seminar "Translation: Beyond the Personal to the Global," Chaired by Dr. Kristine Doll, North East Modern Languages Association (NEMLA), Montreal, Canada, April 16-17, 2010

Invited Talks

"On Identity," Marblehead Public Library, March 30, 2010

DR. SEVERIN V. KITANOV

Presentations

"The Problem of the Relationship between Philosophical and Theological Wisdom in 13th and early 14th-century Scholasticism," *Wisdom and the Cardinal Virtues*, Viterbo University, La Crosse, WI, April 22-24, 2010

Invited Talks

"What Is Joy, and Why Does It Matter to Us?" Marblehead Community Charter School, March 31, 2010

Publications

"Peter of Candia on Demonstrating that God is the Sole

Object of Beatific Enjoyment," *Franciscan Studies*, 67 (2010), 427–489.

Review of *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry: Their Function and Significance*, ed. by Isabel Iribarren & Martin Lenz, *Religious Studies Review*, 35.4 (2009), 284–284.

Review of *Aquinas and Sartre on Freedom, Personal Identity, and the Possibility of Happiness*, ed. by Stephen Wang, *Religious Studies Review*, 35.4 (2009), 285–285.

DR. KRISHNA MALLICK

Publications

"Buddha" & "Hinduism and Peace Philosophy," in *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*, Oxford University Press, 2010.

DR. MICHAEL MULNIX

Presentations

"Harm, Self-Concerning Conduct and Liberty: Understanding Mill's Harm Principle," Northern New England Philosophical Association Conference, Memphis, NH, October 15-16, 2010

"Patient Autonomy vs. Medical Paternalism," an SSC Philosophy Club sponsored debate with Dr. Jennifer Wilson Mulnix, UMass-Dartmouth, March 1, 2010

"Harm, Self-Concerning Conduct and Liberty: Understanding Mill's Harm Principle," presented at the Mid-South Philosophy Conference, Memphis, TN, March 5-6, 2010

Articles

"Squaring Liberty with Utility," *Review Journal of Political Philosophy*, 7:2 (2010), 25–40.

– "Using a Writing Portfolio Project to Teach Critical Thinking Skills," co-authored with Dr. Jennifer Wilson Mulnix, UMass-Dartmouth, *Teaching Philosophy*, 33:1 (2010), 27–54.

PHILOSOPHY ESSAY CONTEST 2009–2010: WINNING ESSAY

HILLARY MACKAY-SMITH

IT'S A METAPHOR, LITERALLY

When Shakespeare's Jacques offers the famous lines "All the world's a stage/And all the men and women merely players" in the play *As You Like It*, he utters what most will recognize to be a metaphor (II, vii, 139-140). Patently this statement is false; the world is not a stage in the obvious and literal sense. Furthermore, the vast majority of men and women would not consider themselves to be actors upon a stage but rather their plain selves living out their daily lives and routines. Although this literal interpretation of Jacques's statement is correct, there seems to be something more going on. When audience members hear these lines the obvious falsity of the statement catches hold in their imaginations and leads them to wonder why Jacques would so blatantly lie. Hopefully, they will recognize Jacques's statement as a metaphor. Moreover, they may even begin to interpret it understanding that the world is a stage insofar as we all play certain roles and the arc of our lives in many ways resembles that of a 7-act play. Philosophers of language have proposed many theories regarding the nature of metaphor, why we use it, and how we come to understand it. I will explore some of these theories and attempt to prove that the only meaning to metaphor is its literal one. Furthermore, the audience's or reader's understanding of metaphor in any context is contingent upon there being only a literal meaning to metaphor.

In his anthology *The Philosophy of Language*, A. P. Martinich provides what he calls a "standard definition of metaphor": "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another in order to suggest similarity between them." (469) In the above example there is a suggested similarity between the world and a stage. This definition leads into one very popular theory of metaphor championed by philosophers such as John Searle. This theory is known as the "Simile Proposal," in which all metaphor is really disguised simile with the "like" or "as" removed. But if metaphor were really just paraphrased simile, why would we bother using it at all? It is clear that simile and metaphor compare two seemingly unlike things on the basis of some relation, but the two figures of speech are not employed in the same way and need not be treated as identical. There are many problems with this theory that are not relevant to this current discussion; however, Robert Stainton notes one crucial insight to come out of it: "What's correct and important is the insight that similarity often plays a central role in the comprehension of metaphor...noticing the similarity is often an important step in understanding the metaphorical speaker." (Perspectives 177) Without detecting

the similarity between the two juxtaposed items, the metaphor will be unsuccessful.

Another theory of metaphor is known as the "Dual Meaning Proposal." (Perspectives 172) This method of understanding metaphor seems intuitive: metaphors have two meanings, a literal one and a metaphorical one. When Jacques says "All the world's a stage," the metaphorical meaning is that we all perform roles in our daily lives that correlate to the roles actors play on a stage. However, the interpretation I just offered of Jacques's metaphor is only one possible interpretation. Other audience members and critics may arrive at different or modified conclusions. The Dual Meaning Proposal does not allow for a range of interpretations that metaphor necessarily demands. If there were truly an inherent metaphorical meaning to this statement, we should all be in agreement and it should be relatively obvious; however, one of the most recognized characteristics of metaphor is its openness to interpretation. This interpretive quality of metaphor is one reason why it lends itself so well to the craft of fiction, and to dismiss the Dual Meaning Proposal.

What the Dual Meaning Proposal also lacks is a way to distinguish between live and dead metaphors. Dead metaphors, through conventional use and language community acceptance, lose the quality that makes them provocative. Stainton provides "mouth" as an example: mouth "doesn't 'resonate' as a literary device...But imagine how [it] would have sounded before bottles and rivers had mouths." (173) There is a clear and definite quality that makes 'mouth' unsuccessful as a living metaphor. Its reference to the opening of a river or bottle has become part of its literal meaning. This leads to the necessary conclusion that living and dead metaphors are not the same and do not perform the same function in language; however, according to the Dual Meaning Proposal, they should. For metaphor to function as it does in speech as well as works of fiction there must be a distinction between the living and the dead, which this proposal simply does not provide.

We are able to succeed in communication at least partly due to a sense of cooperation and custom. When a conversational guideline is violated, we search for reasons why. H. P. Grice elaborated significantly on this idea in his article "Logic and Conversation." In it he discusses what he calls the "Cooperative Principle." This principle outlines generally the guidelines for successful communication, such as offering the appropriate amount of information, only communicating what one knows to be reliable information, and having a basic level of trust with whomever you're in conversation. Grice also stipulates that when one of the elements of the principle is deliberately breached, we believe the person with whom we are communicating is attempting to tell us something extra. This explains how sarcasm and irony can be used to

ETHICS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

—2ND ANNUAL NORTH SHORE
UNDERGRADUATE PHILOSOPHY
CONFERENCE HOSTED BY
SALEM STATE COLLEGE, SALEM, MA



Left to right standing: Ashley Randeale, Jonathan Ravanelle, Christopher Cogswell, Grant Eilers, Andrew Altman, Daniel Wherren; Left to right sitting: William Kidder, Savannah Pearlman, Cayla Thompson



[Left to right: Dr. Charles E. Scott, Keynote Speaker, Dr. Krishna Mallick, Philosophy Chair, and Dr. Jude Nixon, Dean of the SSC School of Arts and Sciences]

Philosophy hosted the all day 2nd Annual North Shore Undergraduate Philosophy Conference on Saturday, March 27, 2010. Endicott College was the host of the 1st Annual Undergraduate Philosophy Conference (February, 2009). The four North Shore Colleges – Endicott College, Gordon College, Merrimack College and Salem State College – have jointly decided to organize and host a philosophy conference on a rotating basis every year.

The theme of our conference was “Ethics in Uncertain Times.” The theme was picked by the Philosophy Club officers, who wanted this conference to involve maximum student participation. Eight students from different colleges from the Greater Boston, including our own student – William Kidder – presented their papers in four sessions. The following is the list of the student papers:

- “Kant’s Moral Philosophy,” by Gregory Alcaro, Bridgewater State College
- “A Kantian Defense Against Misleading Statements as True,” by Jonathan Ravenelle, Merrimack College
- “Humor as Freedom,” by Christopher Cogswell, University of New Hampshire

– “Lewis’s Possible World Theory & the Possibility of Free Will” by William Kidder, Salem State College

– “The Captain on Call,” by Andrew Altman, Tufts University

– “Malignant Morality with Friedrich Nietzsche,” by Scott Campbell, Bridgewater State College, - “Peter Singer’s Ultimatum,” by Savannah Pearlman, Brandeis University

– “Dewey’s Critique of Mill’s Utilitarianism,” by Grant Eilers, Gordon College.

Each of the four presentation sessions was well attended, and there was a very interesting, stimulating and collegial interaction between the presenter and the participants. The attendees appreciated especially the non-threatening intellectual environment of the conference in which ideas were exchanged freely and the pursuit of wisdom guided the conversations.

Present Philosophy Club President Cayla Thompson and Vice President Daniel Wherren were members of the organizing committee for this conference, along with Dr. Krishna Mallick, Chair and Dr. Michael Mulnix. On the conference day, the Philosophy Club officers moderated the sessions. The success of this conference is due, in large measure, to all the ways in which the Philosophy Club members contributed their time, energy, enthusiasm and most of all their minds. Thanks to you all!

A total of 87 people attended this conference, out of which 56 were Salem State students demonstrating again the groundswell of interest in philosophical wisdom on the campus of Salem State. In addition, all the philosophy faculty members—Dr. Kurt Armsden, Dr. William Cornwell, Dr. Michael Deere, Dr. Severin Kitanov and Dr. Michael Mulnix and the secretary of the department, Donna Folino worked hard to publicize the event, prepare and publish the proceedings of the conference, invite the keynote speaker Dr. Charles Scott, Vanderbilt University, Philosophy Events were posted the event on the website, surveys were prepared for the participants and student presenters from other colleges were welcomed. James Glynn, marketing and communications, Salem State, has written a press release for distribution to local media and reach out to local newspapers about William Kidder’s presentation.

The keynote speaker, Professor Charles Scott, Philosophy Department at Vanderbilt University, spoke on “Ethics in Uncertain Times.” We greatly appreciated his address, and many commented that Professor Scott’s talk was excellent. Professor Scott suggested in his talk that a sense of uncertainty is prevalent in diverse cultures. He also spoke about the five aspects of human consciousness – aesthetic, ethical, religious, the desire to be obedient and free

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CAYLA THOMPSON



Photographed by Kim Mimnaugh

ABSURDITY

Cayla Thompson, Absurdity – The painting was done in 2007 for Dr. Michael Deere's Existentialism class (his first class at SSC, and my first Philosophy class – the one that started it all!) and it reflects the concepts of moral suicide and physical suicide, the death of God, and the duality of self.



Photographed by Kim Mimnaugh

EROS AND PSYCHE

Cayla Thompson, Eros and Psyche –The painting was done in 2009 for Dr. Deere’s Love and Sex class. It portrays the Greek myth in which Eros falls in love with the mortal beauty, Psyche. She is warned that she must never look upon his face, but her sisters convince her that she must see who has been visiting her. She holds an oil lamp up as he sleeps, and a burning drop of oil falls on him and wakes him. He discovers her betrayal of trust, and flies into a rage. Psyche must overcome great trials in order to regain his faith in her.

NOTA BENE!

Daniel Wherren was accepted into New England School of Law. Congrats, Dan! May you have a law-full grad school experience!

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

Philosophy faculty and staff would like to congratulate the following students upon their successful graduation:

Applied Ethics/Philosophy of Art Concentrations Majors – Joe Lambert, Matthew Plassmann, Ashley E. Randeke, Stephen J. Shepard, Daniel Joseph Wherren

Philosophy Minors – Sean W. Burke, John F. Crowley III, Tara Nicole Dolan, Emma Margaret Driskill, Kimberly A. Fournier, Jessica Louise Glacken, Daniel R. Lepore, John F. Martell, Matthew T. Plassmann, Ashley E. Randeke, Alexander A. Soto, Cayla Meredith Thompson, Steven E. White



Our Open House



William Kidder receiving his Essay Contest Winner certificate



Joe Lambert receiving his Philosophy Concentrations Major certificate



Matthew Plassmann receiving his Philosophy Minor certificate



Stephen Shepard receiving his Philosophy Concentrations Major certificate



Daniel Wherren receiving his Philosophy Concentrations Major certificate

PHILOSOPHY ESSAY CONTEST 2009–2010: WINNING ESSAY

WILLIAM KIDDER

LEWIS'S POSSIBLE WORLD THEORY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF FREE WILL

There are certain intuitive ideas linked to human existence that are hard to shake. It is only through philosophical inquiry that some of our most intuitive conventions seem to be turned on their heads. Among these conventions is the belief in free will, a belief that most people hold to be a fundamental part of life. As humans, we like to think that we are constantly making choices, constantly creating our own path in the world. In philosophy, this idea has somewhat recently been linked to David Lewis's counterpart theory because of the idea of possible worlds. Lewis proposes that there are an infinite number of possible worlds in existence in which 'counterparts' of the self that exists in our actual world act in infinitely different ways than that self. Thus, if I take a step to the right, there exists a possible world in which my counterpart steps left, a possible world in which another counterpart steps forward, a world in which another counterpart steps one degree to the right of my step in this world, and so on to infinity.

Because this idea focuses on infinite possibilities, on the surface it would seem to be compatible with free will. However, Lewis's idea of distinct counterparts inhabiting each possible world raises a question of compatibility with free will. In a possible-world paradigm of existence there exists a possible world for every possible event one can think of. Given the existence of these infinite worlds, it is inevitable that there be only one exact course of action in each single possible world, including the actual world. If this were not the case, then there would not be an infinite number of possible worlds to accommodate each possible outcome. Lewis argues that the actual self is not spread across these possible worlds. Rather there exists one unique actual self for each possible world, and only similar counterparts of that self in other possible worlds. Lewis's idea of counterparts thus requires that each unique self be limited to only one possible course of action in accordance with the world that it inhabits. Counterparts of the self, and not the actual self, would carry out any other possible course of action, and can do so only in another possible world. The following line of argument is intended to show that Lewis's theory of possible worlds is incompatible with the idea of free will precisely because of Lewis's conception of counterparts.

In order to establish that Lewis's theory of possible worlds is incompatible with free will it is first essential to define 'free will'. There are innumerable intricacies that philosophers will argue about with regard to free will, but in its most basic

sense free will implies the existence of choice. A common way of thinking of free will in this way is to imagine a Garden of Forking Paths model. This model proposes that "a locus of freely willed action arises when the present offers, from an agent's (singular) past, more than one path into the future." In other words this basic model of free will depends on the existence of alternate paths (i.e. possibilities). For example, in a universe in which free will exists, a person who moved to Montana could have possibly moved to Boston, or moved to Europe, or not moved at all. In this way, free will depends on choice. The person moving chose to move to Montana as opposed to Boston or Europe but each path was equally available to be followed. According to the Garden of Forking Paths model, there are an infinite number of forks in our path, but in order to possess free will we must have the ability to choose which path to follow.

This element of choice is not present in Lewis's possible world paradigm. Essentially, the idea of many possible worlds is an extension of the Garden of Forking Paths model, but each fork in the road becomes its own separate world. Because each fork is its own world, only one path can actually be followed in each possible world, including the actual world. When someone moves to Montana, according to Lewis's possible world theory, there exists a world in which a counterpart of that person moves to Boston, and another world in which another counterpart moves to Europe, and so on *ad infinitum*. The key is that each of these counterparts is its own entity, a separate self, and thus each separate self is presented with only one possible path.

Lewis writes that there exists a world for every possible way that things could be. If this is true, then the world that we inhabit (the actual world) is only one of an infinite number of worlds, for we could certainly imagine an infinite number of possible variations of our actual world (even if they are slight variations). Our world is then simply the one possible world in which everything occurs exactly in the way that it has in our history, and in which everything will occur exactly in a certain way in our future, down to the slightest detail. As such, there is no possibility of choice in our world, or any world for that matter, if Lewis's paradigm is accurate. We may be under the illusion that we could have changed the past if we had made different choices, but, according to Lewis's possible world paradigm, those different choices were actually made in other possible worlds by our counterparts and thus could not have been made by our actual world self. Because there exist infinite possible worlds to accommodate infinite possibilities (including choices), our world is simply the world that accommodates our certain set of possibilities, while simultaneously other worlds must accommodate the other choices we believe we could have made.

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When looked at on the smallest of scales, it becomes even more apparent that our world (and any other world for that matter) would have to be deterministic in Lewis's possible world paradigm. It would be as if each and every thing in each world was moving on an invisible track that could not be changed. For example, our world would be the only one in which Barack Obama is president. Infinite worlds would exist in which Obama's counterparts were elected president, while the difference between counterparts could be as slight as one varying step. That one variation in step distinguishes the 'actual' Obama from a counterpart-Obama, just as a variation from that counterpart's steps would amount to the creation of another counterpart. Infinite counterparts of Obama could look exactly the same and could make the exact same speeches and policy decisions as our actual president, but even just one varying step is one of the infinite possibilities that must be accommodated by another possible world, according to Lewis's theory. In fact, the difference between two worlds could essentially be as minute as a single particle of dust moving a microscopic distance differently than its counterpart in another world. Besides the dust particle, literally everything else could remain exactly the same (in a qualitative sense) in the two worlds but nevertheless they would be different worlds. Because there are infinitely many possible worlds in Lewis's paradigm, any possible change, no matter how minute, would necessitate the existence of a different possible world to accommodate it.

This implies that our reality could not possibly turn out any differently, since there would already exist an infinite number of possible worlds in which an infinite number of different outcomes exist have taken place, and no two of these worlds could be the same. It follows that it would be impossible for anyone to act freely in any existing world. No one could choose to follow a different path in his/her world because the slightest variation would necessitate the existence of another possible world. The variation could then only occur in the world that accommodates it, in which it would not be considered a variation but simply the actual course of action in that possible world. The accommodating world is separated from the other worlds precisely because of this variation. Each existing world must accommodate exactly the possibilities that occur in that world. If any world accommodated different possibilities in any way it would be a different world entirely, inhabited only by distinct counterparts of other worlds' inhabitants. In this way, each world is essentially unchangeable in both its past and future events and thus cannot accommodate free will. Each feature of each world is an essential feature of that world, but free will requires that each person's choices be separate from his/her essence.

Not many people would argue that we cannot change the past, but it is a different story entirely to say that one cannot

change the future. But what really makes the past so different from the future in Lewis's possible world model? One might argue that the future has not happened yet; thus it is different from the past in that we do not know what events will occur in the future, while we do know what events have occurred in the past. Thus, because it is not known for sure what will happen in the future, it seems reasonable to believe that any number of things could happen. If any number of things could happen, then it also seems somewhat reasonable to believe that one's choices dictate which things actually do happen. However, although Lewis's possible world theory is based on this sort of idea of alternate possibilities, the idea of choice cannot fit with his possible world picture of reality. Lewis's theory separates each one of these apparent possibilities into its own world, in turn making each possible outcome the only outcome that could actually occur in each respective possible world. This is problematic with regard to the free will of an individual because, according to Lewis, an individual cannot exist in more than one possible world. Thus any individual could not control his/her own future, even if he/she did not know what the future would hold. Thus, the future of each possible world may not be known by the inhabitants of that specific world, but essentially that future could in some way be known by inhabitants of another possible world.

For example, say that I am driving and reach a fork in the road. I decide to make a left turn. According to Lewis's theory, we can then claim to know that in another possible world a counterpart of mine made a right turn. Now, consider the world in which that counterpart made a right turn. In that world my counterpart could claim to know that in another possible world one of his counterparts made a left turn. Well, this is in fact true. In our actual world I did in fact make a left turn, and in our actual world I am in fact a counterpart of my counterpart in that other possible world. Although no one in our actual world could know for sure that I would in fact make a left turn, the inhabitants of the world in which my counterpart made a right turn could know for certain that in at least one other possible world a counterpart (who turns out to be me in the actual world) would turn left.

This sort of example highlights the problem of identity that is inherent in Lewis's possible world theory in connection with the belief in free will. Lewis argues that each possible world is equally real and, as such, is equally real to our actual world. It is possible to argue that this idea of equally real possible worlds implies infinite free will, but it is not possible to make such an argument through the lens of Lewis's counterpart theory. One might say that although in this world a person acted a certain way, in another equally real world that same person was able to act another way; thus the choice to act in different ways was still a reality for that person. This argument is based on the idea that a person's identity could remain consistent across possible worlds, an idea that Lewis explicitly denies.

Although Lewis's counterpart theory seems to solve the problem of identity with regard to possible worlds, it also by extension implies the lack of free will inherent in a counterpart based possible-world paradigm. Lewis proposed that the seemingly identical person to me who did not walk through the door is not me but rather a 'counterpart' of me. Thus, each counterpart of me is his own self, a self that is simultaneously similar to me but not me. This line of thinking is helpful with regard to the identity problem linked with possible world theory because it makes saying something like "I am the walrus" no longer necessary. There is a more concrete definition of self: the self is contained in each actual world in which it exists. If this is to be the case, then each self by definition remains constrained on the one path that his/her possible world must follow. One could not say "I could not act differently in this world, but I chose to act differently in another possible world" because, according to Lewis, there is only one 'I' that does not transcend its actual world. In this view, one could not possibly have free will because each self would by necessity be fulfilling a possible action that his/her other counterparts did not (and could not) fulfill in another possible world.

This idea seems to contradict Lewis's claim in *On the Plurality of Worlds* that nothing that happens in one world causes anything to happen in another. Although it definitely seems reasonable that there is no direct physical causation (Lewis writes that each world bears no spatial-temporal relation to any other world), it also seems that things that happen in one world are necessitated by what happens in another. For example the fact that I take a left turn in my actual world necessitates that some counterpart of mine in another possible world must make a right turn. That certain counterpart could not turn left because that possibility has already been realized in another possible world (my actual world). This seems to raise a chicken before the egg type of question: did my left turn necessitate the counterpart's right turn or did the counterpart's right turn necessitate my left turn? It seems essentially impossible to answer that question; thus, all that can really be said is that the counterpart's action and my action are, in a way, mutually reliant on one another. With regard to free will this point is important because it shows that the causation of our actions is unrelated to any sort of choice. I could not claim that I chose to turn left and then in a domino effect my counterparts went in all other directions. One could not prove such a claim, for I could just as easily say that my counterpart chose to turn right and in a domino effect I turned left. This line of thinking points away from the existence of choice in any world and towards the existence of a pluriverse in which each world is set on a predestined track.

When thinking about the issues presented in this paper it is important to examine what we mean when we say that a thing could have been another way, or that one could have

chosen to do something else. Within the context of Lewis's possible world paradigm, we would mean that in another possible world a counterpart of that thing is another way, or that a counterpart of that person did do something else. The goal of this paper is to show that free will cannot exist within such a context. There are arguments against the existence of possible worlds and, for that matter, arguments against the belief in free will that have nothing to do with possible world theory. Thus, this paper is not meant to argue for the truth of Lewis's possible world paradigm or against the existence of free will, rather it is meant to argue against the compatibility of the two. This means that if this argument is correct, one may choose to support either the idea that free will exists or the idea that Lewis's proposed paradigm is correct, but one could not choose to support both.

WORKS CITED

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PROFESSOR'S COMMENT

William Kidder wrote his essay on free will in my Reality and Knowledge (PHL 315) course in fall 2009 and presented it at the 2nd Annual North Shore Undergraduate Philosophy Conference in March 2010 at Salem State College. His paper examines the implications of David Lewis's metaphysical theory of possible worlds for freedom of the will. Lewis's influential theory is that every possibility, no matter how slight, must be true in some "possible world." Lewis uses the term "possible world" expansively to refer not to a single planet but to a unique and complete collection of facts that could coexist—a non-actual possible world is like an alternative history (and present and future) of the actual universe. Possible worlds are supposed to provide the metaphysical resources needed to analyze freedom of the will: To say that somebody freely purchased a rose but could have purchased a carnation is to say that in the actual world, the person purchased a rose, but in a different possible world, the person purchased a carnation. (To be precise, nothing can exist in two possible worlds, so the carnation is purchased by a "counterpart" of the person who picks the rose.) Kidder ingeniously argues that Lewis's theory does not preserve freedom of the will but instead locks a person into a deterministic or fatalistic path through life. If Kidder's arguments work, the reader should consider whether the most reasonable alternative is to give up on free will or give up on Lewis's theory of possible worlds.

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enrich conversation as the people communicating are actively engaging in a dialogue that transcends basic, essential literal meaning. It also applies perfectly to metaphor, specifically the theory that the only meaning is the literal meaning.

In his article “What Metaphors Mean,” Donald Davidson argues that “metaphor belongs exclusively to the domain of use. It is something brought off by the imaginative employment of words and sentences and depends entirely on the ordinary meanings of those words and hence the ordinary meanings of the sentences they comprise.” (Martinich 474) In terms of meaning, words used to comprise the sentences that convey metaphor have no extra sense or meaning other than their literal ones; what the statement does or accomplishes, on the other hand, is what is paramount. Jacques’s metaphor that the world is a stage is comprehensible by virtue of its literal meaning, but it is not because the metaphor has an extra, inherent meaning with which to compare the literal one. This is where Grice’s Cooperative Principle proves to be so valuable. In issuing a statement that is blatantly false, such as “All the world’s a stage,” the listener’s interest is piqued and he searches for a reason why the speaker would do such a thing. What he hopefully settles upon is that the speaker was ‘getting at’ something metaphorical. We know that the world is not literally a stage, which is what allows this statement to accomplish its work as metaphor. This interaction between speaker and listener, playwright and audience, or author and reader is what metaphor provokes, specifically and entirely due to its one literal meaning.

While it appears to be almost an ironic claim, the literal meaning of metaphor is what allows our use of it to be so vast and creative. In terms of metaphor, its use is what sets it apart from other figures of speech. Metaphor does not step from a page and ‘say’ something to the reader. The reader notes that the writer has consciously and deliberately violated the Cooperation Principle and attempts to find out why. If either the Simile or Dual Meaning Proposals were true, this effort would not be necessary—the comparison would be obvious. This is why the success of metaphor hinges on its literal meaning. Metaphor gives agency to the interpreter by way of its literal meaning. The reader must make sense of it as the literal meaning points to the language’s own failure to say what it means to do. Without the imaginative quality to the performance of metaphor, it is not meaningless, but useless.

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PROFESSOR’S COMMENT

Hillary Mackay-Smith wrote her paper on metaphors for a directed study on philosophy of language that I supervised in spring 2009. (This is the second time she has won the essay competition.) Metaphors are a puzzling subject, because they involve asserting the identity of two things that are not identical. Taken literally, metaphors are false: Time is not a thief, and a person’s eyes are not stars in the heavens. Nonetheless, metaphors are surprisingly common and may seem to express some truth that is not captured in their literal meanings. Consequently, some philosophers have suggested that in addition to the literally false meaning of a metaphor, there is a metaphorical and, oftentimes, true meaning that the metaphor conveys. Mackay-Smith deftly examines and rejects that “dual meaning” proposal. She instead favors an analysis founded on H.P. Grice’s theory of conversational implicatures. Mackay-Smith argues that the person who reads or hears a metaphor, first interprets it literally and recognizes that it violates Grice’s maxim of mutual communicative cooperation (put roughly, each person normally should try to help a conversation along by providing relevant and true information). Believing that the creator of the metaphor is not insane and is not trying to be uncooperative by spouting nonsense, the reader or hearer will conclude that the language is being used metaphorically and is an invitation to imaginatively think about how the items in the metaphor resemble each other. On this model, the recipient of the metaphor does not passively imbibe some predetermined “metaphorical meaning” but instead creatively constructs an interpretation of the metaphor, an interpretation that is grounded in the materials and opportunity provided by the author but that is not answerable to the author’s thoughts about how the items in the metaphor resemble each other.
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spiritedness, which constitute another kind of uncertainty that is indigenous for human beings. Professor Scott’s message was: “But if the question of ethics is taken seriously, uncertainty is not the enemy.”

As I step down from the chair’s position after eight years, I will have very good memory of this conference. Thanks to Dean Jude Nixon and the philosophy club’s support through Student Government Association for this conference.

Dr. Krishna Mallick, Department Chair