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Socrates and Wittgenstein: Philosophy as Therapy

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COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

SOCRATES AND WITTGENSTEIN:

PHILOSOPHY AS THERAPY

By

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A Thesis submitted to the
Department of Philosophy
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Degree Awarded:
Fall Semester, 2005

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*For my husband, Josh,
in honor of his unrelenting faith in me.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks are in order: to my committee members, thank you for having so much patience with me. To Karen Foulke and Margaret Dancy, thank you so much for everything you have done that has helped me and made my life easier while working on this manuscript. Finally, thanks to all my family and especially my brother for all of the unwavering support you have given me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	vi
INTRODUCTION: PHILOSOPHY AS THERAPY.....	1
1. CHAPTER I: SOCRATES' PHILOSOPHY AS THERAPY.....	5
2. CHAPTER II: WITTGENSTEIN'S PHILOSOPHY AS THERAPY.....	20
3. CHAPTER III: SOCRATES AND WITTGENSTEIN.....	35
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	44
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	45

ABSTRACT

This is an investigation of philosophy as therapy, an examination of two philosophers who engage in philosophy as therapy, and an analysis of the success of that philosophy as therapy. In the first place, what is philosophy as therapy? A therapy leads to health, or corrects an illness. A philosophical therapy is a therapy that either uses philosophy as the method of the therapy or has a philosophy as the goal of the therapy. A philosophical therapy involves a “distinctively philosophical activity in a therapeutic practice if it is to be philosophical” according to James Peterman. Peterman lays out criteria of this philosophical activity and he also lays out requirements of a philosophical therapy. He defends Wittgenstein’s method of therapy on these grounds, and I extend this defense to Socrates’ method of therapy.

Secondly, it is my contention that both Socrates and Wittgenstein, though far apart in time and seemingly very separate in method, have a therapeutic approach to philosophy, with similar goals of ultimate happiness. They both use philosophy as a method of therapy. In both cases the method involves examinations: Socrates examines human beliefs and opinions and Wittgenstein examines how people are seduced and confused by language. Socrates wants to help people both realize their own ignorance, and also lead people to a correct view of reality by attaining wisdom, which is partly an acknowledgement of one’s own ignorance. Wittgenstein wants to eliminate linguistic confusions in order to help bring people into agreement with reality. In both cases the end result is a happier person—either because he no longer thinks he knows when he doesn’t, or because he no longer has a skewed view of language resulting in a faulty view of reality.

Finally, how successful are Socrates and Wittgenstein in their methods of philosophy as therapy? Peterman gives an analysis of health that lays a foundation for claiming that Wittgenstein’s project leads to philosophical health. This analysis is based on Nordenfelt’s definition of health. While it is not our “everyday” notion of health, it is a perfectly reasonable

construction of our notion of health. Because of this, I claim that Socrates' project also leads to philosophical health. Socrates and Wittgenstein were not engaged in the same project, nor did Wittgenstein even believe that Socrates' project could get off the ground. Nonetheless, both projects are therapeutic, with varying degrees of success.

INTRODUCTION: PHILOSOPHY AS THERAPY

A therapy leads to a health, or corrects an illness. One can define health as the absence of illness. Or one can define illness as the absence of health. The former is a negative conception of health, while the latter is a positive conception of health. Peterman argues that Wittgenstein's therapy "appears to be based on a negative notion of health as the absence of certain types of linguistic confusion (2)." But he also believes that Wittgenstein must be committed to some positive notion of health. Wittgenstein's aim in philosophy as he states himself is clarity (see PI 133). He brings about this clarity by changing the way we view language. He adjusts our attitude towards it. This is to bring us into agreement with the form of life. That is the positive aspect to which Peterman refers.

In the case of the therapy of Socrates, the therapy must be based on a negative notion of health as the absence of certain types of ethical confusion arising from hubris. But he also must have a positive notion of health because he attempts to adjust our attitude towards what we think we know. His goal is to help us examine ourselves to get at a moral clarity that many people lack. Both Socrates and Wittgenstein are concerned with ethical health. They simply have different approaches.

Peterman distinguishes two ways in which we can look at philosophical therapy. He uses a metaphor of drug therapy to clarify his point. 'Drug therapy' can either refer to a therapy meant to cure someone of an addiction to drugs, or it can refer to a method of using drugs (pharmaceuticals) to achieve a therapeutic result (Peterman 3). In the same manner, 'philosophical therapy' can refer to either the method by which the therapy is performed, or the goal of the therapy. It seems odd to think of philosophical health or illness. Peterman says that this is because "philosophical therapy itself is not committed to any particular goal by virtue of which it is philosophical" (4). Rather, 'philosophical' means that the goals are "characterized and defended on philosophical grounds" (4). The 'philosophical grounds' refers to grounds that are

“arrived at in a philosophical account and justification of the ideal of health in question” (4). This means that the ultimate goal of the therapy may not be philosophical at all. It might be, as Peterman points out, cultural, theistic, etc. He believes that Wittgenstein’s goal is ethical. Socrates’ goal is ethical as well. An ethical goal is a philosophical goal.

It’s not enough to simply give a philosophical justification in order to call a therapy philosophical. One might be able to give a philosophical defense of prayer, but that would not make prayer a philosophical therapy. It would still be a religious therapy, but one that is philosophically justified (4). Instead, there must be a “distinctively philosophical activity in a therapeutic practice if it is to be philosophical” (4). Peterman specifically suggests, “some form of dialectical exchange” (4). Notably, Socrates engages his interlocutor in dialectical exchange, forcing self-examination of beliefs through the elenchus. Wittgenstein has an interlocutor as well, though it is not always clear who his interlocutor is. Peterman lays out four specific criteria for the dialectic exchange to work in a therapeutic context. Merely having a philosophical discussion as an academic exercise is not enough. Peterman’s four essential criteria are as follows:

1. The requirement of confession: the interlocutor must acknowledge what he actually believes.
2. The acknowledged belief must be challenged and refuted if mistaken.
3. The interlocutor must be led to a new way of looking at things, which is better than the old way (a move toward the “therapeutic ideal” that governs the practice).
4. There must be some agreement on the goals of the therapy. This agreement may be reached prior to the dialectic exchange, or “may emerge in the course of it” (5).

The first thing to notice is that one cannot have a dialectical exchange with a horde of people together. This kind of philosophical therapy is done one individual at a time. The specific form of the therapy will vary depending on the specific form of the illness. Peterman points out that two people may have a similar philosophical confusion on the surface. But the confusion may result from totally different ways of thinking. The therapy would be different for each person. Wittgenstein only has one interlocutor at a time. Socrates may have two and sometimes three, but he still works with each of them individually. The reason that the therapy must be an individual thing instead of a mass endeavor is due to the specific criteria mentioned above. Since the interlocutor must acknowledge what he actually believes, it would be hard to address a large

crowd of people who may have different beliefs all at once. Also, the view must be challenged and refuted if mistaken. This can only work on an individual basis. If two people have the same (mistaken) belief for very different reasons, then it could take entirely different arguments to persuade each of the different individuals to give up the mistaken view.

Peterman also lays out three requirements of a philosophical therapy. The first requirement is that “whatever conception of health [the philosophical therapy] proposes, it must be able to show that this conception is supported by an account of human well-being” (7). A person must be better off, i.e. healthier, by undergoing the therapy. Secondly, restoring this “aspect of well-being” must be a restoration of health. In other words, it has to be the case that the absence of this aspect is “an impairment of some centrally important human capacity” (8). I would argue that a restoration of happiness is a restoration of health, and the absence of happiness is an impairment of a centrally important human capacity. Both Wittgenstein and Socrates are concerned to restore human happiness. The third requirement is that the proposed therapeutic practice (i.e. the elenchus or the philosophical investigations) can bring about the desired therapeutic result. Otherwise, what would be the point?

In Socrates’ case, he is concerned with ignorance. Cushman argues that it is a “double ignorance”—that is, not only is man ignorant, but also he doesn’t realize his own ignorance (Cushman 47). Socrates’ therapy, therefore, is twofold. First he has to expose man’s ignorance so that he recognizes that there is a problem. Then, once a person understands that he really doesn’t know what he thinks he knows, he’s ready for an adjustment in his view of reality. Socrates believes that living a moral life will lead to happiness, and happiness is the ultimate goal.

Wittgenstein is concerned with confusion. He uses language games as his therapeutic method. He wants to help us take a step back from how we look at language, and how our confusion arises. He says he is “showing the fly out of the fly-bottle” (PI 309). The way he does this is take a look at how we arrived at our confusion, either by giving similes or analogies to help bring us to a different perspective, or by showing us through several examples that the language doesn’t operate the way we think it does. Once we realize how it does operate, ideally we are no longer confused. He acknowledges that language can be tricky or seductive. That is why we are tempted into the ways of thinking that confuse us. Peterman argues that the later philosophy of Wittgenstein is building on the earlier. He says that the later work has “an ethical importance that stems from the early ethical views” (10) with a therapeutic approach. He argues

that Wittgenstein is “engaged in an ethical therapy designed to bring one into agreement with the world” (11-12). Peterman uses the model of a philosophical therapy that he set forth to defend this claim.

Socrates and Wittgenstein are both engaged in philosophical therapy, and they are both concerned with ethical health, which is based on a notion of happiness. However, they use different methods, and their goals are not completely the same. Wittgenstein suggests that one could eventually quit doing philosophy. The reason one could quit is because everything would be clear and there would be no more confusion. At that point, there would be no further reason to engage in philosophical activity, for Wittgenstein. Notice that he never seemed to get to that point.

On the other hand, Socrates thought that living the philosopher’s life is the best life that one could live. Doing philosophy itself is therapeutic for Socrates, and he had no desire to quit doing it. Engaging in philosophy, constantly examining one’s beliefs, leads to a true view of reality. Cushman points out that in the *Phaedo*, wisdom is the realization of the native conformity of the soul with essential reality (282). Also in the *Republic*, the guardians attain wisdom (282). He calls wisdom the “fruit” of *therapeia*. I suggest that means that the goal of the therapy is to attain wisdom. The practice of philosophy itself, through dialectic, is how one attains wisdom. Cushman says that the “efficacy of dialectic is, first, to encourage self-knowledge; second to induce *aporia* and void presumption; and third, to solicit agreement to evident truths which, by implication, involve ulterior consequences” (298). Once one attains wisdom, one knows how to live virtuously, and therefore one can be happy, since virtue and *eudaimonia* (happiness) are inseparable (10).

My goal in this work is to first examine Socrates’ method of philosophy as therapy. I hope to show, through the use of examples taken from the dialogues that he uses his method of elenchus to lead us to a clearer understanding of the way the world really is, and ultimately to wisdom and happiness. Second, I will examine Wittgenstein’s method of philosophy as therapy. I intend to use examples from his remarks to illustrate his method of arriving at clarity, and discuss their therapeutic value, based on Wittgenstein’s stated goal. Finally, I will examine the success of their different methods. I hope to show that though they have different approaches, they are both concerned with the ethical health of human cultures and they are both successful to some degree of contributing to that ethical health.

CHAPTER I: SOCRATES' PHILOSOPHY AS THERAPY

In this chapter I shall discuss Socrates' method of philosophy as therapy through examples in the dialogues where Socrates himself tells us what he is up to. Socrates' use of the elenchus, or cross-examination in dialogue, is the best way to tend to his soul, which is the most important activity a person can do. Humans are in a state of existence where their own appetites rule their moral decisions. The problem is that they don't realize that an erroneous view of reality skews what their appetites tell them they want. Presumably, if humans had the true view of reality, i.e. if they had correct knowledge, their desires would change and they would make correct moral decisions (or better moral decisions). They would make these (better or correct) decisions because they would *want* to. This ignorance is the condition of humans that Socrates finds himself confronting, and it is this condition that compels him to his method of *therapeia* (as Cushman calls it). Socrates uses the elenchus to draw men into conversation and force them to examine their beliefs. This is his therapeutic method. If Socrates can cause men to doubt their views and come to know through self-examination the correct view, then he will have put them on the road to recovery, so to speak. He encourages this self-examination at every turn.

In the *Apology*, Socrates is forced into explaining how he does philosophy, and why he does it that way. He is on trial for his life, and that makes his position all the stronger. Philosophy is so important to him that he would rather die than stop doing it.

Socrates explains that he is on a quest to discover someone who is wiser than he is. It's not that he's arrogant and so full of himself that he thinks he's the wisest man around. But the Oracle at Delphi has said that there is no one wiser than Socrates (21a). Socrates finds this hard to believe, since he thinks that he is not wise, so he begins looking for someone who is wiser than he in order to be able to "refute the oracle and say to it: 'This man is wiser than I, but you said I was'" (21b). So he begins to examine men who have a reputation for wisdom, and finds out that they are not wise. He comes to believe that the main difference between himself and men

who purport that they have wisdom is that while neither of them “knows anything worthwhile” (21d) the other men believe they know something when they don’t, but Socrates does not believe himself to have knowledge he doesn’t really possess. He is famous for saying that he knows that he does not know. He believes this is where his wisdom comes from, and in this he is wiser than the man who thinks he knows when he does not know. Socrates calls his wisdom a “human wisdom” (20d). Socrates doesn’t attach much importance to this human wisdom, except as a way to avoid hubris: at 23a-b he explains his interpretation of the oracle’s words to mean “human wisdom is worth little or nothing, and that when he says this man, Socrates, he is using my name as an example, as if he said: ‘This man among you, mortals, is wisest who, like Socrates, understands that his wisdom is worthless’.”

Socrates examined many men, beginning with the politicians, and found himself becoming unpopular because he constantly showed these men that they really weren’t as wise as they thought they were. He kept on, though, because he felt that his quest was divinely ordered. At 22a he says “in my investigation in the service of the god I found that those who had the highest reputation were nearly the most deficient, while those who were thought to be inferior were more knowledgeable”. He moved on from the politicians and started examining the poets, in the hopes that they knew something more than he, since he does not write poetry. He found that the poets couldn’t even explain their own poetry and concluded that the poets have a divine gift that is inborn (22b) that they don’t really understand. Unfortunately, the poets, “because of their poetry...thought themselves very wise men in other respects, which they were not” (22c). So again, Socrates found himself the wiser, simply because he did not claim, even to himself, to have knowledge that he did not really have.

He moved on to the craftsmen with similar results: craftsmen have a particular knowledge about their craft (and it’s important knowledge, Socrates recognizes, and in this respect he did find them wiser than he, since he didn’t have knowledge of their crafts) but because they have this knowledge, they also think they have knowledge about other things which they don’t really have knowledge about. This ignorance, Socrates says, “overshadowed the wisdom they had” (22e) and so Socrates determined that it is better to be as he already is, i.e. to know that he does not know rather than have some specialized knowledge and then think he knows about other things when he doesn’t.

Several places in the *Apology* show Socrates claiming that his examinations are right, that he believes his position to be best and therefore must be defended, and that he is trying to help people, specifically Athenians, to have the right attitude. At 28b-c he points out that the risk of death is unimportant if a man thinks what he does is right. While it may seem overly dramatic to compare himself to Achilles who scoffed his own at death at the point of revenging his best friend's death, in truth Socrates is on trial for his very life because of his way of doing philosophy. It's not mere drama. He truly believes that when he examines people's knowledge, seeking wisdom, he is helping them when he shows them they are not wise or that they do not know. He even points out at 29a that fearing death is a prime example of what he has been fighting against. No man knows what will happen to him after death, so "to fear death...is no other than to think oneself wise when one is not, to think one knows what one does not know" (29a). Since it makes no sense to fear death, the threat of death is not sufficient to make him cease doing philosophy the way that he believes it ought to be done.

He tells the jury at his trial that he will not cease, but rather continue to question and examine, because to him it is a divine, moral commandment (29d-30a). Though it sounds arrogant, he says that his service to the god is a great blessing to the city (30a). His goal is to persuade people to have a higher regard for the soul than the body, thereby perpetuating excellence (30a). Killing him actually does a disservice to the city (30e) because he forces people to examine themselves—their beliefs and their morals—and not very many other people make this kind of demand of excellence. He is trying to save people from themselves:

That I am the kind of person to be a gift of the god to the city you might realize from the fact that it does not seem like human nature for me to have neglected all my own affairs and to have tolerated this neglect now for so many years while I was always concerned with you, approaching each of you like a father or an elder brother to persuade you to care for virtue. (31a-b)

Socrates, unlike those others who claim to teach wisdom, does not take payment for his behavior and as proof he points out that he lives in poverty. He himself emphatically denies that he teaches anything (33a-b); rather he questions people who are willing to be questioned in order to examine them, and force them to examine themselves. He says, "it is the greatest good for a man to discuss virtue every day and those other things about which you hear me conversing and testing myself and others, for the unexamined life is not worth living" (38a).

In the *Apology*, Socrates lays out his mission, and there are several points that he makes in the *Apology* that he comes back to again in other dialogues. He comes back to the fact that

there is no good reason for him to fear death in the *Crito* (47e-48a, 52c, 54b) and again in the *Phaedo* (61c-d, 62d, 63b-c, 64a). He comes back, either directly or indirectly to the fact that many men think they know when they do not in several other dialogues. He demonstrates his method of elenchus or dialectic, which is his method of therapy, in most of the dialogues to some degree. This brings up the question about whose therapy this is.

Is the person referred to in the *Apology* and in most of Plato's other dialogues, the historical Socrates? I think there is plausible evidence to think that there was an historical Socrates, and that Plato wrote dialogues featuring the historical Socrates and his philosophy. It would be especially plausible to think that the Socrates in the *Apology* is a fairly accurate rendering of the historical figure, based on the argument set forth in the introduction to the dialogue in the Grube edition (23). It is a matter of history that Socrates made a speech to a jury of his peers, was found guilty of the charges brought against him, and then sentenced to death. Therefore, while Plato very likely took some poetic license in this dialogue, there would be people alive when he published it that would remember the actual speech—people who had actually been at the trial including Plato himself. So Plato mostly likely would not have made up something wholly different from what Socrates actually said or the tone in which Socrates said it. In the *Apology* at least, it is likely that we encounter the historical Socrates.

It should not go unnoticed that Xenophon, a contemporary of Plato, also wrote an *Apology of Socrates*, called the *Apologia*, which also claims to present the historical Socrates. Xenophon's Socrates is a more arrogant version, though that was probably not his intent. Xenophon's work emphasizes Socrates' readiness to die, claiming that he's old now, and approaching an age where he would likely become infirm, and so now dying would be a blessing for a number of reasons (§ 7). Furthermore, Xenophon's Socrates claims to have lived a wholly pious and righteous life (§ 5), where Plato's Socrates makes no such claims and is altogether more humble. W.K.C. Guthrie points out that if Xenophon's Socrates were the more accurate Socrates, then it would hardly seem likely that he would have "excit[ed] the love and admiration of men as wise as Plato and as talented and high-spirited as Alcibiades" (339). While Guthrie does point out some elements in common between Xenophon's account of the trial and Plato's, it's important to keep in mind that Plato was at the trial and Xenophon was not. There seems to be some debate about where Xenophon got his information, and Guthrie remarks in a footnote that one source may have been Plato himself (340, note 1). Guthrie sums up his account with the

following verdict: “To conclude, Xenophon’s *Apology* is of little or no independent value, and may be set aside in favor of a serious consideration of Plato’s writings on the same subjects” (340). That being the case, I assert again that it is in Plato’s *Apology* that we are most likely to encounter the historical Socrates.

However, while some of the other dialogues may feature the historical Socrates, it is also plausible that Plato’s other dialogues instead show a development in his own philosophy that he uses the Socrates figure to portray. Perhaps he uses the Socrates figure out of reverence or respect for the historical figure, or he owes the beginning of the development of his philosophy to Socrates and wants to give him credit. The reason really does not matter for my purposes in this work. The Socrates in the dialogues is the one Plato gives us. My main concern is with the philosophy itself, not to whom it belongs, but for consistency I will refer to *Socrates* as the person doing the philosophy. My view is that the philosophy itself is therapeutic, whether it’s Socrates performing the therapy or Plato. The methods employed by the Socrates in the dialogues are therapeutic, as is the aim of Socrates.

The most important theme raised in the *Apology* by Socrates is the illness of the men of Athens. There are men who think they know when they do not (most men are in this condition). Cushman calls this a double ignorance, and he says that for Socrates, it is a sin against the soul (Cushman 46).

In the *Republic*, Socrates gives the famous allegory of the Cave, beginning at 514a. The allegory illustrates the human condition as Socrates sees it. The people in the Cave have a skewed view of reality. However, they have no idea that their view is not the true view. They live in double ignorance. They are chained in a cave that has one entrance and exit, which is “a long way up” (514a), and one light source that is behind them. They have been there “since childhood” and they can face only forward due to their bonds (514a-b). Because of their position, they cannot see the fire behind them, nor can they see the path between the fire and themselves. There is a wall along the path and “people along the wall, carrying all kinds of artifacts that project above it—statues of people and other animals, made out of stone, wood, and every material. And as you’d expect, some of the carriers are talking, and some are silent” (514b-515a). The only things the prisoners see are the shadows cast on the wall in *front* of them. The shadows are cast by the fire behind the prisoners, and the shadows are of the objects the people along the wall are carrying.

“[The people] are like us,” Socrates says explicitly at 515a. When they talk to each other and name the shadows they see, they believe they are naming the actual things (515b). For example, if they saw the shadow of a wolf, they would name it “wolf” and believe that what they see is a true wolf. Socrates further explains that there is an echo in the cave, so that when the people behind the prisoners carrying the objects speak, the prisoners hear the sound from the shadows in front of them (515b). The prisoners can’t see any other reality—they are chained in place. They have no reason to question their view of reality—it’s always been this way for them since childhood. They “believe that the truth is nothing other than the shadows of those artifacts” (515c). This is the human condition. People have no idea that their view of truth is nothing but shadows on a wall.

On the other hand, they think they do know. If someone were to come to them and say that all they are seeing are shadows on a wall, they would argue and fight with that person, possibly unto the point of death (517a). That’s the problem of the double ignorance. It’s willful ignorance. Not only does man not know, and thinks he does know, but also he refuses to consider that he does not know. Socrates continues the allegory by imagining that one of the prisoners is set free and forced to look around for the first time. The prisoner fights the new sights (blinded by the brighter light), believing the “new” objects untrue—he tries to turn back to the familiar shadows, still believing them to be the true objects (515d-e). He has to be *forced* up the path out of the cave, which might be painful and he might be irritated at that rough treatment (515e). When he first comes out of the cave into the daylight, he would be blinded by the sunlight (516a), and it would take a little while for his eyes to adjust. Eventually, however, he’d see everything clearly. Once he sees everything, he would realize that the shadows back in the cave were nothing but shadows and that what he sees now are the true objects.

He would have pity for the prisoners back in the cave, and their idea of wisdom would no longer seem very wise to him (516c). He would consider himself much better off now that he knows. Further, he would scoff at any honors or praise the prisoners would hand out for being ‘wise’ and guessing correctly at upcoming shadows because he would know that those beliefs are falsely held. Finally, if this person were returned to the cave, he’d be in a tough predicament. Now his eyes must adjust back to the darkness of the cave and he will not be able to see the shadows as well as he once could. His fellow prisoners would make fun of him since he could no longer be very competitive in the guessing of upcoming shadows. They would have no interest in

journeying up out of the cave themselves because they would believe it did more harm than good—look at this guy who left. Now he’s back and he can’t see a thing! They would fight against anyone who tried to make them take the same journey (517a). They are happy in their ignorance and refuse to believe that it is, in fact, ignorance. Taking the allegory a little further, the man who comes back into the cave would be miserable coming back, knowing the truth of what’s outside the cave (and even that they are in a cave). But he would perhaps feel compelled to share the truth with the others in spite of any ridicule he receives, constantly forcing the others to examine what they think they know. He might consider it a moral duty to persevere unto the point of death to help the others.

The human condition of willful ignorance is the condition that Socrates fought against so hard every day. He endured their ridicule, continually examining and questioning them, trying to get them to see that their view of reality is skewed and at the very least they need to realize that they do not know what they think they know. He kept at it for years and finally had to defend himself in a public trial and ultimately died for his trouble. He must have felt very strongly about his mission.

It is important to examine Socrates’ philosophical method directly, to understand why he thought it the best way to accomplish his goal. According to Cushman, the purpose of philosophy, the point of doing it, is “that of rightly disposing men toward truth” (xviii). The way to do that is through the elenchus. The *Euthyphro* and the *Theaetetus* are two dialogues in which Socrates challenges his interlocutor to examine his beliefs for truth. Though both dialogues end in *aporia*, puzzlement, the feeling at the end of each dialogue is very different. In both dialogues Socrates is engaging in therapy, but only in the *Theaetetus* does it seem like he had any degree of success.

In the case of the *Euthyphro*, the interlocutor, Euthyphro is quite stubborn and seems unwilling to admit that he doesn’t know (specifically, what piety is) by the end of the dialogue. Socrates encounters Euthyphro on the way to court and they strike up a conversation. It turns out that Euthyphro is about to prosecute his own father for murder on the grounds that it was impious of him to commit murder. Socrates finds this a fortuitous circumstance, for he, in fact is on his way to his own trial in which he will have to defend himself against the accusation of impiety. If he can determine what piety (and thus, impiety) is, then he could better defend himself against the charge. Euthyphro is here claiming to be an expert on the subject (4e-5a), so

he should be able to tell Socrates what piety is. His first answer to Socrates is that the pious is “to prosecute the wrongdoer” (5d). Socrates ultimately replies that this is an example of a pious action (if it is indeed a pious action) but it is not a definition of what the pious (or piety) is. He says, “[b]ear in mind then that I did not bid you tell me one or two of the many pious actions but that form itself that makes all pious actions pious, for you agreed that all impious actions are impious and all pious actions pious through one form” (6d). So then Euthyphro offers up the definition that “What is dear to the gods is pious, what is not is impious” (7a).

Now Socrates wants to examine that definition for its possible truth or falsity. This is his method: get the interlocutor to offer up a definition of whatever it is they are trying to know (in this case ‘piety’), then examine the definition for correctness. If it turns out not to work, then he wants a new definition. When Socrates and Euthyphro examine the definition that Euthyphro offered for piety, they discover that it’s not a very good definition after all. The problem is that what one god may hold dear, another god may not. For example, one god may determine an action is just, and love that action, while another god may determine that very same action is unjust and therefore hate that action. The same action would be both “god-loved and god-hated” (8a), making that action both pious and impious. This is an obvious problem. So Socrates proposes a modification of the definition: “[W]hat all the gods hate is impious, and what they all love is pious, and that what some gods love and others hate is neither or both” (9d). Euthyphro is amenable to this modification. They agree to examine this modified definition more fully (9e).

Now Socrates raises the question, “Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?” (10a). In other words, do all the gods love a pious thing (or action) by virtue of the fact that it is pious, *or* does a thing (or action) obtain the quality of piety by virtue of the fact that all the gods love it? After some discussion, Euthyphro and Socrates agree that the pious “is loved by the gods because it is pious” (10d), meaning that the quality of piety in a thing (or action) is what causes all the gods to love it. Upon examining the definition, “the pious is what all the gods love”, what it says is the pious is loved by the gods because it’s what the gods love. Once the circularity of the definition is made clear, Socrates admonishes Euthyphro: “when you were asked what piety is, you did not wish to make its nature clear to me, but you told me an affect or quality of it, that the pious has the quality of being loved by all the gods, but you have not yet told me what the pious is. Now, if you will, do not hide things from me but tell me again from the beginning what piety is” (11a-b).

Euthyphro seems at a loss, but is willing to continue the discussion for the time being. Socrates suggests that the pious is a part of justice. He elaborates his point by an analogy: just as odd is a part of number, so the pious is a part of justice. In other words, the pious will always be just, but not everything that is just is also pious (12d). So now the question is “what part of justice is the pious?” (12e). Euthyphro replies that it is the part “that is concerned with the care of the gods, while that concerned with the care of men is the remaining part of justice” (12e). Socrates wants to clarify what Euthyphro means by “care”. They determine that it’s not the same care as the caring of horses, for example. The reason is that when horse breeders care for horses, the horses “are benefited and become better” (13b), but caring for the gods does not make the gods become better. Rather it’s like the kind of care that “slaves take of their masters” (13d), which is more of a “kind of service of the gods” (13d). This leads to a discussion of the aim of the service, which turns out to be that the gods want us to sacrifice and pray, where sacrificing is giving gifts to the gods and praying is begging gifts from the gods (14b-d). The gods must benefit from the gifts they receive, else what would be the point of giving them? Euthyphro elaborates that the gifts are honor, reverence and gratitude (15a). Socrates asks about piety and Euthyphro declares that piety is the most dear to the gods (presumably of the gifts humans give to the gods). And now the discussion has come around full circle to claim again that, “the pious is what is dear to the gods” (15b).

Realizing that they already had this part of the discussion, Socrates wants to start again “from the beginning” because he “shall not willingly give up” before he learns what piety is. He exhorts Euthyphro to “concentrate your attention and tell the truth” (15c-d). Euthyphro basically replies, “Sorry, Socrates, this conversation is going nowhere. I’m busy with important things. I’ll catch you later.”

This lengthy discussion of the dialogue serves the purpose of showing how tenacious and dedicated Socrates is and illustrating his method of inquiry. Socrates does not believe that Euthyphro really knows what the pious is. But Euthyphro says several times that he does know, and that he’s an expert in piety and other divine matters (4e, 5a, 5e, 9b, 13e). While the separate definitions are seriously discussed and weighed (and found wanting), Socrates does not seem to take Euthyphro seriously. This is evidenced by the hyperbolic flattery that Socrates uses. For example, early in the dialogue Socrates says he “is eager” to become Euthyphro’s pupil (5c), and then later he begs Euthyphro help him become wiser, and if he can give adequate proof that his

actions are pious, Socrates “shall never cease to extol” his wisdom (9b). At 12a when Euthyphro says he doesn’t follow Socrates’ point, Socrates replies “yet you are younger than I by as much as you are wiser. As I say, you are making difficulties because of your wealth of wisdom.” While one *could* believe that Socrates is sincere in these remarks, it is more likely that he is subtly making fun of Euthyphro because of his arrogance. Euthyphro, for his part, seems oblivious to any sarcasm.

It may seem that, since Socrates does make fun of Euthyphro, he is not engaging in therapy. However, Socrates does make a sincere effort to define the pious. He treats the definitions offered and the discussions about the definitions with seriousness and reminds Euthyphro that he is after the truth (14e). He offers support for the definitions when Euthyphro cannot seem to come up with any and encourages Euthyphro to continue to try to define the pious, even when every definition they have tried has failed to satisfy. While Socrates is not sympathetic to Euthyphro the man, he still has his goal in mind. He is trying to get Euthyphro to see that he doesn’t really know what the pious is. He is still trying to help Euthyphro. Unfortunately, Euthyphro does not seem to want his help.

In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates is more caring of his interlocutor. Though in both dialogues Socrates is trying to eliminate ignorance, and though both dialogues end with the central question seemingly unresolved, there is a feeling of some degree of success in the *Theaetetus*.

Socrates and Theodorus run into each other at the gymnasium. Theodorus calls Socrates’ attention to Theaetetus, a promising young boy who is much like Socrates in appearance, and quite intelligent as well. They call Theaetetus over and begin a conversation. Socrates wastes no time at all in finding out whether Theaetetus would be interested in a elenchus-style discussion. Theodorus had made a remark earlier about the fact that Theaetetus reminded him of Socrates physically—he said they look alike (143e). As soon as Socrates and Theaetetus begin speaking Socrates asks Theaetetus whether he would take that remark at Theodorus’ word or whether he would examine the remark for truth. Theaetetus immediately replies, “Oh, we should have enquired into that” (144e). Then they set about discussing whether Theodorus is expert enough to determine whether there really is physical resemblance between Theaetetus and Socrates (144e-145b). The tone of the conversation is witty, but with none of the sarcasm displayed earlier in the *Euthyphro*.

In due time, Socrates raises the question of what knowledge is (whether it is the same as wisdom) and proposes that they examine it together. Everyone agrees. Socrates and Theodorus both pressure Theaetetus to answer the question, “What do you think knowledge is?” (146c) on the grounds that he is young and would profit by the exercise. Typically Socrates would not distinguish about the age of his interlocutor (though there have been other interlocutors to beg off answering questions because they felt too old to take part in the discussion), however, this does serve the purpose of making the discussion an individual one, which is the best and most effective way to make a careful examination. Also, it is Socrates’ way when there are more than one interlocutor present to examine one at a time. At first Theaetetus offers up examples like geometry and other subjects and crafts such as cobbling, and Socrates answers that these are examples of knowledge of something, not a definition of what knowledge itself is (146c-147c). In this dialogue, Socrates takes care of his interlocutor, perhaps because he ultimately will have high expectations of him. In other words, Socrates is very careful to spell out his objection so that Theaetetus understands exactly where his first attempt has gone wrong.

So Theaetetus tries again. Before he answers, however, he gives an example of what he believes would be the correct type of answer in a short discussion of a math problem he and another youth had just been working on earlier. He explains the problem and how he answered it (147d-148b). Socrates praises him and then Theaetetus admits that he doesn’t think he can give the same kind of answer for the “what is knowledge” question (148b). This is another spot where Socrates takes care of Theaetetus: Socrates offers strong encouragement and tells him to put his heart into it (148d). Socrates may be handling Theaetetus with more care than he did Euthyphro and some of his other interlocutors in other dialogues, but he doesn’t let Theaetetus off the hook at all. In fact, he demands everything that Theaetetus can give. Theaetetus promises to do this, and just before he gives his answer, he says that he has often tried to puzzle this out (148e) but he has not ever come up with a satisfactory answer. “And yet, again, you know, I can’t even stop worrying about it” (148e). To this Socrates replies that it’s because Theaetetus is in the throes of labor, pregnant. At 149a Socrates brings up that he is the son of a midwife. Theaetetus acknowledges that he had heard that before. He had not heard that Socrates himself “practices the same art” (149a).

Socrates affirms that he does, but asks Theaetetus not to tell anyone else, because he keeps it a secret. Burnyeat claims this is an indication that the midwife image is an invention of

Plato, since no one had heard of it before, and the *Theaetetus* is not an early dialogue (Burnyeat 53). Tomin counters this claim with the point that it makes sense for Socrates to have kept it a secret. “The midwife comparison underlines the divide between Socrates and his interlocutors. Socrates is accountable for the delivery, his interlocutors for the offspring (Tomin 99).”

Theaetetus is young, and like Socrates himself, so Socrates feels comfortable “openly employing” the process (99). On the other hand, it would have been difficult for Socrates to approach other interlocutors such as Protagoras, Gorgias, and others with the attitude that he was going to deliver their intellectual offspring (99). They may not have wanted to talk to him.

Why then, would he openly employ this process even with Theaetetus? Tomin suggests that it’s not only because Theaetetus is so like Socrates, but also because in this dialogue Socrates is portrayed to be at the end of his career (99). I’m not sure why that is significant unless we are supposed to infer that it’s on Socrates’ mind that this is his method and he’s about to have to defend it in court. Socrates does not describe his method as midwifery in the *Apology*, but that does not preclude the idea that he thought of it that way all along. On the other hand, even if it is an invention of Plato, it is still a potent image of the “tendance of the soul” that Socrates was always engaged in. For Plato to want to attribute this image to Socrates must indicate that he had been powerfully struck all along by the therapeutic nature of Socrates’ philosophical method. In any event, whether it’s Socrates’ image of himself that he kept close to his chest, or whether it’s a way that Plato wanted to portray Socrates in this particular dialogue, it’s a powerful and important image. It’s an image that indicates the seriousness with which Socrates (recall that for consistency I refer to Socrates as the one performing the therapy) takes his task in general, and with Theaetetus in particular.

Socrates carries the point further, by mentioning that midwives only practice their art after they are past child-bearing themselves (149b). Theaetetus knew this to be true. Since this is an image, and since Socrates is likening himself to a midwife, one can infer that he’s saying that he is past producing the ideas himself—he is no longer “childbearing”. Also he explains that “human nature is too weak to acquire skill where it has no experience” (149c). This is striking, because one can infer that Socrates means to assert that though he no longer produces these ideas, at one time he must have done so. But this seems contradictory to his famous claims that “he does not know.” Furthermore, at no time does Socrates stop engaging in philosophy. In the *Phaedo*, which is the dialogue that portrays Socrates’ last hours, he engages in the elenchus with

his friends until nearly the moment of his death. So it seems strange for him to assert that he is now barren or past producing ideas. It is possible that one can take the imagery too far. Also, it is not the point of the image to bring out what Socrates knows or his opinions for examination. The point is to examine Theaetetus' opinions.

At 149c Socrates asserts, "midwives can tell better than anyone else whether women are pregnant or not." Theaetetus agrees. Midwives have many functions with regard to the birthing process: they can bring on labor, relieve the labor pains if necessary, bring about the birth, or promote a miscarriage (149c-d). Again, Theaetetus agrees.

Then Socrates brings up a point that Theaetetus did not previously know, and that is that midwives are considered "the cleverest of match-makers (149d)." This is because they are the best at knowing which two people will produce the best children. Midwives are particularly proud of this art, but they keep it a secret and are afraid to practice this particular art, because they don't wish to be accused of the base practice of procuring (149d-150a). But Socrates' point is that the midwife is the expert in matchmaking.

At 150a-b, Socrates explains that *his* midwifery has one difficulty that traditional midwives do not have, and that is the complication for him that "the patients are sometimes delivered of phantoms and sometimes of realities, and that the two are hard to distinguish." But if midwives did have this difficulty to contend with, "the midwife's greatest and noblest function would be to distinguish the true from the false offspring (150b)." Socrates carries his comparison farther. He points out the differences—he attends men instead of women (150b), and he watches over "the labor of their souls, not their bodies (150b)." He stresses to Theaetetus that he must not get angry with him if he examines what he (Theaetetus) says and discovers that it is a phantom (151c). Other people have gotten really angry with him, he says, when he takes away "some nonsense or other from them. They never believe that I am doing this in all good-will" because "it is not permitted to me to accept a lie and put away truth" (151c-d).

This is, I believe, the crux of his image. His duty, as he views it, is to help people determine whether their offspring, (theses, theories, etc.) are true ones. He views it as a moral duty, and he employs the elenchus as the method of carrying out this duty. He maintains that his duty is to bring about the wisdom of others, and he helps whenever he can. Sometimes it turns out well, but other times it doesn't and he has to send the person to someone else, like Prodicus (151b). He only sends people away if he cannot help them further. This could mean either if they

refuse further help from him, or if they simply cannot understand how he's trying to help them. Some of them simply aren't pregnant (151b), and those are the ones he sends to someone else. After all, there is no point in trying to doctor someone who refuses to recognize what the problem is. Socrates employs this lengthy image to lead up to the point to tell Theaetetus that he thinks Theaetetus is pregnant (151b-c). Socrates wants to help the boy deliver his answer to the "What is knowledge" question, and they will examine it together and see if it's a reality or a phantom that needs to be abandoned (150c). Socrates brings up the image a few more times in the dialogue, and again at the end (210b-d). Each time the image invokes the notion of illness, and of health. Theaetetus will have a better idea in future inquiries whether he is barren, and if he is, he will know it (210c).

This image, because of its uniqueness and strength, indicates that Socrates has a deep concern for the philosophical health of his interlocutor. He goes to great lengths to examine the fruits of labor, to determine whether they are truth realities or phantoms. Though the dialogue ends in *aporia*, the feeling is that Theaetetus is much better off for having had this conversation with Socrates, for going through the labor pains, and examining his results. He goes away realizing that though he may not know about something, he now not only knows his own ignorance, but also he is in a position to examine his opinions carefully and critically. This puts him on the road to philosophical health, since that is what Socrates was trying to achieve with his therapy. Eventually Theaetetus may come to know virtue because he has oriented his soul in such a way that he would be receptive to truth. He is no longer in the human condition that the prisoners have in the previously discussed allegory of the cave.

There are many other dialogues that I could discuss to help elucidate Socrates' method. The *Phaedo* discusses the fear of death and Socrates argues that there is no good reason to fear death since no one knows what happens after death. This discussion is to help his friends overcome their fears of death, because Socrates himself has no such fear for all the very reasons he explains. The *Republic* is concerned with many things, of course, but it begins with a discussion of justice. In the *Meno*, Socrates examines the question "Can virtue be taught?" by way of examining the question "What is virtue?". There is not room here to look at all these and the many others. I hope the examination that I have given is sufficient to demonstrate Socrates' method.

The question now is how successful is his method and does it achieve his goal of helping man resolve the conflict in his soul brought on by the human condition of double ignorance? I turn to these issues in Chapter III, where I evaluate both Socrates' and Wittgenstein's methods of philosophical therapy.

CHAPTER II: WITTGENSTEIN'S PHILOSOPHY AS THERAPY

In this chapter, I shall discuss Wittgenstein's philosophical methods by looking at what he says he is up to, and examining his examples for their therapeutic value. Wittgenstein employs language games to help bring into focus those parts of language that sometimes confuse or confound philosophers. The language games take varying forms. Wittgenstein tells us in several places what his aim is, or what his goal is. He specifically tells us that his methods are therapeutic and that the treatment of a philosophical question is like the treatment of an illness (PI 255). The discussion ends with an account of Wittgenstein's goal by James Peterman.

I begin with Wittgenstein's famous remark, PI 133 in which he tells us that he is seeking clarity and that his methods are like therapies.

It is not our aim to refine or complete the system of rules for the use of our words in unheard-of ways.

For the clarity that we are aiming at is indeed *complete* clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear.

The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to.—The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question.—Instead, we now demonstrate a method, by examples; and the series of examples can be broken off.—Problems are solved (difficulties eliminated), not a *single* problem.

There is not *a* philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies. (PI 133)

In this remark Wittgenstein explicitly points out that his methods of philosophical examination are therapeutic. He does not claim to have one method by which all philosophical problems can be solved. But he believes that there are different methods that help with different problems. My problem might be that I want to uncover the "essence" of language. So he provides language games to help deal with my problem. Once he helps me dispel that muddle, perhaps I can stop doing philosophy for a while. At least I won't have that particular problem

any more and can stop worrying about *it*. Next week I might worry about this problem where I can't get at the meaning of a word. I need a different therapy for that. It's not that Wittgenstein is claiming that he has found a way to end philosophy. He's claiming only that he has found methods by which he can treat different philosophical problems.

Jolley explains in his essay, "*Philosophical Investigations* 133: Wittgenstein and the End of Philosophy?" that though Wittgenstein may have had an idea of what it would be like to have "reached philosophy's end" (327), he himself never seemed to get there. Wittgenstein talks in PI 133 of making the "real discovery" that would enable him to stop doing philosophy, but Jolley argues that Wittgenstein was not claiming to have made that "real" discovery. If he had, then he would (or could) have stopped doing philosophy. But he never did stop. Instead, Wittgenstein believes that he has come upon a way of solving some philosophical difficulties. Jolley points out, "Wittgenstein is confessing to his reader that while he does not come empty-handed, what he has to offer falls short of the best that could be offered" (329). Wittgenstein kept polishing his methods. Though he was not completely satisfied with his result, as evidenced by the fact that he never stopped doing philosophy, he had enough confidence in his methods that he shared them with the world. He cared enough about his methods that they be accurately reported and studied, which is why he ultimately published the *Philosophical Investigations*. He did not have very much confidence that the general public would appreciate his work, but he wanted the people who are exposed to it to at least have it "from the horse's mouth" so to speak.

Wittgenstein brings a method to the table that allows someone who is in a muddle to work out of it. Jolley further claims that Wittgenstein has another goal in this passage. He is letting the reader know, when he says that "the series of examples can be broken off," that since his methods can attack different problems, the reader can pick and choose what part to read—what therapy to apply—for a particular trouble. If the reader is troubled by sense data, then he can go to that section of the *Investigations* and work through it. Jolley believes that when Wittgenstein says, "examples can be broken off," he refers to the way in which he wrote the *Investigations*: as an album (as he pointed out in the preface to the work). It is not the case for Wittgenstein that all philosophical problems are bound together (330). Since they are not, then it is only natural that there is not a cohesive body of work, as one might expect. According to Wittgenstein in the Preface, "this book is really only an album" of remarks. In many cases several remarks are related, but one could separate those out from a different set of remarks and

not lose one's way. Jolley makes the point in a footnote that "Wittgenstein did not 'settle for' an album; it was what he had to produce, given his vision of philosophy" (note 4).

In the *Philosophical Investigations* he demonstrates his method right from the very beginning with the language he envisions between A and B and building materials. He explains that the language A and B share consists in words for blocks, pillars, slabs and beams. When A calls out one of those words, B "brings the stone which he has learnt to bring at such-and-such a call" (PI 2). He varies this example several times to get us to look at it from several angles. Then he explains that what he is doing is creating a language game. The language games help us see troubles in the way we look at our use of ordinary language. By taking a step back, and looking at little pictures of language, or a primitive version of language, we can clear up our confusion that we're having. The language game is the primary method that Wittgenstein uses therapeutically, and the other tools he employs are examples of language games.

We might think that the meaning of a word is something to get to, like an object, but only a mental one. Wittgenstein uses language games to show us how this is a mistaken way of thinking. The meaning of a word is expressed by its use and nothing else. There's not another part to it. That's all there is. But he shows us this with example after example, in different ways. If we see it from enough different perspectives, then we won't be tempted to make the mistake again, when we run up on the circumstances that led us to making the mistake in the first place. In the *Blue Book*, Wittgenstein begins by "attacking" the question of meaning. We mistakenly believe that there is an object we ought to be able to point to and say, "Ah ha! This is the meaning!" But there is no such thing. We might think that we can get at the meaning by looking at the definition. Wittgenstein makes a division between verbal and ostensive definitions with a large caveat that says this is a very rough distinction (BB 1). The verbal definition is the one that uses other verbal expressions to explain the verbal expression we're trying to get the meaning of. It just moves us from one set of words to another. The ostensive definition is the one that allows us to point to the word, and that pointing should explain the meaning of the word. Or rather, pointing to the word gives it its meaning. Wittgenstein uses the example of "tove" by pointing to a pencil and saying "This is 'tove' or This is called 'tove' " (BB 2). How are we do interpret this ostensive definition? 'Tove' could refer to 'pencil', 'round', 'wood', etc. Wittgenstein says that our trouble is that we think there is some kind of inner process going on in the act of interpretation. But no inner mental process has to occur. We can just interpret 'tove' and move

on. Our usage of the word 'tove' in the future will determine if we made the correct interpretation.

Our confusion comes because we are "tempted to think that the action of language consists of two parts; an inorganic part, the handling of signs, and an organic part, which we may call understanding signs, meaning them, interpreting them, thinking" (BB 3). We are seduced into believing that there is some mysterious process going on in the mind, which is just out of our grasp. We keep looking for an object in the mind that corresponds to the meaning of the word. Wittgenstein calls it the "occult character of the mental processes" (BB 5). The truth of the matter is, however, that we understand the signs (the words or sentences) of the language, because we can use them. A word gets its meaning from the usage of it. Though we are tempted to give the meaning some "occult" life, whatever we could assign to it would just be another sign. Wittgenstein refers to a sentence as a sign (BB 5). So the meaning of the sign is understood through language. If we wanted to give it the occult life, we would just be using language to describe language. It's not some mental object just out of reach. It's language that is understood through its use. If that weren't the way it worked, we wouldn't use language in the way that we do.

Since using the word in everyday language gives the word its meaning, if we want to change the meaning of a word, then the only way to do that is to start using it differently. This happens, actually. People start using a word differently from the way that it was used originally; e.g. in slang where "bad" can be used to mean "good", and in that context, the meaning is different. Sometimes, after much repetition, a word will cross over from slang into everyday accepted use. It won't be such a specialized use of a term that gives it a new meaning, and it will be accepted as having this new meaning in everyday language, not just in slang. Proper names can do this: Dumpster has become the term for very large waste receptacles, but was originally a brand name. Kleenex has become a common term for a disposable tissue, but there are other brands out there. There are countless examples in the dictionary where a word originated from a slang term or a proper name.

Wittgenstein believes that our problems arise from misconceptions about how we view language. So his method of addressing these problems also stems from language. In PI 309 the interlocutor asks, "What is your aim in philosophy?" and Wittgenstein answers, "To shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle." Notice that the way out of the fly-bottle is the same way as the

way *in to* the fly-bottle. It's not as if there's a secret back door that we will find if only we search hard enough. I take this to mean that we have to look at how we came to this confusion in order to figure out how to get ourselves out of it. That is what Wittgenstein is doing over and over again. Our way of looking at language seduces us into confusions. But we need to look at language to get ourselves out of our confusion. The remedy is in the manner in which we look at language. Thus, Wittgenstein examines how we arrive at our problems in order to treat them. He has several tools in his toolbox. It depends on the problem as to which method, or methods he chooses to help us out of our muddle. All of his tools are language games, but he uses them in different ways.

Wittgenstein defines language games in the *Blue Book*: “[t]hese are ways of using signs simpler than those in which we use the signs of our highly complicated everyday language. Language games are the forms of language with which a child begins to make use of words” (17). His idea is that if there is a muddle in our everyday language, then simplifying the language may clear up the muddle. He calls the muddle a “mental mist” which seems to “enshroud our ordinary use of language” (17) which disappears with the use of the more primitive forms of language in language games.

One of the muddles that philosophers have is looking for the “essential feature” of language, or the “essence” of language. Wittgenstein acknowledges this tendency in PI 65:

Here we come up against the great question that lies behind all these considerations. —For someone might object against me: “You take the easy way out! You talk about all sorts of language-games, but have nowhere said what the essence of a language-game, and hence of language, is: what is common to all these activities, and what makes them into language or parts of language. So you let yourself off the very part of the investigation that once gave you yourself most headache, the part about the *general form of propositions* and of language.”

And this is true. —Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all, --but that they are *related* to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all “language”. I will try to explain this.

We have a craving for generality that results from “a number of tendencies connected with particular philosophical confusions” (BB 17). Wittgenstein combats this notion with a language game. After he acknowledges the tendency in PI 65 that we seek an “essence” of language he interestingly chooses “games” as one of his examples to make his point that there is no such essence (PI 66). He specifically refers to board games, ball games, card games, the Olympic games, etc. It is easy to extend Wittgenstein’s list to include other sports, role-playing games, computer games, extreme games, etc. Wittgenstein challenges the interlocutor to find

something in common with *all* of the types of games. The interlocutor thinks that there *must* be something in common with them all, for if not, they wouldn't *all* be called games. But upon careful examination, there isn't something common to *all* of the types of games. However, there are similarities among them.

For example, football, basketball and baseball are all games that require some type of ball, and they are all team-played games. Golf and tennis are also games that require balls, but not necessarily teams. Card games can require teams, depending on the game, but they do not require balls. Or they may not require teams either, but they are still games. Computer games played on the Internet may require teams, but not cards or balls. Players may consider the games a fun past-time or extra-curricular activity like a hobby. In other cases, playing a game is the player's career—it's a job, not a hobby. So being a hobby can't be what makes it a game. Wittgenstein points out there are whole *series* of relationships among the different games, but there is no feature that is common to all (PI 66), not even competition (take solitaire, for example). Not even winning and losing is a feature common to all games, since a child who amuses himself playing pretend, or one who just tosses a ball against a wall can be said to be playing a game, but there is no winning or losing in either of these cases.

Wittgenstein uses the example of games, and the fact there is no "essence" of gaming or games, to illustrate his point that there is no "essence" of language. In language, too, there are similarities of use, and meaning. Even among different languages, such as German and Dutch, or Italian and Spanish, there are similarities. Some words are even the same, and mean the same thing in different languages. Some words are similar with either similar or different meanings (false cognates, for example, look like a familiar word, but have a different meaning or translation from what one would expect). Some grammatical structures are the same among different languages, while others are similar, yet different, and even others are completely different. Ancient languages may have some similarities among each other, yet can seem totally different from modern languages. Sometimes one has to dig deep to find the roots of a modern language in an ancient one, while other times the similarities are striking and obvious. Thus, there is no "essence" of language, but there are networks of similarities, just like there are networks of similarities in different kinds of games.

Wittgenstein turns to examples time and again in his language games to illustrate his points. In the case of the games example he is making use of 'family resemblances.' This is one

of the methods in his therapeutic toolbox. It's an apt analogy because families look alike, and yet they look different. A woman may have her mother's eyes and her father's nose. In a picture with just her father, one might think she favors her father. In another picture, one of just her mother, the viewer might think she favors her mother. In a picture with the both of them, the viewer could see where she favors her father, and where she favors her mother, and whom she favors more. In the end she is her own person—a combination of both of her parents that is unique to her (her brother or sister have different combinations). She may pass on her eyes and nose to her children, but they may get their hair color from their father, and the family grows. The resemblances are plain to see, as are the differences. It is easy to see now why Wittgenstein chose to call this tool 'family resemblances.' He uses this tool frequently.

Another muddle that philosophers get into is "sense data". Wittgenstein uses the example of the red patch to help get past this one. This method is similar to, but different from, family resemblances. Family resemblances make use of several related examples, whereas the red patch discussion is more like one example fleshed out in greater detail, and modified at times, in order to illustrate his point. First he talks about giving an order to someone to "fetch a red flower" (BB 3). The confusion arises when one is inclined to say that in carrying out this order, first the person following the order has to imagine what red is, i.e. put "red" before his mind. Then he goes to the meadow, with the image of "red" before him, compares all the flowers in the meadow until he comes upon the one with a color that matches the image in his "mind's eye" and picks that one to bring back.

However, one doesn't have to have this image of red before one's mind, as Wittgenstein points out. We can imagine the same scenario with the person carrying around a color chart instead. When he got to the meadow, he could compare all the flowers in it to the red patch on the color chart. The one that matches is the one that he picks. So there is no sense datum in this case, no "image in his mind's eye", yet he successfully carried out the command.

People don't generally go around carrying charts of colors or objects for comparison. What happens is, the person goes to the meadow and looks around it, sees a red flower and picks it, without stopping to compare it to anything—not a red patch on a color chart, and not an image of red before his mind's eye. He knows what red is, and he picks the red flower. One could raise questions about the shade of red—is it orangey, or pinky or true red? But that's not the point of the exercise. The point is that we don't carry around things "in our mind" like sense data.

Wittgenstein brings this point home by changing the example just a little: “[C]onsider the order ‘*imagine a red patch*’. You are not tempted in this case to think that *before* obeying you must have imagined a red patch to serve you as a pattern for the red patch which you were ordered to imagine” (BB 3). Wittgenstein takes this as incontrovertible.

The idea that our language conforms to a calculus is another muddle in which philosophers find themselves that Wittgenstein combats. A variation of it is that it’s not our language that we use everyday, but the “ideal” language would conform to such a calculus. We are just sloppy in our usage. Thus, there is a distinction between an ideal language and ordinary language. Wittgenstein points out that “in practice we very rarely use language as such a calculus” (BB 25). It just doesn’t happen that way, and that’s the reality of it. A calculus has strict rules. Though language does have rules—grammar rules—they aren’t like a calculus. We don’t think of the rules when we’re using language, as Wittgenstein points out (BB 25), and if we are asked to give them, we likely couldn’t. We couldn’t, not because we are incapable of providing a “real definition” of our concepts, but because there is no “real definition.” Wittgenstein makes the analogy that to “suppose there *must* be would be like supposing that whenever children play with a ball they play a game according to strict rules (BB 25).” Children evolve rules, when they use them, as necessary while playing the game. Language works in that way as well.

In this muddle, it’s an attitude that we have that needs to be adjusted. We just ought not have the attitude that language should conform to a calculus. It doesn’t and when we assume that it does, or that it should, we create issues and confusion for ourselves where there needn’t be any. Wittgenstein says that it is wrong in philosophy to “consider an ideal language as opposed to our ordinary one. For this makes it appear as though we thought we could improve on ordinary language (BB 28).” However, it’s not our ordinary language that needs improving. It’s not even our *use* of ordinary language that needs improving. It’s our way of *looking at* our ordinary language that gets us confused. That’s why Wittgenstein steps back and creates language games: to help clear up the confusion.

Another language muddle in which some philosophers find themselves is the idea that a person can have a private language. In PI 243 Wittgenstein postulates imagining a language “in which a person could write down or give vocal expression to his inner experiences—his feeling, moods, and the rest—for his private use.” He clarifies that he means not using ordinary

language: “The individual words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language” (PI 243). Wittgenstein thought that the idea of someone having a private language was a non-starter. Fundamentally the whole function of a language is communication between people. A *private* language flies in the face of this. It may be possible that a person makes up a code or a type of shorthand that only he understands, e.g. for taking notes or for writing in a journal. That is still not a private *language*. For it to be a language, it must somehow communicate. For it to communicate, then more than one person would have to understand it, because communication is between people (one does not *communicate* with ones’ self). However, if more than one person understands it, it’s not *private*. In any event, it would be hard to argue that code or shorthand is an entire language unto itself, even without the communication requirement. Codes and shorthand don’t have grammar the way language does.

But the interlocutor objects: He means that “the individual words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language.” *That* is the private language. A private language is something *inner* that means something only to you. What would that be, exactly? We don’t know, and that is Wittgenstein’s point. The interlocutor wants private language to refer to private sensations. A private sensation could be something like pain, for example.

In PI 246 Wittgenstein points out that it is often the case that “other people know when I am in pain.” But we have been taught to use the word ‘pain’. So how can that be private? If we were taught to use the word ‘pain’ then someone else does understand the language, or they could not have taught it to us. So it’s not private. My use of the word ‘pain’ cannot be different from someone else’s use, or else we’re not communicating. If we are communicating, then it’s not private. If I’m using the word differently, say if I tell someone I’m in pain when I’m just cold, then I’m not using the word ‘pain’ correctly. That doesn’t mean I have a private language. It means that either I didn’t learn the correct use of the word, or else I’m deliberately misusing it. Either way I’m not communicating. Is that what is meant by private language? It seems that is just a code. If I’m deliberately using ‘pain’ to mean how I feel when I’m cold, that is just a code.

Wittgenstein gives another example in PI 275: When you notice the blue of the sky, when you notice it spontaneously, “the idea never crosses your mind that this impression of colour belongs only to *you*.” When that happens, we don’t hesitate to say to the person next to us, “The

sky is really blue today!” It might happen that we even point to it when making the exclamation. Wittgenstein says that if we point to anything at all when making the exclamation, it would have to be the sky that we point to. There is nothing in us, no “blue experience” that we could point to. And it’s not a private experience if our first spontaneous reaction is to point to it and tell our neighbor about it. The mistake we make is in thinking that we are having a “blue sensation” that is private or that we could refer to it with a private language. How could we even talk about a private language, without describing it? And once we describe it, it’s no longer private.

It’s just not the case that each of us walks around every day with an entire private language that we use to communicate only with ourselves, and this never gets mentioned to another person. A person might talk to himself, or think aloud (or not) but when this happens, he is using ordinary language to do it. If I ask him what he’s thinking about, he can tell me using the exact words he thought to himself and I would understand. Or if he spoke to himself, not realizing I overheard, I could understand what he said. I may not know *why* he said what he did, or what the context is. But that is not to say that I can’t understand him because it’s *private*. It just means that I only got part of the conversation.

Notice that Wittgenstein attacks the private language problem from several angles. It’s not that one example wouldn’t make his point. It’s just that his point is more strongly made when he uses several different examples to all illustrate his point. He acknowledges his method by pointing out in PI 593 that “a main cause of philosophical disease—a one-sided diet: one nourishes one’s thinking with only one kind of example.” He not only uses several examples to make his point, he thinks it would be detrimental to the therapy not to explore a problem from as many angles and examples as possible.

Recall that there are four criteria for a therapy, according to Peterman.

1. The requirement of confession: the interlocutor must acknowledge what he actually believes.
2. The acknowledged belief must be challenged and refuted if mistaken.
3. The interlocutor must be led to a new way of looking at things which is better than the old way (a move toward the “therapeutic ideal” that governs the practice).
4. There must be some agreement on the goals of the therapy. This agreement may be reached prior to the dialectic exchange, or “may emerge in the course of it (Peterman 5).

Wittgenstein’s methods meet these four criteria in the following ways: each of his investigations involves a confession. Either Wittgenstein is confessing his belief, or the

interlocutor is challenging Wittgenstein's statement with his own belief. When the interlocutor challenges what Wittgenstein says with his own belief, Wittgenstein answers, in order to lead the interlocutor to a new way of looking at things. The new way of looking at things has to be better than the old way, because when things are viewed in the new way, the confusion disappears. When asked what he is up to, Wittgenstein gives an answer: he is "shewing the fly out of the fly bottle" (PI 309), or he is "aiming at complete clarity" (PI 133), or he is "destroying is nothing but houses of cards" and "clearing up the ground of language in which they stand" (PI 118). He takes the interlocutor to be agreeing with these goals, which do emerge in the course of the investigations.

Who is the interlocutor? Perhaps it is Wittgenstein himself, in earlier stages of philosophical thought. Or perhaps it is anyone who has posed these questions, whether Wittgenstein read them or spoke to the philosophers directly. Or perhaps the interlocutor is the reader, and Wittgenstein is just imagining the responses the reader would have, based on conversations he had with his students and other philosophers of his day. In each case the interlocutor seems to make reasonable responses to what Wittgenstein has said. In that regard he has been honest with us: he is not trying to pawn off ideas or reactions to his thoughts that would be unrealistic or uncharacteristic.

In the Preface to the *Philosophical Investigations*, he states that his work may "bring light into one brain or another—but of course, it is not likely. I should not like my writing to spare other people the trouble of thinking. But, if possible, to stimulate someone to thoughts of his own." Prior to that remark he also pointed out that he really is only publishing out of vanity: his notes and notes of his conversations with people had been in circulation and he wanted to make sure that people got things correct when they attributed ideas to him, and that his ideas are not "misunderstood, more or less mangled or watered down." I take this "vanity" as an indication of the importance of his philosophy to him, and his caring that people get it right is a sign of his commitment to the therapeutic project. If he didn't care, he wouldn't have bothered to publish.

In several places, Wittgenstein answers the questions, "What are you doing?" and "Why is it important?" He tells us that he is showing the fly the way out of the fly bottle in PI 309, which I take to mean that he wants to examine language in order to help us straighten out confusions about language that we get ourselves into. In another place he defends the merit of his investigation:

Where does our investigation get its importance from, since it seems only to destroy everything interesting, that is, all that is great and important? (As it were all the buildings, leaving behind only bits of stone and rubble.) What we are destroying is nothing but houses of cards and we are clearing up the ground of language in which they stand. (PI 118)

I understand this remark as an acknowledgement that it's hard to let go of our muddles. Therapy isn't easy. We cling to our understandings of how things work, even if they are misunderstandings. That is why the interlocutor cries about destroying everything interesting, "all that is great and important". Wittgenstein categorically destroys the notions of sense data, ideal language, private language, the idea that language has an essence, and more. It seems that he is only destroying, never building. He reassures us, however, that he's not really destroying anything important at all—just our illusions. Once our illusions are gone, we will be able to see clearly. Then we will no longer be in a muddle. Furthermore, we will be able to identify how we got into the muddle in the first place, to avoid any reconstruction of the house of cards. Ideally it's at that point—the point where we see our mistake, that it's a mistake, and how to avoid making it again—that we can stop doing philosophy.

Peterman emphasizes that Wittgenstein's therapy is aiming at bringing one into agreement with the form of life. He argues this is a central goal of Wittgenstein's project. Wittgenstein only mentions forms of life a few times in the *Philosophical Investigations*, but that is not an indication of unimportance.

To begin with, Peterman argues that the form of life must be unchangeable, or else there would be no reason to help someone therapeutically to come into agreement with it. If one could change the form of life, then perhaps it would be easier to do that than come into agreement with it by changing one's attitudes about language. Hence, Peterman says, "So the notion of form of life must be understood as unchangeable aspects of life" (104). The way to fix the problems that people have with the form of life is to change the attitude into one of acceptance. The way Wittgenstein does this is through clarification of language.

So what is the form of life? Is there more than one? Peterman points out textual evidence that sometimes points towards one form of life, and sometimes points towards multiple forms of life. In PI 241 Wittgenstein uses the singular, 'form of life', and in PI p. 226, he uses the plural, 'forms of life'. Peterman aims to resolve this apparent conflict by "appealing to my interpretive claim that the notion of a form of life is internally related to the notions of unchangeable aspects of life and aspects that ought to be accepted" (104). He argues that there is one unchangeable

form of life that is common to all humans. This is the human form of life, as distinguished from the forms of life of other animals or plants. The human form of life would have to have features that other forms of life didn't have, in order to be uniquely human. Peterman points out that Wittgenstein does, in fact, make this distinction. He talks about the common behavior of mankind (PI 206) as the "reference by which we understand other cultures" (Peterman 104) and furthermore that other animals don't have enough of human behavior to make them intelligible to us: "If a lion could talk, we could not understand him" (PI p. 223).

But there must also be different human forms of life (105). Peterman explains that though Wittgenstein can use language games to explain common behavior, and though common behavior is the reference by which we understand other cultures, "these common behaviors can be developed variously" (105). That is why we come across a clash of cultures, so to speak, or why in the development of two cultures from a common beginning, they can seem worlds apart now, or why a conquered nation can take on the culture of the conquerors or vice versa. We can make sense of another culture through their language games and our ability to associate those language games with ours (105). For example, Russians think differently than Americans. They each have a different way of viewing things because of whatever historical events that have shaped each of them as a culture. But that doesn't mean that Americans cannot understand the Russians or vice versa, if they take the time. So these are examples of two forms of life. And it could be argued that one could convert from one of these forms of life to the other (105). Religious experiences (epiphanies) might be examples of converting from one of the forms of life to another.

But Peterman also points out that the only reason such a conversion is possible is because of the unchangeable human form of life (105). A lion could not convert to the human form of life, nor the human to the lion form of life, because these are two unchangeable, different forms. Not only could the one not convert to the other, the one could not even understand the other—they are too different. On this interpretation of the form of life, only the human form of life (singular) is the one with which we must be in agreement. Human forms of life (plural) can be changed if necessary.

What Peterman says is that the human forms of life are to be understood as unchanging or as given "in terms of which concepts and language games are intelligible" (105). It's necessary to view them this way to keep from looking for something hidden behind the language or to keep

from thinking of the forms of life as “something whose intelligibility must be derived from something different from it, for hidden ideals or causal mechanisms” (105-106). However, we view the forms of life as intelligible based on their relation to the common behavior of mankind. We can’t make sense of them if they aren’t related to the common behavior of mankind, in other words. So it’s the common behavior of mankind that “is the ultimate appeal in terms of intelligibility of language games and concepts” (106).

Peterman supports this interpretation by appealing to PI 654-56 where Wittgenstein discusses language games. In these three remarks he makes observations of situations where we should simply make note of a language game being played, rather than look for an explanation. In the last remark he says, “It might be asked: how did human beings ever come to make the verbal utterances which we call reports of past wishes or past intentions” (PI 656). Peterman’s point in appealing to these remarks is that they discuss when we want to note a language game, and that “we also want to clarify its role in the human form of life and the purposes served by such language games” (e.g. reports of past wishes or past intentions). He says, paraphrasing Wittgenstein, “That is not to look for an explanation, but for the very general facts that make our language games intelligible” (106). While it is possible to change the forms of life (plural), the form of life is unchangeable (106).

In order to resolve a philosophical problem in one of the many forms of life, one has to come into agreement with the form of life, “by clarifying its relation to the common behavior of mankind” (106). Peterman is contrasting philosophical problems with non-philosophical ones and says that non-philosophical ones could be resolved by reform (of our language for practical purposes to prevent misunderstandings as Wittgenstein says in PI 132) or by conversion to another form of life with its own language games (106). Peterman claims that this account is not only supported by Wittgenstein’s own remarks, but that it resolves a potential conflict that could arise on his view. People operate in the form of life: that is *given*, according to Wittgenstein’s view. So the philosophical muddles that he discusses and dispels arise in the form of life. But if the form of life is given, then how could these actually be muddles? They arise from the form of life so they must be in agreement with the form of life. This is the conflict or the inconsistency in Wittgenstein’s view. But Peterman’s reading accounts for this apparent conflict and resolves it, because on his reading there are many forms of life, yet only one unchangeable human form of life with which we must come into agreement.

Furthermore, his reading defends Wittgenstein against the charge of relativism. If there are only forms of life (plural) and they are unchangeable, then each would be given, according to Wittgenstein, and each would be intelligible on its own. According to Peterman, if each of the forms of life is intelligible on its own, then there is “no way to show that a particular form of life was mistaken in its basic claims” (107). This would bring the charge of relativism, especially if two forms conflict or are mutually exclusive. But by accepting Peterman’s reading, the charge of relativism is avoided since though there are forms of life (plural) they arise from the human form of life. One only has to evaluate the forms of life as separate developments of the form of life and then one can determine which is better or more correct or more in agreement with the form of life. The relativism charge does not hold. Thus, on Peterman’s account, Wittgenstein finds traditional philosophy “deficient” in that it is based on a mode of living and thinking that is not in agreement with the human form of life (107).

Peterman also discusses how it is that one can be in agreement with the form of life or out of agreement with it. If the form of life is given, and it’s the human form of life, “it must be a form of one’s actual everyday life” (108) and it’s hard to understand how one can be out of agreement with it. Peterman acknowledges that Wittgenstein is not entirely clear on this point, but he does say that Wittgenstein focuses on “bewitchment that shows up in philosophical puzzles” (108). Wittgenstein is drawn time and again to those puzzles, or muddles, which seduce us into thinking that things are one way, but at the same time can’t be that way. He says in the *Blue Book* “Philosophy, as we use the word, is a fight against the fascination which forms of expression exert upon us” (27). It’s this fascination that is the bewitchment that Peterman refers to. The practice of philosophy helps bring us into agreement with the form of life. And to be in agreement with the form of life would be to “avoid puzzlement” or to “not be rejecting the familiar reality of everyday language and life in favor of some hidden ideal” (Peterman 108).

Wittgenstein’s method of bringing us into agreement with the form of life is through philosophy as he sees it: the use of language games. “The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one or another piece of plain nonsense and of bumps that the understanding has got by running its head up against the limits of language. These bumps make us see the value of the discovery” (PI 119). Once we see the value of the discovery, we are no longer tempted to be puzzled.

CHAPTER III: SOCRATES AND WITTGENSTEIN

Both Socrates and Wittgenstein perceive philosophy as an activity that should lead to a healthier individual, and hence to healthier society. They both attempt to therapeutically adjust people's attitudes about how they view the world. In Wittgenstein's case he encourages a shift in how people view language, in order to bring them into agreement with how things really are. We fall into confusion because of how we talk about our world. We speak of "mental images" that we hold in our heads, and we "try to get at them". There are no such things to "get at" so it's no use in trying. We just hurt ourselves, or at least frustrate ourselves, when we have this attitude.

Peterman looks for precedence for Wittgenstein's use of philosophy as therapy. He concludes that there is no one source, but instead a combination of sources: Schopenhauer, Spengler, Goethe, St. Augustine, and unsurprisingly, Plato. Peterman points out that while Wittgenstein "found much to criticize in Platonism" his own rejection of Plato's methods does not make "Plato's project any the less therapeutic". It's a difference in approach and method, and possibly a difference in goals (130). He also argues that Wittgenstein was influenced by Freud and that there is a similarity with Pyrrhonic skepticism. Peterman's point is that though his methods are his own, Wittgenstein's project is deeply rooted in "the heart of philosophy in the beginning" (130).

Is there precedence for Socrates? Cushman argues that the philosophers before Socrates were naturalists and mathematicians who focused mostly on investigations of nature rather than investigations of man (16-17). Socrates was a revolutionary, then, and paid for it with his life. So, Socrates was the first philosopher to employ philosophy as therapy, setting the bar high for the philosophers who followed him.

It might be hard to imagine that people in general really need philosophical therapy. After all, most people are not tormented by philosophical problems in the way that Wittgenstein was. Most people, even once they have questions or puzzles, can set them aside and get on about the

business of everyday life with seemingly no difficulty. Even while most philosophers are engaged in philosophy, one may not want to say they are “tormented” while reading Kant or even Wittgenstein himself. Perhaps one is confused, even frustrated. It might take a while to work the puzzle out. It might require some several days or weeks (or even years) of study. But even then, it’s not usually the case that the philosopher is deeply in the throes of passion or torment (even part of the time, let alone all of the time). It is hard to imagine (especially for someone who is not in the field of philosophy academically) steeping oneself in philosophy all the time, constantly examining oneself or working out puzzles. Some people are affected that deeply. Wittgenstein was not the only one. Generally, however, students of philosophy may find a puzzle interesting, or an ethical dilemma challenging, but it may make only a ripple in their world rather than a storm.

Wittgenstein himself seemed to hold out little hope that he would reach very many people with his therapy. He states in his preface, “It is not impossible that it should fall to the lot of this work, in its poverty and in the darkness of this time, to bring light into one brain or another—but, of course, it is not likely.” His pessimism is not groundless. Many people do have a hard time understanding his work. Many people think they understand his work and really don’t (both detractors and supporters). One could argue that while Wittgenstein offered a therapy for the ills of society, he did not think society was ready to take the treatment. On the other hand, he thought it was important enough to the people who are seduced by philosophical puzzles that they receive treatment for their ills that he made the effort to publish his work. Even if the masses largely ignored his work, there would be the few who would benefit from it.

Peterman’s interpretation that Wittgenstein’s goal in his therapy is to bring people in agreement with the form of life is only intelligible if being in agreement with the form of life is an ideal of health. Therefore, in order to offer support for his view, Peterman gives an analysis of health that lays a foundation for claiming that Wittgenstein’s project leads to philosophical health. Furthermore, Peterman argues that it’s not only the health of the individual that is important to Wittgenstein, but also that he cares about cultural health.

To begin, Peterman offers a definition of health that he gets from Lennart Nordenfelt in his work, *On the Nature of Health*: “ ‘A is healthy if, and only if, A is able, given standard circumstances in his environment, to fulfill those goals which are necessary and jointly sufficient for his minimal happiness’ (79)” (Peterman 108). This definition of health is not the definition

that people normally use in everyday life. When people conventionally speak of someone as healthy, they typically mean that their body is free from physical illness. Furthermore, when one is mentally healthy, it's taken that there is no current defect like depression or schizophrenia, or some other mental illness.

However, people do talk in everyday language of "healthy relationships", for example, referring to relationships that are non-abusive mentally and physically. Or sometimes people refer to having a "healthy attitude" or a "healthy approach to life" Given these and other conventional uses of the word 'health' I suggest that Nordenfelt's definition is an extension of the everyday notion of health that adequately suits the purposes of this discussion of philosophical therapy.

Peterman argues that Nordenfelt's definition is superior to other definitions of health because it establishes a level of healthiness that is more than mere survival (which is a minimum requirement for being alive, but not necessarily for being healthy) and it also avoids the pitfall of another definition of health (the subject goal theory) where the goal of health is set by an individual. The pitfall of the subject goal theory is that a person could set goals of health for himself that are too low or even damaging (109). This definition of health sets a standard that is higher than basic survival needs and it acknowledges that "real human happiness is not just whatever someone thinks it is" (109). Additionally, this definition can easily be adapted to define health for infants, animals and even plants. This is important to Peterman because the definition can theoretically be extended to define cultural and moral health. Nordenfelt's definition allows for minimal happiness, and Peterman suggests that would be minimum health. Optimal health, on the other hand, would be "the capacity to satisfy all of one's goals" (109-110).

Peterman adapts this definition to show that there is a relation between the goals of Wittgenstein's therapy and happiness. Remember that Wittgenstein's aim is clarity. He wants to remove puzzlement. He also wants to bring one into agreement with one's form of life. To remove puzzlement *is* to bring one into agreement with one's form of life, for Wittgenstein. Peterman gives two definitions, based on two separate possible relationships between philosophical health and happiness. First he points out that philosophical puzzlement, or muddles as I have been calling them, could so interfere with one's life that they could prevent one from being even minimally happy. So he offers definition A: "Being in agreement with one's form of life is necessary, given standard circumstances in one's environment, for fulfillment of those

goals that are necessary and jointly sufficient for one's minimal happiness" (110). In other words, one is unhealthy if one is out of agreement with the form of life, since that interferes with the fulfillment of said necessary and sufficient goals of minimal happiness. If philosophy is tormenting someone, that person is unhappy and therefore not in a state of health.

The second possibility is that happiness may itself arise from being in agreement with one's form of life. If one is in agreement with one's form of life, then perhaps one is happy regardless of other circumstances. Peterman calls this 'ethical happiness' and is led by this idea to offer definition B: "Being in agreement with one's form of life is necessary and sufficient for one's complete or ethical happiness" (110). He calls it 'ethical happiness' because "it comes from one's orientation toward one's form of life" (110). If being in agreement with one's form of life is both necessary and sufficient for happiness, then one cannot be happy without being in agreement with one's form of life. Given that health is directly related to happiness, then if it's impossible to be happy when one is out of agreement with the form of life, then being out of agreement with the form of life is unhealthy. Even worse, it's ethically unhealthy (110).

Peterman thinks that it makes the most sense of Wittgenstein's project to think of his therapeutic goals as working towards a cultural health rather than just individual health. His reasons for this stem from the previously mentioned difficulty—not everyone so obsessively thinks of philosophical issues that they cannot pursue a normal life, nor are very many people tormented by philosophical puzzles (111). So it's hard to justify Wittgenstein's project if it's only aimed at a few individuals. But, Peterman points out that Wittgenstein has an underlying theme of a cultural ideal in his writings. He then offers a definition of cultural health that reasonably follows from the previous definition of health that he gave for individuals. He bases this definition on a reasonable assumption that the health of a culture is "a function of the health of its members" (112). The definition is "a culture is healthy if, and only if, the members of that culture (or almost all of the members of that culture) are able, given standard circumstances in their environment, to fulfill those goals that are jointly necessary and sufficient for their minimal happiness" (112).

It would make sense then to place constraints on philosophers that prevent them from providing "philosophical accounts that would in any way contribute to cultural illness" (112). Further, they should provide accounts that promote cultural health. If a philosophical account brings people into disagreement with the form of life, then it contributes to cultural illness.

Conversely, if a philosophical account brings one into agreement with the form of life, then it contributes to cultural health. Even if the philosopher himself is not interested in philosophical therapy, if his philosophical accounts create the muddles that Wittgenstein combats, then those accounts ought to be avoided because of their “impact...on the culture as a whole” (113).

Peterman specifically mentions Russell as one who would offer an approach to philosophy that could be a detriment culturally, presumably partly because of his belief in sense data and the widespread impact his arguments had on the philosophical community. Wittgenstein argues extensively against sense data and the like, because a belief in sense data creates puzzlement. Peterman’s analysis indicates that it’s not only mistaken to argue for sense data, it’s also wrong to do it, because it causes confusion in so many people, bringing them out of agreement with the form of life.

These confusions, by bringing people out of agreement with the form of life, shake people’s confidence in their form of life, creating a pervasive unhappiness. Because people cannot avoid the form of life (remember the form of life is the human condition of how life is; i.e. the common behavior of mankind), a lack of confidence in the form of life makes people fundamentally unhappy. A positive goal for philosophers would be to “engage in the sort of thinking and writing that clarifies and gives members of a culture a confident feel for differing parts of their form of life” (113). This is the kind of philosophy Wittgenstein tells us that he is engaging in, for example in PI 133 where he says he’s aiming at clarity. Peterman points out that Wittgenstein doesn’t really spell out his therapeutic project. He does give remarks that tell us what he views philosophy to be, or what his aim is, but mostly he just gets on with the business of the therapy: he identifies the muddles and attempts to dispel them.

Peterman’s account is based on a reasonable definition of health. He provides a sympathetic reading of Wittgenstein’s remarks that make sense of Wittgenstein’s claims that he is offering treatments or therapies. It gives a justification of Wittgenstein’s project as important because it promotes health—not only individual health, but also cultural health.

While philosophers today might find it hard to understand initially why philosophical therapy is necessary, Socrates did not find it hard to imagine that people in general really need philosophical therapy. He encountered the illness of the soul every day and tried to combat it. He believed it was a widespread corruption. Remember that the human condition is double ignorance, as presented in the allegory of the cave in the *Republic*. It is also a willful ignorance

because, as Cushman points out, men are in a “Cave of ignorance and, by their own decision and choice, wedded to *doxa* and its objects” (298). *Doxa* is opinion, as opposed to truth. Men like their condition (or, rather, they think they do, since they really don’t know any better) and fight against anything that would change it.

For Socrates, the condition of the soul is of prime importance. Cushman says that Socrates was “bent upon inducing men to become alert to truth as it was dimly or more clearly manifest to them” (6). This “clarifying process” is best done through the *elenchus*, or cross-examination. Socrates draws out the beliefs of the interlocutors and together they examine the beliefs (often a definition for a concept to be clarified). As every opinion and belief is brought forth and examined, man becomes more aware of the truths that are within him. He can separate the wrong beliefs from the right ones, hopefully coming nearer and nearer to wisdom. Socrates says himself in the *Apology* that “it is the greatest good for a man to discuss virtue every day and those other things about which you hear me conversing and testing myself and others, for the unexamined life is not worth living for man” (38a).

Virtue and happiness (*eudaimonia*) are inseparable (Cushman 10). Socrates’ main purpose was “to make his soul as good as possible” (10). Furthermore, he believed every other man should share this purpose (10). Socrates himself set the example. He lived as he taught, and he died true to his convictions. In the *Crito*, he (Crito) comments to Socrates, “often in the past throughout my life I have considered the way you live happy, and especially so now that you bear your present misfortune so easily and lightly” (43b). Socrates constantly tended his own soul. He spent all his free time engaging in discussion, questioning and cross-examining. He lived in poverty (*Apology* 31c), yet it clearly did not seem important to him to alter that circumstance. One can only conclude that he enjoyed his life.

Cushman argues that if virtue is the key to happiness, then “happiness is the likeliest evidence of solid virtue” (10). Since it seems clear that Socrates was happy, then it is likely that Socrates is also virtuous. This is also borne out in the dialogues. In the *Crito* he has an opportunity to escape his death sentence and flee the city (45a-c). Crito makes a powerful argument for Socrates to save himself, if not for his own sake then for the sake of his friends and his sons (45d). It would be easy, since Crito has the bribe money handy (45a) and he has friends who would keep Socrates safe in Thessaly (45c). But Socrates does not flee. Instead, he argues that it would be unjust to flee (48c-54d). Because it is unjust, he does not flee. Furthermore, he is

at peace with this decision, more so than all his friends, in fact. This is further evidence of both his own virtue and his own happiness.

Peterman focused on Wittgenstein's philosophical therapy as the object of his study, but his criteria for a dialectic exchange in a therapeutic context are designed to be universal criteria. Therefore, if Socrates' philosophy is therapeutic, it will meet these four criteria. The first criterion is that of confession. Socrates constantly exhorts his interlocutors to be honest, to give their own opinion. He demanded it of Euthyphro each time that he asked for a definition of piety, and he reiterated his need for truth at 14e when he said specifically to Euthyphro "I prefer nothing, unless it is true." He demanded honest opinion of Theaetetus, gently and encouragingly, but insistently. In the *Crito*, when finally he has completed his argument that it is unjust to flee to save his life, he demands of Crito to speak against him if he honestly believes he can (54d). Crito has nothing to say.

The second criterion is that the acknowledged belief must be challenged and refuted if mistaken. This is absolutely the method that Socrates employs. By definition the elenchus is cross-examination. The third criterion is that the interlocutor must be led to a new way of looking at things, which is better than the old way. Well, this is what Socrates is trying to accomplish. He is not successful with every interlocutor. Remember that Euthyphro did not seem shaken from his conviction that he is an expert in all matters of the divine, even at the end of the dialogue when he had to walk away without giving an adequate definition of what the pious is. However, Socrates' dialectical exchange should not be ruled a failure. Wittgenstein did not think he could reach everybody, either. Some people are just stubborn (don't forget the human condition is willful ignorance, and that people fight change).

The fourth requirement is that there must be some agreement on the goals of the therapy. Socrates tells people what he is doing. It's not a secret that he's trying to get people to understand that they don't know. He went to the forum every spare minute he had in order to have a dialectical exchange with people, to seek one wiser than he. So when people engage in a discussion with Socrates, even if the goal is not spelled out at the beginning, one can infer a tacit agreement on the part of the interlocutor. Socrates' method of philosophical therapy does meet the criteria for a dialectical exchange to be therapeutic as set forth by Peterman, just as does Wittgenstein's (almost better—it's almost as if the criteria were written with the elenchus in mind, but nowhere does Peterman claim that).

Peterman evaluates Wittgenstein's therapy based on three requirements, using Nordenfelt's definition of health and extending this definition to cultural health. Can one evaluate Socrates' therapy based on the same three requirements and Nordenfelt's definition of health? First the goal of Socrates' therapy must be an ideal of health. Socrates' goal of his therapy is wisdom, which in turn leads to virtue and happiness. Since Socrates is most concerned with the condition of the soul, and turning people away from the human condition of double ignorance, he naturally is concerned with health. Cushman explains:

The test of truth is not in being in agreement with others, however great the throng, but in being in agreement with one's self—by being in accord with the soul that has native kinship with divine reality. And herein is indicated, also, the therapeutic power of dialectic. It has the capacity to conduct the mind of inquirers from erroneous opinion to the threshold of valid insight and knowledge (300).

An unhealthy man is one who lives at odds with himself and his “deepest presentiments of truth” (300) and Socrates' goal is to help resolve the conflict. Resolving the conflict leads to wisdom, which in turn leads to virtue and happiness. If happiness is an ideal of health for Wittgenstein, it can no less be an ideal of health for Socrates.

Secondly, a person must be healthier by *undergoing the therapy*. Socrates is his own example of someone who is better off (healthier) by undergoing his therapy. He examined his own opinions first. Thirdly the proposed practice must bring about the desired therapeutic result. Cushman asks whether “dialectic waits upon a certain *fitness of soul* and that, wanting suitability, its power is blunted” (299, italics his). His answer is that there are times when dialectic fails (299). Euthyphro might be a case in point. However, it does not fail completely: “At least dialectic may lead a man to the point where he recognizes that the place at which he has arrived in dialectical interchange is contradictory to his starting-point” (299). He cites Polus, Callicles, and Alcibiades as specific examples. “But [Socrates] left it to them to decide which way they would go and whether, henceforth, they would live in self-accord or in perpetual disagreement with themselves” (299).

The therapy can only be as successful as the “unhealthy” person lets it be. People do fight change, and Socrates could not expect to be successful with every interlocutor, nor is there any evidence that he had such high expectations. In fact, in the *Republic*, when he is designing the ideal *polis*, it's the philosopher king who governs the city, because not everyone has the temperament for philosophy.

On the whole, Socrates' therapy is not any less successful than Wittgenstein's. Their goals are similar: the achievement of human happiness (but Wittgenstein seems to think philosophy has an end, whereas Socrates hopes to engage in the elenchus even in the afterlife). Their methods are different—so different that Wittgenstein believes that Socrates is mistaken in his method. We cannot know what Socrates would have thought of Wittgenstein's method. They are both concerned with bringing a person into agreement with themselves. Wittgenstein wants to bring a person into agreement with his form of life, and Socrates wants to end the discord a person has in his soul. Their theories of reality and what is truth have not been evaluated in this discussion. Suffice it to say they are very different. But their methods are both therapeutic, and they are both successful, to a degree.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

I was born in Tucson, AZ, in 1974 and moved a lot as the result of being the daughter of an Air Force Sergeant. I graduated high school at Sidney Lanier High School in Montgomery, AL. I attended Auburn University where I earned a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and English in 1997.

Upon graduation from Auburn University, I was accepted into the graduate program in the philosophy department at Florida State University. My studies have emphasized Ancient Philosophy and Ethics. I took some beginning Ancient Greek courses as well as Latin, two Greek Reading courses. My coursework included seminars on Wittgenstein, Plato's Theory of Forms, Aristotle: *Metaphysics & Biology*, *Metaphysics*, *Readings in the History of Philosophy*, *Philosophy of Language*, and *Logic*.

After completing the Master of Arts degree at Florida State University, I shall reside with my husband in Carnesville, GA, which is near Athens. I am a strong believer that one's education never ends, and my future plans include going back to school to get my teaching certificate in order to teach Literature and Language Arts on a high school level.