Philosophy in a Fallen Language: Wittgenstein, Goethe, Milton

Richard McDonough[a],*

[a]Adjunct Lecturer Arium Academy, Singapore.
*Corresponding author.

Abstract

Many scholars have found both Wittgenstein's suggestion in para. 608 of *Zettel* (hereafter *Z*608) that language and thought may arise out of chaos at the centre and his remark to his friend Drury that he looks at philosophical problems from a religious point of view to be most puzzling. The paper argues that the language in *Z*608 illustrates his point in his remark to Drury. For the language of the emergence of meaning from chaos at the true centre *is* the religious language of creation found in Goethe and Milton—both of whom were much admired by Wittgenstein. The paper refutes the orthodox interpretations that *Z*608 suggests that language and thought may arise out of chaos at the neural centre. The "religious-cosmological" interpretation of *Z*608 is sketched. It is shown that the language of *Z*608 is found in Goethe's *Faust* and in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. On this basis a, roughly, phenomenological" reading of *Z*608 is developed. Finally, it is argued that this literary-religious reading of the *language* in *Z*608 expresses Wittgenstein's view that humanity lives, so to speak, in a *fallen* state, and that, therefore, human language and human philosophizing are limited by humanity's fallen (from paradise) state—or, as Wittgenstein puts it in the religious language in the Preface to his *Philosophical Investigations*, that humanity is currently limited by the "poverty and darkness of our time."

INTRODUCTION

No supposition seems to me more natural than that there is no process in the brain correlated with associating or with thinking; so that it would be impossible to read off thought processes from brainprocesses. I mean this: if I talk or write, there is, I assume, a system of impulses going out from my brain and correlated with my spoken or written thoughts. But why should the system continue further in the direction of the centre? Why should this order not proceed, so to speak, out of chaos? The case would be like the following – certain kinds of plants multiply by seed, so that a seed always produces a plant of the same kind as that from which it was produced – but nothing in the seed corresponds to the plant which comes out of it – this can only be done from the history of the seed. So an organism might come into being out of something quite amorphous, as it were, causelessly; and there is no reason why this should not really hold for our thoughts, and hence for our talking and writing.

Wittgenstein, *Zettel* (para. 608)

Wittgenstein is the philosopher of poets and composers, playwrights and novelists, …
Jarman, *Wittgenstein: The Terry Eagleton Script* (p.5)

According to the orthodox interpretations paragraph 608 of Wittgenstein's *Zettel* (hereafter *Z*608) suggests that language might arise out of physical chaos in the brain. McGinn (1984, pp.12–13, pp.112–114) thinks it suggests that the heads of normal thinking human beings might be filled with sawdust. Ben-Yami (2005) thinks *Z*608 envisages the conceptual possibility that human brains might turn out to be in physical chaos. Scheer (1991) thinks it posits causal indeterminism in the brain. Davies (1991) and Mills (1993) separately suggest that it anticipates connectionist theories of neural processing (See also Sutton, 2014). Hark (1995) argues that *Z*608 can only be a critique of Köhler's theory of electric brain-fields. All claim that the centre and chaos in *Z*608 as the neural centre and neural chaos. On this view (hereafter the Neurological Interpretation or **NI**), *Z*608 suggests that language and thought may arise out of physical chaos at the neural centre—but this *cannot* be correct.

Wittgenstein's "later philosophy" (hereafter **WLP**), to which *Z608* belongs,[1] stresses that the philosopher must not advance any kind of theories or theses (*PI*, 109, 128; *Z*, 233). Despite this, **NI** sees *Z608*, not only as advancing theories and theses but some quite extreme ones at this. **NI** is s most implausible reading of a passage in Wittgenstein's later philosophy (hereafter Wittgenstein).

There is, however, a different way to read *Z608*. Since **WLP** stresses that "everything lies open to view" (*PI*, 89, 126, 435),[2] it must be possible to interpret the key concepts in *Z608*, chaos, the centre, the "arising" of order, etc., as referring to items that lie open to view. On this reading, *Z608* does not suggest that linguistic meaning (hereafter meaning$_L$) and mental content (content$_M$) may "arise" from physical "chaos" at the neural "centre" but that these may "arise," in a very different *non-causal* sense, from a kind of "chaos" that "lies open to view" at a kind of centre that is open to view—namely "chaotic" behaviour at the centre of "forms of [human] life". On this reading, rather than suggesting most un-Wittgensteinian *theories* about hidden processes in the brain, *Z608* is actually nothing other than a vivid portrait of Wittgenstein$_L$'s perspective—according to which meaning$_L$ "arises," so to speak, from the "infinite variations" (*CV*, 73) in human forms of life.

In his (2013), (2014a) and (2014c) McDonough, invoking Wittgenstein$_L$'s remark to Drury that he cannot help looking at philosophical problems from a religious point of view (Malcolm, 1997, 1), argues that *Z608* is *not* written in the language of neuroscience but in the language of religious-cosmogony (hereafter **RCI**). McDonough (2014b) argues that *Z608* also admits of an Austrian economic interpretation (**AEI**).[3] Since, however, Wittgenstein$_L$ emphasizes the connection of meaning$_L$ and content$_M$ with forms of human life, and since literature is the natural vehicle for a portrait of forms of life, Wittgenstein$_L$'s views are also well-suited to a literary interpretation. The present paper supplements **RCI** and **AEI** with a literary interpretation (hereafter **LI**) of the key terms in *Z608* by considering similar language (the arising of meaning from chaos at the spiritual centre) in two literary figures revered by Wittgenstein: Goethe and Milton. It is further argued that **LI** is not merely of academic interest but sheds new light, not only on *Z608* but on Wittgenstein$_L$'s views generally.

§ I argues that **NI** contradicts Wittgenstein's signature views. § II briefly sketches **RCI**. § III shows that *Z608*'s picture of order arising from chaos by movement towards the true centre is found in Goethe. § IV shows that a similar picture is found in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. § V argues that **LI** discloses a "phenomenological" dimension to *Z608* (a portrait of the emergence of language from forms of life that is "open to view"). § VI sketches the more humble conception of philosophy shared by Wittgenstein and Milton that emerges from **LI**.

1. THE NEUROLOGICAL MODEL OF *ZETTEL* 608

Philosophy simply puts everything before us and neither explains nor deduces anything.—Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain.
Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (para.126)

Only conceptual and aesthetic questions … grip me. At bottom I am indifferent to the solution of scientific problems; …
Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (p.79)

Despite the fact that Wittgenstein rejects the relevance of scientific theories about hidden processes to the solution to his philosophical issues, **NI** reads *Z608* as proposing just such theories. Since, however, Wittgenstein holds that "everything lies open to view" what one should infer that the centre and chaos mentioned in *Z608* do not refer to hidden neural processes but to something that is already "open to view".

Whereas **NI** assumes the centre mentioned in *Z608* is the neural centre, that is the real point of *Z608*, read carefully, is that it is *not* the neural centre. Consider the 2nd-4th sentences in *Z608* (numbered for convenience):

(**S1**) [I]f I talk or write, there is, I assume, a system of impulses going out from my brain and correlated with my spoken or written thoughts. (**S2**) But why should the *system* continue further in the direction of the centre? (**S3**) Why should this order not proceed, so to speak [*sozusagen*], out of chaos?

Whereas **NI** assumes that centre mentioned in S_2 *must* be the neural centre, S_1 *endorses* the common view that the brain impulses cause human behaviour. But S_1 indicates that those neural impulses move *from* the brain *towards* spoken/written items in the public world. Since S_2, read naturally, asks why that neural system should proceed further in that direction, *the centre mentioned in S_2 has to be in the public world that is "open to view".*

Wittgenstein identifies this *public centre* at several other places in **WLP**. In *PI* (108), he contrasts his old *TLP*-view of language possesses a kind of "formal unity" with his new view that "the axis of reference of our examination must be rotated … around the fixed point [*Angelpunkt*] of our real need"—which he identifies with *ordinary life*. But "*Angelpunkt*," which Anscombe translates as "fixed point," can be translated as centre-point (Traupman, 1991, 17). Thus, *PI* (108) identifies the real centre-point of "our examination" as ordinary life—or, more precisely, "forms of life" (*PI*, 23, pp.174, 226). Similarly, *RFM* (III.15) identifies "the centre of gravity of mathematics" as *action* and *LFM* (246) identifies the "central reality" corresponding to mathematical propositions, not as abstract objects, but as our *methods* of representing. These kinds of *centres of human activities* are, unlike the neural centre, "open to view." Wittgenstein *never* identifies the centre of a language with the neural centre—but that is the reading adopted by **NI**.

Second, since the notion of chaos in Z608 is tied to the notion of the centre, this clarifies Z608's notion of chaos as well. **NI** correctly assumes that the chaos is where the centre is, but since it misidentifies the location of the centre, it misidentifies the location of the chaos. In fact, Wittgenstein employs chaos-imagery throughout **WLP**. At *OC* (613-614) he states that the attempt to doubt certain very fundamental things … would plunge human judgment into "chaos"—referring not to chaos in the brain but to a kind of "chaos" *in human life*. He also alludes to the chaos from which language arises when he identifies "the great swarm [*ganze Gewimmel*] of human actions" against which action is judged (*Z567*). Since understanding the way language arises from the great "swarm" of human action is what the philosopher needs to understand, Wittgenstein states at *CV* (65) that the philosopher must learn to "feel at home" in "primeval chaos." Thus, whereas some philosophers may prefer to reside in the more comforting artificial worlds of Wittgenstein's own *TLP* or Russell's *Principles of Mathematics* the correct understanding of language requires that one descend into the chaotic *ganze Gewimmel* of human life in order to see how language "arises" from it. The description of the way language arises out of chaos of life is found on virtually every page of **WLP**. It is what is behind Wittgenstein's remark that there are "countless kinds of sentences that are constantly coming into and dropping out of existence (*PI*, 23). It is what is behind his remarks that many words do not have fixed meanings and that one cannot give a complete list of rules for the use of a word but that this does not detract from their utility (*PI*, 79; *Z440-441*). It is what is behind his remark that "in the flux of life" rigid concepts won't do and that all concepts are "elastic" (*LW-1*, 246, 340). It is what is behind his remark that "life's infinite variations are essential to our life" (*CV*, 73). It is what is behind his remark that that "what we regard as expression consists in incalculability" (*CV*, 73).[4] It is such points to which Z608 refers when it suggests that language may "*sozusagen*" arise from chaos. That is, Z608 is, quite obviously, *not* concerned with the neural basis of language but with *the elusive connection between languages and "chaotic" forms of life*.

In summary, Z608 does *not* suggest that language arises from chaos at the neural centre. It suggests that language arises from the chaotic *ganze Gewimmel* of human behaviour in the true centre ("*Angelpunkt*" of our real need") of language—the open world of human action. In effect, Z608 proposes a "Copernican Revolution" in the understanding of language to replace to *old* view that language is *centred* in hidden neural mechanisms with the *new* view that it is *centred* in forms of life that are "open to view" (McDonough, 1989, 18-21). Thus, Z608 supports a phenomenological picture of the way language arises from the chaotic *Ganze Gewimmel* at the centre of human forms of life. It is in this sense in the tradition of

German "life-philosophy" (Rickman, 1988, 91-2, 148-9, etc.). Despite this, most scholars have assumed their own scientific paradigms in reading Z608.

2. THE RELIGIOUS-COSMOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF *ZETTEL* 608

Wittgenstein [told] his … friend Drury: … "I am not a religious man but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view." … [This] made Drury wonder whether "there are not dimensions to Wittgenstein's thought that are still largely being ignored" ... I have the same doubt in regard to myself. Malcolm, *Wittgenstein: From a Religious Point of View?* (p.1)
What I invent are new similes.
Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (p.19)

Whereas **NI** sees the centre and chaos in Z608 as the neural centre and neural chaos, **RCI**, following Wittgenstein's remark to Drury (hereafter **WRD**), holds that the language in Z608 is the language of *creation* that originated in Hesiod's *Theogony* (McDonough, 2013). Although Malcolm (1997, p.92) and Winch (1997, p.132) admit uncertainty how to interpret **WRD**, there are numerous religious images in Wittgenstein's writings. In *TLP* and *NB* Wittgenstein endorses the microcosmic doctrine found in numerous religious writers, including Wittgenstein's "revered" Augustine (Malcolm, 2001, 59), but also in Milton and Goethe. In the Preface to *PI* Wittgenstein refers to "the poverty and darkness of our time", which follows Augustine's view of man's temporal life as poverty and darkness (Chadwick, 2001, 21, 33, 120, etc.). At *OC* (370), in language reminiscent of Pascal (2005, 37, 45, 59, 62), Wittgenstein remarks that if one doubts certain fundamental things, one "stand[s] before the abyss [*Nichts*]." At *RFM* (V.13) Wittgenstein states that mathematics relies on a "good angel" and at other places he worries about a "demon" that may play havoc in mathematics (*RFM* I, 45, 135; II, 78; *PI*, 339; *OC*, 639). He repeatedly appeals to the notion of God's eye perspective and God's creative power (*PI* 452, 426, pp.217, 226; *RFM,* I. 72; III, 56; V, 27, 29, 34; *LFM*, 103–104, 131, 147; *LW-2*, 85; etc.). The image of the seed from Z608 is common in religious writings as a metaphor for growth (*Zechariah* 8: 12) or as a spiritual metaphor as in the parable of the mustard seed (*Matthew* 13:31–32; *Mark* 4: 30-32). The imagery of chaos and movement towards the centre from Z608 is found in many religious writers including Augustine (Clark 2005, 54, 66; Clark, 2001, 94; Brunn, 1988, 23, 109; etc.). The present section concentrates on the creation imagery from Z608, but, as shown later, this imagery links up with Wittgenstein's imagery of the centre, chaos, darkness, etc.

RCI does *not* hold that Z608 *endorses* any religious views. Z608 only states that the production of language is "*sozusgen*" like the emergence of order from chaos. Wittgenstein is only making *comparisons* that he finds

illuminating (*PI*, 130-131; *RFM* V.12; *CV*, 19, etc.). Whereas indeterminism, connectionism, sawdust in the head, etc., are *theories* about inner states or processes, *Z608* no more states a theory than Wittgenstein states a theory when he *compares* language to a labyrinth at *PI* (203). When Wittgenstein, in **WRD**, states that he looks at philosophical problems from a religious *point of view* he only means that he employs religious *similes* to shed light on philosophical problems. The language in *Z608* is not the language of armchair neuroscience. It is, broadly speaking, literary language—the "mythological" language of a "kind of world picture" (*OC*, 95).

Second, whereas **NI** holds that the centre in *Z608* is the neural centre, *Z608*, read carefully, implies that the neural impulses are moving *from* the brain *towards* a centre ("*Angelpunkt*") in the public world of spoken or written sentences. But this parallels the language in many religious myths in which one moves *towards* a spiritual centre as *towards a goal* in order to achieve salvation, enlightenment, etc. (McDonough, 2013 & 2014).

Third, whereas **NI** sees the chaos in *Z608* as neural chaos, *Z608*, read carefully, implies that the chaos is not in the brain but in the shared public centre of language. Thus, what *Z608* really suggests is that language arises, "*sozusagen*," out of the "chaotic" *Ganze Gewimmel* of human behaviour in the centre of "ordinary life." Wittgenstein employs this creation imagery in *Z608* in order to suggest an alternative to the orthodox neural paradigm. On his new paradigm, the production of language is not like a mechanical process, but is more like *the creation of a cosmos from chaos as described in many great literary works*.[5]

3. THE ARISING OF ORDER FROM CHAOS IN *FAUST*

> Our thought … marches with certain views of Goethe's [in his] *Metamorphosis of Plants*. … We are collating one form of language with its environment, or transforming it in the imagination so as to gain a view of the whole of space in which the structure of our language has its being.
> Wittgenstein and Waisman, *Logik, Sprache, Philosophie*[6]

> God grant the philosopher insight into what lies in front of everyone's eyes.
> Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (p.63)

It is well-known that both Wittgenstein (Malcolm, 1977; McDonough, 1989) and Goethe (McDonough, 2004) reject mechanistic theories of living things and, accordingly, mechanistic accounts of language production. This is rooted in their shared vision of *creative nature* (McDonough, 2004). The present section examines the similarity between Goethe's creation imagery (Moretti, 1998, p.631; Brown, 1998, pp.688, 692; etc.) and Wittgenstein's remarks at *Z602-Z615*.

First, the microcosmic idea from Wittgenstein's early philosophy is found in *Faust* (hereafter *FAU*). Lines such as: "Root up earth's core with urgent divination. Feel in one's breast six days-worth of creation" (*FAU*, 91), suggests the view, central to the present reading of *Z608*, that the language of *cosmic* creation also applies, *sozusagen*, to man—the microcosm (Bennett, 1998, p.600; Moretti, 1998, p.628).

Second, the image of "the centre" from *Z608* also plays a crucial role in *FAU*. Steiner (1924, § 9) identifies a key feature of Goethe's notion of the centre,

> There is absolutely only one single thought-content, and our individual thinking is nothing more than our self … working its way into the thought-centre of the world.

This is reflected in Faust's attempt to reach the centre of the universe by making a deal with the devil (Fuller, 1998, 565). Pace *Z608*, properly read, the motion is *towards* the centre, as towards a goal, not, as **NI** sees it, *from* a (neural) centre that is the efficient cause of the neural impulses. Goethe employs the idea that one achieves knowledge by moving *towards* the "single thought content" at the *spiritual centre* of the world.

Why, however, is finding the true centre so hard to do? If there is a single thought centre of the world then there is no alternative. So why is it not automatic that one's thought-content reflects this single thought-centre? *FAU*'s answer is that human life is a constant battle between the forces of order and chaos, where the order in human life, as in the *cosmos*, arises, not out of reason, but out of chaos, darkness, instinct, etc. (Mellett, 2001).

Mephistopheles (the Devil) exclaims,
> I am a part … of the Darkness, Darkness that gave birth to Light. The proud Light that now competes with mother Night concerning her more ancient rank and place.[7]

To Mephistopheles' proud claim Faust replies: "You marvelous son of chaos!" (Mellett 2001, Introduction), thereby endorsing the view that chaos and darkness give birth to light.

Faust envisages a *dynamic* relation between chaos and the centre. Given Goethe's own microcosmic doctrine (Moretti, 1998, p.600, p.628), this is reflected in a struggle between the cosmic forces of chaos and one's own nisus towards the true centre (Steiner, 2000, p.5). Although one's own true centre is the same with the thought-centre of the world, human beings often get distracted in the chaos and darkness and abandon quest for the true centre.

Goethe also sees chaos as an essential force in human evolution towards the higher spiritual levels. Taking some poetic license (with his insertion of the parenthetical remark), Mellett translates the last four lines of Part II of *Faust*, sung by the *Mystical Chorus*, thus,

> Everything past is but a metaphor!
> What cannot be calculated is happening right here!
> What cannot be described is being accomplished right here!

The Eternal Feminine (Mother Chaos, Mother Night) evolves us ever more and ever more.

Since human evolution is an outcome of the struggle between the forces of chaos and one's own *nisus* towards the single cosmic thought-centre, the course of evolution cannot be calculated or even described—which means it can only be captured in metaphor. For similar reasons, Wittgenstein in Z608 indicates that his language is metaphorical ("*sozusagen*"). Finally, Wittgenstein's remarks in Z603-604 about the unpredictability of human behaviour correspond to Goethe's remark that what is happening "right here" cannot be calculated.

In summary, key elements from Z602-614 are reflected in Goethe's *Faust*. First, both agree that the key elements in *genesis* cannot be described literally—they are, borrowing Wittgenstein's words from *TLP* (Preface)— "beyond the limits of language" and can only be expressed metaphorically. Second, the order in human life arises out of chaos/darkness. Third, the arising of order from chaos requires motion *towards* the true centre. Fourth, because the arising of order from chaos is beyond the limits of language it is incalculable. Fifth, the imagery in *FAU* has nothing to do with scientific theories about brain-function, but, rather, is concerned with spiritual development in human life. As literature, *Faust* is concerned with something that takes place right before one's eyes (in the lives of the characters in the story). It is for similar reasons that Wittgenstein insists that "what is hidden" (in the brain) "is of no interest" to his philosophical investigations (*PI*, 126).

4. THE ARISING OF ORDER FROM CHAOS IN *PARADISE LOST*

It takes the authority of a *Milton* to convince me.
Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (p.48)

This subversive impulse in Milton's spirit—we may call it the recognition of human production of everything humans can value, including the concept of creation—is also the spirit of [his] age, …, the continual restless struggling forth of the new.
Teskey, *Delirious Milton* (p.18)

Since Milton's *Paradise Lost* (hereafter *PL)* contains some of the most sublime religious language ever written, and since Milton blended his poetry with his philosophy (Fallon, 2007), and since, like Wittgenstein, Milton was heavily influenced by Augustine (Lewis, 1961, Ch. X), and since Wittgenstein revered Milton as an authority, it is only reasonable, following **WRD**, to ask whether Milton's imagery sheds some light on Wittgenstein's views. It would at first glance not seem that there is not much likelihood of success. Milton, like Goethe, shares Wittgenstein's distaste for mechanistic accounts of living things (Rogers, 1996, p.12, pp.217-218), but this only supports a highly general comparison. Further, Milton

begins *PL* (I: 22-26) by calling upon God to illumine what is "dark" in him and to "raise" what is "low" in him, so that he might "justify the ways of God to men". When Milton refers to "the ways of God" he is referring, among other things, to the fall of man, the entry of sin and death into the world, the ejection of Adam and Eve from Eden, etc. Thus, to "justify the ways of God to men" requires explaining how a perfect God can let such things happen—roughly, "the problem of evil" (Mackie, 1971; Patterson, 2008). But what can such theological matters have to do with Wittgenstein's philosophy of language?

Consider Wittgenstein's imagery in Z608! The image of seeds appears early in *PL*: "That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed …" (I: 8). The two main images in Z608, motion *towards* the centre and order arising from chaos[8] appear repeatedly in *PL*. Indeed, what "the chosen seed" (I: 8) was taught was "how the heavens and earth arose out of chaos" (I: 9-10).

The key notion of the centre is introduced a few lines later. Referring to the rebellious angels cast into hell, Milton (I: 71-74) writes,

For those rebellious, here their prison ordained
In utter darkness, and their portion set,
As far removed from God and the light of heaven
As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole

God and the divine light are located at the centre while the rebellious angels are removed *from* the true centre to a distant dark place. Although they have moved *from* the divine centre, the point is that the proper motion is *towards* the (divine) centre. Even in the first pages of *PL,* one finds the image of order from chaos via movement *towards* the true centre. Note, by the way, that in "The Argument" to Book I (Le Comte, 35), Milton assimilates darkness and chaos when he describes hell as "a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos".[9] Thus, the darkness imagery in Milton links with the chaos and darkness imagery in **WLP**. This imagery is also combined with the microcosmic idea, at IX: 107-113,[10]

As God in
Heaven is centre, yet extends to all, so thou
Centring, receiv'st from all those orbs; in thee
Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears,
…
Of growth, sense, reason, all summed up in Man.

Note, first, that though God is identified as the centre of "all", there is a second quite different notion of the centre in the passage expressed by a verb: "Centring" is something that man, by doing, receives virtues from all the other creatures that, *sozusagen*, orbit around him. Since God is the absolute centre by virtue of His essence, He does not need to *do* any "centring," but man, as microcosm, can mirror God (to the degree appropriate to his lesser nature) by *centring* himself on God. Of course, man might fail to do this, but, in that case, like the rebellious angels, he moves *from* the true centre *towards*

chaos and darkness.

Second, the passage implies that just as God "extends to all" of existence so man extends to all the other creatures. The "virtues" of these lesser creatures, growth, sense, and reason, are "summed up" in man. Just as man is a microcosm of God's created cosmos, the various creatures are microcosms of man, yielding a hierarchy of living things, akin to Lovejoy's (1964, 89, 164) Great Chain of Being, in which the lower creatures are images of man (i.e., revolve, *sozusagen*, around man at the centre of the material world), who, in turn, is an image of God's created cosmos (i.e., revolves, *sozusagen*, around the Divine centre of the cosmos).

The image of order arising from chaos via motion *towards* the centre conjoined in Z608 is also conjoined in Milton's description of God's creative act (VII: 225-231, 242),

> He took, the golden compass, prepared
> In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
> This universe, and all created things.
> One foot he centred and the other turned
> …
> And said, …
> This be thy just circumference, O World."
> …
> And earth, self-balanced, on her centre hung.

God here takes the "golden compass," plants one foot in the centre of creation, and turns the other foot to set it in circular motion—thereby determining the *limits* ("just circumference") of the created world. That is, God moves his foot *towards* the material centre to create an earth "balanced" on her centre. It seems that Milton's God, like Wittgenstein, employs a compass to fix the "*Angelpunkt*" of his real need. For Milton's God, this is the centre of the created cosmos. For Wittgenstein, it is the *Angelpunkt* of language that he, in his *philosophical* investigations, wishes to understand.

One of Milton's images of chaos is particularly illuminating in the present connection. Recall that Wittgenstein sees language arising from the *Ganze Gewimmel* (great swarm) of human behaviour. Milton also, like Goethe, uses swarm-imagery. Sometimes, as at *PL* (VII: 385-402, 489-492), he uses it as an organic metaphor associated with the *generation* of life,

> And God said, "Let the waters generate
> …
> With fry innumerable swarm, …
> and
> Swarming next appeared
> The female bee, that feeds her husband drone

At II: 890-903 Milton suggests a connection between the genesis of living organisms and primal chaos (Rumrich, 1996, pp.23, 101, 130-132, 141-142),

> Before their eyes in sudden view appear
> The secrets of the hoary deep, …
> …

> where eldest night
> And chaos, ancestors of nature, hold
> Eternal anarchy, …
> …
> Of each faction, in their several clans,
> Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands …

At X: 521-522 he employs swarm imagery to refer to the pit of devils changed into serpents,

> [D]readful was the din
> Of hissing throughout the hall, thick swarming now

At XII: 185-188 he refers to

> A darksome cloud of locusts swarming down
> Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green;
> Darkness must overshadow all his bounds

Milton here combines the organic image (swarming insects) with the spiritual darkness that exceeds its proper bounds. That is, Milton too has his *ganze Gewimmel* (great swarm) of living things, sometimes as an image of organic generation, sometimes of creative primal chaos, sometimes of Satan's swarming hoards—sometimes as a combination of these. Thus, Milton too sees order arising out of the chaotic *Ganze Gewimmel* of living things.

Finally there is a less obvious image of order arising from chaos in *PL* that turns out to be very illuminating for **WLP**. It is a major theme in *PL* that sin comes into the world by virtue of female transgression. Eve's reply to Adam's accusation at IX: 1144-1146 is significant,

> What words have passed thy lips, Adam severe,
> Imput'st thou that to my default, or will
> Of wandering, as thou call'st it, …

Sin comes into the world via Eve's will to *wander*, where wandering is aimless chaotic movement without definite purpose or direction.[11] Milton here invokes the common identification of chaos with the feminine (Dalley, 1987, 329; Rumrich, 1996, 138-145). It was because Eve wandered out of Adam's control that sin and death entered the world.

This especially significant since the same word is used to describe the "sons of Belial, flown with insolence and wine," who, inspired by Satan, "wander forth" into the night to commit lawless acts in "the streets of Sodom" (I: 502-505). Although the naked sexism is disturbing, it soon emerges that that Eve's chaotic wandering ways are an essential part of "the ways of God" that Milton sets out to justify in *PL*.[12]

Consider in this connection the famous cryptic final words of *PL* (XII: 641-642) in which Adam and Eve, having been expelled from Paradise, look back sadly at their former home,

> Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
> The world was all before them, where to choose

> Their place of rest, and Providence their guide;
> They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,

> Though Eden took their solitary way

It appears that Adam, as he now wanders with Eve, has been *converted* to her wandering ways. Could it be that chaotic wandering is part of God's plan?

In fact, from the beginning, all was not what it seemed in paradise. Eden was, no doubt, beautiful. In a passage that becomes important later, Milton (IV: 236-241) even doubts that "art" is equal to the task of describing its beauty,

> [I]f Art could tell
> How, from that sapphire fount the crispèd brooks,
> Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
> With mazy error under pendant shades,
> Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
> Flowers worthy of Paradise, …

Unfortunately, something was missing from paradise—namely, freedom. But in order to achieve freedom, one needs knowledge. Thus, Eve's her chaotic wandering that led her to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a necessary part of God's plan (Shoaf, 1985, 27-28). Thus, *part* of the story in *PL* is that Eve's sin first brought sin and death into the world, but the other part, is that by so doing she *liberated* Adam, and by implication, all mankind, from the *tyranny* (I: 124) of childlike obedience. For chaos is not simple evil. It is also "the womb of nature" (II: 910)—the *creative* principle (Norton, 1999, 232, 241-242). As such, it is also the source of liberty (Cf. Rogers, 9-10, 114, etc.).[13] Adam concludes, near the end of the poem, that "to obey is best" (XII: 561), but this means an obedience *freely given*, earned in the struggle through the chaos of life (Himes, 2005, 318 n108, 347-348 n959). This is why *PL* ends with Adam and Eve, setting off *freely* ("where to choose") to *explore* the new world (since their old home lay behind them) that lay before them, guided only by Providence. The concluding worlds of *PL* describe the beginning of a *journey* through the chaos and darkness—but it is important to be clear what providence means here.

In the Christian tradition Providence is God's power of providing for human needs: "The Lord will provide" (*Gen.* 22: 14). But Providence does *not* provide any guarantee of success. Nor does it provide a map for one's journey. Belief in Providence is belief that one is in God's hands. If one wants to become the Bishop and fails to get it, the Christian says, "God will provide", meaning that one was not meant to get it after all because God had other plans for one's life. Providence does *not* provide any escape from the chaos and darkness of life.

On the contrary, the whole point is to learn to *live* in the chaos and darkness in order to build a new order in it. By the end of the poem Adam has learned "to walk" (XII: 562-568)

> As in his presence, ever to observe
> His providence, and on him sole depend,
> Merciful over all his works, with good

> Still overcoming evil, and by small
> Accomplishing great things, …

The chaos and darkness, the "mazy error," remain around Adam and Eve, but now, properly *centred* in God, they are equipped with the "spiritual armor" (XII: 491) to fight it.[14] Nor are these "great things" they might accomplish just anything. Adam and Eve were not put on earth to become great finger-painters. The angel explains God's plan that out of the chaos will arise a "Paradise … far happier … Than this of Eden" (XII: 463-465). Adam replies (XII: 469-473),

> O goodness infinite, goodness immense,
> That all this good of evil shall produce,
> And evil turn to good, more wonderful
> Than that by which creation first brought forth
> Light out of darkness!

Given that the image of light arising from darkness is a variant on that of order arising from chaos,[15] the passage gives Milton's justification of "the ways of God to man." Eve's sin, the fall of man, the ages of suffering, etc., are justified because these are necessary to produce an even greater goodness—one *not imposed by divine tyranny*, but self-won by free human beings as they struggle to build a better order in the chaos of their fallen life. God's plan was not that human beings should revel forever like innocent children in the dazzling beauty of Eden. It was that human beings should learn, in the painful journey through the chaos, freely to bring good out of evil and order out of chaos. In Wittgenstein's words, this requires that the philosopher must "descend into the primeval chaos and feel at home there" (*CV*, 65). Wittgenstein here describes nothing less than the necessity of the fall of man into the primeval chaos where he must make his home—but that *is* the story of *PL*.

In fact, the chaos was already present, but unseen, in Eden. Recall from IV: 236-241 how in Eden "nectar" ran "with mazy error" feeding "Flowers worthy of Paradise". Since a maze symbolizes chaos (McCullough, 2005, 4, 220) the passage implies that even the flowers of paradise, prior to the fall, arise from chaos. Similarly, at IV: 232-234, Milton describes a great river in Eden fed by the "nether flood," which

> … from his darksome passage now appears, and now, divided into four main streams, runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm, …

Even in Eden before the fall, order (a system of life-giving rivers) emerges from the darkness and (chaotically) "wanders" through many realms. But Adam and Eve had failed to see the chaos and darkness that had been *right before their eyes* all the time. Indeed, Eve's chaotic wandering was just an extension of the chaos around them. Since Adam shares this same nature (she was made

from his rib), his critique of her wandering was a great failure of self-knowledge.[16] The fault that Adam saw in Eve exists and must exist in himself as well. Thus, *PL* describes a fall that necessitates a journey in which, to use Wittgenstein's words, Adam and Eve come to see "what lies in front of everyone's eyes" (See epigraph, § III.)

One crucial part of what they must come to realize after the fall is that *even their language is fallen* (Carrithers and Hardy, 1994).[17] It is not as if their language has somehow miraculously escaped the fall. Even their language is now infected with the "mazy error" that pervades their fallen life. Had their language escaped the fall, they could, at least, retire to that secure corner of their life and rationally plan their journey through the darkness. But since their language is infected with that same darkness (Shoaf, 36-37, 96-97), the notion of a true proposition is of limited utility to them. Since even their "propositions" are infected with that "mazy error", the sort of truth available to fallen beings, who, *sozusagen*, see everything "through a glass darkly" (*Cor*. 13:12), is, as Heidegger stresses (Guignon, 2001, 52), *disclosedness* (bringing light to the darkness).[18]

Thus, what Adam and Eve possess at the end of the poem is not some divine gift of happiness. The chaos and darkness remain around them and inside them. Happiness and goodness do not, *sozusagen*, "fall from heaven".[19] But now they are equipped with the "spiritual armor" (XII: 491) to fight it. It is part of God's plan that happiness and goodness must be *won* by *free* self-knowing (VII: 509-513) beings, in a *journey* that brings *light* to the chaos/darkness around them. They are also equipped with the realization that they can only succeed by centreing themselves in God. It is inevitable, therefore, that, at the end of the poem, Adam and Eve set out with "wandering steps". For they have discovered that, like Mephistopheles, they too are sons (and daughters) of chaos—and that this is the way it *must* be! It is God's plan that human beings must *freely* build a better order and they can only do this by making order arise from the chaos/darkness that surrounds and penetrates them.

5. THE LITERARY MODEL OF *ZETTEL* 608

> It is not impossible that it should fall to the lot of this work, in its poverty and in the darkness of our time, that it should bring light into one brain or another, but it is not likely.
>
> Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Preface)

> It is all one to me whether or not the typical western scientist understands or appreciates my work, since he will not in any case understand the spirit in which I write.
>
> Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (p.7)

As argued earlier, **NI** simply does not make sense as an interpretation of **WLP**. Z608 makes far better sense when read against the background of many great literary works in which the imagery in Z608 is not employed in a scientific sense but, roughly, as it occurs in the great religious myths that form the basis of the Western intellectual tradition (See *OC*, 95). *FAU* explores the idea that salvation may arise from chaos and darkness of human life. *PL* argues that order and goodness arises from chaos in multiple senses, e.g., from Satan's evil plans, from the swarming chaos of life, from Eve's chaotic wandering, etc. In both *FAU* and *PL* it is only when one is *centreed* on the true centre that goodness and order can be made to arise out of the chaos/darkness (although Milton and Goethe have very different views of the precise nature of the true centre). Nevertheless, the same relationships found in Z608 are, with an important qualification, found in *PL* and *FAU*.

The qualification is that there is *nothing* about God or spiritual centres in Z608. But **LI** does *not* hold that Wittgenstein endorses the theological views in *PL* or *FAU*. Z608 concerns the production of language. It no more states theological *theories* than scientific ones. In **WRD** Wittgenstein only says that he looks at philosophical problems *from a religious point of view—not* that he endorses any religious views (although he may do so independently).[20] Wittgenstein employs religious imagery as useful *similes* for bringing "light" to the "darkness" of his time. Z608 poses the following challenge to the scientific paradigm,

> You modern scientists hold that language is produced by mechanisms at the neural centre, but there is an alternative paradigm. Why could not language arise on *analogy* with the way spiritual meaning is pictured as arising in literary works such as *Faust* and *Paradise Lost*? The picture in these works, tracing to ancient religious myths, is that human beings can make order arise out of the *chaos of human life* by finding the true spiritual centre.

Wittgenstein claim is not that people can *literally* make language arise from chaos by moving towards some spiritual centre. It is that this creation imagery is a useful *simile* for breaking the grip of the dogmatic scientific picture and suggesting a new paradigm for our understanding of language.

Consider how differently **LI** would understand S_1-S_3 from the way they are understood on **NI**,

(S_1) [I]f I talk or write, there is, I assume, a system of impulses going out from my brain and correlated with my spoken or written thoughts. (S_2) But why should the *system* continue further in the direction of the centre? (S_3) Why should this order not proceed, so to speak [*sozusagen*], out of chaos?

First, since S_1 *admits* the existence of a neural *system* underlying language, **NI**, which holds that Z608 says that language may arise from neural chaos, simply must ignore S_1. On **LI**, however, S_1 makes perfect sense. Since **LI** holds that the centre and chaos are *not* the neural centre and neural chaos, it sees S_1 simply as *reminding* the

reader that *Wittgenstein's method is neutral with regard to scientific theories*. The mistaken belief that *Z*608 denies standard scientific views about the neural basis for language arises only because, for reasons made familiar by Kuhn (1970), **NI** presupposes the very neuroscience paradigm that *Z*608 eschews.

Second, whereas **NI** assumes that **S₂** asks why the system of neural impulses must continue towards the neural centre, **LI** holds that the whole point of *Z*608, read carefully, is that the true" *language-generating* centre is *not* the neural centre but the "*Angelpunkt* of our real need"—roughly, "forms of life." Further, whereas **NI** sees the neural centre as the location of the neural mechanism that mechanically *causes* language production, Wittgenstein's *Angelpunkt* of our real need is, rather, the kind of centre that one moves *towards* as to a *goal*. One does not often find references to *this* kind of centre-as-*goal* in modern scientific texts (which have been largely purged of such teleological notions), but one does find it in many classic literary works. Since Goethe believes that one must move towards the single thought-centre in the world, **S₂** would, in his terms suggest, roughly: Why on earth would anyone think that a mere material system of nerve impulses gets one closer to the real creative centre where language arises? Similarly, since *PL* suggests that human beings must centre themselves on the Divine centre to make order arise in a chaotic world, **S₂**, in Milton's terms, would suggest, roughly: Why on earth would anyone think that one can make language arise by centring oneself on some mere material system of nerve impulses?

Consider now a Goethean reading of **S₃**. When Mephistopheles, that "son of chaos", declares himself to be part of the darkness that "gave birth to light," he is *not* suggesting that light may arise out of darkness or chaos in the brain, but that it may arise out of darkness or chaos of human life. Read in these Goethean terms, **S₃** suggests, once again, that human language may arise, *sozusagen*, from the chaos and darkness of human life.

It may, however, be the reading of **S₃** in the light of Milton's imagery that is most illuminating. Recall first that in *PL* goodness/order is implied to arise from the swarming chaos of the sons of Belial (which parallels the Goethean reading), but order is also implied to arise from Eve's chaotic wandering through a dark world. Recall that Milton's description of Eve's wandering does not imply that it is *literally* chaotic. Eve may "wander" here because she sees some flowers, there because she follows a forest path, there because she hears some bird songs, etc. It is consistent with this that there is some unseen order to her wanderings. Eve's chaotic wanderings are only *sozusagen* chaotic. They are chaotic from a certain point of view—specifically, *Adam's point of view that she should remain under his "rational" control*. For Eve does not wander with a particular *rational* goal in mind, e.g., she is not

trying to calculate the surface area of Eden to determine how many parking lots it might accomodate. Eve *explores*, is *adventurous*, is *open* to what she *may* find in her wanderings, thereby disclosing *new* possibilities. Against this background, **S₃** suggests that language arises out of one's wandering (*journey*) through the chaos and darkness of fallen life. Indeed, in *PI* (Preface) Wittgenstein uses precisely this imagery of wandering "criss-cross in every direction" over the "landscape" in order to bring "light" into the "darkness."

Once one recognizes that *Z*608 is written in literary, not scientific, language, it becomes clear that it is not the odd singularity in **WLP** that some take it to be. In fact, several other passages in **WLP** make very similar points in different imagery: "Each of the sentences I write is trying to say … the same thing over and over again (*CV*, 7). Consider, for example, *PI* (635), where Wittgenstein asks what it is like to remember a past situation,

> It is as if a snapshot of a scene had been taken, but only a few scattered details of it were to be seen: here a hand, there a bit of a face, or a hat—the rest is dark. And now it is as if we knew quite certainly what the whole picture represented. [It is] as if I could read the darkness

Given the connection between the images of chaos and darkness, *PI* (635) suggests that one's memories arise, *sozusagen*, out of the chaos and darkness of one's mental images. It is illuminating that "reading the darkness" is exactly what Adam and Eve must learn to do after the fall. *Z*608 and *PI* (635) make very similar points in slightly different imagery and neither of them has anything essential to do with *theories* about brain processes.

Indeed, this literary reading sheds new light on Wittgenstein's reference in *PI* (Preface) to the "poverty and darkness of our time." Wittgenstein there mentions light in the brain, but no one (in their right mind) would take this as an allusion to neuroscience theories. Scholars have tended to see this passage as a vague *personal* reference to Wittgenstein's distress at the impending war and at the superficial popular science of his cultureless age (Hallett, 1974, p.66)—but, following **WRD**, it can be seen as the *religious* image of *light entering a brain from above* (not "arising" from the brain). A similar *religious* image occurs in *Paradise Regained* (Sims, 1979, pp.-22). Wittgenstein's reference in *PI* (Preface) to the darkness is his way of indicating that he understands *PI* to be written from Samson's position in *Samson Agonistes* (pp.98-100), where he has been "exiled from the light" and forced to live

> As in the land of darkness, yet in light, to live a life half dead, a living death, …
> Wittgenstein does, in fact, stress that death pervades man's fallen life,
> If in the midst of life we are in death, so in sanity we are surrounded by madness (*RFM*, IV.33).

The point in *RFM* (IV.33), paralleling that in *Z*608, is that mathematics too does not, *sozusagen*, fall from

heaven, but "arises" from the "death" and "madness" (the chaos and darkness) of man's fallen life. The darkness in *PI* (Preface) and *PI* (635) and the death and madness of *RFM* (IV.33) are simply variations on the images of chaos and nothingness from Z608[1]. None of these passages have anything to do with scientific theories. In all these passages, Wittgenstein, following **WRD**, is indicating that his philosophy is, of course, written from the chaos/darkness of "our" fallen state. In the phenomenological terms of his Austrian forebears, Z608 is the description, not of the journey of neural impulses through the brain to the public world, but of journey from the chaos of life to meaning$_L$ in the shared "Life-world"—a "Life-world" that is, in Wittgenstein's words, always right "in front of everyone's eyes".

6. "VAIN WISDOM" AND "FALSE PHILOSOPHY"

[P]hilosophy really ought to be written only as a *poetic composition*.
Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (p.24)

Paradise Lost … deliberately stages the ancient battle between philosophy and poetry.
Kerrigan, "Milton's Place in Intellectual History"[2] (p.264)

Since it was his "obdurate pride" that caused Satan to be cast out of heaven (I: 36, 58) and Adam and Eve's prideful desire to be "equal with gods" (IV: 526) that causes their fall from grace, one requires a more humble philosophy appropriate to man's fallen nature. In order to illustrate this more humble conception of philosophy shared by Wittgenstein and Milton, recall, to take just one of many possible examples, the highly influential view of language-learning that Fodor (1979, 58) calls the Language of Thought Hypothesis (hereafter **LOTH**),

If Chomsky is right … learning a first language involves constructing grammars consonant with some innate … system of language universals and testing [them] against … observed utterances [with the aid of] an innate simplicity metric. … [T]here must be a language in which [this knowledge] is represented … [and] it cannot be a natural language since, by hypothesis, it is his first language the child is learning.

Fodor (1987, x) finds it difficult to believe that anyone could disagree with **LOTH** because he sees "no alternative" to it, but he (1979, 65) admits it is philosophically problematic[3].

Part of what is problematic is that Fodor's (1979, 65) view implies that "you can't learn a language unless you already know one". Fodor (1979, 82; 1987, 98-100, 111; etc.) escapes the *prima facia* infinite regress by positing that human beings come into the world possessed of an innate mental language called "*Mentalese*" that has to be "as powerful as any language [anyone] can ever learn". Since Fodor's new born human infants (hereafter **FNI's**) *can* learn English, Spanish, Greek, Pashtun, Japanese, Cherokee, Malay, Yanomámi and *all* other *possible* natural languages, **FNI's** are born already in possession of *every concept that any human being could ever learn!* Fodor (1979, 80) admits this is a "horrendous consequence" but it is only the beginning. **FNI's** must also possess an "innate simplicity metric" and the scientific skill to "test" their innate grammars against the linguistic data they collect. It seems that **FNI's** are born having already eaten, and eaten well, of the "tree of knowledge."[4]

Adam and Eve's state of innocence before the fall contrasts greatly with the sophisticated state of **FNI's**[5]. Although **FNI's** might stray into unfamiliar territory, there is no part of the world that is *in principle* dark to them. In this respect they contrast with Adam and Eve who are irrevocably surrounded by chaos and darkness (even if they do not always realize this). **FNI's** may be in doubt whether this creature is an insect or an arachnid, but they are born in possession of all concepts needed to resolve all such questions. No part of the world can be irrevocably dark to them. Thus, just as Satan tempts Adam and Eve to desire a kind of knowledge that will make them "equal with Gods" (IV: 525-526), Fodor's and Chomsky's "cognitive science" tempts one with a vast knowledge of all possible human concepts of all possible understandable entities. **FNI's** would seem, in that sense, to be "equal with gods".

Fodor's and Chomsky's optimistic vision did not originate with them. It arose long ago in the rationalist tradition of Descartes (Chomsky, 2009), which, in turn, traces to Plato's innatism (Fodor, 1983, 6; McDonough, 1991). On the classical rationalist view, the world is made by God to be understood by the human mind which, similarly, is made by God to understand the world. But even if one believes in a divine creator, as does Milton, this does not mean one must believe that God must

---

1 Milton's use of the notion of chaos in PL shares much with the ancient classical tradition in which chaos is closely connected with the chasm/abyss, the ocean, war, night/darkness, the boundless, indeterminacy, Satan, and the feminine, etc., (Osgood, 1964, pp.21-22, 27, 60, 63; Johnson, 1989, p.73; Rumrich, 1996, pp.140-146; Rumrich, 2014; Teskey, 2006, Ch. 4). Teskey (2006, pp.65-66) notes important differences between the "objective" chaos in PL and the "subjective" *chaos in Paradise Regained*.
2 The original is from Plato's *Republic* (607b5).
3 Fodor describes his view as "the only game in town" (Aydede, 2010, § 8).

4 The Tree of Knowledge is often described as the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which might seem to include only moral knowledge. In fact, the Hebrew phrase is an example of merism in which opposite terms are combined to capture an entirety (Berlin, 2004, 2134), i.e., knowledge of good and evil is knowledge of the good and knowledge of the evil, i.e., knowledge of everything.
5 One might think that Milton's Adam and Eve are born with innate knowledge of language because they can speak immediately upon being created. However, Carrithers and Hardy (1994, 100-101, 144-150) point out that for Milton "faith through grace can alone" make "knowledge real". See also MacCallum (1986, 172-173). Adam and Eve are born speaking by means of God's grace—not innate knowledge or neural mechanisms.

construct the world after the rationalist blueprint. Milton's God has more *dramatic* plans for man's earthly journey towards salvation. The blueprint for Milton's paradigm open existed in Hesiod's view carried down through the ages in various forms that order need not arise out a prior order but may arise out of chaos.

Z608 attempts to revive a version of that ancient paradigm. Unfortunately, the defenders of the old paradigm tend to evaluate the challenger by reference to their own paradigm—resulting in the self-fulfilling prophecy that the upstart is absurd (Kuhn, 1970). Thus, **NI** reads *Z608* in terms of the very neural paradigm that it eschews—resulting in the ascription to *Z608* of the impossible (for a philosopher who says one must not advance any kind of theory) views that there may be sawdust, causal indeterminism, or connectionist neural processes in the brain.

Significantly, **WLP** offers no formula for negotiating the chaos and darkness of man's fallen life. In *PI* (Preface) Wittgenstein states that he can only offer portrait of his "long and involved journeyings … over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction". Like Eve, Wittgenstein has done a great deal of *wandering*. Just as Eve's sin began a journey in which she and Adam come to realize that their fallen state does not permit them to become "equal with gods," so **WLP** takes philosophers on a journey in which they come to realize that their godlike concepts (of sublime mental languages, etc.) are "too high for man,"[6]

> [T]he form of expression we use seems to have been designed for a god, who knows what we cannot know … For us, of course, these forms of expression are like pontifical which we may put on, but cannot do much with, since we lack the effective power that would give [them] meaning and purpose. (*PI*, 426)

Milton, referring to certain fallen angels in hell (II: 557-568), reflecting on the cause of their fall, makes a similar point about the limits of intellectualist philosophy,

> Others sat apart on a hill retired,
> in thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
> …
> and found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
> …
> Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy!—
> yet with pleasing sorcery, could charm
> … and excite
>
> Fallacious hope, …

Philosophy was supposed to lead one out of the chaos/darkness. But by "reasoning too high" philosophers end up in a "vain wisdom" that "charms" with "pleasing sorcery" but gives only "fallacious hope" of godlike concepts that promise an escape from mankind's fallen state[7].

Wittgenstein does not reject *all* philosophy. But his philosopher must "descend into primeval chaos and feel at home there" (*CV*, 65)—which is precisely what Adam and Eve had to do when they *fell* into the world of chaos and darkness and had to make a home there. Wittgenstein's philosopher must, like Adam and Eve, *descend* into the chaos and darkness, *wander* through it "criss-cross in every direction" (*PI*, Preface), make a *home* in it, eventually recognize their human *limitations* and learn to read the *chaos* and *darkness* that had been there, right "in front of everyone's eyes," unseen, from the beginning (of the human world)[8]. The fundamental, but unspoken, moral of **WLP** is *humility*: "The edifice of your pride has to be dismantled. And that is terribly hard work" (*CV*, 26). The philosopher, who is constitutionally disposed to an exaggerated pride in his/her abilities, must recognize that reason is not given to humankind to plumb the secrets of the universe but to help them chart their way through the darkness of fallen life. Milton (*Areopagitica*, 252) agrees: "[R]eason is but choosing"[9].

Z608 is a paradigmatic example of Wittgenstein's notion of philosophy as a "poetic composition."[10] As such, it is portrait, not of the journey of chemical impulses through the brain, but of man's journey through the "mazy errors" of fallen existence towards the true "centre" of human life[11]. It is, perhaps, a measure of "the darkness of "our time" that one can see in *Z608* an inconsistent (for Wittgenstein) excursus into armchair neuroscience. In fact, *Z608* is a, roughly, a *humble* (therefore, metaphorical) description, *sozusagen*, of the *genesis* of the *phenomenon* of meaning$_L$ that is "already before one's eyes" in the *life-world* of fallen humankind. Indeed, this is why an

---

6   The expression is from Aristotle (1941, Bk X, 1177b26).
7   Durham and Pruitt. (2008), Mention Wittgenstein in this connection. *The comparison between philosopher's and fallen angels is too fascinating to pass over in silence* (pp.106, 111-112).

8   See Raine (2012, § 1). On the importance of the image of man's true "home" in the Platonic philosophy and literature!
9   Given Whitehead's (1961). Distinction between the two fundamental conceptions of reason in the Western tradition, that deriving from Ulysses and oriented to the art of life, and that from Plato, oriented towards a godlike understanding of the cosmos, Milton's conception of reason, like Wittgenstein's, traces to Ulysses (Cf. Himes, 300 n 559, 314 n1020, 401 n122, pp.8-11).
10   Kerrigan's (1989) remark that whereas "philosophy is "discourse with a limit … [p]oetry is chaos," adds an intriguing dimension to the present discussion but cannot, unfortunately, be pursued here, (p.273).
11   Indeed, most commentators regard Wittgenstein's comparison of language to a labyrinth (*PI*, 203) as a mere shorthand for the view that language is complicated, e.g., Black's *The Labyrinth of Language*, named after Wittgenstein's comparison of language to a labyrinth, never mentions the actual literary notion of a labyrinth. In fact, the labyrinth story involves precisely the same concepts mentioned in Z608. The labyrinth is itself a symbol of chaos (McCullough, 2005, 4, 45, 119, 220, 222, etc.). The labyrinth has a centre that one must go *towards* in order to escape the labyrinth, i.e., the chaos (McCullough, 2005, 3, 6-10, 15-16, 18, etc.). The escape from the labyrinth symbolizes the arising, *sozusagen*, of a meaningful life, broadly speaking, from the chaos. But this lengthy story must, unfortunately, be left for another occasion.

exegesis of the *literary* imagery that informs the "religious point of view" employed by Wittgenstein in writing *Z608* is so illuminating.

CONCLUSION

> The only way for us to guard our assertions against distortion – or to avoid vacuity in our assertions, is to have a clear view in our reflections of what the ideal is, namely an object of comparison – a yardstick, as it were – instead of making a prejudice of it to which everything *has* to conform. For this is what produces the dogmatism into which philosophy so easily falls.
>
> Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (p.26)

The paper argues that the orthodox view that *Z608* suggests that meaning$_L$ and content$_M$ may arise from neural processes is plainly untenable. Wittgenstein$_L$, who holds that one must "not advance any kind of theory" (*PI*, para. 108; *Z,* para. 233), cannot consistently be advancing neural theories in *Z608*. Rather, the key concepts in *Z608* must allude to phenomena that are "already in front of everyone's eyes" (*CV*, p. 63), i.e., the concepts of chaos, the centre, the "arising" of order, etc., in *Z608* must refer to aspects of *forms of human life*. The concepts in *Z608* have to be *life-concepts* rather than scientific concepts— and, in fact, various versions of these life-concepts are shown to be present elsewhere in Wittgenstein$_L$'s works. Since such "life-concepts" are the natural province of *literature*, and since these concepts are found in Goethe and Milton, both of whom were admired by Wittgenstein$_L$, one can fashion an illuminating literary interpretation (**LI**) of *Z608* that sheds new light both on *Z608* and on Wittgenstein$_L$'s other works. **LI** illustrates why it makes sense that the motion of neural impulses in *Z608* is *from* the brain *towards* the true *meaning-generating* centre in public forms of human life. The production of meaning$_L$ and content$_M$ is transferred from the domain of the scientific laboratory into the *drama* of human forms of life. Similarly, whereas **NI's** view that meaning$_L$ and content$_M$ arising out of chaos in the brain seems absurd and unscientific, **LI's** idea that they arise out of the creative "chaos" of human forms of life is simply a reformulation, in new imagery, of the core perspective of Wittgenstein$_L$'s "life-philosophy." By providing a new "yardstick" for evaluating meaning$_L$ and content$_M$, i.e., by employing *non-theoretical* literary language to compare their production to the genesis of a cosmos, **LI** discloses that the real point of *Z608* is precisely opposite to that in **NI**: The aim of *Z608* is to suggest a "Copernican" reversal of the received dogma about the true centre of meaning$_L$ and content$_M$. *Z608* replaces **NI's** idea that meaning$_L$ and content$_M$, "revolve," *sozusagen*, around hidden mechanisms in the brain with the idea that they "revolve," *sozusagen*, around forms of human life. But that is one of the central ideas of Wittgenstein$_L$'s works.

REFERENCES

McDonough, R. (1991). Plato on the Art of Moral Education. In C. K. Chong (Ed.), *Moral perspectives and moral education* (pp.63-83). Singapore University Press.

Aristotle. (1941). *Nicomachean ethics* (W. D. Ross Trans.). In R. McKeon (Ed.), *Basic works of aristotle* (pp.927-1112). New York, NY: Modern Library:

Augustine. (2005). London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Aydede, M. (2010). The language of thought hypothesis. *Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy.* http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/language-thought/

Bennett, B. (1998). "Interrupted Tragedy as Structural Principle. In C. Hamlin (Ed.), *Faust: A Tragedy* (pp.598-610). New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

Ben-Yami, H. (2005). The hercules in the machine: Why block's argument against behaviourism is unsound. *Philosophical Psychology,* 18(2), 179–286.

Berlin, A., Brettler, M., & Fishbane, M. (2004). *The Jewish study Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Black, M. (1968). *The labyrinth of language*. Westport, Conn: Praeger.

Brown, J. K. (1998). The spirit of the water. In C. Hamlin (Ed.), *Faust: a tragedy* (pp.688-703). New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.

Brown, P. (1993). *Introduction to Augustine's Confessions*. Indianapolis: Hackett: xv-xxx

Brunn, E. (1988). *St. Augustine: being and nothingness*. Trowbridge: Paragon

Campbell, W. G. (2014). "Temptation. In L. Schwartz (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to paradise lost* (pp.164-178). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carrithers, G., & Hardy, J. (1994). *Milton and the hermeneutic journey*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Chadwick, H. (2001). *Augustine: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chomsky, N.. (2009). *Cartesian linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clark, M. T. (2001). *De Trinitate*. In E. Stump & N. Kretzmann (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Augustine* (pp.91-102). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press:

Dalley, S. (1987). *Myths from Mesopotamia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Davies, M. (1991). Concepts, connectionism, and the language of thought. In W. Ramsey, S. P. Stich & D. Rummelhart (Eds.), *Philosophy and connectionist theory* (pp.485-503). Hillsdale NJ: Psychology Press.

Edwards, K. (2014). Cosmology. In L. Schwartz (Ed.), *The cambridge companion to paradise lost* (pp.109-124). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press:

Eliade, M. (2005). *The myth of the eternal return*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Fallon, S. (2007). *Milton among the philosophers*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Ferguson, J. (2008). Satan's supper: Language and sacrament in *paradise lost. Uncircumscribed Mind* (pp.129-145).

Selingsgrove: Susquehanna University Press.

Fodor, J. (1979). *The Language of thought*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Fuller, M. (1998). Goethe. In C. Hamlin (Ed.), *Faust: a tragedy* (pp.565-567). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co:

Fuller, M. (1998). *Faust*. In C. Hamlin (Ed.), W. Arndt, (Trans.), *Faust: A tragedy* (pp.1-344). New York: W. W. Norton and Company.

Ghomshe, S. M. (2012). Platonic philosophy in the poetry of Kathleen Raine. *Studies in Literature and Language*. *CSCanada* URL: http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/j.sll.1923156320120401.1890/3391

Grayling, A. C. (2001). *Wittgenstein: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Guignon, C. (2001). Being as Appearing: Retrieving the Greek Experience of *Phusis*. In R. Polt & G. Fried (Eds.), *A companion to Heidegger's **introduction to metaphysics*** (pp.34-56). New Haven: Yale.

Hallett, G. (1979). *Companion to Wittgenstein's "philosophical investigations."* Ithaca: Cornell.

Hark, T. (1995). Electric Brain fields and memory traces: Wittgenstein and *Gestalt* psychology. *Philosophical Investigations*, *18,* 113-138

Heidegger, M. (1982). The Question Concerning Technology. *The question concerning technology* and other essays (pp.3-35). New York: Harper and Row.

Hill, J. (1979). *John Milton: poet, priest and prophet: A study of divine vocation in Milton's poetry and prose.* London: Macmillan. URL: http://projects.chass.utoronto.ca/emls/iemls/postprint/jhill-milt/milton.htm

Himes, J. (2005). Notes to John Milton. In J. Himes (Ed.), *Paradise lost* (pp.263-466). New York: Dover.

Jarman, D. (1993). *Wittgenstein: The terry Eagleton Script; The Derek Jarman film.* London: British Film Institute. URL: http://www.complete-review.com/reviews/wittgenl/tescript.htm

Johnson, L. M. (1989). Milton's epic style: the invocations in *paradise lost*. *The Cambridge companion to Milton* (pp.65-79). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kerrigan, W. (1989). Milton's place in intellectual history. *The Cambridge companion to Milton* (pp.261-276). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kuhn, T. (1970). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Le Comte, E. (1995). Introduction (vii-xxxii) and notes to John Milton. *Paradise lost*. New York: Signet Publications.

Lewis, C. S. (1961). *A preface to paradise lost*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lovejoy, A. O. (1964). *The great chain of being*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Ludwig Wittgenstein: a memoir. (2001). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mackie, J. L. (1971). Evil and Omnipotence. In B. Mitchell (Ed.), *The philosophy of religion* (pp.92-104). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Malcolm, N. (1977). *Memory and mind*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

McCullogh, D. (2005). *The unending mystery*. New York: Anchor.

McDonough, R. (1989). Towards a non-mechanistic theory of Meaning. *MIND*, *XCVIII*(389), 1-21.

McDonough, R. (2013). The religious-cosmological reading of Zettel 6o8. *Sophia*, *52*, 259-279

McDonough, R. (2014c). Heidegger's *ereignis* and Wittgenstein on the genesis of language. *Open Journal of Philosophy, 4*(3), 416-431.

McGinn, C. (1984). *Wittgenstein on meaning*. Oxford: Blackwell

Mellett, T. (2001). Goethean science: Bringing chaos to order by looking at phenomena right in the 'I'. In Herbert Rowland, (Ed.). *Goethe, chaos and complexity*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. URL: http://www.southerncrossreview.org/6/goethe.htm

Mills, S. (1993). Wittgenstein and Connectionism: A Significant Complementarity?. *Philosophy and Cognitive Science* (pp.137-156). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Milton, J. (2011). Paradise lost. in E. L. Comte (Ed.), *Paradise Lost and other poems* (pp.3-349). Signet Books.

Milton, J. (2012). Paradise regained. In W. Kerrigan, J. Rumrich & S. Fallon (Eds.), *Paradise Regained, Samson Agonistes, and the Complete Shorter Poems* (pp.255-318). New York: Modern Library.

Milton, J. (2008). Areopagitica. *John Milton: The major works* (pp.236-272). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Milton, J. (2011). *Samson agonistes*. In E. L. Comte (Ed.). *Paradise lost and other poems* (pp.345-400). New York: Signet Publications.

Monk, R. (1990). *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The duty of genius*. New York: Penguin.

Moretti, F. (1998). Goethe's Faust as Modern Epic. In C. Hamlin (Ed.), *Faust a tragedy*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co: 611-633

Norton, M. (1999). "The Geometry of Choice: Chaos Theory and *Aeropagitica*. In C. Durham & K. Pruitt (Eds.), *All in all*: *Unity, diversity and the Miltonic perspective* (pp.232-244). Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press.

Osgood, C. (1964). *The classical mythology of Milton's English poems*. New York: Gordian Press.

Pascal, B. (2005). *Pensées* (W. Trotter, Trans.). New York: Washington Square Press.

Patterson, A. (2008). "Milton and the Problems of Evil" in *Uncircumscribed Mind (*25-45). C. Durham & K. Pruitt (Eds.), Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press Plato (1968). *Republic* (A. Bloom, Trans.). New York/London: Basic Books.

Psychosemantics: The Problem of Meaning in the Philosophy of Mind (1987)*.* Cambridge: MIT

Raine, I. (1944). Milton's references to plato and socrates. *Studies in Philology*, *41*(1), 50-60.

Raymond, J. (2014). Milton's angels. In L. Schwartz (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to paradise lost* (pp.138-151). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rickman, H. (1988). *Dilthey today: A critical appraisal of the contemporary relevance of his work*. Santa Barbara: Praeger

Rogers, J. (1996). *The matter of revolution: Science, poetry and politics in the age of Milton*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Rumrich, J. (1996). *Milton unbound*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rumrich, J. (2014). Things of darkness: sin, death, chaos. In L. Schwartz (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to paradise lost* (pp.29-41). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Russell, B. (1996). *The principles of mathematics*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co..

Scheer, R. (1991). Wittgenstein's indeterminism. *Philosophy*, 66(255), 5-23.

Scheman, N. (1996). Forms of life: Mapping the rough ground. *Cambridge companion to Wittgenstein* (pp.383-410). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schoaf, R. A. (1985). *Milton, poet of duality*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Shawcross, J. (1979). The hero of paradise lost one more time. In J. M. Patrick & R. Sundell (Eds.), *Milton and the Art of Sacred Song* (pp.137-147). Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Sheehan, T. (1993). Reading a life: Heidegger and hard times. *The Cambridge companion to Heidegger* (pp.70-96). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sims, J. (1979). Milton, literature as a Bible, and the Bible as literature. In J. Max Patrick & R. Sundell (Eds.), *Milton and the Art of Sacred Song* (pp.3-22). Madison: The University of Wisconisn Press.

Smith, B. (1996). *Austrian philosophy: The legacy of Franz Brentano*. Chicago/LaSalle: Open Court.

Steiner, R. (1924). *The theory of knoweldge implicit in Goethe's world conception* (7th ed., W. Lindeman, trans.). Dornach: Rudolph Steiner *Nachlassverwaltung*. URL: http://wn.rsarchive.org/Books/GA002/English/AP1985/GA002_c09.html

Steiner, R. (2000). *The philosophy of freedom*. Sussex: Rudolph Steiner Press. URL: http://www.scribd.com/doc/6858750/Rudolph-Steiner-The-Philosophy-of-Freedom

Stulting, C. (1999). The Satanic Predicament in Paradise Lost. In Durham and Pruitt (Eds.), *All in all*: *Unity, diversity and the Miltonic perspective* (pp.112-127). Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press.

Sutton, J. (2014). "Remembering as Public Practice: Wittgenstein, Memory, and Distributed Cognitive Ecologies. In V.A. Munz, D. Moyal-Sharrock & A. Coliva (Eds.), *Mind, language and action: Proceedings of the 36th Wittgenstein symposium*. Kirchberg am Wechsel. URL: http://philpapers.org/rec/SUTRAP

Teskey, G. (2006). *Delirious Milton*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Toulmin, S., & Janik, A. (1972). *Wittgenstein's Vienna*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Traupman, J. (1991). *German & English dictionary*. New York/London/Toronto/Sydney: Bantam Books.

Urmson, J. O. (1956). *Philosophical analysis: Its development between the two world wars*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Whitehead, A. N. (1962). *The function of reason*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Winch, P. (1997). Discussion of Malcolm's essay. In N. Malcolm (Ed.), *Wittgenstein: From a Religious Point of View?* (pp.95-136). New York: Routledge.

McDonough, R. (2004). Wittgenstein, German organicism, chaos and the centre of life. *The Journal of the History of Philosophy*, *XLII*(3), 297-326.

Wittgenstein, L. (1958). *Philosophical investigations* (G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). Oxford: Blackwell.

Wittgenstein, L. (1961). *Tractatus-logico-philosophicus* (D. Pears & B. F. McGuiness trans.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Wittgenstein, L. (1969). *Notebooks, 191416* (G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). New York: Harper and Row.

Wittgenstein, L. (1970). *Zettel* (G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wittgenstein, L. (1972). *On Certainty* (D. Paul & G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). New York: Harper

Wittgenstein, L. (1972). *Remarks on the foundations of mathematics* (G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). Cambridge: MIT Press.

Wittgenstein, L. (1994). *Last writings of the philosophy of psychology*, *2*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wittgenstein, L. (1996). *Last writings of the philosophy of psychology, 1*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wittgenstein: From a religious point of view?. (1997). New York: Routledge.

Wittgenstein's philosophy and Austrian economics. (2014b). *Studies in Sociology of Science*, *5*(4), 1-11.

Wittgenstein's *Zettel* 608: An analogy with Martin Buber. (2014a). *Iyyun*, 63, 259-288 .

Yami, H. (2005). The hercules in the machine: Why block's argument against behaviourism is unsound. *Philosophical Psychology*, *18*(2), 179-286.