# Commonplaces NC

### Framework

#### Determining the meaning of existence precedes ethics. Before we can say what constitutes the subject we must say why the subject exists, and before we can call an action good or bad, we must establish the universal rules which regulate it. In the same way it is impossible to play chess if without knowing that its rules command us to achieve checkmate, life must be a constant search for meaning and an ultimate truth

#### However, the subject does not think itself into existence and easily access truth but is rather thrown into the world and constituted by it. Our perceptions of ethics are defined by being thrown into a particular culture which already has preconceived systems of meaning and sets the limit for any ultimate inquiry we make.

Gustavo Gomez **Perez**, Boston College, USA Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogota, Colombia, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty: Art and the Bodily Emergence of Meaning, **2013**, <http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-105101a8-d1b5-40d8-b776-2473eed0ee97/c/SPCh_2013_4_Gomez_Perez_G_109-136.pdf> //AHS PB

In Phenomenology of **Perception**, Merleau-Ponty **criticizes the metaphysical understanding of the body as a thing posited by an “I-Think”** and proposes instead to conceive the body as a “(…) grouping of lived through meanings which moves towards its equilibrium”30. **The body is a grouping of meanings because it is experienced as a “(…) power of natural expression**”31. This means that the phenomenon of **speech and** the act of **meaning are grounded on the antepredicative life of consciousness32**. In this way, Merleau-Ponty provides an account of the phenomenon of speech and the act of meaning that is **opposed to intellectualist views pertaining to the Cartesian tradition33**. Hence, Merleau Ponty’s challenge is to find an approach to speech in which the word is not the conventional labeling of a “verbal image” determined by causal connections, for in Cartesian view of language “(…) speech is not an action and does not show up the internal possibilities of the subject: man can speak as an electric lamp can become incandescent”34. The intellectualist views consider language as an “entity of rational origin”35, presuming that it is possible to understand language independently of our bodily relations to the world. On the contrary, Merleau Ponty argues that **thoughts are constituted by the very enactment of speech**, which means that, for instance, the orator does not really know what he wants to say before performing the speech36. In this way, **even what is usually considered as a mental or verbal image is a modality of my being in the world, “(…) presented with many others in the all embracing consciousness of my body**”37. For Merleau-Ponty, art is a paradigmatic example for understanding a non-intellectualist approach to speech and its relation to embodied consciousness. He remarks, for instance, that **in music or the actor’s performance we perceive the meaning as something that cannot be separated from the sensible dimension of the work38. The work of art shows that meaning is immanent to bodily expressions**, that the gestures captured in the painting are meaningful just as the bodily movements of the actor in stage. This means that the body is essentially gestural, and that its **expressive power is manifest in all of its movements and actions**. In this way, Merleau-Ponty concludes that “the spoken word [insofar as it is an expression of the body] is a genuine gesture, and it contains its meaning in the same way as the gesture contains its. This is what makes communication possible”39. **This means that at the basis of any form of communication there is an embodied comprehension of the world. Precisely, language cannot be explained in terms of causal relations, or as a reflex movement determined by a physiological mechanism, because meaning depends on the singularity of our actual experience of the world, an experience that is fundamentally felt or lived**. In this sense, emotions reveal an experience of **meaning that cannot be separated from** the actions and **situations that constitute our gestures**: “The fact is that the behavior associated with anger or love is not the same in a Japanese and an Occidental. Or, to be more precise, the difference of behaviour corresponds to a difference in the **emotions** themselves. It is only the gesture which is contingent in relation to the body’s organization, it **is the manner itself in which we meet the situation and live it. The angry Japanese smiles, the westerner goes red and** stamps his foot or else goes pale and **hisses** his words. **It is not enough for two conscious subjects to have the same organs** and nervous system for the same emotions **to produce in both the same signs**. What is important is how they use their bodies, the simultaneous patterning of body and world in emotion”40.

#### Prefer this account of ethics:

#### [A] When subjects analyze existence from a view from nowhere instead of embodied in the world, they view it as purely theoretical and are alienated from any search for truth.

Abraham **Mansbach**, Heidegger on the Self, Authenticity and Inauthenticity, pub in Iyyun: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly, **1991**, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23350704> //AHS PB

Analysing the two spheres of interaction, Dasein and things and Dasein and Others, we see that Dasein's characteristic attitude is practical.7 In the terms of Dasein and things, Heidegger describes human existence as being in a world which it copes with, appropriates and finally shapes. This is what he calls the attitude of "concern" {besorgen), wherein **things are encountered in everyday activities: in working, producing goods, typing papers, hammering, etc.** **They** **are thus not merely objects, but** "equipment," they **are useful for some purpose**, manipulable. Things so encountered are entities "ready-to-hand" {zuhanden). **To regard things as independent of their** use and **function is to regard them as "present-at-hand"** {vorhanden), but this is only possible when Dasein's practical dealings with such tools meet with an obstacle or difficulty. Under such conditions things cease to be ready-to-hand and appear as present-at-hand. **When things cease to be functional**, useful for Dasein's purposeful activity, **they emerge as objects. For only when** **Dasein** is interrupted and the **referential totality** of its equipment **[is] broken** are the utensils involved attended to thematically rather than used. Only then **is** **Dasein forced by circumstances to 'look' at things theoretically**.

#### [B] Only viewing the self as defined by the world and its particular ethical community leaves room for the existence of others and solves the problem of solipsism.

**Mansbach 2**

The second sphere, that defining the relation between Dasein and other human beings, which Heidegger calls Dasein's "solicitude" {Fürsorge), is also characterized by the practical attitude. For in its practical dealings not only does Dasein encounter things as equipment, it encounters other human beings as well, both in the act of producing and in consuming the fruits of their labour. **Others are not isolated entities but a constitutive part of** Dasein's **environment**. Heidegger asserts that "Being with Others belong to the Being of Dasein" (BT 160/123), making Being-with a constitutive element of **[and] human existence. He thus [this] eliminates any problem of solipsism, since the need to explain how the individual knows of the existence of the other individuals vanishes: to be with Others is prior to knowing them. Traditional philosophy tries to solve the problem by positing an 'I' and a 'thou'**; according to Heidegger **this succeeds only in replacing solipsism of an isolated Self by solipsism** "en deux in the I-thou relationship" (BPP 278/394). But **this elimination of the problem of solipsism highlights** the problem of the Self: how can a human being be with Others essentially and at the same time be an individual? We will see below that by **defining human existence as essentially related to Others**, Heidegger precludes complete differentiation of the individual Self from other selves in either the authentic or the inauthentic mode.

#### Thus because our search for meaning is limited by communal ethical perspectives, derivations of value must begin from the commonplace, where different communities of being in the world break out of predefined moves to share and blend ideas.

**Oakley**, S. S. (**2008**). Commonplaces: Rhetorical Figures of Difference in Heidegger and Glissant. Philosophy and Rhetoric, 41(1), 1–21. doi:10.1353/par.2008.0001 ///AHS PB BRACKETS IN ORIGINAL CARD

In keeping with his commitment to apposition, Glissant’s concept of **commonplaces invites the comparison rather than the supersession of philosophical concepts**. For Glissant, **commonplaces are culturally specific formulae about being in the world, cultural truths that migrate** through traditional channels or technological channels.4 Where people “under contrary or convergent auspices, think the same things, pose the same questions,” Relation is manifest (1997, 23). **The commonplace “mobilizes better than any other system of ideas our imaginaries, but on the condition that we be alert to recognize it**” (23). The commonplace’s first theoretician Aristotle would likely concur. As Ekaterina Haskins explains, Aristotle pursues an “assimilation and differentiation of his linguistic sources,” although this method issues from his view of cyclical history: “Each age . . . generates the same ideas about the world, and these ideas are preserved, if only partially, in the form of sayings, maxims, and myths. Aristotle’s task, then, is not to advance understanding to a new level, but to distill the truth implicit in preserved opinions” (2004, 6). In contrast, Glissant holds the significance of the commonplace to lie in its ubiquity and frequency rather than its truth value. In fact, the emphasis on truth value that marks other modes of thought constitutes their risk: Not theories, ideologies, powers—not **a** system or an idea of the world—but the **enormous entanglement, which is not a matter of submitting to primordial lamentations nor yielding to unbridled hopes. The word cried by the world, which carries the voice of each community. The mass of commonplaces, deported cries, mortal silences**, by which we apperceive that the force of the State is not our true vehicle and we agree that our truths not join up with force. (1997, 27–28) Glissant further conceives of commonplaces as that “poetic necessity, open and mysterious” (1990, 190) which allows for thinking productively outside of rationalist constraints. Poetic thinking is thus freer to think in relation. This supports Aristotle’s view of the commonplaces as topics of invention, or in Richard Lanham’s definition, “common sources of arguments” (1991, 169; italics original). Here, **the commonplaces** designate familiar topics that **allow for** intellectually or morally—Glissant would add **culturally**—**productive variation**. In her examination of the Rhetoric within its context, Ellen Quandahl concludes that “common topics are part of a theory of interpretation” rather than invention: “they are the elements of interpretation so often embedded in commonplaces and in figures of speech and thought” (1986, 135). While Aristotle never explicitly links his commonplace topics to figures of speech, many of his topics overlap with figures of speech, as rhetoricians have noted. What attracted Aristotle to tropes was the observation that “**relations are productive of thought**. . . . One could say, then, that topics are tropes that Aristotle examined in a new way. He saw that patterns—in the list of arguments Greek boys were memorizing—could be examined philosophically” (134). It is precisely the pattern that intrigues Glissant: since Relation is not a thing to be grasped, its operations can only be inferred and imagined. For Glissant, **the recurrence of the form** or the topic **represents the trace of an encounter between cultural imaginaries, which are ways of knowing/desiring specific to a culture**. The central role of difference in both Heidegger’s and Glissant’s thought indicate such an encounter as well as an otherwise unlikely affinity. For Heidegger, **difference is constitutive not only for being and Being, but for any substantive thing or concept at all**. Difference is the “event” which is the condition of possibility for identification of any one thing, to include, for example, “past” and “future.” In his 1950 lecture “Language,” Heidegger states: In the midst of the two, in the between of world and thing, in their inter, division prevails: a dif-ference. . . . The word dif-ference [Unter-Schied] is now removed from its usual and customary usage. What it now names is not a generic concept for various kinds of differences. It exists only as this single difference. It is unique. Of itself, it holds apart the middle in and through which world and things are at one with each other. The intimacy of the dif-ference is the unifying element of the diaphora, the carrying out that carries through.5 Contrasting himself to Hegel, Heidegger asserts that this is a matter of thinking “difference as difference” (2002, 47; italics original). Glissant’s concept of Relation is largely compatible with Heidegger’s constitutive difference, as two of his aphorisms suggest: “**Thus is [Relation] the idea of being, but which shoots away from being-as-being and confronts presence”; “It is passage, initially nonspatial, which yields itself as passage and confronts the imaginary**” (1990, 200, 202). Yet Glissant would take issue with Heidegger’s insistence on difference as conceptually “unique” to the exclusion of “various kinds of difference.” On the contrary, the two are coextensive phenomena as Glissant affirms in an earlier and less abstruse passage in which he takes issue with otherwise sympathetic ideas of Kostas Axelos and Deleuze and Guattari, respectively:

#### Thus the standard is creating Commonplaces between Ethical Communities

#### Prefer:

**[1] Negating the validity of commonplaces is a performative contradiction, insofar as debate acts as a commonplaces to merge in compare ideas, which means by being here you have conceded its validity.**

#### [2] Absent Commonplaces any action becomes permissible as there is no place to reconcile problems between groups about theories of truth.

#### [3] Commonplaces are a side constraint on truth as absent being contrasted with something outside our communal frames of knowledge, we are limited by subjective bias.

**[4] Abolishing commonplaces is the root cause of oppression insofar as we regard other groups as deviant and bad under our systems of meaning, instead of learning, respecting, and incorporating their own.**

### Offense

#### Now Negate:

#### [1] Engagement between communities in a common place in an instrumental good regardless of its form. When we give military aid to anyone we compare and contrast our various systems of meaning on military strategy and what we think is ethical. Arguments that authoritarianism’s badness turn case are incoherent, insofar as the alternative is shutting down commonplaces which is always bad under the framework.

#### [2] Western countries like the United States labeling foreign community’s as authoritarian is bad under the framework since A) it functions as a blanket statement that totalizes multiple systems of meaning under one banner, which makes it impossible to form commonplaces B) its incoherent insofar as a community’s truth can only be defined within that community C) only I solve, because by comparing our ideas leads to them sharing our systems of meaning making them more democratic.