

February 24, 2004

IN MEMORIAM
Zeno Vendler
Professor Emeritus of Philosophy
1921 – 2004

Zeno Vendler was born in Hungary in 1921. He was educated there until he joined the Society of Jesus and trained for the priesthood in Holland. His doctoral studies in philosophy were at Harvard University, where he took his degree in 1959. He left the order shortly thereafter, and taught philosophy in a number of American colleges and universities. In 1965, he was a founding member of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Calgary. In 1973, he moved to Rice University and then, the next year, to the University of California at San Diego. After his retirement in 1989, he lived on the Oregon coast for a number of years until he returned to Hungary, where he died on January 13, 2004. He was married twice, and had a son by each marriage.

Zeno was raised in a German speaking family in Hungary, and thus started out bilingual in German and Hungarian. He became fluent in Latin and Dutch during his stay in a Jesuit seminary in Holland. He fell in love with English, though he learned it relatively late. Ordinary language philosophy was thus tailor-made for Vendler's passion and reflection. Vendler was also initiated into modern linguistics through his association with Zelig Harris. After completing his dissertation at Harvard, by lucky chance, he got a position in Harris's project on grammatical transformations. Vendler regarded Harris as a true genius. The result of this tutorial was a famous monograph on Adjectives and Nominalizations. Vendler is well-known among linguists, most notably through two early works: "Each and every, any and all" and "verbs and times." The first is an analysis of subtle differences among four English words that correspond to universal quantifier in logic. The second concerns the often subtle effects of verb expressions on aspectual interpretation of sentences; the two terms Vendler introduced in the discussion of this topic area, "achievement" and "accomplishment," have since become part of the basic technical vocabulary in modern linguistics. Both of these works have been very influential and served as sources for the later development of sophisticated and highly technical treatments of their respective topic areas. It may also be noted that Vendler's work on the order of prenominal modifiers provides a precursor to theories of parsing.

Although much of Vendler's work involved the careful analysis of everyday language, such efforts were nearly always directed toward understanding traditional philosophical issues in epistemology, metaphysics, and the philosophy of mind and language. From his earliest writings to his last book, *The Matter of Minds* (1984), Zeno was a defender of a sophisticated form of Cartesianism. He argued that mental phenomena were different from and irreducible to physical phenomena, and used the resources of linguistics and ordinary language to support this point of view. He was a delightful conversationalist. Zeno's passion for language was eclipsed only by his infatuation with geography. He was a great traveler; his last major trip, when he was about eighty, was a cruise to Antarctica, the last continent for him to reach. He was a dedicated and accomplished photographer. He took pride in his ability to hold the camera still long enough to take pictures in dark places without a flash or a tripod. Zeno was the author of four books and more than thirty articles and reviews. The undersigned wish to thank Ernest Lepore and S.-Y. Kuroda for their help with this memorial resolution.

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Frederick Olafson
 Avrum Stroll