

MEDITATION AS COMPOSITION: WALLACE STEVENS'
EXISTENTIALIST VISION

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ABSTRACT

Wallace Stevens' poetry and theory reveal his deep concern with the effect poetry has on human life and poetic creation. Stevens' poetic approach takes into account the poet's attempt to bring order out of chaos and, by imaginatively resisting the confusion of the world around him, to develop fictions from which order can emerge. Stevens' "The World as Meditation," as well as his critical essays, presents meditation as both the search for and the necessary element of creative order and explores its value in relation to the dynamic interplay of reality and imagination. The picture of the poet's world that Stevens draws is, ultimately, an existential one, for in it, self-creation has an important place: the individual first exists and then creates the meaning and value of his existence from his personal meditation about that world.

PROLEGOMENA TO HUSSERLIAN PHENOMENOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

By examining Husserl's *Prolegomena to Pure Logic* (volume I of the first edition of *Logical Investigations*) we discover the pre-technical observations and project uniting his later phenomenological writings. The key such observations are the objective fact of actual agreement across different individuals, as manifested most clearly in logic and math, and the fact of the irreducibility of the subjective experience of truth. Numerous arguments against relativism, and its variants, are offered in support of the former, objective, fact, while the latter, subjective, fact is briefly characterized, but not further defended.

The project underlying Husserl's phenomenological work is the attempt to base objective knowledge, evidenced by actual agreement, upon the subjective experience of truth. The project is motivated by Husserl's observation that scientific knowledge, exemplary of objective knowledge in general, lacks any unifying theory and that therefore such a theory is needed.

FIRST BELIEFS

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ABSTRACT

Justified belief and truth might actually diverge, rather than converge. I wish to bifurcate epistemological justification from correspondence, or convergence, or any other notion of truth. Justification is a more pluralistic, creative, concept than truth. Put less metaphysically, justification is time slice orientated. It needs to be investigated in the context of the epistemic agent in question and the satisfaction of regulative principles of inference conducive to the agent's needs and goals. And, as part of an epistemic agent's inheritance, the intially warranted is an integral part of epistemology.

The initially warranted are spontaneous intuitions which could have proved to be random, haphazard, or irrational. On inspection, one finds that intuitions have a core rationality and that one can attribute provisional justification to previously unjustified beliefs. But this core rationality should not be understood in a foundationalist manner, such as that offered by L. J. Cohen. Here, I distinguish initial from intrinsic, or foundational, warrant. I understand the status of first beliefs on a legalistic analogy, making use of the concepts of suspicion, probable cause, and beyond a reasonable doubt. Naive practices satisfy the definition of initial warrant, as opposed to intrinsic, because they are ultimately replaceable. But this nonfoundational warrant gives a more reasonable account of change of belief, and prepares the way for a coherence theory of justification.

ASPECTS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF GEORGE SANTAYANA

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ABSTRACT

For a number of reasons George Santayana (1863-1952) has been a largely neglected figure among contemporary thinkers. Yet he is a fascinating philosopher with challenging, original insights (especially in the area of aesthetics) presented in a beautiful literary style.

Here, after a brief look at his life and the spirit of his thought, a few details of Santayana's philosophical position are presented, along with a more extensive view of his aesthetics. As regards the latter, the concentration is on the nature and significance of the aesthetic experience.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU: AN AMERICAN ORIGINAL IN THE SOCRATIC TRADITION

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ABSTRACT

Without taking any position on the great man theory of history, should not both Socrates and Thoreau be included among the *dramatis personae* of what might be seen as cultural drama--namely, Western civilization? Socrates' inclusion is assured; the case for Henry David Thoreau is more difficult, and for a number of reasons. New England Transcendentalism generally, and Thoreau in particular, are typically perceived as being of literary rather than philosophical significance. Thoreau's philosophical reputation (or what little there is of it) is usually attributed to the influence of his essay, "Civil Disobedience," on Gandhi and others. Such a view misses the philosophical mark for Thoreau's philosophy is far richer.

In the Socratic tradition, Thoreau found no truths leading to the good life in what the masses of men thought. Thoreau's approach to the good life began by listening only to the beat of a different drummer. But, as with Socrates, Thoreau was committed to more than simply exposing the fallacies and illusions of everyday thought: both passionately sought the universal; yet they had differing conceptions of how *episteme* was to be realized. The differences may be conveniently (not definitively) summarized under epistemological and metaphysical headings. Epistemologically, Socrates champions the arithmomorphic theory of knowledge or the deductive ideal; Thoreau's epistemological

commitment is to the method of intuition. Metaphysically, Socrates is the seminal and perhaps greatest Idealist; while Thoreau is conventionally thought of as a Transcendental Idealist pursuing those higher truths which the world of space and time pallidly reflects, his metaphysics are more adequately understood as similar in some ways to those of Whiteheadians, on the one hand, and Taoists on the other.

Thus, while both Socrates and Thoreau seek truths which relate to the central concern of living the good life, the eternal verities which Thoreau seeks pertain to the process itself and are to be found through immediate, intuitive encounters with Nature (rather than through reunification of the disembodied soul with the realm of forms or practicing the methods of *maieusis*). Thoreau understood the criticism that such a notion would engender. He addressed the subject in wry fashion in "Walking" which defends "Beautiful Knowledge"--knowledge useful only in a higher sense without practical value; he also argued in "Walking" that the ultimate form of knowledge is "Sympathy with Intelligence."

History may very well be, as Shakespeare might have it, sound and fury signifying nothing. Perhaps David Hall's thesis in *Eros and Irony* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1982) is correct, and we should view history--and therefore Socrates and Thoreau--as a philosophical ironist: "Unless we can free ourselves from the bias that forces us to conceive the cosmos as a single-ordered world which it is our responsibility to recreate in social and political dimensions, we shall surely not escape the temptation to exploit the instrumental power born of our narrow and perverse anthropocentrism for totalitarian ends" (p. 251). And maybe, just maybe, Thoreau is himself the first ironist: "In Wildness is the preservation of the World."

PITY AND ITS RELATIVES

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenology of pity involves discussion of several related emotions which are either included in pity or associated with pity in important cases of pity. The ones treated are:

Chagrin or the "apologetic feeling:" the desire to have X removed from one's awareness, or just removed.

Pathos: the response to the pathetic (especially of events as opposed to people and animals).

Embarrassment: the acknowledgement that X ought not to exist (associated with pathos).

Protectiveness: accompanies pity of the near-and dear.

Outrage that X (= the pitiful quality) belongs to the pitied personality.

Pity is defined as the recognition of the thinglike aspects of personality.

Self-pity does not fit this analysis and must be classed as an allied but distinct emotion.

PROGRESS IN METAPHYSICS

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ABSTRACT

Progress in metaphysics can be measured by the accumulation of metaphysical ideas but an additional criterion in the form of approaching an external goal cannot be formulated. Neither pragmatic value, coherence, nor correspondence to truth will work to provide an additional criterion. Popper's criteria for criticizing metaphysical theories have been interpreted to follow too closely his criticism of scientific theories in terms of their empirical consequences. When problem solving success is relativized to the historical context of problem formulation, which is only one way of relating to the world through the expression of metaphysical language, and simplicity and fruitfulness are taken as aesthetic rather than empirical criteria for criticism, then Popper's criteria can be used to say more about the ideas which constitute the growth of metaphysics even if they do not form a separate criterion for progress.

"ON PHAEDO: DEATH AS A MEANS FOR LIFE"

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ABSTRACT

In Plato's "Phaedo," Socrates says that the true aim of philosophy is to prepare one for death and that philosophers look forward to death, yet in the "Symposium," Socrates says that in our desire to obtain a portion of the Good for ourselves, we long for immortality. The thesis of this paper is to tie the connection between the philosopher's desire for an everlasting life and his desire and preparation for death; death is a means for philosopher's search for truth which, in turn, stems from his desire for a divine immortality, an everlasting life. Of course, philosophers do not have a death wish, so there must be at least two senses of "death." Philosophers desire to separate the petty distractions related to bodily perceptions from their "soul" perceptions through which they discover truth. This separation of soul and body is one sense of "death," and this death for a divine immortality is evident from the sense in which philosophy is a preparation for bodily death. Out of love for the Forms or an admiration for their immortal, true, and changeless (etc.) nature, the philosopher desires to be near the Forms and, to the greatest possible extent, to be like them himself. Socrates implies in the "Phaedo" that philosophy causes this resemblance and spiritual proximity. Spiritual improvement and, hence, an immortal Form-like nature is the true aim of the occupation of philosophy. Therefore, the philosopher dies to his bodily distractions out of the desire for a divine and Form-like immortality. In abbreviated and paradoxical words, death is a means for life.

PRAGMATISM AND MUSIC: A BRIEF LOOK

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ABSTRACT

This piece uses philosophic tools to illustrate and examine two opposed schools of thought and conduct from the world of music. By "the world of music" is meant the activities of Western classical music as taught, learned, and performed within the category of traditional piano literature. The philosophic tools employed are drawn from the system of the eminent nineteenth-century American mathematician, scientist, and founder of philosophical pragmatism, Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914). Citations from both the Peirce *Collected Papers* edition and from manuscript holdings at the Institute for Studies in Pragmaticism are utilized.

The two schools of musical thought concerned are termed the "mechanical" (as in deterministic, machine-like; algorithmic) and "anti-mechanical" outlooks. The sources chosen as representative of these outlooks are, respectively, Walter Giesecking's *The Shortest Way to Pianistic Perfection* of 1932 and Arthur Schnabel's *Music and the Line of Most Resistance* of a decade later. Both these pianists and teachers were figures of extraordinary stature during their lifetimes whose influence is still felt today.

Peirce's pragmatism, which to him was ". . . simply the experimental method. . . of all successful science," is found useful in two respects relevant to the musical schools under consideration. First, the diametric opposition of the mechanical/anti-mechanical viewpoints from music is placed in bolder relief by comparison with Peirce's pragmatism. Secondly, it is put forward that Peirce's pragmatism can be of profound value when addressing the

particular and pernicious form of doubt engendered in artists by the mechanicalism/anti-mechanicalism opposition.

In the course of these examinations, an account is given concerning the evolution of the terms "pragmatism" and the lesser-known "pragmaticism." Historical remarks are offered on Peirce being the originator of the doctrine of pragmatism in 1871 and on his subsequent modification of the term, in 1905, to pragmaticism.

TRIANOSKY ON THE AUTONOMY OF VIRTUE ETHICS

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ABSTRACT

In an article in the *Journal of Philosophy*, Professor Trianosky argues that there is a looseness of fit between standards of vice and principles of wrongdoing. He claims that while *deontic* blamings of persons are appropriate only when an individual has performed a wrong action, *aretaic* blamings are appropriate even when individuals have committed no wrongdoing. To illustrate his point, Trianosky discusses instances in which people seem to feel guilty for refraining from performing supererogatory actions. However, his examples and arguments do not establish his point. Rather, they help to establish that both aretaic and deontic theorists (may) have difficulty with the category of supererogatory actions, and, that there are varying degrees of looseness of fit between standards of vice and principles of wrongdoing *within* deontic ethical theories.

DIALECTIC, CONCEPT, AND TIME IN THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIND

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, an attempt is made to make a small but important, foundational point concerning the place of time in Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Through a close reading of the text, time is related to the dialectic and *Begriff* or concept. Then this tripartite consideration leads to an assertion concerning the centrality of time in the *Phenomenology*.

CHASING PARADIGMS:
FROM THE CORRUPTION OF SPORT TO SPORT SAMADHI

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ABSTRACT

1975 is a pivotal date for the recent history of sport. The sports world had undergone a major transfiguration or "revolution" in Thomas Kuhn's sense of historical change as a shift of paradigms which govern our thinking and cultural practices. The old paradigm which was displaced was also the original one--it arose in the 19th century in Great Britain and I label it "The Eton Paradigm." The Eton Paradigm assimilates moral values with sport: amateurism, recreation, and the conventionality of play. Arguments which appeal to "sports build character" as a premise work from within this moral paradigm. It declined with the rise of technology and the success ethic (economics displaced morality).

Out of the corruption of sports (around 1975), there arose a new paradigm with religious, philosophical, aesthetic, and artistic values associated with it. A transfiguration of values took place in sport. This paper briefly sketches this transfiguration with the assistance of a modified ordinary language philosophy which analyzes "sport-talk" or popular literature of this century. Eastern or Asian philosophy makes an unexpected entrance into the West by way of the sports world with Sekida's *Zen Training* and Tim Gallwey's series on the inner game. Adam Smith summed up this phenomenon with this remark: "Sport is the western yoga." The new philosophical stance was reinforced by the growth in popularity of the martial arts in the United States. This stance can be found in the jargon players use to describe their sport

experience, for example, "playing in the zone." These experiences I call "sport samadhi" (*samadhi* is the Sanskrit term for "concentration" or contemplative awareness).

From a cursory review of the literature, I conclude that the larger social and philosophical process which governs sport practices and conventions have indeed undergone a major transformation. The structure of this historical change is best described in terms of Kuhn's theory. It is shown here that "sport" like other cultural activities exhibits major changes in our intellectual climate. The intellectual historian and philosopher find a fertile field of inquiry in the realm of sport.