

THE MORAL IMAGINATION

Thomas M. Alexander

ABSTRACT

In this paper I argue that the contemporary effort to reintroduce a language of the virtues needs to take seriously the role of imagination in moral deliberation, unless it is going to reintroduce the questionable claim of there being a human essence. I briefly explore three contemporary figures who have tried to do this, Hare, Putnam, and Rorty, concluding that their use of imagination is still too limited. I suggest that a more adequate version can be found in Dewey's concept of moral imagination as the reconstruction of a present situation.

SOME CRITICISMS OF DERRIDA'S VIEW OF PLAY

Kenneth Buckman

ABSTRACT

In this paper I critique Derrida's view of play, which he regards as an unlimited and spontaneous activity defying the metaphysics of origin, a metaphysics that seeks after the origin of truth and meaning. He bases his critique of the authority of the metaphysics of origins on the sign/signification schema derived from the work of Saussure. Since no authority exists outside the play of sign/signification, those who embrace origins and unities do so out of sentimental attachments to these conceptual schemes. Thus, as characterized by Derrida, the work of play is free and unlimited play because there is no ground outside the play of signifiers that can inhibit or limit play. Play is free, spontaneous, and beyond restraint.

Although many elements in Derrida's treatment are commendable, I direct four criticisms against his view. First, the opposition that Derrida constructs between deconstruction and a metaphysics of origins rests upon a false dilemma. Alternative positions are either excluded from the argument or inappropriately reduced to one or the other of the positions that he outlines. Second, without the exclusivity of this opposition, Derrida's project loses much of its vitality. Third, the charge of sentimental attachments that Derrida levels against his opponents applies equally well to deconstruction and further undercuts the power of his critique. Finally, contrary to Derrida, play cannot be conceived as other than constrained and limited.

SERIAL AND PERSONAL IDENTITY

Houghton Dalrymple

ABSTRACT

Hume's discussion of serial identity goes wrong from the start, but we learn something from his mistakes. His first mistake is to misconstrue the common-sense belief in external objects and to use the misconstruction as his starting point for his analysis of identity. Thus, he starts from "My perception at t_1 is the same as my perception at t_2 ." Intended as a statement of numerical identity, this is nonsense because perceptions are events and numerical identity does not apply to events.

His second mistake is to assume that identity and change are incompatible. However, serial identity and change are complementary concepts. An object cannot be said to have changed unless it has remained the same in the numerical sense.

His third mistake is to suppose that persons are composed of perceptions "which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity." As Hume realized, successions are not things that remain the same or persist through time, and so serial identity does not apply to them.

Hume's worst mistake is that he hardly mentions the body. The body is a physical object. As is the case with all physical objects, numerical identity unquestionably applies to the body. If the person is whatever it is that persists through time and if the person is the same individual now as before, then the human body is the most obvious candidate to be the person. With bodies on hand, identification and reidentification of persons are easy; but, without bodies, we hardly know how to make a start.

THE VALUE OF A MULTICULTURAL APPROACH TO LITERATURE

Patricia A. Deduck

ABSTRACT

While the value of literary study within the college curriculum has long been established, a truly multicultural approach to literature, despite the traditional offerings of "World Literature" or "Great Books" courses, has not been widely established. I attempt to add to the case for such an approach in three respects. First, I respond to some recent objections to the multicultural perspective. Second, I describe a literature course that embraces the approach by exploring the specific topic of the family in the twentieth-century novel. Finally, I discuss the value of such a course. In general, the value of such a multicultural approach to literature resides in helping students know the world in different but equally good ways.

ME AND MY SELFISH TEMPORAL PARTS

Dean Geuras

ABSTRACT

The paper attempts to identify a problem in the theory of time variously known as the B-theory, the static theory, or the tenseless theory. According to the B-theorist, events are tenseless, but people experience events as if they have a present, past, and future. People generally believe that only one set of events—those in the supposed present—truly exist and that all other events are either past—and thus exist no longer—or future—and thus are not yet in existence. However, the B-theorist maintains that the human distinctions among present, past, and future do not apply to real events but only constitute a human illusion.

I argue that if the B-theory is correct, people are composed of distinct momentarily existent subjects of experience. None of those experiencing entities (referred to as "I's" in the paper) exist uniquely because, according to the B-theory, all times are equally existent. Since according to the B-theory the belief that only one moment exists is illusory, the belief that only one momentary experience and subject of that experience exists is also illusory.

Let us suppose that a particular momentary "I" is diabolical and egocentric. It considers an imaginary bargain proposed by an imaginary demon. If the demon offered—right now—to trade the "I" momentary euphoria for utter torture to the "I's" body at all moments thereafter, this "I" would accept the bargain. Since this "I" experiences only the one moment, this "I" does not undergo the painful experiences of the other momentary "I's." The "I" of one moment does not share experiences of its later "I's," just as it does not share the experiences of other people. This egocentric, momentary "I" would, therefore, accept the demon's offer.

For the B-theorist, there is something conscious that tenselessly undergoes the pleasurable moment but not the

others. That conscious something—whether it is called a momentary "I," a temporary part of the "I," a part of the "I's" personal history, and so on—has nothing to fear from other moments. It could sacrifice the pleasures of other moments as felicitously as it could sacrifice the pleasures of other sentient beings existing simultaneously with it.

The mere fact that a conclusion is counterintuitive does not render false the theory from which it is derived. However, a burden rests upon the defender of any counterintuitive theory to reduce its unnatural air. B-theorists have already recognized such a burden in their attempt to solve a problem suggested by H. H. Price. Price argues that, if the B-theory is correct, a convict should feel no differently at the beginning of his sentence than at the end. Those B-theorists who recognize a need to respond to Price's challenge should now find a new one—the conflict of interest among one's own temporal parts.

FREUD'S RELIGIOUS SKEPTICISM RESURRECTED

Jeffrey Gordon

ABSTRACT

In *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud argues that his psychoanalytic "discoveries" about the origins of religious beliefs strengthen the case for religious skepticism. "This is a classic case of the genetic fallacy," believers (and others) reply. In this paper, written in a dialogue style, I give Freud the opportunity to respond to his critics.

**CAN MACHINES THINK?
A LOOK AT TURING'S IMITATION GAME**

Glenn C. Joy

ABSTRACT

The question, "Can machines think?" was asked by Alan Turing in the first sentence of his famous 1950 article "Computing Machinery and Intelligence." Instead of giving an answer to the question, he proposed an operation substitute because he believed that deciding the meaning of the words "machine" and "think" was problematic and that the question was "too meaningless to deserve discussion." His replacement question involved what has become known as the Turing Test, or the Turing Game, although he did not call it that. Turing asked, "Are there imaginable digital computers which would do well in the imitation game?"

In this paper, I find and examine five different imitation games in Turing's article. I explain how these are related to each other and to what has become known as the Turing Test. I also show how some popular statements of Turing's views are incorrect.

**THE SOURCES OF INTENTIONALITY
FOR MARTIN HEIDEGGER**

Richard M. Owsley

ABSTRACT

The concept of "intentionality" has become one of the most important for philosophy in the twentieth century. By "intentionality" is meant that characteristic of consciousness that points to, refers to, targets, or contemplates entities, processes, or objectives. These target entities are, for the most part, different from consciousness itself. Intentionality has uses in ethics, logic, aesthetics, psychology, epistemology, and ontology.

It was Heidegger who saw intentionality as the center of his peculiar kind of phenomenology. This paper examines the sources that Heidegger used. He was especially indebted to the works of Franz Brentano and Edmund Husserl. Although he was introduced to the concept through the work of these two predecessors, he nevertheless had serious reservations about their analyses. Heidegger was especially intent upon changing the locus of intentionality from the empirical ego of Brentano and the transcendental ego of Husserl.

Through the introduction of *Dasein*, Heidegger surmounted the Cartesian subject-object dichotomy, which he found to be the source of much philosophical mischief. He refused to be caught up in the entanglements of either idealism or realism. Having established a dependable basis for intentionality, Heidegger concluded that a meaningful human choice and novelty become possible.

EVOLUTION AND THE PRAGMATIC SELF

Peter Robinson

ABSTRACT

Darwinism has the potential for causing the single most revolutionary change in western thought because it displaces individual human beings from the ontological center of the universe. The American pragmatists, while holding many evolutionary themes in common, incorporated the consequences of evolution into their philosophical outlooks, each in their own way. The pragmatists together almost stand alone among philosophers in having taken Darwinism seriously, and they should be credited with implementation of its revolutionary consequences for Western thought.

However, there are other tenets of the American pragmatists that make the individual self the locus of reality and value. These ideas come from various sources and are held in varying strength among the pragmatists. The pragmatists each differ in how they evaluate the concept of the self and how they adjudicate between it and evolution, but in general they fail to carry out a complete revolution in philosophy based on the consequences of Darwinism. They retain the ontological centrality of the individual self somewhere in their philosophies.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF TECHNICAL WRITING

Semon Strobos

ABSTRACT

Technical writing has traditionally and is still considered to be different from creative writing due to what Aristotle would call material cause—the use of such elements of language as metaphor, description, sentence construction, and so on. But technical writing can be shown not to be different from creative writing in this way. The perception that is so to be distinguished results from a philosophical tradition—traced in this paper—that has created a dichotomy between spiritual and material elements of human thought. Further, philosophy in the last century has also challenged the relevance and validity of such a dichotomy. Instead, this paper postulates and demonstrates the usefulness of seeing the difference between creative and technical writing as a difference in its *telos*, what Aristotle would call its final cause.

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