

ABSTRACTS

WHEN IS BIOLOGY DESTINY? BIOLOGICAL DETERMINISM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Immaculada de Melo-Martin

The focus of this paper is to show that those who criticize biological explanations of human nature might be granting too much to those who propose such explanations when they argue that the truth of genetic determinism implies the end of critical evaluation and reform of our social institutions. This is so because when we argue that biological determinism exempts us from social critique we are erroneously presupposing that our social values, practices, and institutions have nothing to do with what makes biological explanations troublesome. My argument is then that what constitutes a problem for those who are concerned with social justice is not the fact that particular behaviors might be genetically determined, but the fact that our value system and social institutions create the conditions that make such behaviors problematic. Thus, I will argue that even if genetic determinism were correct, the requirement of assessing and transforming our social practices and institutions will be far from superfluous. Biology is rarely destiny for human beings and the institutions they create.

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INTUITING BELIEFS: ON SOSA'S ACCOUNT OF RATIONAL INTUITION

Edgar Eslava

In a paper commenting on G. Bealer's notion of Rational Intuition and its role on the theory of a priori knowledge, E. Sosa formulates three questions he considers necessary to answer in order to establish a clear epistemic account of intuitions: First, what is ostensible intuition? Second, what would make it a basic source of evidence? And third, is it possible to defend intuition against the accounts that exclude it *prima facie* as a source of evidence? In the first question Sosa is asking for an explicit definition of the object under scrutiny, or at least explicit enough to be useful to guide the discussion of its place in an epistemological theory. The second is the question about the epistemic status of intuition and its usefulness. In the final question, Sosa inquires for the necessary character of the answer given to the prior question. In this paper, I use Sosa's own approach to address the questions about the meaning of Rational Intuition and its possibility to be used as a source of evidence.

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THE KILLING STATE

C. Lynne Fulmer

With the pace of executions increasing dramatically, there is increasing controversy over the death penalty. Society long has been divided on the subject of capital punishment. In philosophical circles, the debate has generally centered on either the consequences of the death penalty or the justice of state-sanctioned killing. Opponents of the death penalty in the latter camp frequently cite inequity in the use of the death penalty as evidence of its obvious injustice. These opponents point to the fact that its use is arbitrary and involves considerable discrimination with respect to race, gender, and economic factors. This paper considers whether inequities in the current use of the death penalty are sufficient to consider a moratorium on its use and whether this constitutes a definitive attack on the death penalty itself or whether it is merely a commentary on its contemporary use. It looks at studies like the Baldus and Bowers and Pierce that conclude there are systematic patterns of stark discrimination in capital punishment. It then considers Van den Haag's defense of such patterns on the grounds that such injustice does not reside in the penalty itself, but its distribution. The paper then considers some serious objections to Van den Haag's argument and concludes that punishment, including capital punishment, is unjust when it is based on factors which are irrelevant to the punishment itself and wrongly assumes we can accurately determine who should die.

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CAN A POST-MODERN THEORY BE A CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY? THE CASE OF JEAN BAUDRILLARD

J. Craig Hanks

One of the purposes of social theory is to help us understand our situation; to help us understand who we are, how we live, and what we value. Critical social theory aims also to critique our existing situation and to articulate how it might, and in many cases, ought to be otherwise. This might take the form of utopian thinking that proposes an alternative radically other than how we now live. Or, it might take the form of imminent critique that calls us to account for the ways in which we fall short of our already existing ideals.

Over the past 40 years, or so, many theorists have argued that we are entering a new world, one that they variously characterize as postmodern, late-modern, post-ideological, or even as "the end of history." Jean Baudrillard describes our present situation, constructed primarily by new information technologies, as one that is radically new, radically different than the recent past. He holds that the media, new technologies, and simulations constitute a new type of experience, construct a new world in which all boundaries, meanings, and values of previous social forms are destroyed, and produce new kinds of people. I examine the work of Jean Baudrillard, and argue that it fails as a critical social theory. I will further suggest that his work instead serves as a strategy of containment and functions to legitimate the way things already are.

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HEIDEGGER'S HAMMER

or

The Origins of a Philosophy of Art in the Workshop of *Being and Time*

Julius Simon

"For once to pose questions here with a *hammer* and perhaps to receive for answer that famous hollow sound which speaks of inflated bowels . . ."

Nietzsche, from *Twilight of the Idols*

In my essay I comment on the origins of Heidegger's philosophy of art out of the resources of *Being and Time*. Although the general consensus of many Heidegger scholars is to differentiate Heidegger's work according to Heidegger's own references to a "turn" in his thought, that is, from generally analytical early work to his later concentration on art and language, I argue for a kind of continuity of structure in Heidegger's overall body of work and that, while devoid of specific references to art or works of art in *Being and Time*, I maintain that that text nonetheless provides the significant ground upon which the works of his middle and later periods are built and take direction. The consequence is that there is no radical conversion or disjunction in Heidegger's work; rather, his body of work demonstrates a line of continuity and referential totality that I attempt to trace. Tracing such continuity has ramifications for judgments that are made about his political decisions and ethical silences.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Joe Barnhart has published in numerous journals and is author of six books. He is Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. His fields of specialization are metaphysics, Karl Popper, and the philosophy of religion.

Inmaculada de Melo-Martín, previously Associate Professor of Philosophy at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, is now a member of the Division of Medical Ethics in the Department of Public Health, Weill Medical College of Cornell University. She specializes in bioethics and philosophy of science, with an emphasis on philosophical issues raised by genetics and molecular biology.

Edgar Eslava is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Undergraduate Director (2005-2007) at Universidad del Rosario in Bogotá, Columbia.

Gilbert Fulmer is Professor of Philosophy, Texas State University-San Marcos. His specializations are philosophy of religion, ethics, and evolutionary metaphysics.

Lynne Fulmer did her graduate work at Rice University. She is on the faculty of Texas State University-San Marcos where she pursues her interests in ethics, critical thinking, Wittgenstein, Whitehead, and linguistic philosophy.

Craig Hanks, a fifth-generation Texan with degrees in philosophy from Texas A&M and Duke Universities, is Associate Professor at Texas State University-San Marcos. His work focuses on American pragmatism, critical theory, and philosophy of technology.

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Glenn Joy is Professor of Philosophy at Texas State University-San Marcos. His interests are in the areas of philosophy of science, logic, ethics, philosophy of religion, Lewis Carroll studies, and mechanical puzzles.

Joseph Kallo received his doctorate in philosophy from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. He is currently Technology Coordinator, Department of Curriculum & Instruction, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Carlos A. Sanchez is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at San Jose State University, where he focuses on phenomenology and Latin American philosophy.

James Sauer is Professor of Philosophy at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas. His research interests are ethics, social and economic philosophy, and critical thinking. He has published numerous papers, is author of three books, and is editor of *Dialogue*, the official journal of Phi Sigma Tau, the International Honor Society for Philosophy.

Jules Simon, Assistant Professor in Philosophy at the University of Texas at El Paso, specializes in continental philosophy, phenomenology, and critical social theory.

Dan R. Stiver is Professor of Theology at Logsdon School of Theology, Hardin-Simmons University, in Abilene, Texas. He has written *The Philosophy of Religious Language: Sign, Symbol, and Story* and *Theology after Ricoeur: New Directions in Hermeneutical Theology*.

Joseph Ulatowski is a Graduate Teaching Assistant at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City where he is also Coordinator of Preparation for Philosophy as a Profession. His specializations are metaphysics and early analytic philosophy from Bolzano to Quine.

Matt Zwolinski is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of San Diego. His current research focuses on the morality of sweatshop labor, and on the connections between metaethical theories of practical reasoning and normative ethical theories of value and right action.

NEW MEXICO-WEST TEXAS PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

53rd Annual Meeting
Hotel Galvez, Galveston, Texas
April 5-7, 2002

Friday, April 5th
7:00-10:00 p.m. Registration and Hospitality Hour

Saturday, April 6th
7:00-8:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast

SATURDAY:

Session 1A: Joe Barnhart (University of North Texas), Chair

- 8:00-8:35 **Ken Smith** (UNT) An Irrationalist Characterological Morality.
8:35-9:10 **Immaculada de Melo-Martin** (St. Mary's U) Biological Determinism and Social Responsibility.
9:10-9:45 **Lee Stauffer** (NMHU) Language, Biology and Moral Relativism.

Session 1B: Gary Cesarz (Southwest Missouri State University), Chair

- 8:00-8:35 **Carlos Sanchez** (UNM) From Ortega y Gasset to Mexican Existentialism: The Search for a Philosophic Conception of Chicano Identity
8:35-9:10 **Rui Zhu** (SWT) We-wei: Lao-zi, Zhuang-zi and Aesthetic Judgment
9:10-9:45 **Fred G. Sturm** (UNM) Dynamic Tridimensionality and Critical Ontognosiological Historicism

Coffee Break 9:45-10:00 a.m.

Session 2A: Lee Stauffer (New Mexico Highlands University), Chair

- 10:00-10:35 **Matt Zwolinski** (UAZ) Person-Neutrality and the Separateness of Persons
10:35-11:10 **Michael Matthis** (Lamar U) Objective Contingency and the Philosophic Tradition
11:10-11:45 **Robert Skipper** (St. Mary's U) Objects in Space as Metaphor for the Internet.

Session 2B: Gil Fulmer (Southwest Texas State University), Chair

- 10:00-10:35 **Paul Wilson** (SWT) A Priori Knowledge: The Ultimate Certainty?
10:35-11:10 **Edgar Eslava** (SIU) Intuiting Beliefs: Sosa's Account of Rational Intuition
11:10-11:45 **Joe Kallo** (SIU) Belief and the Problem of Criterion in the Meno

Noon Recess 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Session 3A: Charles Harriman (College of Santa Fe), Chair

- 1:00-1:35 **Glenn Joy** (SWT) Humor, Logic, and Lewis Carroll
- 1:35-2:10 **Joe Ulatowski** (U Mississippi) A Conscientious Resolution of the Action Paradox on Buridan's Bridge
- 2:10-2:45 **Jason Berntsen** (U Missouri) Foley on Lottery-Style Paradoxes and the Principle of Conjunction.

Session 3B: Thomas Urban, (HCCS/Northwest College), Chair

- 1:00-1:35 **Craig Hanks** (SIU) Can Postmodernist Theory be a Critical Social Theory? The Case of Jean Baudrillard
- 1:35-2:10 **Dan Stiver** (HSU) Can Postmodernism Claim to be True?
- 2:10-2:45 **Kevin Dodson** (Lamar U) Rousseau's Critique of Negative Liberty

Coffee Break 2:45-3:00 p.m.

Session 4A: Scot Miller (Hardin-Simmons University), Chair

- 3:00-3:35 **Joe Stamey** (McMurry U) Heidegger and Postmodern Behavioral Sciences
- 3:35-4:10 **Julius Simon** (UTEP) Heidegger's Hammer and the Origins of a Philosophy of Art in the Workshop of *Being and Time*
- 4:10-4:45 **James Sauer** (St. Mary's U), Reconfiguring the Adam Smith Problem

Session 4B: Anthony Palasota (Texas Southern University), Chair

- 3:00-3:35 **C. Lynne Fulmer** (SWT), The Killing State: Arbitrariness, Amoebas and the Death Penalty
- 3:35-4:10 **Hamner Hill** (SEMO), The Paradox of Self-Amendment and the Validity of Basic Norms
- 4:10-4:45 **Yeongseo Yeo** (U Missouri), Is Old Evidence Evidence?

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4:45-5:30 p.m.

Houghton B. Dalrymple Memorial Plenary Session

Chair and Introductory Remarks:
Gary Cesarz, Southeast Missouri State University

Speakers:
Joseph Barnhart, University of North Texas
Joseph Stamey, McMurry University
Gil Fulmer, Southwest Texas State University

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Business Meeting: 5:30-6:00 p.m.

Joe Barnhart (University of North Texas), **President**
Charles Harriman (College of Santa Fe), **Vice President**
Gary Cesarz (Southeast Missouri State University), **Secretary/Treasurer**
Scot Miller (Hardin-Simmons University), **Editor, *Southwest Philosophical Studies***

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7:00 p.m.
NM-WT Philosophical Society

Banquet
&
Presidential Address

Joe Barnhart (University of North Texas)

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SUNDAY:

7:30 a.m. Coffee Break

Session 1A: Joe Stamey (McMurry U), Chair

8:15-8:50 **Ann Brinegar** (Baylor), A Theodicy of Ultimate Love

8:50-9:25 **Gil Fulmer** (SWT), Howard Van Till's Supernaturalism

9:25-10:00 **Linda Kraeger** (Grayson C), Shakespeare as Philosopher of Religion

Session 1B: C. Lynne Fulmer (Southwest Texas State University), Chair

8:15-8:50 **John DePoe** (HSU), St. Anselm of Canterbury: His Life and Contributions

8:50-9:25 **Sharon Norman** (McM U) The Nature and Purpose of Forgiveness

9:25-10:00 **Peter Hutcheson** (SWT), Hick, Personal Identity, and Immorality

10:00-10:35 **Michael Linville** (HSU), Coffee and Metaphysics: the Politics of Ethics

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End of Conference

Special Thanks to Our Host Institution:

Dr. Carlos Garcia, Academic Dean

Northwest College

Houston Community College System

Houston, Texas

Local Arrangements: **Thomas Urban**