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BOOK REVIEWS

Joyce, Richard, *The Myth of Morality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. xiv + 241, AU$140 (cloth).

This book defends moral fictionalism. Its first half is an argument for a moral error theory. According to Joyce claiming that someone morally ought to perform a certain action is to say that she has reason to perform the action 'regardless of her desires and interests, regardless of whether she cares about her victim, and regardless of whether she can be sure of avoiding any penalties' [134]. Joyce argues that these 'regardless' reasons are both non-negotiable parts of morality and non-existent. He does not think, however, that this conclusion should lead to morality's abandonment. Morality is instrumentally useful. It enables agents to cooperate with others to achieve their non-moral ends. Joyce proposes that we persist with morality but view it as a fiction. His noncognitivist fictionalism presents moral judgements non-assertorically. We make believe that we must do as moral judgments direct in order to achieve morality's benefits.

The Myth of Morality is nicely written—it provides an elegant account of recent debate in metaethics for readers who have some background. It is not a particularly original book. In substance it closely resembles the theory suggested by J. L. Mackie and defended at greater length by Michael Ruse. Joyce's evolutionary emphasis is especially reminiscent of Ruse, who also combines a moral error theory with noncognitivism. Joyce's principal innovations are terminological. Identifying them as such is not to gainsay their value. Fictionalism is an idea now prominent in discussions of the ontological status of possible worlds, numbers, and fictional characters. Joyce puts metaethicists into conversation with metaphysicians of morality, mathematics, and fiction.

In this short review I will explain why I find the central argument of *The Myth of Morality* unconvincing. The error theory demands an argument considerably stronger than the one that Joyce provides.

The idea that moral judgements provide reasons for performing actions regardless of other considerations is certainly not an eccentric one; other philosophers have emphasized the overridingness of moral judgments. Moral realists enamoured of this putative property of morality will doubtless search for ways to vindicate 'regardless' reasons not considered by Joyce. Suppose, however, that we agree with Joyce that there are no reasons that apply to an agent 'regardless of her desires and interests, regardless of whether she cares about her victim, and regardless of whether she can be sure of avoiding any penalties'.

We should think differently of this property in the context of a constructive account of morality than when it is used to reach an antirealist conclusion. This is because antirealists have a greater obligation to address alternative accounts than do realists. A realist who identifies moral reasons with 'regardless' reasons can rely on

the robustness of her conceptual analysis when presented with accounts that purport to vindicate morality in other ways. Joyce's antirealism proceeds from the non-existence of such reasons. He has an obligation to consider theories that count reasons potentially overridden by non-moral reasons as moral, even if they are inferior from the perspective of conceptual analysis.

Alternative theories of morality may require a degree of semantic leniency. But it is not hard to find historical precedents for this manner of leniency, especially in respect of folk posits threatened with elimination. When they were first seriously proposed, genes could not account for some of the most important popular beliefs about inheritance. We now accept genes as units of heredity in part because we have failed to find more precise vindicators of the network of folk belief about inheritance.

Joyce is dismissive of analyses of morality that omit any reference to his favoured 'regardless' reasons. He likens them to defences of 'witch discourse' that refer to women who disrupt patriarchal social arrangements, faulty because they omit 'a vital aspect of the discourse' [96]. In an attempt to convey what is at stake in the debate about the reality of moral properties, he suggests that accounts of morality that make no reference to 'regardless' reasons fail to explain the 'all-important moral *authority* that putatively binds us regardless of our desires' [101].

An indicator that one is being overly serious about a candidate feature of morality is that many people who work within the field of ethics do not treat it as a 'vital aspect'.

Consider an explanation of morality that takes as its starting point the kinds of prudential considerations that Joyce thinks make it worthwhile persisting with morality even after the debunking of its realist pretensions. Contractualists view moral rules as actual or hypothetical agreements between contractors motivated by non-moral ends. Some of the most important decisions taken by contractors concern the content of moral rules. But they also make meta-moral decisions, decisions about how moral rules are to bind agents. Joyce has described one option available to them—moral rules will be understood as providing 'regardless' reasons. But it is possible that contractors will decide that their rules can occasionally be overridden by exceptionally strong contrary non-moral desires. This second possibility may still make moral reasons more authoritative than any other category of reason. Moral reasons will have greater call on us than any other category of reason, even if combinations of contrary non-moral reasons do, on occasion, override them. Although these rules are not as authoritative as Joyce would like, their contractualist presentation has the advantage of explaining the source of their authority. To the extent that they do, they bind us by virtue of a connection to an actual or hypothetical agreement.

It is not my brief here to defend any variety of contractualism that does without 'regardless' reasons. I am interested instead in how we would characterize such a view. Joyce will say that contractors that agree upon rules that can, every now and then, be trumped by non-moral reasons have chosen to regulate their conduct by some code other than morality. But it seems to me more fitting to say that they adopt a moral code whose rules lack the feature that Joyce has chosen to elevate above all others. It is still the case that their pursuit of their own ends is regulated by rules designed to take account of the interests of others. This kind of contractualist doesn't seem disingenuous in the same way as someone who analyses 'witch' as 'woman who

challenges patriarchy'. Contractualism can vindicate much of folk discourse about morality even if it eschews 'regardless' reasons.

Joyce does not appreciate the scale of the task that he has undertaken. Before we arrive at an antirealist conclusion we must consider the full range of ways in which a particular aspect of folk discourse might be vindicated. Paul and Patricia Churchland make an antirealism about intentional psychology easier by taking a very strict approach to its central posits. Joyce's strategy is similar—he insists on an excessively stringent interpretation of moral claims. More concessive approaches leave open a range of possible realisms about morality—with conceptual criteria used to decide the winner. Joyce vigorously intuits that no reason potentially overridden by non-moral reasons could be a moral one. The viability of alternative explanations of morality will make him seem like a philosopher who uses conceptual analysis to arrive at the conclusion that genes could not be units of heredity or to deny that plasmodium parasites could cause malaria.

This criticism notwithstanding, Joyce has produced an interesting, well-written investigation of a central issue in metaethics.

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Miller, Alexander, *An Introduction to Contemporary Metaethics*, Oxford: Polity Press, 2003, pp. xii + 316, US$64.95 (cloth), 29.95 (paper).

My initial hope when I first saw Miller's book was that here at least would be a work which satisfies the long standing need for a comprehensive introduction to contemporary metaethics which is accessible enough to be employed in advanced undergraduate courses and introductory graduate seminars. This hope was only partially realized, however, as Miller ends up oscillating between clear presentations of extant debates in the recent literature and his own extended attempts to determine where the truth of the matter lies. The result is an interesting book that likely will appeal both to those looking for a classroom text in metaethics as well as to experts on the relevant issues.

Miller divides his introduction into ten chapters. After briefly introducing some terminology and taxonomic classification in the first, he devotes the second chapter to Moore's open-question argument as well as to recent versions of the argument defended by Thomas Baldwin and jointly by Darwall, Gibbard, and Railton. Chapter Three focuses on Ayer's version of emotivism, and not only outlines the view but also considers important problems that it faces as well as various ways in which an emotivist might go about motivating the rejection of Moorean non-naturalism.

Chapters Four and Five are devoted to the more sophisticated contemporary non-cognitivist proposals by Simon Blackburn and Allan Gibbard respectively. Miller provides a clear and helpful overview of Blackburn's quasi-realist project, focusing in particular on Blackburn's response to the Frege-Geach problem and on John McDowell's well-known objections to quasi-realism. In the next chapter, Miller presents Gibbard's own novel solution to the Frege-Geach problem.

Turning from non-cognitivism to cognitivism, Miller reserves Chapter Six for Mackie's error theory and his argument from queerness against moral realism. Here we also find sections on Locke's view of colour and Wright's objection to error theories. This discussion naturally leads to a consideration of response-dependent or dispositionalist views in Chapter Seven. Miller only considers one form such a view can take, namely that according to which the moral is determined by the opinions of cognitively ideal agents. Miller ends up rejecting such a view on the grounds that the specification of the ideal conditions for judgement will inevitably end up appealing to moral concepts or facts, thereby contradicting the express aim of the view to be giving a reductive account of the moral.

In Chapters Eight and Nine, Miller next considers non-reductive and reductive moral realist positions. The Cornell realists are taken to be the main representatives of the former view, and here Miller devotes most of his attention to the well-known debate between Sturgeon and Harman on the explanatory role of moral properties. Miller argues that Harman gets the better of the exchange even if the non-reductive realist were to make use of more sophisticated theories of explanation such as Jackson and Pettit's notion of 'program explanation' or Wiggins's 'vindicatory explanations'.

When it comes to reductive forms of moral realism, Miller devotes an extensive amount of space to explicating and defending Railton's account of non-moral and moral value. Along the way we also find sections devoted to criticizing Michael Smith's arguments for motivational internalism and moral rationalism, as well as a defence of analytic moral functionalism from Smith's permutation problem.

Finally, Miller ends with a very unsympathetic treatment of McDowell's realist non-naturalism, as well as a brief consideration of Smith on the Humean theory of motivation.

In the end, then, the most promising positions in contemporary metaethics turn out to be quasi-realism and reductive realism. Moorean non-naturalism, traditional emotivism, fictionalism, dispositionalism, non-reductive realism, and McDowellean realism all end up taking lots of abuse.

Miller clearly exhibits an impressive acquaintance with large segments of the metaethics literature, and his writing is often clear and rigorous. In the remainder, I will raise some concerns about how well the book succeeds in providing an 'introduction' to contemporary metaethics.

Accessibility. Much of Miller's book should be accessible to graduate students in philosophy with little background in metaethics. However there are sections which may prove challenging even to those who work in the area. Often this happens when Miller simply quotes or briefly sketches a philosopher's position or argument without taking the time to explain what, for example, motivated the position in the first place or how exactly the argument is supposed to go. One example is the presentation of Wiggins's objection to reductive naturalism [202–3]. Wiggins's argument is rather complex, requiring two entire pages just to state in numbered premises whose meaning often isn't readily apparent. Yet rather than spend a paragraph or two to try and explain what is going on for those who might not have read Wiggins's paper beforehand, Miller instead immediately presents his own response to the argument. Similarly, I found the long discussion of McDowell on 'disentangling' to be very tough going [244–56].

Scope. As the summary above suggests, Miller's book is very comprehensive and nicely covers many of the important views, positive arguments, and objections. One noticeable omission is the absence of any discussion of relativism, especially since Mackie uses an argument from moral diversity as one of the two main arguments for his error theory. It also would have been nice to see at least an initial discussion of the recent debates having to do with non-cognitivism and minimalism. Finally, as the chapter on dispositionalism is a mere nine pages in length, it could have been supplemented with a presentation of David Lewis's important view.

Balance. As the last comment suggests, the space and attention devoted to certain theories comes across as unbalanced in several places. Thus Miller uses twenty three pages to lay out Railton's view in the chapter on reductive naturalism, whereas the chapter on norm-expressivism only gestures at some features of Gibbard's position in two paragraphs while devoting the entire remainder of the chapter to Gibbard's response to the Frege-Geach problem. Similarly, many have considered the motivation argument (the conjunction of motivational internalism and the Humean theory of motivation) to be the most significant challenge to moral cognitivism. But rather than summarizing the main positive arguments and objections that have been raised with respect to each of this argument's premises, Miller instead only attacks some of Michael Smith's discussion of them in *The Moral Problem*. While these criticisms of Smith might be important to specialists, they do little to help other readers gain an overall sense of the contemporary terrain in this area.

Tone. My final concern is closely related. Much of the first half of Miller's book exhibits an appropriate degree of restraint on his part as he largely tries to lay out various arguments and positions as clearly and carefully as possible. Towards the end, however, the chapters start to read like those in an original monograph, with Miller largely taking over the critical discussion and attempting to adjudicate the relevant disputes. In many cases, he takes himself to have adequately responded to a prominent objection against a given theory or to have advanced an objection of his own which shows that a given metaethical position is implausible. Again, some of this discussion no doubt will be of interest to specialists. And in general I have no objection to some authorial intervention in introductions and guidebooks. But the degree to which Miller intervenes and the forcefulness with which he presents his conclusions will, I suspect, give a rather skewed impression of the viable options and arguments in contemporary metaethics to undergraduates, beginning graduate students, and other non-specialists who approach Miller's book with an open mind. Some will likely disagree with me about this methodological preference, and it may just be a quirk of mine. But I always prefer to have the views, arguments, and objections laid out clearly before me in works of this kind, so that I can then try to come up with a cost/benefit assessment of my own.

Despite these concerns, Miller's book should be seriously considered both by those looking to teach on contemporary metaethics as well as those who are interested in what he has to say about a host of important topics in the field.

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Divers, John, *Possible Worlds*, London: Routledge, 2002, pp. xvi + 380, £65 (cloth), £17.99 (paper).

John Divers's *Possible Worlds* is a thorough, careful, and well-argued exploration of the prospects for realism about possible worlds. Since -isms in this area abound, it's important to be clear from the beginning that 'realism' here just means the view that there is a plurality of possible worlds—of some sort or other. Divers characterizes realism about worlds as the view that declarative sentences about possible worlds are truth-apt, that some of them are (nontrivially) true, and that such sentences entail the existence of at least one nonactual possible world [21]. This characterization is purposely neutral about just what worlds *are*, and thus leaves room for realists other than David Lewis.[1] Yet it is not so ecumenical as to make everyone count as a realist; plenty of people deny some part of it. Antirealists include fictionalists (à la Rosen [1990]), modalists (à la Prior [1977] and Forbes [1985; 1989]), and noncognitivists (the closest to which is Blackburn [1984; 1986]).[2] Divers sets these views aside for future work. His project in *Possible Worlds* is to sort out the relative merits of the two kinds of realism about possible worlds—genuine modal realism and actualist modal realism (also known as ersatzism). I shall follow Divers in labelling these GR and AR respectively.

The book is divided into four parts. In Part 1, Divers provides an overview of the forms of realism and antirealism about possible worlds, and a survey of why we talk about possible worlds at all. Possible worlds talk has, as he puts it, conceptual, ontological, and semantic applications. That is, possible worlds talk is supposed to (i) elucidate our modal concepts, (ii) provide truthmakers for modal claims and reductive analyses of entities like properties and propositions, and (iii) provide the formal semantics for modal logic. These categories help structure his discussions of GR and AR in Parts 2 and 3, the bulk of the book. In each case, he explains the view or version thereof, discusses its abilities to handle the various 'applications', and then examines the problems it faces. In Part 4, he offers a brief summary and tallies up the score. Divers thinks that GR beats out AR—it does more good than AR, and, contrary to popular belief, does not obviously do any more harm. AR carries serious ontological and epistemological costs just as GR does. Thus if we are to be modal realists at all, we should be *genuine* realists.

Yet it would be a mistake to characterize Divers's book as a straightforward defence of GR. What it really is is a literature survey, a report on the state of the art in possible worlds research. It covers just about every argument ever raised, every thrust and counterthrust and countercounterthrust, including many new points of Divers's own. The book is exhaustive—and a bit exhausting—and I will only be able to sketch a handful of issues here.

Divers argues that GR meets most of the desiderata laid out in the 'applications' he describes (Chapter 4), except that it cannot in fact provide nontrivial truthmakers for modal truths [51–7]. In the next several chapters, Divers discusses the many objections that have been raised against GR. These include the possibility of island

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[1]Indeed, the characterization perhaps leaves too much open, because it does not tell us which sentences count as being about possible worlds. What if I insist on calling possums 'possible worlds'?

[2]I think it would be better to call Blackburn himself an abstentionist about possible worlds discourse and a quasi-realist about modal discourse. He provides a quasi-realist account of claims like 'there could be a purple people eater', not of claims like 'there is a world in which there is a purple people eater'.

universes, the irrelevance of counterparts, the claim that 'possible world' is an unanalysed modal notion, epistemological worries, and the paradoxes of recombination—just to name a few. He also raises a new objection to the effect that the GRist cannot single out nonactual individuals in order to refer to or quantify over them [77 – 85]. After careful consideration of these objections, he dismisses most of them as misguided or, more often, inconclusive. The question, then, is how AR fares in comparison.

Divers begins his discussion of AR by distinguishing four different versions, according to what possible worlds are taken to be (Chapter 10). Plantingan Realism (e.g., Plantinga [1974]) identifies possible worlds with maximal possible states of affairs. Nature Realism (e.g., Stalnaker [1976], Forrest [1986]) identifies possible worlds with complicated properties—ways the world might have been. Book Realism (e.g., Carnap [1947], Jeffrey [1965], Adams [1981]) identifies possible worlds with 'certain kinds of maximal or complete stories, the elements of which are structured propositions or interpreted sentences of a specified (worldmaking) language' [178 – 80]. Finally, Combinatorialist Realism (e.g., Skyrms [1981], Armstrong [1989]) identifies possible worlds with constructs out of actually existing individuals and actually instantiated properties.

Of course, each of these forms of AR, as actually held by actual philosophers, comes with a lot of other bells and whistles. Divers's taxonomic strategy seems to be to divide up the landscape by claims about the nature of the posited worlds, and then—as a decidedly secondary matter—to associate those claims with the further views about modal metaphysics held by their actual proponents. However, I worry that this is not the best way to go, for two related reasons. First, it does not permit discussion of which clusterings of views are mere historical accidents and which are philosophically well-motivated. Second, it obscures other interesting dimensions along which forms of AR can vary.

One important such dimension is the question of whether the ARist supplements her ontology with actual entities that stand in for nonactual individuals (such as uninstantiated haecceities), or whether she instead echoes Robert Adams in saying that 'all possibilities are purely qualitative except insofar as they involve individuals that actually exist' [1981: 3]. This question appears to crosscut Divers'S categories, because it does not have anything obvious to do with what the abstract worlds are supposed to be *made of*. Yet it is of crucial importance in evaluating what a form of AR is ontologically committed to, and what it says about singular propositions about nonactuals, iterated modality, serious actualism, and what Divers calls the D-problem [210 – 23; highly recommended]. Divers does not ignore this issue, of course, but his way of categorizing the views does not bring it properly to the fore. My point here is just that actually held versions of AR are packages of views, different aspects of which are to blame for different problems. It would be better to tease out and articulate the different aspects, and evaluate them directly, than to evaluate more coarse-grained and presumably contingent groupings of claims.[3]

At any rate, Divers subjects his own four versions of AR to the same scrutiny to which he subjected GR. After arguing that none of them succeed at the three 'applications' as well as GR does (Chapters 11 – 13), he examines a variety of

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[3]In one instance, Divers seems to get the actual package wrong. He claims that Nature Realism accepts uninstantiated nonqualitative essences [238]—which would surprise certain Nature Realists, like Stalnaker.

objections to the views (Chapters 14–17). Here, roughly, is his tabulation of the overall score. GR is clearly better placed than AR to analyse properties, propositions, and the like in terms of worlds. GR is able to provide a reductive analysis of modality, and AR is not. AR has difficulties making sense of the standard Kripke semantics that GR does not have. Although both views are threatened by set-theoretic paradoxes, the problem is arguably worse for AR than GR. Both views have problems quantifying over nonactuals, and thus have problems with expressive power. Both have a lot of work to do sorting out modal epistemology, and neither has an unproblematic, clearly sane ontology.

Divers therefore agrees with Lewis that 'the balance of benefits to costs afforded by GR is greater than that afforded by AR and that this makes GR the superior option' [297]. I do not, despite the fact that I think Divers is right on many points. However, I shall not dispute any of the details of the smaller arguments here. Instead, I just want to say a few (not particularly original) words about Divers's overall strategy—about relying on costs-benefits analyses, and doing philosophy-by-points-tally.

The problem is simply that it is very difficult to come up with a straightforward victor, because among the many things that AR and GR disagree about are *which features count as costs or benefits*, and *how much weight to assign to them*. To take one particularly clear example, consider the 'conceptual application' of providing reductive and extensionalist analyses of modal notions. The ARist simply does not put the same positive weight on this that the GRist does. No ARists these days take themselves to reduce modal concepts to nonmodal ones, so it is not as though they are claiming a benefit that they cannot in fact provide. Indeed some ARists take it to be a *virtue of their view* that it does not reduce modal concepts to nonmodal ones. The idea is that any view that purports to reduce the modal to the nonmodal *ipso facto* gets it wrong. If this is right—and there is at least something to the thought— then AR should get points rather than demerits here.

This sort of difficulty emerges in other, less obvious, ways as well. I suspect that it may impact Divers's claims about the relative importance of the respects in which AR does and does not have a 'safer and saner' ontology than GR [227]. And it clearly affects the extent to which the so-called 'problem of iterated modalities' should be taken to be a genuine difficulty for forms of AR that reject nonqualitative essences and other sorts of stand-ins for possible individuals. Such forms of AR think it is a mistake to *try* to make sense of *de re* modal claims about nonactual individuals, and will similarly demand points rather than demerits for their failure to do so (see, for example, Adams [1981], Lycan and Shapiro [1986], Fitch [1996], Bennett [forthcoming]).

But I suppose all this is really neither here nor there. As I have said, Divers's goal is not only to argue for GR, but also simply to survey the state of the art in thinking about possible worlds. Who cares if I resist the overall lesson he draws, and some of the points he makes along the way? The fact is that Divers's survey is wide-ranging, careful, and very useful. I can only bicker about the scorecard because he has laid it out so clearly.

Possible Worlds is indeed painstakingly clear. It is carefully organized, and has useful section headings and a comprehensive index. However, some of this clarity is undermined by the fact that Divers goes rather overboard with acronyms. Every view, every thesis gets an acronym, often introduced utterly in passing and used only

a few times. This is confusing in itself, and also leads to editorial errors. For example, 'SA' means 'structure-based anti-realism' on p. 23, but 'strong actualism' on p. 224. And 'RGR' is used on p. 70 with no explanation—according to the index, it gets introduced on p. 84; after some searching, I found it defined on p. 83. This sort of thing can make for a difficult read.

But it is worth fighting through the thicket of acronyms, for there are many rewards to be reaped. There are some gems in here. I particularly recommend Divers's discussion of what he calls 'extraordinary modal claims' in Chapter 4, his sketch of what makes a realism count as actualist in the beginning of Chapter 10, and the way he connects various familiar difficulties that arise for AR to less familiar issues about whether ARists can unthinkingly help themselves to Kripke semantics (Chapter 13). And although reading the book from cover to cover may be hard going, it is an incredibly handy resource to dip into here and there. *Possible Worlds* is unpretentious, fair-minded, wide-ranging, richly detailed, closely argued, and thorough. It is probably too difficult, and presupposes too much, to be of use to most undergraduates. But it is a must-have resource for graduate students—or, indeed, for anyone trying to work their way through the morass of literature on possible worlds. I look forward to the follow-up book on antirealism that Divers promises in the introduction.

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Campbell, John, *Reference and Consciousness*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002, pp. vii + 267, £40.00 (cloth), £14.99 (paper).

A major thesis defended in John Campbell's book is characterized as the 'Classical View' of the relation between reference and consciousness: 'Knowledge of what it is for a proposition to be true is what causes, and justifies, your use of particular ways of verifying, and finding the implications of, that proposition' [24]. This view sits

naturally with an account of reference, the 'common-sense picture', that sees one's knowledge of the reference of a term controlling and justifying the use one makes of the term. Campbell sees the later Wittgenstein and Quine as opposing this account; for both of them the pattern of use is detached from knowledge of reference and becomes 'all there is', leading to Wittgensteinian worries about the resulting arbitrariness of the pattern of use, and to the Quinean thesis that meaning is indeterminate. Campbell's aim is to reinstate the common-sense picture by invoking our conscious attention to an object to explain our ability to understand a demonstrative thought about that object. More specifically, the claim argued for is that knowledge of the reference of the demonstrative in a demonstrative thought about an object is supplied by conscious attention to that object.

To succeed in this project Campbell needs to provide a robust characterization of what conscious attention to an object consists in—how it is that we manage to do this in a way that does not presuppose either the knowledge to be explained or the use that is to be controlled. There is a threat from above and a threat from below. One may think that paying conscious attention to an object requires us to have conceptual abilities that link us to that object, so precluding the explanatory role attributed to conscious attention, or one may think that non-conscious information-processing capacities are all we need for reference-fixing, so pre-empting the controlling role. For Campbell, it is rather conscious attention that controls the information processing activities relevant to an object, and it is the object thus attended to that justifies the use of some information processes over others.

This is illustrated by two examples, that of a fielder catching a cricket ball, and the task of finding whether one thing is enclosed within another. The first example raises some worries about the way Campbell sees the role of attention to an object. To catch the ball, says Campbell, the fielder has to be 'selecting information from the moving ball, and performing operations upon that information' [27], and this selection is achieved by consciously attending to the ball. But the fielder has to pay attention to a lot else besides, and to process information from, amongst other things, the strength and direction of the wind, the slope of the field, the position of the sun, and the position (and speed) of the next nearest fielder. Except for the simplest of cases, paying conscious attention to x is almost inevitably going to involve paying attention to, and processing information from, a lot else besides x. Campbell's account would have to be complicated by the idea that the other information processing is guided by the objective given by conscious attention to the object.

So the claim is that it is conscious attention to the object that causes our selection of the right information processes. A further claim is that visual information about an object reliably available to a subject without conscious attention to the object (for example in a blindsight experiment) will be insufficient for an understanding of a perceptual demonstrative referring to that object. According to Campbell, it is 'compelling to common sense that conscious attention to the object is needed for an understanding of the demonstrative' [9]. If this is right (some may find it less than compelling) then conscious experience of an object is necessary for knowledge of the reference of a perceptual demonstrative.

What of the conceptual capacities of the subject presupposed by the subject's ability to concentrate attention on an object? Does paying attention to an object require that the subject possess concepts which enable the singling out of the object

in experience? An answer to this question requires some elaboration of what concept-possession is, but Campbell does not supply any such elaboration. One problem that this lack causes is apparent in his argument for the claim that conscious attention to an object is more primitive than thought about that object. Animals, he notes, can 'single out' a moving object, or single it out because it is red, without having any concepts relating to movement or colour. But does that mean that people, who can understand demonstrative reference, and so do have concepts about objects, can single out objects by their colour even if they possess no colour concepts? Campbell claims they can, but his evidence is provided by children who can refer to perceived objects on the basis of colour vision 'long before they have any grasp of colour concepts'. Evidence for the lack of colour concepts is provided by the difficulties the children have in using words to classify the colours they can discriminate. This would appear to make linguistic abilities essential to concept-possesion, but this controversial claim goes undefended.

The (explanatory) primitiveness of conscious attention is emphasized in the dismissal of attempts to make the use of sortal concepts essential to the understanding of demonstrative reference. One 'sortalist' claim is that we 'bind' features to objects in the way we do because we have particular sortal concepts which provide a classificatory scheme for us. Here Campbell uses evolutionary considerations to reject this idea; given our binding strategies would have evolved from creatures with a similar visual system to us, it is unlikely that those strategies evolved as a consequence of our having any particular set of sortal concepts. But a sortalist might allow for the fact of sortally-independent binding, making the less ambitious claim that objects thus bound are subject to different sortal schemes, and which object we demonstratively refer to could be dependent on the binding strategies we have *and* the sortal concepts we use. And Campbell notes that this sortalist can then say that the pattern of inferences we make with regard to a perceived object is justified by the sortal concept rather than by simple attention to the object.

Campbell's response to this is to claim that all the sortal concept does is make explicit the relevant pattern of inferences, saying what the pattern is, and so cannot play a justifying role with respect to those inferences. It is experience of the object that is fundamental; this experience justifies the pattern of inference and also allows for sortal classification. The argument against the advocate of sortal concepts here is fairly quick, and indirect. It goes by way of an analogy with the laws of logic, which are said to describe, rather than justify, the inferences they cover. A 'sortalist' (e.g.,Wiggins) may just deny the relevance of the analogy. More importantly, such a sortalist may press Campbell to say more about the 'Gestalt organisation' of the visual field, such an organization playing an essential role in Campbell's account of the selection of the specific information-processes relevant to different objects in the visual field. The friend of sortals may suspect that allowing for Gestalt principles to play an essential role in the identification of an object to which the subject is paying conscious attention will, when such principles are fleshed out, lead to a version of sortalism.

So far the classical view defended by Campbell is compatible with a view that sees demonstrative reference controlled by the object the speaker has in mind, that object being the one consciously attended to. What makes Campbell's account radically different from this is his take on what experience of an object comes to: 'Experience of a perceived object is what provides you with knowledge of the reference of a

demonstrative referring to it' [114]. What we are given is a relational theory of experience of an object: the object we have experience of is itself part of the content of the experience. The relational view thus rejects any 'common factor' account of the content of our experiences. Seeing a dagger over there and hallucinating a dagger over there will not be intrinsically similar experiences; the qualitative content of the experience is, at least partially, constituted by the character of the objects seen.

The question arises: how does one know this is the truth about our experience of objects? Campbell does not argue directly for the relational view. The suggestion is that the relational view, and only the relational view, shows why we need the notion of the phenomenal character of experience. 'Experience of objects has to explain how it is that we can have the conception of objects as mind-independent' [121]. More precisely, experience explains how demonstrative thoughts are possible. Alternative accounts of perceptual experience, such as representative theories (and disjunctive theories) fail in this explanatory task because they take the intentional character of experience for granted. For the representationalist, the character of the experience of hallucinating a dagger includes the thought (or representation) that there is a dagger before one. This debars it from explaining how such a thought about a mind-independent world is possible. On the relational view, so it is claimed, our experience can explain our grasp of the concept of mind-independent objects, and this is because experience of objects is more primitive than thought about objects.

The relational view, as described, does not commit one to the implausible claim that two people looking at the same object will thereby have the same intrinsic experiences of the object. What is claimed is that there will be an intrinsic difference to the experience if the object were not there. And because of this, the experience guarantees the existence of the object experienced. This guarantee is meant to legitimate inferences that employ demonstrative reference to objects. Take

> That woman is running.
>
> That woman is jumping.
>
> Therefore, that woman is jumping and running.

Campbell claims that a 'common factor' theory of experience cannot justify this inference, as the experiences justifying the demonstrative thoughts could be the same even if different women were seen. This is impossible on the relational view, which makes the sameness of the woman transparent to the subject of the experience. This does not mean that sceptical problems are overcome; a subject may be mistaken about the nature of the experience they are having—'it may be impossible to tell, simply by having the experience, which sort of experience it is' [130].

One has to wonder what kind of transparency is involved here. More importantly for Campbell's purposes, one has to wonder what explanatory role experience can play. Common factor theories of perception (whether representational or sense-date type views) took as one argument in their favour that their view could explain why a subject hallucinating a dagger in front of her, and another subject seeing a dagger in front of her, would act in the same way. Sameness of experience would figure as an essential part of the explanation of the ensuing actions. Campbell cannot allow experience this role, so the explanation now is that one of the subjects seems to be (or

thinks they are) having the 'dagger-in-front-of-one' experience, and it is this seeming which explains that subject's actions. The common factor theorist may well object that this is ad hoc, so a lot will depend on the independent argument for the relational view.

That argument depends essentially on the claim that without a relational conception of experience of objects we are bereft of an explanation as to why we have the concept of phenomenal experience. It is not that we have to have the concept of relational experience in order to have the right to claim knowledge of an independent world. It is rather that, unless experience is relational, we would have no need of the concept of the phenomenal character of experience. This is brought out forcefully in the discussion of the distinction between disjunctivism and the relational view. Disjunctivists also deny that there is a common factor in the hallucinatory and veridical experiences, so they make the existence of the object essential in typing the veridical experience. But they take the veridical disjunct to involve the grasping of a demonstrative thought about an object, and Campbell protests that this robs the experience of its capacity to explain how thought about mind-independent objects is possible. The intentionality of thought is presumed, not explained. Or rather, that we can have thoughts about mind-independent objects is not explained. A disjunctivist about perception (McDowell, for instance) could protest that such explanatory work is discharged *not* by invoking the pre-conceptual, but by noting that the actualization of conceptual capacities in experience is not under our control. It is, such a disjunctivist will say, our 'passivity' in experience that enables the thought that the objects so experienced are mind-independent. The further claim, which I will not discuss, is that experience of properties and objects is not limited to experience of the dispositional qualities of the objects experienced; our experience is of the categorial ground of those dispositions. Functionalist and Gibsonian accounts of perception are dismissed on the grounds that they cannot use our experience of objects 'to explain how it is that we can grasp demonstratives referring to the object as referring to a categorical object, not merely a collection of potentialities' [145].

Clearly one's judgement about the plausibility of Campbell's defence of the Classical View (of knowledge of reference) depends largely on how persuaded one is that the relational account of experience is true. I must admit to being unpersuaded, though intrigued. Part of the problem is the indirect, semi-Kantian nature of the argument given. Campbell asks: Given we have thoughts about mind-independent objects, what in the nature of our experience can explain this? The relational account is meant to provide the (only possible?) answer. But it is not clear how this explanation works, nor exactly how experience will play the justificatory role fashioned for it. The demonstrative thought about an object is meant to be caused and justified by the pre-conceptual experience. But the accusation that those who prefer to avoid the pre-conceptual end up taking intentionality for granted could be turned against Campbell; he helps himself to the notion of *relational* experience, which is a rock-bottom notion. Does it advance any explanatory purpose? Not if the explanandum is the general one of the subject (mind) being epistemologically related to the (mind-independent) world. Does the conceptualist see any distinctive role for experience? Yes, for without it the mind would be undisciplined in its thoughts. And Campbell does not really explain how there can be an *epistemological* (justificatory) relation between non-conceptual experience and thought. (For an illuminating account of the problems in locating a *reason* in non-conceptualized experience see

Richard Heck 2000, 'Nonconceptual Content and the "Space of Reasons"', *Philosophical Review* 109, issue 4).

Campbell develops his relational account of experience in chapters on joint attention and memory demonstratives, and completes his account by going back to review the major alternatives, Dummettian anti-realism and Quine and Davidson on inscrutability and indeterminacy. What he has to say in these chapters is illuminating and of great interest, even if one rejects the relational view of experience. In general Campbell provides a sustained an impressive argument in favour of his view. *Reference and Consciousness* is essential reading for those interested in how it is that experience can explain our knowledge of the world.

There are a few typographical mistakes, none interfering with comprehension, though on p. 145, line 4, we are told that we can 'gasp demonstratives' which no doubt we can, but presumably 'grasp' was intended.

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Gertler, Brie, ed., *Privileged Access: Philosophical Accounts of Self-Knowledge,* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003, pp. xxii + 266, £50 (cloth).

This collection of essays about the nature of self-knowledge includes specially commissioned contributions plus reprints of recent articles by Boghossian, Shoemaker, Wright, and others. Its concern is with the explanation of special or 'privileged' access to one's own states, and the question is construed broadly. Most articles share the naturalistic perspective which Gertler in her introduction rightly asserts is the dominant position in contemporary philosophy of mind. However, the approach is less unified than that of a collection on the same theme from a few years ago, Crispin Wright et al.'s *Knowing Our Own Minds* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). Wright's volume focussed on two questions: how first-person authority can be explained without recourse to a Cartesian introspectionist or observational model of self-knowledge, and the compatibility of first-person authority with externalism. Gertler's volume construes 'privileged access' more broadly, and is less closely focussed on first-person authority—or the authority of avowals, as I would prefer to call it—or at least on the post-Wittgensteinian problematic which has been Wright's main concern.

This is an area in which it is hard to find agreement even in the starting point for debate—over the data in question indeed. Gertler in her Introduction contrasts infallibility, self-intimation, epistemic asymmetry, epistemic privilege, and incorrigibility. I would be inclined to add a further category of 'immunity to error', not the same as infallibility or incorrigibility because it does not suggest a knowledge-claim. She begins by considering the questions 'How do you know that you think it will rain tomorrow?', and 'How do you know that you have a headache?', commenting that when read as demands for justification, the questions seem absurd. Still she assumes that 'I believe that I think it will rain tomorrow' makes sense, as do some other contributors. That is, they assume that because one can say 'I believe that Jonathan believes that I believe . . .', or 'I believe that I believed that p', then the first-person present-tense case makes sense—that because 'I believe that p' is a proposition, it can

meaningfully be substituted for p in the schema 'I believe that p'. But this no more follows, than it follows from the logically non-contradictory status of the conjunction of 'P' and 'I believe that not-p', that one can meaningfully assert 'P, but I believe that not-p' (the issue of Moore's Paradox).

In addressing their intractable task of accommodating self-consciousness within a naturalistic world-view—surely the hardest problem for naturalism and for scientific philosophies of mind—contemporary writers have often construed the epistemology of self-knowledge as introspectionist, attempting to assimilating it to perception. It is this debate which Fred Dretske and William Lycan focus on in the first two papers, 'How Do You Know You Are Not A Zombie?' and 'Dretske's Way of Introspecting'. Despite his naturalistic stance, Dretske questions the introspectionist treatment, which Lycan defends, arguing for instance that as in perception, introspection yields awareness of experiences via awareness of properties.

Christopher Peacocke's 'Conscious Attitudes, Attention and Self-Knowledge'— which also appeared in the Wright collection mentioned earlier—argues that rejection of perceptual and inferential models of self-knowledge does not lead to a constitutive thesis of the sort advocated by Crispin Wright. For Peacocke, there is the more attractive option that a conscious belief can give reason for a corresponding second-order belief in a way that involves tracking the first-order state without perceiving it or inferring to it. (Again there is the assumption that the attribution of the second-order belief makes sense.) Crispin Wright's own contribution 'Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy of Mind: Sensation, Privacy and Intention', a ten-page 'abstract of a sequel' to his article 'Does *Philosophical Investigations I*, paras. 258–60 Suggest a Cogent Argument against Private Language' (in P. Pettit et al., eds., *Subject, Thought and Content*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

In their article 'Knowing Selves: Expression, Truth and Knowledge', Dorit Bar-On and Douglas Long present an account of avowals—the category of first-person psychological utterances normally taken to be authoritative—that is Wittgensteinian in regarding them as a direct expressions of mental states, yet which also attempts to accommodate the unWittgensteinian view that avowals involve a 'special type of self-knowledge', as they put it. They argue that an account of the security of avowals should respect both Semantic Continuity—avowals are continuous in semantic content and logical structure with ordinary empirical statements and in particular second- and third-person utterances—and Epistemic Asymmetry. Unlike what they term the Simple Expressive account, their treatment does not attempt to deflate self-knowledge. They argue that avowals are reliably produced by the state in question—in the case of avowals of belief, say, a belief dispositionally construed—and therefore warranted. The result is a robust epistemic status for self-knowledge. This kind of account is a tempting one, but I feel that properly construed, the authority of avowals is not a matter of mere reliability, but of immunity to error on certain conditions—and so I am not persuaded.

Equally densely-argued is one of the most impressive new contributions, José Bermúdez's 'The Elusiveness Thesis, Immunity to Error through Misidentification, and Privileged Access'. The article focuses on one of the key phenomena in the region of self-consciousness and self-knowledge. Bermúdez challenges Shoemaker's suggestion that this phenomenon—which I shall abbreviate to IEM—is the other side of the coin to the Elusiveness Thesis, which says that when we find out about our own properties through introspection, we are not presented with any object whose

properties they are. IEM says, for example, that if I believe on grounds of proprioception (ordinary bodily awareness) that my legs are crossed, I cannot subsequently wonder whether that is the case while still maintaining, on the same grounds, that nonetheless someone's legs are crossed. The claim that IEM and Elusiveness are intimately connected—a claim which Shoemaker wants to defend— amounts to this: 'Once we realise that judgments based on introspection are [IEM] the thought that there might be a perceptual encounter with the self in introspection quickly reveals itself to be incoherent—simply because there is no gap between knowing that an introspectively accessible property is instantiated and knowing that it is instantiated in oneself' [217]. Bermúdez concludes against this attractive thesis that there are non-introspective forms of self-awareness—including bodily awareness and self-perception as it occurs in everyday perceptual awareness—in the explanation of which the Elusiveness Thesis has no role. Hence the phenomenon of IEM is prized apart from that of the Elusiveness Thesis.

One reason for this conclusion, Bermúdez argues, is that proprioception provides a form of 'proto-perceptual acquaintance with the embodied self, while at the same time being a source of identification-free awareness of one's own physical properties' (i.e., IEM). Another is that even if proprioception is included under the heading of introspection, there are yet other ways of finding out about oneself which are clearly non-introspective—such as finding out that I am standing in front of the Marble Arch. Bermúdez reiterates the argument of his earlier book *The Paradox of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1998) that proprioception is a form of perception—though he seems to be less assertive here, claiming that it is 'proto-perceptual'. I believe that Bermúdez is right to say that IEM-exhibiting non-proprioceptive self-knowledge—of one's location for instance—has been neglected, and does indeed seem to be straightforwardly perceptual. He also claims that ordinary visual perception can yield information about whether one is moving or at rest, and also a fairly accurate indication of one's speed and trajectory; however I am less convinced by these examples, since visual proprioception seems implicated. Bermúdez's conclusion is that IEM in the proprioceptive, perceptual, and locomotive cases cannot be explained by the Elusiveness Thesis, and so one has to look elsewhere. Drawing on science-fiction cases, he finds the proprioceptive immunity to be de facto—I would rather question the coherence of the science-fiction scenarios— while for perceptual cases, he argues that IEM is a function of the way in which the self is represented in the content of perception, citing the work of J. J. Gibson. While I find this conclusion unsatisfactory, the arguments presented require careful attention.

Other articles include Ernest Sosa on 'Consciousness and Self-Knowledge', Sydney Shoemaker's 'On Knowing One's Own Mind', Richard Moran's 'Self-Knowledge: Discovery, Resolution and Undoing', Michael Tye's 'Representationalism and the Transparency of Experience', and Paul Boghossian's 'Content and Self-Knowledge'. The index could have been more helpful—for instance, the entry for 'Immunity to Error through Misidentification' refers to the less significant mentions in Bermúdez's article but not the major ones. But the editor is to be congratulated on a high-quality and wide-ranging collection on a central topic in the philosophy of mind.

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Ewin, R. E., *Reasons and the Fear of Death*, Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002, pp. 167, US$74 (cloth), 26.95 (paper).

Ewin's book has its virtues. The writing is straightforward, engaging and full of colourful examples. The topic is interesting, and many of Ewin's claims are quite sensible. However, Ewin fails to address relevant literature, to provide sufficient clarification of his theses, and to show that his views are novel.

The book proceeds as follows. After a brief introductory chapter, Chapter Two consists of a discussion of the harm of death. Ewin is primarily concerned with Lucretius's (and Epicurus's) argument that 'death is nothing to us'. Since the dead do not have experiences, the argument goes, they cannot suffer; thus it is irrational to fear being dead. He also addresses Lucretius's symmetry argument: since early death and late birth equally deprive us of the good things in life, and it is irrational to regret not being born earlier, it is equally irrational to regret or fear early death. After discussion of well-known responses to these arguments by Bernard Williams and Thomas Nagel, Ewin concludes that nobody has ever adequately responded to Lucretius. The next few chapters are intended to provide the basis for such a response.

Chapter Three, 'Concepts and Their Formal Elements', is primarily an exposition of the notion of the 'formal element' of a concept, a notion introduced by Julius Kovesi. This is supposed to be important because 'the main concern of this book is the formal element of the concept of death' [39]. The formal element of a concept is supposed to determine which things fall under that concept; so the formal element of the concept of death should tell us which events count as deaths. The chapter contains an extended critique of an article by Roger Dworkin, who claims that death is not a 'unitary' notion.

In Chapter Four, 'Evolution and Ethics', Ewin argues that 'our evolution as a species depends on our having developed inclinations to take certain sorts of facts as reasons for carrying out certain sorts of actions' [49]. This is supposed to be important because Ewin goes on in Chapter Five, 'Concepts, Rationality, and Death', to claim that we have evolved to have a fear of death and to engage in death-avoiding behaviours. It is rational to fear death, says Ewin, because 'fear of death is one good mechanism for avoiding death and the possibility of passing on genes' [101]. People have a 'natural inclination' to fear death, making death avoidance 'part of the formal elements of the concepts we employ' [49]. Thus fear of death underlies much of our reasoning, but is not itself the conclusion of a piece of reasoning. This is Ewin's response to Lucretius.

In Chapter Six, Ewin takes up the definition of death. He claims that 'the formal element of the concept of death is that it is the end of a life' [129]. He holds a striking thesis about life: 'What is it to be alive? Again, it is to have some form: one lives as a rose, or as a human being, or as a Martian' [117]. Life as a person, according to Ewin, is defined by agency. 'It is the capacity to struggle … that makes us people. Action, and not merely bodily movement, is essential to the idea of a person' [127].

Having argued that the fear of death is rational, the last chapter takes up circumstances in which it may be rational to seek death. Ewin argues, on the basis of the value of autonomy, that assisted suicide and euthanasia ought to be permitted.

I will confine my critical remarks to two portions of Ewin's book: his discussion of Lucretius on the evil of death, and his attempts to define life and death.

Ewin's book seems to be motivated in part by his dissatisfaction with extant responses to Lucretius. But Ewin's criticisms of the extant responses are confused. Recall Lucretius's argument that death is 'nothing to us' because dead people don't have experiences. An obvious response is to say, as Nagel, Williams, and many others do, that death is bad in virtue of the fact that it prevents its victim from having good experiences and completing projects. Ewin complains that even if Nagel has shown death to be harmful to its victim, he has not shown that it is a harm that we have reason to fear, since we don't have to experience being dead [18]. But no argument is offered for the claim that suffering is the only kind of harm we have reason to fear. Ewin then says that Nagel's view fails to explain 'why we regard death as an evil in itself and life as good in itself' [18]. This response is puzzling. If Lucretius's challenge is to show that death is *intrinsically* bad—bad independent of any bad consequences it brings about—the challenge should be rejected. To show that we have a reason to fear death, it would suffice to establish that death, by preventing its victim from having some more of a good life, has bad consequences for the one who dies.

Having dismissed Nagel and Williams, Ewin presents his own view, expressed in the following mysterious passage:

> The attitude of *regarding death as a natural evil* ... is something that is presupposed by our reasoning, not something arrived at by reasoning from other premises. *Regarding life as valuable in itself* can be the reason for many actions, but need not [be] (and usually is not) itself an outcome of reasoning.
>
> [19–20, my emphasis]

This passage reveals a recurring confusion: Ewin equates the claim that death is bad in itself with the claim that life is good in itself. But from the fact that something is intrinsically good, nothing can be deduced about whether the absence or removal of that thing is intrinsically bad. If pleasure is intrinsically good, it doesn't follow that anything intrinsically bad is going on in a rock [Chisholm and Sosa 1966].

It is odd to say that the claim that death is evil or to be feared is 'not something arrived at by reasoning from other premises'. It would be absurd to think that the true causal explanation of people's fear of death involves appeal to a line of reasoning in which everyone engages, the conclusion of which is the claim that death is bad. But nobody has ever argued for such a claim. Is Ewin saying that the claim that death is evil cannot be the conclusion of any argument? That any such argument must be unsound? That people never put forth such arguments? That they don't need to be able to produce such an argument in order to behave rationally? I cannot think of a way to interpret Ewin's central claim according to which it is both plausible and novel.

Turning to Ewin's attempts to define life and death, we find more problems. Consider again his striking claim: 'What is it to be alive? Again, it is to have some form: one lives as a rose, or as a human being, or as a Martian' [117]. But having a form is not sufficient for being alive; chairs have forms but aren't alive. What we want to know is what roses, humans, and other living things have in common that sets them apart from chairs. Ewin hasn't provided that. And consider again his definition of death: 'the formal element of the concept of death is that it is the end of a life' [129]. What about a case of fission, where a life ends because the organism

divides in two? Does this count as death? Can there be other ways of ceasing to live without dying—e.g., by entering a state of suspended animation? Ewin makes no attempt to defend his proposal against such possible counterexamples.

Many of the problems I have mentioned stem at least in part from a failure to address relevant recent literature. For example, the problems for Ewin's definition of death involving fission and suspended animation were raised over a decade ago by Fred Feldman [Feldman 1992: 60 – 71]. Ewin never mentions Derek Parfit's well-known discussion of the symmetry problem [Parfit 1984: 165 – 84]. Feldman, John Fischer, Anthony Brueckner, and Frances Kamm are just a few other prominent philosophers that have contributed to the discussion of the symmetry problem in recent years [Brueckner and Fischer 1986; Kamm 1988; Feldman 1992]. Ewin mentions none of them. Ewin's solution to the symmetry problem is to point out that 'we cannot act on the past, but we can act on the future' [16]. Parfit points out that we prefer evils to be past rather than future even when we cannot alter the future [Parfit 1984: 168]. The reader is left to wonder how Ewin would respond to Parfit.

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Dennett, Daniel C., *Freedom Evolves*, New York: Viking, 2003, pp. xiii + 347, US$24.95 (cloth), US$17.00 (paper).

The question how human free will is possible has plagued philosophy ever since the moment one has started to consider what it means to perform acts and how they come to pass. With *Freedom Evolves*, Daniel Dennett contributes to a discussion which is still relevant to, among other fields, ethics and philosophy of mind.

In his book, Dennett evinces to have assimilated a great number of topics which are relevant to the question whether and, if so, how human freedom is possible. However, important problems come to the fore when it is considered how the conclusions are reached. Dennett is, as he indicates himself [98], compatibilist: the fact that the world develops determined by certain laws (of physics) doesn't entail that people don't have a free will.

Dennett especially opposes two other approaches, which both occupy an extreme position in the realm of possibilities in which his is an intermediate. His resistance to 'libertarianism', which denies determinism, is illustrated by his criticism of 'agent causation': one may not, according to Dennett, assume that a self, as an isolated entity, determines its own acts. This is a notion which has been defended on a large scale; Descartes is the most important stumbling block. The 'Cartesian Theatre, the

imaginary place in the centre of the brain "where it all comes together"' [123], doesn't exist.

Whatever one may want to think about this, Dennett's position that 'agent causation' is a 'mysterious doctrine' [100], seems to me to be correct. Its advocates appeal to a notion which needs to be elaborated in order to obtain a meaning and to be defended convincingly.

The other point of view which is disputed by Dennett is radical determinism,[4] which denies the existence of free will. The problem with this is, in Dennett's view, that radical determinism confuses two things, namely something being determined by preceding causes and the inevitability of an event which is consequently to occur. In other words, from the fact that something is determined by the past, it doesn't follow that it will develop inevitably. In fact, a certain history, a character, provides a means to find out one's possibilities and to decide. That is why Dennett is able to say: 'Determinism is the friend, not the foe, of those who dislike inevitability' [60].

If one doesn't inquire beyond a 'common sense' approach (human beings are able to contemplate a number of options and after that decide what to do), this consideration may be acceptable and at first sight it seems to be convincing. It appears, however, that Dennett has not examined the matter sufficiently in order to be able to answer the real question he has taken upon himself, namely whether (human) free will exists. He says, for example: 'In general, there is no paradox in the observation that certain phenomena are *determined* to be changeable, chaotic, and unpredictable, an obvious and important fact that philosophers have curiously ignored' [90].

This is, however, not as curious as Dennett makes it appear. From the fact that something is unpredictable, it cannot be concluded that freedom is present, unless several steps are passed over, which Dennett accordingly does. He doesn't examine what 'freedom' means and seems to be content having shown that a (great) predictability isn't possible. This appears most clearly from the way in which he deals with Benjamin Libet's research. It appears that a 'readiness potential' may be derived from his experiments: prior to the moment when one performs an act consciously, one is already focused on it unconsciously. One might conclude from this that something like a free will cannot exist: at a level one doesn't control, the act is prepared and even determined. At best, one could stop the process when one realizes what act one wants to perform, in the last 150 (actually 100) milliseconds prior to the act; this would perhaps, as the neuroscientist Vilayanur Ramachandran says, rather indicate 'free won't' [231]. (Dennett doesn't make it clear whether there is freedom at that moment, when one 'vetoes', but he would seemingly affirm this.)

Dennett seems to present an opportunity to evade the conclusion that Libet's findings exclude the possibility that free will exists. The 'Cartesian theatre' is struck by it: 'Libet's data ... rule out one hypothesis ...: *Self-contained You*, according to which *all* the brain's chores are gathered into one compact location, where everything could happen at once in one place' [237–8].

Dennett's notion of the self gives another interpretation of 'free will': 'Our free will, like all our other mental powers, has to be smeared out over time, not measured

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[4]I call this '*radical* determinism' as Dennett is a determinist himself as well, but thinks that the existence of a free will is compatible with it.

at instants' [242]. Free will isn't only present when the isolated, privileged soul acts entirely consciously; it is present in the entire process.

Dennett's approach prevents his conception of free will being struck in the same way as that of the defenders of an isolated self. It is, nonetheless, difficult to accept his conclusion as long as complementary considerations are omitted. He doesn't clarify *how* free will is possible. He does state how freedom has evolved in his opinion, appealing to Darwin's theory of evolution. Freedom has developed together with the coming about of a world in which beings could no longer live 'automatically' but in which it was, as they started to communicate, necessary that they could reflect on their own behaviour.

This doesn't sound incredible and it is defensible as an hypothesis, but one has to be careful and be able to accept possible alternatives to the theory of evolution, an attitude which Dennett doesn't adopt. The point, however, is that Dennett's exposition, even if it is correct, doesn't prove anything except freedom of movement. This is something other than freedom of will, the presence of which is the focal point of Dennett's book. He clarifies the matter as follows: 'The question is whether you are responsible for the act committed. We *may* frame this as the question "Could you have done otherwise?" ... We would seek *specific* evidence of your competence, or extenuating circumstances' [298]. For Dennett, an answer to this question is sufficient to decide whether free will is the case. In order to be able to decide this, however, the complementary question is necessary whether one determines *oneself* how one acts.

Dennett doesn't examine this critically enough; the only thing that matters, in his view, is that some people realize how they act; an insight which has slowly ripened in mankind is decisive. To know how one acts doesn't, however, entail that one could have deviated from the act. After all, one's act is (in this case) based on reason and the decision has taken place when one acts. Dennett's strategy, to expand the self to such a degree that all deliberations are based on free will, is without success here. He would, by characterizing reason as a part of the self, have to appeal to self-legislation, something which is not intelligible.

It is, therefore, important to distinguish freedom of will from freedom of movement. The presence of human freedom of movement may be derived from the fact that one is able to abstain from an act. The presence of human freedom of *will* has, on the contrary, not been demonstrated, as this would require an explanation how one determines one's own will. It may be impossible to demonstrate this; Dennett does not, at any rate, succeed in doing this. He even deals with the issue in the wrong order: 'If you want to be free, you must *take* responsibility' [292]. The answer to the question how one may take responsibility on the basis of free will—the essential question—however, is not discussed.

These matters are problematic and because of them I cannot agree with Dennett's most important conclusions. Still, the fact that he doesn't proceed dogmatically and introduces 'Conrad', a character that presents objections Dennett goes into (regarding the matter whether Dennett actually considers the objections and doesn't merely present the issues he has already discounted, I give him the benefit of the doubt), is positive. Meanwhile, this caution is not always present. His uncritical attitude with regard to the theory of evolution, which presents convincing but no certain results, weakens his view.

Finally, Dennett's characteristic style must be discussed. It is not only acceptable but even commendable to convey a message comprehensibly, but this may not come

at the expense of its contents. Dennett often approaches the issues too lightly. His style is agreeable in that one may smoothly become acquainted with his views, but this approach does mean that he often acquits himself of his task too easily and does not investigate matters thoroughly enough.

Freedom Evolves is an interesting book for those who wish to acquaint themselves with the topic of free will and want to see a number of relevant questions dealt with comprehensively. Dennett's position, as a compatibilist, is balanced. He doesn't, however, succeed in reaching his goal, to show how free will could develop (evolutionarily); his exposition is too superficial for that.

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Davies, W. Martin, *The Philosophy of Sir William Mitchell (1861 – 1962): A Mind's Own Place,* Studies in the History of Philosophy 73, Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003, pp. ix + 445, US$129.95 (cloth).

Before John Anderson there was William Mitchell. Mitchell was a Scot, like Anderson and many other early Australian philosophers (Francis Anderson, Henry Laurie, down to Jack Smart). In the early part of his career he published several papers in *Mind*, including one as an undergraduate. Mitchell arrived in Adelaide in 1894 to take up the Hughes Chair of English Language and Literature and Mental and Moral Philosophy. He had two predecessors, Davidson and Boulger, but Mitchell was the first real philosopher. He taught philosophy at Adelaide for thirty years. In the course of that, he wrote his major work *Structure and Growth of the Mind* (1907). He was eventually invited to give two series of The Gifford Lectures at the University of Aberdeen (1925 and 1926), which is certainly evidence of an international reputation. The lectures were written up as *The Place of Minds in the World* (1933). A following book on *The Power of Minds* has been lost. The themes of these books might be best described briefly as a diachronic approach to philosophical psychology. Mitchell had given up his Adelaide chair (1924) to become Vice-Chancellor even before Anderson arrived in Sydney (1927). Mitchell was Vice-Chancellor then Chancellor until retirement in 1950. During this period he presided over a large expansion of the University of Adelaide, recruiting many eminent professors and instituting a major building program to house the rapidly increasing student body. As Vice-Chancellor he refused a room, working from the Registrar's room when necessary, and preferring to discuss administration with his staff in their rooms. His influence in Adelaide outside the University was considerable also, though it was not in the anti-establishment style of Anderson. For example, he was active in educational circles, and is credited with the introduction of programmes into The Adelaide Teachers College. He was knighted in 1927. He died in 1962 at the age of 101.

This would be of only minor historical interest were it not for the fact that Mitchell was an excellent philosopher who is now all but forgotten. His works are neither taught nor read, and the few historians of Australian philosophy mention him briefly and rather uncomprehendingly. He is often described as an idealist (Blanshard, Passmore, Grave, Kennedy, Franklin). That might explain the neglect if

it were true, but in this book Marty Davies buries it once and for all. There are simply too many places where Mitchell avows a robust realism. For example, Davies [29] usefully quotes Mitchell: 'No object is made mental, nor altered, by being felt, imagined, or known in any way ...When your ideas quarrel with mine, and when they agree, it is because they ... grasp the same object as mine, and to find it independent of our grasp ...The room is ...not affected by my perceiving it'. Similarly, his realism seems to have been materialist, as in 'When you try to picture the structure and the action of the mind, remember you are trying to picture the structure and action of the nervous system. In this way you will avoid the usual confusion of trying to picture a hybrid process consisting partly of visible movements and partly of invisible feelings' [29].

A late ninetheenth-century Scottish philosophical immigrant to Australia who was both a realist and a materialist is interesting enough. More, his realism was of a complicated sort. Davies describes him as an epistemic subjectivist (in that we know the world only through subjective experience) and also a pragmatist in justification. The former expresses a certain perspectivalism about our sensory knowledge: the perspective is ineliminable, which leads Davies to describe him as a 'non-doctrinaire' materialist [108] having affinities with Nagel and McGinn. The latter connects with his theory of representation: a thing is successfully represented if the mind has expectations about it (Mitchell's word was 'prophecies') which are fulfilled. That is, intentionality and justification are lived, they are processes in the world. This dynamic approach is characteristic. Mitchell's approach is to account for the taxonomy of the various aspects of mentality in terms of their growth, one might even say their various causal histories. More Australianism! Perhaps there really is something to that speculation about the bright sunlight down here. Davies is uncompromising in seeing Mitchell as a forerunner of current cognitive science. He aimed to give 'a psychology which is in turn an introduction to philosophy' [30, citing Passmore]: 'Indeed, for Mitchell, philosophy *was* a kind of psychology' [30].

This is a long book as philosophy books go. As well as Mitchell, we get a lot of Davies in it. There are many discussions of contemporary themes which are obviously intended to show where Mitchell fits in, but which are interesting in their own right. To take an example, there is an extended discussion of varieties of internalism and externalism from Putnam onward. He interprets Putnam's internal realism as ontological realism (there can be serious dispute with this interpretation), as a pragmatic theory of truth, as coherentist about justification, and as anti-objectivist about knowledge-seeking. He then credits Mitchell with all these views, though understandably in a less-well-worked-out way. This makes reading the book of greater contemporary interest than you might expect.

Is it too good to be true, that Davies has re-discovered a forgotten genius of Australian philosophy? Davies is cautious, pointing out that by now history has passed Mitchell by. True, but people have been revived from obscurity before. Why then has he been neglected? Davies offers several reasons. There were his isolation, the overshadowing presence of Anderson in Sydney, and the even greater presence of Wittgenstein on the world stage. To these we might add the salient fact of his obscure philosophical style. *Structure and Growth of the Mind* is almost entirely innocent of logical signposting. No professional philosopher these days reading for a publishing house (except perhaps for those wallowing in the slough of postmodernism) would let Mitchell get away with it. Similarly, Mitchell develops a formidable technical

vocabulary which is, unfortunately, rather ill-chosen. This should be a lesson to young philosophers: if you want to be understood and remembered, choose your defined terms felicitously and euphoniously, so as to carry your meaning with ease. Davies has usefully provided us with a glossary, which must have taken a great deal of work to figure out. It certainly aids comprehension but also highlights Mitchell's eccentric choice of terminology. To choose just one fairly typical example, there is Mitchell's distinction between fixed and floating capital. Fixed capital is the innate ability of a creature to recognize a stimulus, whereas floating capital is 'the ability to take interest in things which are not fixed or instinctual ... for example the ability to notice the corked character of wine' [432]. One trouble is that these terms come from economics, which will tend to mislead those who know the economics. But even for the student who is not so educated, the absence of an obvious meaning only adds to the cognitive load. Multiply this by fifty and you can see that reading Mitchell takes effort.

   Is there, then, anything new to be learned from Mitchell? Read Davies's book before reading Mitchell, but don't read either in the expectation that you will find that Mitchell is as strikingly different as, say, Hegel, or Popper, or Wittgenstein. Mitchell didn't produce a New Grand Theory, so much as solid psycho-philosophical work in the service of the realist-materialist paradigm, conditioned by traces of the nineteenth-century idealism which he was escaping. In bringing him to our attention in such detail and with such clarity, Davies has done Australian philosophy, and Adelaide in particular, a fine service. He is to be thanked for it.

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