

Saturday, March 5:

9:30 a.m. Session 1--Explorations in Pragmatism
Faculty Meet- Chair: David Pfeiffer, Principia
ing Room "James and Goodman,"

Jonathan Moreno, Washington (St. Louis)

"Pragmatic Ultimates, Contexts and Common Sense,"

Donald Lee, Tulane

Commentator: Edward Madden, SUNY-Buffalo

9:30 Session 2--On Buchler
Oak Room

"Identity and Ontological Parity (Buchler's Metaphysics of Natural Complexes),"
Stephen D. Ross, SUNY-Binghamton

"Some Ambiguities in Justus Buchler's Treatment of The Concept of Poetry,"

Morris Grossman, Fairfield

Commentator: Justus Buchler, SUNY-Stony Brook

12:30 noon Lunch - Faculty Dining Room

Closing Comments: John Lachs, President, SAAP

1. Abstracts of papers to be read at the Annual Meeting.

A. Paul Kuntz, "George Perkins Marsh, Pragmatist and Founder of Ecology"

I called the method of Marsh, "proto-pragmatism" and the results as now common "ecology." Whereas for almost a century the encyclopedia articles, until notice was dropped, were "George Perkins Marsh American Scholar and Diplomat, 1801-1882;" now that we approach the centennial of his death, we need the reappraisal "American proto-pragmatist and founder of ecology."

B. Thomas M. Alexander, "Vital Symbolism: Hartley Burr Alexander's Basis for a Naturalistic Logic"

In this paper I introduce the life, works, and general philosophical ideas of Hartley Burr Alexander (1873-1939) and then proceed to examine in particular his theory of "Vital Symbolism." With the advent of modern physics, which at once showed nature to be dynamic and relativistic, and modern psychology (especially with the work of James and Bergson), Alexander believed that it was necessary to dispense with the old static forms of categorical thinking and arrive at a naturalistic basis for a logic and theory of meaning which was at once organic and humanistic. All meaning comes from lived experience, and all experience is shaped by the psychophysical structure and functioning of the human organism. While experience is thus relative to man, nevertheless it is not illurory. Our experience is "symbolic" of reality, using the metaphors of the human organism--hence "Vital Symbolism." For instance, the human skeletal structure shapes our experience of three-dimensional space, giving us a sense of before, behind, right, left, and up, down, and here. Likewise the metabolic rate of pulse and respiration give us the shape and flow of time. Alexander finds seven "naturalistic categories" the skeletal, the muscular, the visceral, the cycle of growth, the sexual, and the higher human functions of language, society, and value-thinking. All meaning, Alexander maintains, must be construed ultimately in terms of these human functions. Among these functions is man's ability to idealize. Thus Alexander believed that any naturalistic logic would provide a ground for a more "spiritual" view of man, one that would take into account his moral, aesthetic, philosophical, and religious functions. Insofar as men themselves treat these functions as having more significance for human life than the other functions, so would this naturalistic logic.

C. Edward I. Pitts, "Idealism in American Education, Where Are You Now That We Need You?"

This paper attempts to briefly present the main features of the educational philosophy of William Torrey Harris, leading St. Louis Hegelian and U.S. Commissioner of Education from 1889 until 1906. The thesis presented is that the Hegelian philosophy of Harris played an important part in the formation of modern public school systems, and that many current educational practices have some idealist background, especially in the area of moral education. Harris' educational thought is traced to its Hegelian sources, and systematically outlined. It is concluded that Harris' thought made possible, to a large extent, the historical transition in this country from the small, provincial one room school, to the general system of mass public education.

- D. Mary B. Wiseman, "An Interpretation of Practical Consistency in the Ethics of C. I. Lewis"

Philosophers explicating "consistent actions" and "inconsistent actions" often appeal to the well-defined concept of logical consistency. This approach, however, has an unfortunate consequence that demands its rejection. When consistency is understood as logical consistency between sentences expressing the performance of actions or the activities named by intentional verbs, inconsistent actions or intentions become logically impossible. Yet we use "consistent" to name a moral virtue and "inconsistent" a vice.

To resolve this difficulty, I (i) show why practical consistency should not be construed as a species of logical consistency, (ii) define practical consistency, and (iii) interpret the categorical imperative as the imperative to be practically consistent. My position has grown from the unfinished ethics of C. I. Lewis, who takes practical consistency to be prior to logical consistency but fails to give an adequate argument for his view.

- E. Richard Werner, "Dewey's Pragmatism and Justification in Ethics: A Contemporary Reconstruction"

By proposing a philosophical reconstruction of John Dewey's notion of justification and, in particular, justification in ethics, I argue that one can construct a viable, objective ethical theory capable of avoiding the standard criticisms raised by contemporary noncognitivists in ethics. Fundamentally, I argue that since Dewey opts for a pragmatic approach to justification in favor of the more traditional deductive model, he avoids the naturalistic fallacy (both the defnivist and the deductivist versions) since, within the Deweyan scheme, all inquiry has indigenously normative aspects. As such, attempts to force Dewey's theory into an ethical naturalist mold have been misguided even though it is true that, given his approach, ethical justification is not different in kind from scientific or any other type of factual justification. Finally, I show how a Deweyan approach can be used to answer many of the standard objections raised against theories which purport to provide an objective foundation for ethics.

- F. Kathleen Harrington, "Frederick Woodbridge's Naturalistic Platonism: A Critical Appreciation"

Frederick Woodbridge's The Son of Apollo (1929) was the only book on Plato written by an early American naturalist. Reacting against the current tendency to regard Plato as an uncompromising dualist and an ascetic who advocated a flight from the world of the senses, Woodbridge denied that the philosophy of Plato presupposes a strong ethical or metaphysical dualism. He argued that far from being an ascetic, Plato was primarily concerned with the fulfillment of all of man's natural powers in the context of the political life. He was also one of the first scholars to emphasize the importance of the dramatic context of Plato's thought. In addition to giving a critical appreciation of Woodbridge's Platonism, this paper explores certain features of Woodbridge's own philosophy which provide the background necessary to understand his interpretation of Plato: viz. his analysis of the reliability of our sources of knowledge of Greek philosophy; his philosophy of history with its concomitant view of the task of the historian of philosophy; and the fundamentally Aristotelian cast of Woodbridge's thought, which led him to read Plato primarily as the teacher and precursor of Aristotle.

- G. David Norton, "Stephen Pepper on Conceptual Diversity and Conceptual Change"

In the current debate on ultimate conceptual diversity and ultimate conceptual change, Pepper's World Hypotheses requires to be placed with Collingwood's Metaphysics and Kuhn's Structure of Scientific Revolutions as a basic reference point. Pepper is akin to Collingwood and Kuhn in sponsoring the thesis of multiple ultimate conceptual systems, and the thesis that conceptual change is of two basic types, "evolutionary" and "revolutionary." But by avoiding the thoroughgoing historicism of Collingwood and Kuhn, Pepper also avoids their binding relativism. In Pepper, metaphysics affords external viewpoints upon a given conceptual system and its historical enactment, in virtue of the perennial availability of alternative "world hypotheses." This also gives Pepper several advantages with respect to the problem

of ultimate ("revolutionary") conceptual exchange. The strictly serial pluralism of their accounts offers foothold to a quasi-causal conception of revolutionary exchange and a murky intimation of an historical development which is independent of human beings. But causal explanation is precluded in favor of rational explanation by Pepper's limited ahistoricism. Likewise it is Pepper who renders intelligible our ability to recognize the occurrence of conceptual revolutions in the past (as Kuhn discerns a "Copernican revolution," an "Einsteinian revolution," etc.). For by the tenets of Collingwood and Kuhn, the current world view (exhibiting the capacity of every world view) commensurates the whole of experience in its own terms, and therefore renders the past continuous with the present as the past of this present. In this situation historical discontinuities cannot be apprehended. But by the perennial availability of alternative world views according to Pepper, we have available the means to apprehend a given period of the past for what it was to itself, rather than for what it is to us.

I argue, finally, that Pepper's concurrent pluralism implies a new and more viable social ideal, to replace the older ideal of universal agreement in matters of ultimate belief. The new ideal may be termed the "complementarity of perfected differences."

H. Jonathan Moreno, "James and Goodman"

Nelson Goodman is not usually one of the contemporary philosophers identified with the classical American pragmatists. In this paper I try to indicate some important respects in which Goodman's inclinations are broadly comparable to those of William James. I concentrate on four related themes in each author: the pragmatic tendency, pluralism, radical empiricism and nominalism. The general conclusion from this study is that both hold a vigorous pluralism according to pragmatic criteria, though Goodman's commitment to nominalism tempers his pragmatism in a way which may not be friendly to James.

I. Donald Lee, "Pragmatic Ultimates: Contexts and Common Sense"

Two of the most familiar non-absolutistic ultimates appealed to by pragmatists in philosophic explanation are the ideas of context and common sense. A context is a whole composed of different kinds of parts organized by an integrative principle. It has an inside and an outside, a foreground and a background, and is highly relative. Common sense is a "relatively absolute" framework used for clarification of meanings. It is relative to a given time, place, and field, but is absolute within the field at a given time. The clarification it provides is measured in a practical way; i.e., in terms of the cessation of further clarification. The idea of common sense is related to the concept of a context in the following way: any field of discussion is a context when it has a common sense basis organized by an integrative principle which can further operate upon that basis to produce sophisticated concepts. By relating context and common sense in this way, we can see them as co-ordinate ultimates of philosophic explanation; we no longer appeal to them as separate from each other.

J. Stephen D. Ross, "Identity and Ontological Parity (Buchler's Metaphysics of Natural Complexes)"

In Metaphysics of Natural Complexes, Justus Buchler has delineated a profound and revolutionary approach to ontology, embodied in his "principle of ontological parity." This principle entails that all being is ordinal and relative, and that every being (natural complex) has many "integrities." The integrity of a being is its functional singularity. Buchler also defines the notion of the "contour" of every natural complex, in effect, the totality of its integrities. These two conceptions are incompatible, and the notion of contour must be abandoned and replaced by a functional plurality and singularity of integrities. An important consequence is that human individual experience--"proception" in Buchler's language--is not a unified totality, but is also a functional plurality.

K. Morris Grossman, "Some Ambiguities in Justus Buchler's Treatment of The Concept of Poetry"

Buchler's treatment of the concept of poetry contains some apparent contradictions which can be dealt with in two ways. They can be faulted as inadequacies of his theory or they can be seen as "exhibitive" devices that contribute to Buchler's own critical and poetic architectonic. This paper engages in both of these approaches, conjoining them for its own philosophical purposes. Buchler himself sees exhibitive judgment as paradigmatic of art, but not inappropriate to philosophy. Such judgments may involve manipulated contradictions, deliberately deployed in the process of generating a philosophical structure. Those judgments need not be instances of the kind of lax thought that hasty criticism might make them out to be. The outline of Buchler's theory are presented here, in order to provide the groundwork for an examination of the ambiguities in question.

2. Other SAAP Programs

A. SAAP Program at the Western APA Meeting in Chicago in April:

Chair: Edward C. Moore, Indiana/Purdue University at Indianapolis

Speaker: John McDermott, Queens College

"The Radical Empiricism of William James: Contentions and Social Implications"

Commentator: Paul Tibbetts, Dayton

Max H. Fisch, Indiana/Purdue University at Indianapolis

"A Report on the project for a new edition of the writings of Charles S. Peirce."

B. The Program for the SAAP at the Pacific APA Meetings in Portland, Oregon in March:

Symposium on William E. Hocking

Chair: Jacquelyn Ann K. Kegley, California State College, Bakersfield

Speakers: Barbara MacKinnon, University of San Francisco

"Hocking on Objectivity"

Eugene D. Mayers, California State University, Haywood

"Hocking's Philosophy of Law"

Commentator: David Rouse, California State College, Bakersfield

3. The Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (U.S.) will be held at Bradford College in Haverhill, Massachusetts, April 14 to 17, 1977. Those wishing to read a paper should contact Professor Benjamin Nelson, 29 Woodbine Ave., Stony Brook, New York 11790.

4. The Congress of The First International Week on the Philosophy of the Greek culture will take place in the island of Chios September 19-25, 1977. The Congress is sponsored by the Hellenic Society for Philosophical Studies and the Mediterranean Society of Philosophy. The general theme centers on the notion of man and the specific themes are as follows:

1. Oriental Philosophies and Greek Philosophy
2. The Philosophies of the Hellenistic World and the Oriental Philosophies
3. Greek Philosophy and Hebrew Philosophy
4. Greek Philosophy and the Philosophies of the Roman world
5. Greek Philosophy and Arab Philosophy
6. Greek Philosophy and its Byzantine prolongations
7. Greek Philosophy, Medieval and Modern Philosophy in the Mediterranean countries
8. Greek Philosophy and its Neohellenic prolongations

Those interested should send titles of papers to Professor E. A. Moutsopoulos, First International Week of Philosophy of the Greek Culture, 40, Hypsilantou Street, Athens 140, Greece. February 28, 1977 is the deadline for replies to have been received in Greece. After that date further details will be send to those applying.

5. The Meeting of the SAAP held in conjunction with the APA Eastern Division in Boston was very successful. The Society thanks the speaker Professor William Barret; the commentators, Professors Sherover and Belaief; the chairman, Professor John E. Smith; and the program director Bruce Wilshire for a stimulating program.