

he blithely accepts the caricature, comparing the annihilated moral facts to Santa Claus as mythical entities we're well rid of.

To test student response to the film a colleague offered to show it to her class of 50 beginning students. Their reactions ranged from indifference to annoyance with the sound quality and Hare's tendency to mumble a bit when pressed. But all agreed that as an introduction to the study of moral philosophy it would inspire little interest. This might lead a convinced audiovisual enthusiast type to adopt it for a smaller, higher-level course, but, as the above account of the drift of the discussion should suggest, the dangers of blurred distinctions, questionable historical attributions and the inconclusive character of so much of the dialogue are significant drawbacks. My hunch is that the visual presence of Oxford moralists and the provision of two or three simplified charts at various points do not offset the disadvantages noted above.

— Lawrence J. Jost

Other Minds. Open University Film Series. Color, 16mm, 25 min. \$275 purchase; \$20 rental.

This is a filmed discussion of the problem of other minds, featuring A. J. Ayer and G. N. A. Vesey. (Professor Ayer's dog has an important walk-on part.) The film provides a clear and lively introduction to the basic issues concerning the problem of our knowledge of other minds, and is suitable for use in either a first course in philosophy or at a more advanced undergraduate level. Although the debate is relatively free from philosophical jargon or technical terms, students viewing the film would benefit if they were already familiar with the issues raised and some of the terms used. For instance, one might ex-

plain before screening it such ideas as behaviorism, the argument from analogy, privacy, deductive and inductive inference, an explanatory hypothesis, and even phenomenalism, since Vesey confronts Ayer briefly with analogies between the problem of other minds and knowledge of the external world. A preliminary reading of the relevant part of Ayer's *The Problem of Knowledge*, which is mentioned in the film, would be useful. The viewing time is approximately one half-hour, and so there would be opportunity for a brief discussion of its content in a normal fifty-minute period.

The apparently unscripted discussion takes place against the background of what I take to be Ayer's comfortable and quietly ornate residence. He is in top form, displaying the quick philosophical footwork that one expects from him in debate. He provides a forceful exposition of both the issue and his own traditional and familiar solution to the problem. Throughout the discussion he keeps Vesey on the defensive by presenting his position very simply and clearly, in contrast to Vesey's disappointingly inarticulate attempt at rebuttal along Wittgensteinian lines. Ayer's view is that the meaning of psychological words like 'pain' and 'sadness' are understood by each of us because we associate them with certain of our feelings. Although such words are taught to a child when he exhibits a particular pattern of behavior, Ayer claims "that one can detach the word from the circumstances in which one learns it and make it refer simply to the actual experience." In our talk about others, psychological words also refer to their feelings, not to their behavior, and the philosophical question then is what can the connection between those feelings and their behavior be such that one is justified in attributing feelings to them on the basis of their behavior. He insists that one has

the choice of regarding the relation either as being represented as an entailment between psychological ascriptions and descriptions of behavior (observable movements) or as some kind of inductive relation. He and Vesey both reject behaviorism, and so Ayer thinks they ought to agree that the answer to the epistemological problem about the existence of other minds rests on an inductive inference and that ascriptions of feelings to others constitute explanatory hypotheses that explain their behavior.

Vesey resists having to choose between the deductive and inductive options that Ayer sets before him, contending that a genuine philosophical question about whether or not other human beings *in general* have minds "does not arise." One can ask "practical" questions about whether or not a particular person is suffering from a headache or merely making excuses, for example. Also one can ask whether a non-human creature, say, a being from outer space or Ayer's dog, has a mind, and here the way to settle the question is to compare its capacities with those of human beings. But the allegedly deeper issue concerning whether other persons are really conscious or intelligent does not arise unless one accepts, as Ayer does, certain objectionable Cartesian presuppositions about language. According to Vesey, one such presupposition is that a word has meaning for a person because he associates it with some "object". A second assumption is that in the case of a psychological term, that object is "interior, private, and mysterious." It is Ayer's acceptance of these presuppositions which permits him to raise a general doubt about the reliability of behavioral expressions of feeling and to think that he is thrown back solely on his own case to justify his belief that others "very probably" have thoughts and feelings as he does.

Although I have considerable sympathy with the general line that Vesey is

suggesting here, I can also understand Ayer's impatience with him. Ayer insists that the sceptical question about others *does* arise so long as we separate the concept of a feeling from the concept of the behavior by which it is expressed. It is easy for Vesey to say he rejects characterizing the relation between the two as being either "deductive" or "inductive", but Ayer cannot "for the life of him" make out what Vesey's own third alternative is. I suspect that the audience will have the same difficulty, especially if they are not familiar with recent discussions of the problem which have developed from Wittgenstein's frustratingly cryptic aphorisms on the topic. Vesey objects to the suggestion that the word 'pain,' for example, stands for a sensation in a way that cuts it off conceptually from natural expressions of pain, but he fails to find a way to explain convincingly why his view is not just a futile attempt to concoct an impossible alternative to the possibilities Ayer has canvassed. What does not emerge clearly enough is the justification behind his claim that he can legitimately reject the seemingly plausible groundrules that Ayer lays down for treatment of the problem. Hence, the contest appears to be one-sided, and an instructor using the film will probably want to be prepared to fill in more of the content of Vesey's position.

Vesey himself has made such preparation easier by writing, as a part of the set of materials on "Other Minds?" put out by the Open University, a forty-eight page monograph in which he explains at greater length his objections to the view represented by Ayer and states his own position in more detail. He discusses briefly Malcolm's references to "behavioral criteria," for instance, and Strawson's remarks about depression "spanning the gap" between what is felt and what is observed. None of this is taken up explicitly in the debate with

Ayer and although the level of discussion in the monograph is considerably more sophisticated than that of the film, it might prove a useful adjunct to the film in an extended examination of the problem with undergraduates.

— Douglas C. Long

Kant and Causality. Open University Film Series. B&W, 16mm, 28 min. \$150 purchase; \$20 rental.

This part of the British Open University film series begins and concludes with reference to previous and succeeding programs. Partly (but only partly) because the film is not wholly self-contained, one has difficulty imagining how it could be used effectively in a regular college or university course dealing with Kant.

The film begins with an elementary and (to this viewer at least) overly unctuous illustration of the distinction between objective succession (egg rolling off table and breaking) and subjective succession (successive apprehension of co-existing parts of a house). Then considerable time is devoted to making out (through a modified quiz-show format) the claim that our judgments of objective succession presuppose assumptions about various causal relations or causal laws. However, the actual illustrations seem to deal in part with what might more properly be called *constancies*: we see a circle covering increasingly more of a patterned background and judge that we are looking at an expanding balloon, *since we know that walls don't customarily, rapidly shrink or expand*. (We have been supplied with some additional verbal context—including mention of balloons.) This part of the program is not sharply related to Kant, and seems geared to the intellectual speed and style of an average, television-oriented, high school student.

Professor Godfrey Vesey, who has been managing the discussion up to this point, now raises the question whether events must *in every case* be subsumable under causal laws for judgments of objective succession to take place concerning them. Isn't it enough that nature be for the most part regular and ordered? (Here, and elsewhere, I may have failed to get the question precisely right: it was not possible to adjust the soundtrack to achieve full intelligibility.)

Enter Professor W. H. Walsh, who indicates that Professor Vesey's suggestion is very unKantian. He further maintains that what has so far been said, while doubtless relevant to the Transcendental Deduction¹, fails altogether to capture the purpose and content of the Second Analogy. He then proceeds to examine in some detail various themes in Kant's treatment of time.

In some ways Walsh is fine. He gives clearly the impression of a good scholar engrossed in his subject and shows certain moments of humor and personality. Vesey, by contrast, seemed strained and inauthentic (although this judgment may not be fair to his role through the whole series of programs).

Unfortunately, Walsh's scholarly commentary and analysis are not smoothly integrated with the preceding level of discussion. It is hard to see how anyone sufficiently innocent to profit much from the first part of the program could also be sufficiently well informed to make sense of the second (and vice versa). Perhaps the underlying pedagogical notion is that we begin with intuitive, "philosophical" points, and move on to more complicated theoretical and textual issues. If so, someone has under-estimated the challenge of moving from philosophical (and literary) ground-zero to the higher reaches of Kant criticism within a span of twenty-eight minutes.

I watched this film in the company of