

ABSTRACTS FROM INQUIRY

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THE CONCEPT OF A HUMAN ACTION

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This analysis of the concept of a human action takes its point of departure in the fact that actions are things done by persons. But people do many things which do not qualify as actions. A necessary condition for calling something done an *action*, is that the agent intends or means something by it, in the sense that the agent has some specific end in mind. Thus an action may be said to be the externalization, realization, or *expression* of the agent's meaning. But what precisely are such meanings or intentions that are given expression in actions? How are they to be distinguished from other mental contents? The author tries to answer these questions by distinguishing them, on the one hand, from experiences, sensations, feelings, and, on the other hand, from other thoughts and meanings that do not find expression in the action. It is claimed that this account of action explains many characteristics of actions: that actions are appraised, not described (because meanings are evaluated), that an action is regarded as a unity (because the meaning is a unity), that the intention and the performance are not causally related, but related as are the content and expression of linguistic utterances, etc.

TOPICS ON THE BORDERGROUNDS OF ACTION

DAVID S. SHWAYDER, *University of Illinois, Urbana*

The psychological conceptualization of phenomena involves characteristic explanations of animal movement. Conscientious attention to this fact results in a kind of behaviorism I call 'conceptual epiphenomenalism'. This doctrine at once explains the characteristic 'opacity' of psychological predicables and helps to show the way around difficulties opacity is felt to create, and it also frees our thinking from the tyranny of the distinction between necessity and contingency, too often misapplied to facts rather than to things said or thought. An important challenge to conceptual epiphenomenalism is to account for the facts of introspective certainty and privileged testimony. This challenge can be met by identifying the nature of and displaying the behavioral conditions for the various grades of self-consciousness or reflective knowledge. The methodology of conceptual epiphenomenalism is schematically applied to elucidate first the general conception of animal action and then a variety of phenomena plausibly thought to be explicable by reference to the conception of action, specifically the broader category of animal behavior, intention, and hoping and wishing.

EXPLAINING ACTION

CHARLES TAYLOR, *McGill University*

This paper is an attempt to re-interpret some of the results of contemporary studies of action and explanation by philosophers who may loosely be called 'post-Wittgensteinian', e.g. G. E. M. Anscombe, A. Kenny, A. I. Melden. One of the themes which recurs in these discussions is that of the noncontingent connection between desires, intentions, etc. and the actions which we explain by them—although not all the authors concerned understand this in the same way, and many would not accept the term 'noncontingent connection'. The thesis that there is a noncontingent connection between e.g. desire and action is strongly contested, and I attempt in this paper to show (a) that our language for the factors which we cite in explaining action, desires, intentions (Sect. II), feelings (Sect. III), sensations (Sect. IV), etc. is inescapably dispositional in a strong sense, i.e. that it characterizes these factors as disposing us to act in certain ways. But I argue (b) that this does nothing to show that these factors are not causes of the actions

they explain (Sect. I). The seeming oddity of causes which are noncontingently linked with their consequences is explained when we see (c) that the account of action embedded in our ordinary language is teleological, i.e. refers us ultimately to the inclinations of the subject, and intentional (Sects. V and VI).

ON DESCRIBING ACTIONS

DAVID RAYFIELD, *The Memorial University of Newfoundland*

In this paper I first give a summary and modification of an analysis of human action for which I have argued elsewhere (*Noûs*, Vol. 2 [1968], No. 2). I then distinguish true, correct, and applicable descriptions of actions and propose a thesis by which a single action may be correctly described by more than one description. Finally, I state and argue against the thesis of a paper of A. B. Cody's (*Inquiry*, Vol. 10 [1967], No. 2), according to which a single action can be correctly described by no more than one description.

HOPING, WISHING, AND DOGS

COLIN RADFORD, *University of Kent, Canterbury*

Although dogs are almost totally incapable of symbolic behaviour, they can hope, for a dog's behaviour can manifest not only a desire for something but varying degrees of expectation that it will get what it desires; but since they are almost totally incapable of symbolic behaviour, nothing they do can indicate that they both desire something and yet are certain that they will not get it. So the suggestion that dogs entertain idle wishes is, apparently, vacuous, i.e. untestable, or nonsensical. Nonetheless, we can imagine situations in which we would be tempted to say of a dog that it had an idle wish, but since idle wishes so often and typically require language, we should be reluctant to impute it.

DISCUSSIONS

I. DANTO ON BASIC ACTIONS

JOSEPH MARGOLIS, *Temple University, Philadelphia*

Arthur Danto's well-known thesis respecting the necessity of admitting basic actions is examined with a view to demonstrating that either there are no basic actions or that the criterion Danto advances for identifying them is untenable. Attention is drawn to his reliance on a doctrine of First Causes, parallel arguments respecting actions and events, the univocity of 'causes', and the alleged symmetry between an analysis of action and of knowledge.

II. CAUSATION AND BASIC ACTIONS

A REPLY *EN PASSANT* TO PROFESSOR MARGOLIS

ARTHUR C. DANTO, *Columbia University*

Past formulations of basic actions have suggested that an action is basic only if the agent does not cause it by performing a distinct action. Here I show that basic actions can be caused, even by actions of their own agent: they are basic only in not having distinct actions of his as components. When a man m does a (mDa), a is an event and contained in the *complex* event mDa . Different sets of questions arise concerning a 's causation than for mDa 's causation, and the paper attempts to show that a 's being caused is consistent with mDa ; that mDa itself may be caused, so that no contra-causal thesis is entailed by the existence of basic actions; but that the causes and the implicit causal laws for a and for mDa are disjoint. It is further shown that a

univocal conception of causality covers all cases, whether the effects are actions or mere events. I finally seek to show the manner in which this concept may be harmonized with the intuitions of freewill theorists without becoming dissonant with those of determinists.

III. ON THE INDIVIDUATION OF ACTIONS

CARL G. HEDMAN, *Miami University, Ohio*

An initially plausible argument for the conclusion that we individuate actions independently of any reference to what the agent intended is examined and found to involve *a petito*.

IV. DAVIDSON'S NOTION OF LOGICAL FORM

JAMES CARGILE, *University of Virginia*

Roughly speaking, Donald Davidson has proposed that the logical form of sentences like 'A did B' is *revealed* more clearly in sentences like 'There is a doing of B by A'. He explicitly rejects the suggestion that these are just equivalent, or two different forms for expressing the same content. His view is that they share a common form more clearly revealed by the latter kind of sentence. It is argued, to the contrary, that on any clear account of logical form, the forms are different. Davidson gives reasons why the second kind of form is preferable to the first, but not reasons for denying there are two different forms involved.

V. ACTION AND REACTION

DONALD DAVIDSON, *Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford*

To give the logical form of a sentence is to describe its semantically relevant features against the background of a theory of truth. It is argued that formal rules of inference, unless shown valid by a semantic theory, are irrelevant to logical form, as are other matters that concern only notation and syntax. This conception of logical form is called upon to elucidate and defend an analysis of sentences about actions and events. This analysis also supports the claim that intentional actions do not comprise a class of actions.

VI. FREUD ON CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS INTENTIONS

ROBERT K. SHOPE, *Columbia University*

While noting the occasional appearance of intelligent action in the service of a putatively unconscious desire, Frederick A. Siegler (*Inquiry*, Vol. 10, No. 2) maintains that Freud went so far as to claim that such actions are intentional. This misconception of Siegler leads him to misrepresent one of Freud's arguments to show that unconscious intentions exist. A more satisfactory critique of Freud develops upon understanding that his argument begins with a contention that conscious intentions are sometimes—in Miss Anscombe's sense—'mental causes' of slips of the tongue or errors. Certain recent arguments that intentions are not causes do not refute this contention. It can be seen that Freud fails to prove by the argument in question that unconscious intentions exist. But Siegler's claim that the very concept of an unconscious intention is incoherent remains unproven.

REVIEW DISCUSSIONS

I. ACTION AND THE PERSON

ASTRID KJAERGAARD, *University of Odense*

John Macmurray, *The Form of the Personal*, Vol. I. *The Self as Agent*, Vol. II. *Persons in Relation*.

II. SOCIAL CONCEPTS OF ACTION

NOTES ON A PROPOSAL FOR A SOCIAL THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

GUTTORM FLÖISTAD, *University of Oslo*

Jürgen Habermas, 'Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften', *Philosophische Rundschau*, Beiheft 5, and *Erkenntnis und Interesse*.

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ON SYSTEMATICALLY DISTORTED COMMUNICATION

JÜRGEN HABERMAS, *J. W. Goethe University, Frankfurt a. M.*

In this, the first of two articles outlining a theory of communicative competence, the author shows how the requirements of such a theory are to be found in an analysis not of the linguistic competence of a native speaker, but of systematic distortion of communication of the kind postulated by psychoanalytic theory. The psychoanalyst's hermeneutic understanding of initially incomprehensible acts and utterances depends on the explanatory power of this understanding, and therefore rests on theoretical assumptions. After a preliminary delineation of the range of incomprehensible acts and utterances dealt with in psychoanalysis, the author presents an account of psychoanalysis as linguistic analysis. He then explicates the key theoretical assumptions underlying the analytical procedure, in particular those relating to the notion of 'scenic understanding', and concludes by indicating the place of explanatory understanding in a theory of communicative competence.

LIBERTY OF EXPRESSION ITS GROUNDS AND LIMITS: (I)

H. J. McCLOSKEY, *La Trobe University*

The problem posed in this paper is 'Can those interferences with liberty of expression which are necessary and desirable be indicated in some simple, general way, e.g. in terms of some principle or principles of the kinds with which J. S. Mill sought to delimit the interferences with freedom of action?' It is argued that although J. S. Mill sought to defend 'the fullest freedom of expression', he in fact allowed important interferences of kinds which render the formulation of a principle covering them difficult. Further, it is maintained that the important liberal arguments advanced by the great exponents of liberalism are such that they admit as being necessary, legitimate, and desirable, a wide range and variety of interferences, where these interferences are such that they must be determined in the light of the facts in the concrete situation and not on the basis of some general principle.

LIBERTY OF EXPRESSION ITS GROUNDS AND LIMITS: (II)

D. H. MONRO, *Monash University*

It is argued against McCloskey (1) that the restrictions on freedom of opinion which Mill is alleged to concede are not in fact departures from his general principle; (2) that Mill's infallibility argument is not quite as McCloskey interprets it, but makes the point that it is possible to have rationally grounded opinions only in a society in which free enquiry is encouraged, and that McCloskey's counter-examples fail because they presuppose such a society; (3) that Mill attaches more importance than McCloskey allows to the argument that opinions are valueless unless rationally held and that his conception of rationality and self-development differs from McCloskey's; (4) that there is a general principle, which McCloskey has not refuted, namely

that an atmosphere of free enquiry is hard to maintain, and that any suppression, even one apparently justified, will have the indirect effect of helping to destroy that atmosphere, and is consequently likely to do more harm than good.

'LAW AND ORDER' AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

FRED R. BERGER, *University of California, Davis*

Law and order ranks high among the values the State is thought to achieve. Civil disobedience is often condemned because it is held to threaten law and order. Several senses of 'order' are distinguished, which make clear why 'law' and 'order' are so often linked. It is then argued that the connection cannot always be made since the legal system may itself create disorder. Civil disobedience may contribute to greater order and a more stable legal system by helping to remove these causes of disorder. Thus, civil disobedience is sometimes justifiable in terms of its contribution to law and order.

THE TRUE FUNCTION OF THE GENERALIZATION ARGUMENT

ROLAND PAUL BLUM, *Colgate University*

An examination of its employment in ethical disputes reveals that the generalization argument (the question, 'What if everyone did x ?') is not based upon utilitarian calculation and that its effectiveness depends upon the existence of institutions contrary to the ones it hypothesizes. The basis of moral valuation, therefore, remains in the actual institutions presupposed by the generalization argument rather than in the argument itself which is used exclusively against persons whose acts violate current institutional rules. It seeks to discourage such acts by showing the undesirability of institutions under which such acts would be permissible.

DISCUSSIONS

I. ARE 'EXTERNAL QUESTIONS' NON-COGNITIVE?

E. D. KLEMKE, *Roosevelt University*

Grover Maxwell (*Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 29, No. 132) holds that Carnap's 'Empiricism Semantics, and Ontology' contains 'the basis for the definitive solution of all significant ontological problems'. This paper disputes that claim and tries to show that Carnap's view bypasses the main step toward the solution of some ontological problems by means of an improper interpretation of a distinction between external and internal questions and assertions (with regard to linguistic frameworks). It also examines an assumption which appears to be the basis for Carnap's position and tries to show that this assumption is not acceptable.

II. CATEGORIES, GRAMMAR, AND SEMANTICS

JAMES W. CORNMAN, *University of Pennsylvania*

Proposals for a criterion of category difference usually state that two terms belong in different categories if, under certain conditions, one of them is meaningful in some context, and the other is meaningless or absurd in the same context. In all such proposals, cases of meaninglessness, or absurdity, are criteriological features of category difference. Often the meaninglessness of a sentence is intuitively evident, but sometimes intuitions are unclear and conflict. It is desirable, therefore, to base decisions about absurdity on something more reliable than intuitions. The purpose of this paper is to examine two specific attempts to provide a test of absurdity. The first, by D. J. Hillman, tries to show that, contrary to Ryle, purely grammatical features of sentences are sufficient for a criterion of category difference and meaninglessness. The second, by Katz and Fodor, states that a grammar is not adequate to distinguish all anomalies, but that

the resources of a certain kind of semantics are. It is argued that there is good reason to reject both attempts.

REVIEW DISCUSSIONS

I. SELF-DECEPTION

RONALD B. DE SOUSA, *University of Toronto*

Herbert Fingarette, *Self-Deception*.

II. KANT AND THE NEW WAY OF WORDS

J. C. NYÍRI

Wilfrid Sellars, *Science and Metaphysics. Variations on Kantian Themes*.

III. HERMANN BONDI:

ASSUMPTION AND MYTH IN PHYSICAL THEORY

WOLFGANG YOURGRAU, *University of Berne and University of Denver*

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RUDOLF CARNAP, 1891-1970

ARNE NAESS

THE LOGIC OF EXPLANATION IN ANTHROPOLOGY

S. T. GOH, *University of Singapore*

This paper is about the problem of explanation in anthropology. There are, broadly speaking three theories of explanation, namely, the scientific theory, the historical theory, and finally what I have decided to call the phenomenological theory, after M. Natanson. The author argues that none of the three theories is adequate by itself to encompass the complex nature of anthropological science. The three theories correspond roughly to at least three different types of questions raised by anthropologists, and this being the case the principle of methodological tolerance seems a natural and sensible principle to adopt. The paper also deals with the problem of reduction, i.e. the problem whether the three theories are different from and logically independent of one another.

TOWARDS A THEORY OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

JÜRGEN HABERMAS, *J. W. Goethe University, Frankfurt a. M.*

In this, the second of two articles outlining a theory of communicative competence, the author questions the ability of Chomsky's account of *linguistic* competence to fulfil the requirements of such a theory. 'Linguistic competence' for Chomsky means the mastery of an abstract system of rules, based on an innate language apparatus. The model by which communication is understood on this account contains three implicit assumptions, here called 'monologism', 'a priorism', and 'elementarism'. The author offers an outline of a theory of communicative competence that is based on the negations of these assumptions. In opposing the first two assumptions he introduces distinctions, respectively, between semantic universals which process experiences and those that make such processing possible, and between semantic universals which precede all

socialization and those that are linked to the conditions of potential socialization. Against elementarism, he argues that the semantic content of all possible natural languages does not consist of combinations of a finite number of meaning components. Differences in systems of classification preclude this, and such differences can be seen to infect all respects of intercultural comparison. Using the notion of 'performative utterance', the author elucidates the role of dialogue-constitutive universals as part of the formal apparatus required of a speaker's capacity to communicate. He then notes what would be required of a general semantics based on a theory of communicative competence; and finally points out how this theory might be used for social analysis.

SOME PREREQUISITES FOR A POLITICAL CASUISTRY OF JUSTICE

N. M. L. NATHAN, *University of Reading*

After briefly vindicating casuistries which successively apply a number of different moral principles, I describe some of the principles of justice liable to figure in such casuistries, assess the relative popularity of these principles and show that some of the most popular cannot be consistently applied in all circumstances.

UTILITARIANISMS: SIMPLE AND GENERAL

F. HOWARD SOBEL, *University of Toronto*

If we overlook no consequences when we assess the act, and no relevant features when we generalize, can it matter whether we ask 'What would happen if everyone did the same?' instead of 'What would happen if this act were performed?'. David Lyons has argued that it cannot. Two examples are here articulated to show that it can. The first turns on the way consequences are identified and assessed and in particular on the treatment accorded 'threshold consequences'. The second example turns on the way in which the 'social context' of the act (what others would be doing) is taken into account in the generalization. Also included is a formal theory of conditionals from which implications are drawn for utilitarianism and with which I attempt to dispel certain doubts concerning cases employed in my arguments.

DISCUSSIONS

I. SOME CRITICISMS OF THE KATZIAN METATHEORY OF SEMANTICS

MARC L. SCHNITZER, *University of Rochester*

In his criticism (*Inquiry*, Vol. 13, No. 3) of the Katz and Fodor semantic theory (*Language*, Vol. 39, p. 170), J. W. Cornman's identification of the theory's inadequacy rests on an invalid argument, and his proposals for emending it are based on a misinterpretation of the theory's notions of 'semantic marker' and 'projection rule'. Nevertheless, Cornman's criticism suggests a genuine objection to the theory: that the need to add to or change lexical readings to ensure correspondence with native linguistic skill in detecting anomalies brings into question the theory's alleged ability to reproduce this skill. Some problems in the application of the notion of 'semantic marker' are also pointed out. It is concluded, however, that criticism of the theory remains largely speculative due to the dearth of object discourse in the literature on the Katzian semantic proposal.

II. EISENBERG AND SELF-OBLIGATIONS

NICHOLAS FOTON, *Emory University*

Although, quite properly, Eisenberg (*Inquiry*, Vol. 11, No. 2) opposes the assumption that the area of morality takes in only social actions (i.e. actions which have consequences for other

human beings), he does not go far enough in opposing it. He fails to see that much of his own terminology, especially when he speaks of someone owing something to himself, suggests a social-contractual setting.

REVIEW DISCUSSIONS

I. THE ANALYTICAL SOLIPSISM OF WILLIAM TODD

TIMOTHY L. S. SPRIGGE, *University of Sussex*

II. THE BUSINESS OF ANTHOLOGIES

R. A. SHARPE, *St. David's University College, Lampeter*

J. J. MacIntosh and S. K. Coval (Eds.): *The Business of Reason*.