

Editorial: The Name of the Game

We have already received two critical comments on our editorial of October 1993 and we should like to receive more. We were conscious that there was confusion and misinformation in our account of the game called Botticelli. In particular we knew that our attempt at a specimen episode in the game was incoherent. We accordingly concur with a just verdict delivered by Mr Leo Pilkington:

I do not understand your exposition of the game called 'Botticelli' in your editorial to the October 1993 issue of *Philosophy*. Your specimen exchange does not appear to me to exemplify the game explained in your first paragraph. Specifically: if all a player has to do is to quote a line containing a word (any word) from the line cited by the previous player, how can the game end before the resources of the language are exhausted (assuming that a word is eliminated once it is thus twice cited)?

Maybe I am being stupid, and have misunderstood: but I am intrigued and would like to understand the game. Can you help?

Mr Ian House is more intricate and oblique and extends the enquiry into wider grounds:

Is there a game called Mephistopheles? I think so, and recall it as a game in which a writer quotes a line or so of English verse and the printer's gremlin introduces a plausible variant (by way of, for example, transposition, mislineation or revised lexical choice). The object of the game is to outwit the tired proof-reader and to provide entertainment for the idle reader

Macbeth is infected by the disorder so prominent in the play. Even the God-gifted organ voice would have drawn his breath in pain for such a mighty line. Keats was expressing a longing, not placing an order with the wine waiter. Ariel, not Ferdinand, was making a claim about the whereabouts of the latter's father. 'Vibrates' lives in my memory, as do two lines.

We hope that other readers will bring new resources into the search so that we can present a more accurate account of the matters we have touched on. We offer a range of questions through which we can extend our efforts.

We still need to know whether there is a game called Botticelli, and whether there is a game called Mephistopheles, and if so

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whether they amount to two games or one. Are there books where one can find the rules of our games or similar ones? Why does it matter? Does it matter? What if anything does it have to do with philosophy? It is intelligible that Mephistopheles should be called Mephistopheles, but why is Botticelli called Botticelli?