Spring 1997

Logos-Sophia

Pittsburg State University Philosophical Society

Philosophical Journal of the
Pittsburg State University
Philosophical Society

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Volume 7

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The Editors

Welcome!

The journal you have before you is the seventh installment of *Logos-Sophia*, the student journal of philosophy. *Logos-Sophia* (meaning "Reason and Wisdom") is a creative outlet where the campus community can share their philosophical ideas. This journal is an invitation for you to explore thought-provoking issues that weigh on questioning minds.

The PSU Philosophical Society publishes *Logos-Sophia* . . The society was formed in 1987 to promote the awareness and discussion of philosophical issues for the PSU community. We are a casual discussion group that meets every Sunday at 5 'o' clock at **Coffee by the Book**, 115 East 6th street. Our discussions start with a target subject, but touch upon a wide range of topics and viewpoints. This year we covered a variety of issues including anthropomorphism, existentialism, rationalism vs. irrationalism, Richard Rorty's views of religion, T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," and Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World*. We also support guest speakers and presentations. On October 21, Dr. Viney presented "Witch Craze," a lecture and slide show about the witch trials of Europe and America. On February 16, Dr. Barry Brown, of Missouri State Southern College, led a discussion on the ethics of war. In late April, the Society sponsored the third annual panel discussion on religion, coordinated by Russ Prophet. This year we also up-dated the campus philosophy brochure (last up-dated in 1988).

We also would like to announce that former member Anita Chancey, who is currently doing graduate work in Philosophy at the University of Oklahoma, had her paper "Charles Hartshorne: A Philosopher's View of Abortion" accepted by *Process Studies*. A shorter form of this paper appeared in last year's journal. Anita would like to thank the Society for all their help with her paper and for all their support while she was at PSU.

Finally, we cannot forget that this year began tragically for the Society and for people all over the PSU campus with the death of Chuck Lee. He was a philosopher in the truest sense and an exceptional member of the group. He is greatly missed.

This edition of *Logos-Sophia* is dedicated to the memory of

Charles "Chuck" Lee.

Introduction

The members of the PSU Philosophical Society offer sincere gratitude to the following people:

To Jan, Roger, and Shannon O'Connor for graciously allowing us to meet at **Coffee by the Book** every week and for serving *quality* coffee.

Rebecca Viney for proofing the journal in it's rough drafts.

To **APEX.COM** for kindly donating the color insert in this year's *Logos-Sophia*. The journal would not be the same without it.

Thank you

Thanks

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Articles

Destiny and Film Noir:

The Depiction of Fatalism in Selected American Film Noir 1941-1950

Larry W Ranney

The relationship between literature and film has in a limited measure some of the same characteristics as the paternal affiliation between an aging monarch and a young prince: the former has the majesty of regal maturity, tradition, and an unquestionable respect based on accomplished deeds while the up-start prince is known for financial extravagance, unearned pretense, a flamboyant lifestyle, and a popularity which is founded on the seething uneducated masses rather than proven and universally accepted accomplishments. George Bluestone in *Novels into Film* accurately notes how this equivalence between cinema and literature is fundamentally related to the primary 'visual' nature of both media. He accentuates how a recognized literary author known for his conversant visual detail, Joseph Conrad, in his Preface to *Lord Jim* desires, "*you* the reader see" and in a similar manner the noted film pioneer and director D.W. Griffith commented that, "the task I'm trying to achieve is above all to make *you see*."1 Bluestone notes that although both are ostensibly the same verb, they express significantly different concepts of perception:

> *Not only are Conrad and Griffith referring to different ways of seeing, but the "yous" they refer to are different. Structures, symbols, myths, values which might be comprehensible to Conrad's relatively small middle-class reading public would, conceivably, be incomprehensible to Griffith's mass public. Conversely, stimuli which move the heirs of Griffith's audience to tears, will outrage or amuse the progeny of Conrad's "you." The seeming concurrence of Griffith and Conrad splits apart under analysis, and the two arts turn in opposite directions. That, in brief, has been the history of the fitful relationship between novel and film: compatible, secretly hostile. 2*

Film and literature's inimical relationship is doubly ironic: although critics continually exposit their differences, both embrace conspicuous similarities and are analogous through numerous and fundamental affinities. As Joy G. Boyum remarks in *Double Exposure--Film into Fiction:*

> *But the art with which film (or at least narrative film) clearly shares most--from its use of plot, characters, setting, dialogue, and imagery through its manner of expressing theme to its tendency to manipulate space and time--is literature. And so it follows that the effort to assert film's uniqueness involve one which it seems so intimately related. 3*

The American Film Noir was a group of distinctive films released from major and minor studios between 1940 to 1958 which focused on the darker, more sinister side of post World War II American society and culture. Film Noir accentuated middle class crime, urban decay, malevolent city life and presented a *dramatis personae* of disillusioned veterans, *femme fatales*, psychotic murderers, and rootless anti-heroes. Leonard Quart and Albert Auster in *American Film and Society Since 1945* remark that these works:

> *...constructed worlds where paranoia was the dominant feeling, and almost nobody could be trusted. It was a world where women, often in the central role, were glamorous and dangerous, seductive sirens whose every action was marked by duplicity and aimed at satisfying a desire for wealth and power. The male protagonists are frequently weak, confused and morally equivocal, susceptible to temptation, and incapable of acting heroically. In turn the villains were often superficially sympathetic figures whose charm masked malevolence and perversity and on occasion operated as alter egos or doubles for the films' heroes.4*

Film Noir is inexorably linked with the earlier development and proliferation of the pulp detective fiction of the 1930s--today designated as the 'hard-boiled' or 'tough guy fiction.' These authors whose articles appeared in the crime magazines of the period were originally journalists or reporters who brought the violent realism and degenerate atmosphere of the bootlegging Roaring Twenties into their fiction. James M. Cain and Dashiell Hammett both began their careers in the early 1930s utilizing and adapting the traditions of their journalistic and private investigator experience (Hammett was a Pinkerton Detective for years) to works which would become the literary basis of several of the most critically significant Film Noir of the forties. Cain, who was labeled a 'twenty minute egg' by his biographer David Madden, published the Noir classic *The Postman Always Rings Twice* in 1934; two other of Cain's works were also filmed and became Film Noir classics: Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity* (Paramount, 1944) and Michael Curtiz's *Mildred Pierce* (Warner Brothers, 1945).

Other noted 'hard-boiled' writers of the period were Cornell Woolrich, Carroll John Daly, and Raymond Chandler whose best-known detective, Philip Marlowe, became grist for the Film Noir as the central character in several films including *Murder, My Sweet* (RKO, 1944), *The Big Sleep* (Warner Brothers, 1946) and *The Brasher Doubloon* (20th Century-Fox, 1947).

This literary foundation was significant for the development of Film Noir for two principal reasons: First, as R. Barton Palmer states, this was more that just a "simple transportation to the screen of certain popular types of fiction...it helped establish a popularity within mass culture for grim, disturbing stories about the underside of American culture."5 The link between the detective fiction authors and the existentialist writers of the post-World War II period is noteworthy. As Bruce Crowther comments, although they were separated by audience, nationality, and culture, the similarity of themes and characterization is irrefutable:

> *These writers took a cynically detached view of the American Dream, fully recognizing its darker side, and had an outlook that bordered upon existentialism. Like the existentialists, the tough-gut writers of the 1930s upheld the importance of the individual and his need to assert his uniqueness in the face of artificial social conventions and the political tyranny of an uncaring establishment. They created protagonists who were inadequate but did their best, who intuitively followed a course--perceptible only to themselves--along which they marched to the beat of a different drummer. Additionally, and of great significance for the makers of film noir, they deal with the existentialists' obsessions with alienation, with man's helplessness when faced with the inexorable reality of life, and the significance to humankind of what was happening now.6*

Secondly, one of the ubiquitous narrative techniques of the detective fiction--the first person confessional frame tale--was translated onto the screen and used with success in the Film Noir as a standard narrative device. The Film Noir antihero speaking in the first person would confess to past transgressions which would be visualized through the cinematic flashback; the character's commentary through voice-over was an additional method used to express the inner thoughts of the central character. Obviously, these films were not created as philosophical tracts, yet their ability to present complex ideas to a wide audience has become a recognized fact in film history.

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Among the most interesting themes of the Film Noir was their ability to produce a mode of fatalism surrounding and engulfing the central protagonist. Noir scholars such as Robert G. Porfirio and Paul Schrader have long recognized and commented on this aura of fatalism encircling the characters. Schrader in "Notes on the Film Noir " comments that "the romantic narration [voice-overs and flashbacks] creates a mood of *temps perdu*: an irretrievable past, a predetermined fate and an all-enveloping hopelessness."7

What is interesting for students of literature and cinema is how this sense of fatalism and hopelessness can be elucidated. Literature has the distinct advantage over the cinema especially in a third person work since the omniscient author can interject subtle hints through a character's internal monologue, external dialogue, or even digress from the narrative to converse with the reader as was the 'Dear Reader' style of the 18th century novelists such as Fielding. Additionally, characters in literature can engage in lengthy philosophical discussions such as with Dostoevsky or Tolstoy which would not be possible in a film given the limited time to develop a narrative. However, even with such limitations, the Film Noir was resourceful in developing innovative methods of visually dealing with difficult philosophical concepts- such as fatalism on limited budgets, restrictive shooting schedules, and often dictatorial studio heads.

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Pard's Evil Eye: High Sierra

Prior to an examination of the voice-over as a vehicle for depicting fatalism, it would be appropriate to examine a of Film Noir which utilized traditional narrative techniques to achieve the desired fatalistic ambiance. Raoul Walsh's *High Sierra*, an early vehicle for Humphrey Bogart, utilized established elements of the gangster genre yet was peppered with many Noir elements. After being paroled, the infamous bank robber "Mad Dog' Roy Earle attempts to continue his life of crime; however, all his endeavors are failures: a disastrous robbery of a plush hotel, the man who will buy the diamonds from him dies, Earle is double-crossed and

shot by another gangster after the hotel robbery, and he is forced to flee for refuge to the high Sierra mountains where he is cornered and killed by a police sniper.

Interestingly, the fatalistic element in *High Sierra* is linked to a cute little dog, Pard, who befriends Earle while he is planning the hotel robbery with his gang at a cabin in the mountains. Pard's aura of bad luck is early established when a local fisherman, Algernon, informs Earle that all Pard's previous owners have come to tragic ends; later Algernon informs several fisherman that Pard has the 'evil eye.' When the group leaves for the hotel robbery, Pard is locked in the cabin but manages to escape and follows Earle down the road till the hardened gangster softens and takes the dog along: the hotel robbery is a disaster and Earle is shot.

While hiding from the police, Earle's girl Marie (Ida Lupino) comments that Algernon's belief in Pard's 'Evil Eye' may be founded in reality:

> ***Earle:*** *(voice-over off camera) Yeah...Don't look like things are ever gonna cool off...*
>
> ***Marie:*** *You know what Algernon said about Pard here being bad luck.*
>
> ***Earle:*** *That's malarkey.*
>
> ***Marie:*** *Maybe it is and maybe it ain't.*
>
> ***Earle:*** *How could a poor little dog be the cause of it? That's' just plain dumb...*
>
> ***Marie:*** *Sometimes you get me crazy. You think when you say a thing, that's that. Nobody knows nothin' but you.*
>
> ***Earle:*** *Okay...Pard's to blame for everything...It's all Pard's fault...*

After being trapped by the police in the high Sierra Mountains, Earle is in an impregnable position till Marie with Pard arrives. Pard begins to bark and runs up the mountain causing Earle to leave his position, and he is shot and killed by a police sniper. Thus the symbol of fatalism is, ironically, man's best friend which follows Earle like a Greek Fury and is ultimately the reason of his tragic denouement.

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In juxtaposition to the linear narrative fatalism as in *High Sierra,* framed narratives such as *Double Indemnity , Detour They Won't Believe Me,* and *Criss Cross* utilize the confessional frame tale--the central character confesses his past transgressions to a friend, a jury or even to himself. All these works have a similar narrative structure, and use similar voice-over techniques to establish the fatalism surrounding the central confessional character. The following graph demonstrates the similarities of these film's narrative structure, central confessional characters, and repeated fatalistic images:

Film	*Double Indemnity*	*Detour*	*They Won't Believe Me*	*Criss Cross*
Date	1944	1945	1947	1950
Studio	Paramount	PRC	RKO	Universal
Confessional Character	Walter Neff	Al Roberts	Lawrence Ballantine	Steve Thompson
Confessee	friend	himself	jury	himself
Fate Mentioned	yes	yes	yes	yes
Travel Images	yes	yes	yes	yes
Machine Images	yes	no	no	no
Game Images	yes	no	yes	yes

The importance of the voice-over for confessional films is recognized by cinema scholars as the technique similar to the confessional voice in written texts. It has a sincerity and authority unlike other narrative techniques which lends it an honesty and candor. Kaja Silverman in "Dis-Embodying the Female Voice" agrees that "the capacity of the male subject to be cinematically represented in this disembodied form aligns him with transcendence, authoritative knowledge, potency and the law--in short, with the symbolic father."8 It is through the confessional voice-over that many of the Film Noir establish the fatalism of its characters--the doomed characters who are already trapped in a web of corruption, in custody, or mortally wounded confess to the police, a jury, into a dictaphone, or even to themselves how they came to such a tragic end.

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Straight Down the Line: Double Indemnity

Billy Wilder's Double Indemnity is a classic of the confessional Film Noir and considered one of the finest films of the period. In the opening scenes, the confessional narrative is established when insurance salesman Walter Neff (Fred MacMurray) staggers back to his office in the Pacific All Risk Building to confess into a dictaphone to his partner and father figure Barton Keyes (Edward G. Robinson) that he is guilty of murder. From this confessional platform, the film uses flashbacks and voice-over to establish how the fatalistic insurance salesman became entrapped in a scheme to murder the wealthy husband of *femme fatale* Phyllis Dietrichson (Barbara Stanwyck). The confessional narrative is the mirror reverse of the traditional detective work in which the viewer is kept in the dark concerning the actual culprit till the ending; contrarily, the confessional frame tale relies on the mystery of how the situations already existing have occurred and the only mystery is the final fate of the confessional individual. In the case of *Doubled Indemnity*, the fated Walter Neff is unable to flee the building, collapses in the doorway, and is arrested.

Raymond Chandler's screenplay as adapted from James M. Cain's novella utilizes two imaginative concepts to establish the fatalistic aura---an unstoppable machine and a trolley car ride--both images presented in the same scene and continued throughout the film. After Walter finally agrees to her criminal plans, he accosts her with the need to be firm and not waver in their determination to do the deed:

> ***Walter:*** *There isn't going to be any slip-up. Nothing sloppy. Nothing weak...It's got to be perfect...Straight down the line.*
>
> ***Phyllis:*** *Straight down the line.*

As the scene ends and Walter watches her leave his apartment, he comments through voice-over using machine imagery as a fatalistic device:

> ***Walter:*** *That was it, Keyes. The machinery had started to move and nothing could stop it.*

Later, when Walter learns that the husband has broken his leg and will not be able to make the trip during which he would be murdered, Walter believes that the 'fates' must have intervened on his behalf to save him. He explains in voice-over his feelings:

> ***Walter (voice-over):*** *After that a full week went by and I didn't see her once. I tried to keep my mind off the whole idea. I kept telling myself that maybe those fates they say watch over you had gotten together and broken his leg to give me a way out...*

Shortly, Walter receives a call from Phyllis that the time has been set and again through voice-over he informs the audience and Keyes what were his innermost thoughts:

> ***Walter (voice-over):*** *That was it, Keyes, and there was no use kidding myself any more. Those fates I was talking about had only been stalling me off. Now they had thrown the switch. The gears had meshed. The machinery had started to move and nothing could stop it...*

After the murder, their relationship deteriorates when Barton Keyes the insurance investigator begins to suspect that the accidental death of the husband was actually murder. After explaining to Walter how he believes the murder was committed, Keyes adapts and uses Walter's own earlier image of a trolley car ride going 'straight down the line' as his own metaphor for the path all criminals must take:

> ***Keyes:*** *There it is Walter...A murder's never perfect...They've committed a murder and that's not like taking a trolley car ride together where each one can get off at a different stop. They're stuck with each other. They've got to ride all the way to the end of the line. And it's a one-way trip, and the last stop is the cemetery.*

This image of road travel would again be invoked by Phyllis when Walter wants her not to sue the insurance company since she would have to testify in court and their whole plan would be exposed. Phyllis threatens Walter with his own words:

> ***Phyllis:*** *Yes. And nobody's pulling out. We went into it together, and we're coming out at the end together. It's straight down the line for both of us, remember.*

On the Road: Detour

Like the opening of *Double Indemnity*, and other Film Noir, Detour, *They Won't Believe Me*, and *Criss Cross* use the critical situation of the protagonist--a bum in a road side cafe wanted for a possible murder, on trial for murder, or about to commit a robbery--to draw the audience into the narrative. In Edgar Ulmer's low budget minor Noir classic *Detour*, the hapless confessional protagonist, Al Roberts, reflects while sitting in a roadside cafe about the events which entangled him in the suspicion of murdering a fellow traveler. Several times during his voice-overs he remarks how fate had intervened in his life as he hitch-hiked across country: "What could my life have been like if that car had just passed me on by?" As the film ends, he slowly walks down a darkened road just as a squad car stops and picks him up; his concluding voice-over returns again to fate's ability to strike anyone at any time:

> ***Roberts (Voice-over):*** *There is one thing I know. Some day a car will stop to pick be me up I never thumbed. Yes. Fate or some mysterious force can put the finger on you or me for no good reason at all.*

"The Truth, The Whole Truth..."

They Won't Believe Me

Irving Pichel's *They Won't Believe Me* uses a trial as a forum for the confessional protagonist, Lawrence Ballantine, to present to the jury how he is innocent of two murders. Unlike *High Sierra* and *Detour*, Ballantine's fate is already partially sealed in that the audience knows that the jury must render a verdict of either guilty or not guilty—Ballantine is already a fated individual and this knowledge acts as a connecting cable throughout the narrative. Again travel images are utilized as a fatalistic device:

> *-Day Sequence: Ext. highway CS-Ballantine pacing to left in FG-highway in BG-camera pans-*
>
> ***Ballantine (Voice-over):*** *On Monday the bus was late, but I didn't care. It was warm in the sunshine. I walked up and down for a while watching the cars pass on the highway.*
>
> *-Cars pass on highway-Ballantine pacing-camera panning following him-*
>
> ***Ballantine (voice-over):*** *I wondered how long it would take us to reach Reno. I had no way of knowing then that roads don't always go where you expect them to.*

Later, Ballantine leaves for South America to forget the suicide of his wife and to begin a new life; however, he meets an old lover, Janice Bell, and his voice-over reflects the alteration in his life this meeting will entail:

> *Day Sequence: Ext. veranda CS-Ballantine seated in FG at table at right-facing right BG-smoking-music-*

Ballantine(off): *Then one day at lunch in the hotel, fate opened a brand new deck of cards.*

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Fated Lovers: Criss Cross

Robert Siodmak's powerful Film Noir--only one of a distinguished opus of Noir works--is slightly different in its narrative matrix than the previous confessional works. The lengthy flashback in which the audience learns of Steve Thompson's (Burt Lancaster) past occurs while he is driving an armored truck which is being set up for a robbery--Thompson is the inside accomplice whom the robbers need to successfully heist the truck. As he drives toward the appointed robbery, Thompson reflects back on his tumultuous relationship with Anna and how she was ultimately the cause for his present predicament. His voice-over continually refers to images of being unable to alter the direction of travel: "From the beginning, it all went all one way."

In another pivotal scene, Thompson is in the Union Train Station checking schedules at the newsstand and his voice-over describes Film Noir's preoccupation with fate. When the clerk bends down in the stall, Thompson has an unobstructed view across the station and sees Anna standing waiting for a train. Thus, they are reunited and the situation progresses to its fatalistic denouement.

Thompson (voice-over): *If I hadn't been hanging around Union Station that day. If the clerk in the news stand hadn't picked that moment to run out of cigarettes... to reach down for a fresh pack..."*

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Dead Man Walking: DOA

In conclusion, it is appropriate to return to a Film Noir like *High Sierra* which is able to invoke a feeling of fatalism without the use of narrative voice-over. The most striking example of the fatalistic Film Noir frame tale and a work which is often viewed as the closing film of the classic Film Noir period is Rudolph Mate's *D.O.A.* (Dead on Arrival). Frank Bigelow (Edmund O'Brien) stumbles into a police station to report a murder: himself. The astonished police officers listen to his story narrated in a continual, non-voice-over flashback of how he was poisoned two days ago to prevent him from being a witness to the theft of nuclear material. Bigelow uncovers the plot, tracks down and kills his poisoner and is able to stagger to the police station to tell his story. As the narrative returns to the present, Bigelow remarks that he doesn't have long to live and then suddenly falls dead in the station; when the uniformed officer asks the sergeant how to file this case he replies, "File it, D.O.A."--the appropriate conclusion linking the final scene to the film's title and fatalistic theme.

D.O.A., is a total immersion into the story yet without benefit of any confessional voice-over narration to assist the viewer. The aura of fatalism and lack of alternatives which were developed in the trial atmosphere in *They Won't Believe Me* is very similar to that in *D.O.A.*,--Bigelow's death is ineluctable since he has been poisoned with a lethal radium toxin which has no antidote. The viewer knows this from the opening scenes and that *D.O.A.* cannot have a happy ending with the protagonist a 'dead man--walking' from the first scenes.

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In conclusion, the low-budget Film Noir made by second rate directors, 'B' actors, and usually placed at the bottom of the lobby card later became fertile areas for the French *auteur* film critics who mined them for counter-culture signs lurking under the American facade of optimism. This is especially true in the numerous and innovative ways in which the Film Noir demonstrated fatalism through a cute little dog's evil eyes, travel, machinery, and gambling images. The writers, directors, and producers of Film Noir at Paramount, RKO Radio Pictures, and United Artists were limited only by their imaginations in their ability to concertize difficult philosophical concepts and is only one more reason for naming the 1940s as the Golden Age of Hollywood. Without intention, the Film Noir of this period established an interdisciplinary bridge demonstrating the difficult concept of fatalism through imaginative and ingenious visual images and biting voice-over commentary.

ENDNOTES

1. Lewis Jacobs. *The Rise of the American Film.* (New York, 1939). p. 139.

2. George Bluestone. *Novels into Film.* (New York: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957) reprinted in *Film as Literature, Literature as Film.* edited by John Harrington (New York/Westport, Connecticut/London: The Greenwood Press, 1977) pp. 137-138.

3. Joy Gould Boyum. *Double Exposure: Fiction into Film.* (New York: New American Library, 1985) p. 14.

4. Leonard Quart and Albert Auster. *American Film and Society Since 1945.* (Second edition; New York/Westport, Connecticut/London: Praeger, 1991). p.25.

5. R.Barton Palmer. *Hollywood's Dark Cinema: The American Film Noir.* (New York:Twayne Publishers, 1994.) p. 34.

6. Bruce Crowther. *Film Noir: Reflections in a Dark Mirror.* (New York: Continuum Press, 1989) p. 14.

7. Paul Schrader. "Notes on Film Noir." (*Film Comment*, volume 8 Number 1, Spring 1972). p 11.

8. Kaja Silverman. "Dis-Embodying the Female Voice" in *Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism* edited by Mary Ann Doane, Patricia Mellenkamp, and Linda Williams. (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1984) p. 134.

One Scholar's Diary

Kelichiro Yamamoto

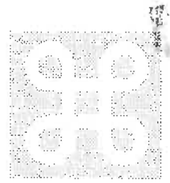
November 18, 1948

Today, I had only two classes to teach at my university. In one of these classes, a student sitting in the third row raised his right hand, saying, "Is there any reason to learn this subject?" This really made me upset. I tried to understand what the student was implying. Gazing at the student's eyes, I understood he had an eye for the subject that I have taught for twenty six years and that it was meaningless to him. At that moment, he, the student, denied my life. My life! I have studied for this subject since, I guess, I was an adolescent. Not only is this subject the only one that interests me, but I have spent my life learning and teaching it. But he denied that! Since we are "Dasein" mentioned by Heidegger, or should I borrow the term from Sartre's play *No Exit*, which I watched when I visited France, "It is truism that we, human, can neither live forever nor escape from reality. Reality is there. If God is defined as an immortal and perfect being who created our universe, then we are in the opposite of that." We are the ones who are tiny, limited and frail "Dasein." I have created my distance limited but freely as Jules Lequyer stated. For me, I have tried to live the life I was given as hard as I can. Alas! My life of teaching this subject was contradicted by one student. Like looking down from the mountain top, the student observed my existence as though it had been a tiny object on the ground. Yet what about the thought that I can see the student from the mountain top as if I were God?

My wife brought me a cup of coffee at the usual time, eleven o'clock. How about our love? Inasmuch as I am not quite sure what love is, I thought ours might be so-called love, I do not know. Nevertheless, is that meaningless? No, since we have been together for twenty-one years and our life has been here, it must not be meaningless. It is not possible for us that our married life is set foot into the black hall. There is no such a thing in which is meaningless! The sun, the world and the universe! I, the student, and people whom I will never meet! Philosophers who have sought the thing that never was sought! I am not capable of denying those. Never. . .

It seems to me that earlier it had been snowing outside for a short while. I love winter because it makes me feel sad--and eager to wait for warm spring. Ancient people needed to explain these natural phenomenon by creating Myth. Now that our science can designate reasons for these phenomenon, it probably seems inadequate to think that those myths make good reasoning. Yet those who were living in that time needed it. The fact that there was to be no God was necessary for Nietzsche. On the other hand, in Pragmatic view, existence of God is something necessary for some people to have faith in if and only if it produces "cash value." In this situation, moral meanings in life is given to them. In other words, believing in God in a religious sense may make some people's life meaningful since they must come to think of what is moral value among humankind. Perhaps these minds are satisfied in fulfilling their moral code. By means of Pragmatism, nevertheless, is it possible that value comes to be thought of as a measurement of things; "by using a coffee spoon," as stated by T.S. Eliot? I do not know. I do not know unless I examine my idea to see whether or not it is correct.

I know the reason, but I do not know the reason. Contradiction? Yes, the sentence is contradiction. Ah, does learning things in the world mean narrowing down our thought, like Dr. Faust? Yet if Dr. Faust's conclusion must be correct, James's pragmatism, in part, has the possibility to deliver mistake to us? I, even if I have been a scholar, am afraid of being ignorant and want to know everything, as much as I possibly can. Socrates! You knew that about 2300 years ago. 2300 years! One thing I can assert is there is no such a thing as meaninglessness. Even what the student said to me is, likewise, meaningful. This might be the opposite position to the novel written by that French man recently. Well, those are my opinions and should be my subjectivity. I need objectivity as well. Since I have three classes to teach tomorrow, I had better go to sleep. Yet there is one more thing that I have to write in my diary so I do not forget--Can the student deny the subject?



This piece originally appeared in the May 7, 1996 edition of *The Collegio*.

Sovereignty over ants

Boundaries confine human understanding

Chuck Lee

Last weekend while brushing my teeth in front of the bathroom mirror, I noticed a little black ant crawling down the side of the mirror. Let's call this ant Pat. Marching from the mirror to the wall and down the carpet, Pat headed for the shower. While she struggled over the desert of yarn, I wondered what she was doing in my house. I figured she must be a scout on a quest for a food source; she would return to her hill and lead others in her family to it. Pat would neither expect nor receive special recognition for her deed, it was her job. I admired her dedication and dexterity as she climbed through soap scum on my shower door, towards the ceiling. Pat's curving, lithe body, tiny legs and antennas fascinated me.

However, before I was able to get emotionally attached to her, my ego reared its big head and demanded Pat to recognize me as her superior. Here she was roaming my house scrounging for food and upon finding some, she would bring more of her kind into my home. More importantly she had not taken any noticeable interest in my presence. This I could not stand for, so I set off after Pat, the ant scout.

I closed in on her, eyeing her vertical progression up the semi-clear shower door. I cornered her with my fingers, demanding her to recognize my existence. I yelled at her about trespassing, home privacy and informed her of my right to destroy her for entering my domain. Once Pat discovered enough space to break free, she squirmed by my finger and continued up the door. Her apathy toward my rights only justified my superiority. Obviously she was an ignorant lesser being that could not communicate in any civilized manner. My admiration for Pat had quickly turned to contempt. However, I was still willing to diffuse our conflict through compromise.

My idea was to relocate Pat somewhere outside of my home where she could continue to look for food. So, I began negotiations while I corralled her between my fingers. This time I did not leave her any room to squirm away. The unfortunate result of the relocation was not my fault. Pat's actions became unpredictable and violent. She refused to compromise, turning every which way until she fell to her death.

I was innocent; after all, she had invaded my home. I was simply protecting my interests. Besides, I was here first and how could it possibly be my fault that Pat could not communicate properly? I was innocent as I washed her broken body down the drain. Behind me, through a very small crack near the mirror, another ant named Amigo had witnessed the entire episode. Mournfully, he returned to his ant hill and reported the bad news to his family. Amigo said, "Humans have still not learned from their history, perhaps tomorrow."

The World as God's Body:

A Comparison of Ramanuja and Charles Hartshorne

Rebecca Viney

The idea of viewing the world as God's body is not new. It is at least as old as Plato. Plato pictured the universe as a divine body with a divine soul. Plato's view had two gods. The Demiurge was the purely eternal God, creator of all eternal things. The World Soul was a creation of the Demiurge and included all non-eternal entities (Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 53). Daniel Dombrowski's view is that the World-Soul and the Demiurge are actually two aspects of the same deity. The idea of viewing the world as God's body is much discussed from a variety of religious and philosophical perspectives, from Ramanuja's Hinduism (Julius Lipner) to Plato (Daniel Dombrowski) to Christianity (Grace Jantzen, Sallie McFague, Thomas Tracy), including Mormonism (David Paulsen). Charles Hartshorne has long held this view, at least since 1941 (in *Man's Vision of God*), and he contrasted his view with that of Ramanuja in 1953 (in *Philosophers Speak of God*). Hartshorne says in *Philosophers Speak of God* that the closest parallel to his views in Western philosophy is Plato and the closest parallel in Eastern philosophy is Ramanuja (188).

In speaking of the world as God's body, we can use the parent/child analogy, but as the American philosopher Charles Hartshorne points out, this has limitations. We shouldn't compare God to the father and the creatures to children. The father has no physical connection with the child at all during gestation and none after birth. Even the mother/child analogy is poor because although theirs is closer than father/child, the fetus is still an entity unto itself, albeit a parasitic entity. And once the child is born, the connection is completely severed (Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 54).

A better analogy is the mind/body or soul/body connection. Hartshorne does not accept the soul/body analogy since he does not believe that we have eternal souls. This is not to say that Hartshorne does not believe in minds. In his cell/body analogy, he uses the example of the effect the mind has on the body and vice versa: "Between our experiences and our central nervous systems, there is no further mediating mechanism. How we feel and how certain nerve cells act depend somehow directly on each other" (*Omnipotence*, 55). This is how we act upon God and how God acts upon us--directly, not via other creatures. The analogy with which Hartshorne is happiest is the cell/body connection. This gives him the close association he wants without having to answer questions about the existence of souls.

Ramanuja, a Tamil Brahmin from South India (1017-1137 CE; Lipner 1) espoused the mind/body or soul/body analogy. Ramanuja believed three things are real. These are (1) matter, (2) souls, and (3) God (Brahman). Matter and souls are completely dependent upon God. They are God's body and God holds them together in unity as their Soul. Matter and souls are substances in themselves, but are also attributes of God (Sharma 346). In *The Face of Truth*, Julius Lipner suggests the image of God as both the pot and the clay (83). This analogy would have been acceptable to Ramanuja. He defined a body as that which is controlled, supported, and utilized by a soul for the soul's purposes, just as a potter molds and creates a pot for his purposes, and God controls, supports, and utilizes us for His purposes (Sharma 346). The matter and souls that make up God's body are eternal but ever-changing. This, however, has no effect on God, who, although immanent in the world as controller, is transcendent of it. Sharma explains Ramanuja's stance: "Hence God is the unchanging controller of all change, and the limitations of matter as well as the miseries and imperfections of the finite souls do not affect the essence of God" (348).

It isn't clear what Ramanuja means by *essence*. Does he mean the *existence* of God or God's *actuality*, i.e. how God's existence is actualized? How can the world have no effect upon God if the world is God's body? (Hartshorne, *Philosophers*, 189).

Ramanuja gives us the answer by way of analogy between our bodies and our True Souls (as opposed to our empirical souls). The changes in our bodies have no effect upon our True Souls. Because of *karma* and ignorance, we wrongly identify ourselves with our bodies, but upon release from our bodies, all knowledge is open to our True Souls, which are unchanging through eternity. Ramanuja might have agreed with St. Paul who wrote, "For now we see in a mirror darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood" (I Corinthians 13:12). Though my soul is an attribute of God, it is spiritual and real. It is "an eternal point of spiritual light . . . beyond creation and destruction" (Sharma 350). St. Paul also calls to mind a relevant comparison of the world as God's body in Acts 17:28 where he addresses the Athenians and quotes Epimenides, "In him we live, move, and have our being."

In keeping with his soul/body analogy, Ramanuja compares the eternal succession of cosmic epochs with God (Brahman) breathing in and breathing out. God is both cause and effect of the universe. If we picture God in the stage of inhalation, this is cause. There exists at this stage matter without form and unembodied souls. As God exhales, the matter takes form, the souls are embodied according to their karmas, and the universe takes shape. This is God as effect (Sharma 348).

Ramanuja tries to reconcile the free will of the creatures with God's omnipotence. God is the controller of *karma*, but the individual souls have free will. The free will that Ramanuja ascribes to the creatures can only be the ability to act free of constraint. We are not physically constrained from doing what we will, and in that sense we are free. But we are *not* free in the sense that the *karma* of our past decisions (which God controls) determines the choices which we make. We have free will only within limits.

Hartshorne shares some of Ramanuja's views. The two philosophers agree that the world is God's body, and, as such, the creatures have an inseparable, vital relationship with God. For Hartshorne, God may exist without any particular creature. Thus, God exists whether or not you or I exist. However, you or I cannot exist without God. There is a one-to-many relationship in both views--one God, many creatures, yet God is all-inclusive. There simply is nothing outside of God. They also agree that God and the world are necessary (the actuality of the world is not necessary but the existence is), but Ramanuja's world, which changes, has no effect on God. Hartshorne strongly disagrees with this view. The idea of a God who is unsympathetic to the world is anathema to him.

Hartshorne's view is based on a cell/body analogy rather than soul/body. For Hartshorne, our immortality is found rather in God's perfect memory. The really big differences in Hartshorne's and Ramanuja's views come in (1) God's omnipotence and (2) God's immutability. Ramanuja seems to hold what Hartshorne calls a "tyrant view of God" (Hartshorne, *Omnipotence*, 11). We have free will, but not really. We are not constrained, but God controls us through the accumulated *karma* of our decisions. Hartshorne prefers to speak of God's power as persuasion. We have free will, but God attempts to persuade us to do what is right and moral. The pain and outrage that we feel in sympathy with others is God's pain and outrage on a smaller scale. Secondly, Ramanuja's God, whose body is the changing world, remains unchanged by the world. We find a more appealing view of God in Hartshorne--a God who suffers and rejoices along with the creatures. As Hartshorne says, "Hurt my cells and you hurt me" (*Omnipotence*, 80). Analogously, hurt the world and you hurt God.

By way of comparison and contrast, I include the following table.

	Ramanuja		Hartshorne
1.	The world is God's body.	1.	The world is God's body.
2.	Soul/body analogy.	2.	Cell/body analogy.
3.	Individual souls have an intimate, inseparable, organic relation to God.	3.	Cells (world) have an intimate, inseparable, organic relation to the body (God).
4.	Our souls are eternal, and, when liberated, will know God.	4.	We do not have eternal souls, but achieve immortality in God's perfect memory (Hartshorne 110).
5.	God knows the individual souls, but they, though changing, have no effect upon God--God is immutable.	5.	God knows us and is affected and changed by this knowledge (Viney 29). Just as we are affected by pain to our bodies, God is affected by pain to us (Hartshorne 61-62).
6.	One-to-many relation. One God, many individual souls. God is all-inclusive.	6.	One-to-many relation. One God (body) and many creatures (cells). God is all-inclusive.
7.	Individual souls have free will within limitations of karma which God controls.	7.	God's power is persuasion, not tyranny (Hartshorne 10).
8.	God is necessary, and the world is necessary, even though it is ever-changing.	8.	God and the world are necessary (Viney 37). The world is eternal though changing (Viney 87).

This author finds Hartshorne's view the more appealing one but for one point, that our souls are not immortal. However, if Hartshorne is correct, being an eternal memory in God's consciousness is still immortality in some respect and preferable to total extinction.

Any belief in God is a step in the right direction, for a belief that there is no God invites despair and a lack of aim toward a meaningful existence. Likewise, the belief that God created the world and then abandoned it to its own devices (good or evil) and the belief that God completely determines the direction of our lives can leave us in a wasteland of hopelessness. Ramanuja and Hartshorne offer attractive alternatives to these views: that God does exist; that

God is still with us in an intimate connectedness; that God is good and prefers the good for the creatures but lets them make their own decisions; that God is affected in meaningful ways by what the creatures do; and that in some way the creatures will live on after death, either with God in soul or as an integral part of God's self.

ENDNOTES

Dombrowski, Daniel A. Analytic Theism, Hartshorne, and the Concept of God. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996. [Chapter 3 is entitled "divine Embodiment" and compares Hartshorne's views with the idea of "limited divine embodiment" in William Alston and Richard Swinburne. Dombrowski does not mention Ramanuja. There is also an illuminating discussion of Plato's theology.]

Hartshorne, Charles. *Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism*. Chicago: Willett Clark & Co.,
1941. [See especially page 185, "The World Is God's Body."]

. . . *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984.

. . . *Philosophers Speak of God*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953. [See especially pages 177-178, 186-189 where Hartshorne discusses Ramanuja's views. David Tracy calls the existence/actuality distinction made on page 189 "Hartshorne's discovery" and Hartshorne wrote, "I rather hope to be remembered for this distinction" (*Existence and Actuality: Conversations with Charles Hartshorne*, edited by John B. Cobb, Jr. and Franklin I. Gamwell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984, page 75).]

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show that thinking about the world as God's body is a tenable option for Christians. See also Donald Wayne Viney's review of this book in *Process Studies*, 16/1 (Spring 1987): 61-
63.]

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Paulsen, David L. "The Doctrine of Divine Embodiment: Restoration, Judeo-Christian, and Philosophical Perspectives," *BYU Studies*, 35/4 (1995-96): 7-94. [Paulsen canvasses the early literature of the Church fathers, recent philosophical literature, and the writings of Joseph Smith. Mormon theology accepts the concept of divine embodiment, though not in the sense of either Hartshorne or Ramanuja. For Mormons, God has a body *within* the universe.]

Sharma, Chandradhar. *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. London: Rider, 1960.

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Viney, Donald W. *Charles Hartshorne and the Existence of God*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985.

Wainwright, William J. "God's Body," *The Concept of God*, edited by Thomas V. Morris. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987: 72-87. [Wainwright mentions both Hartshorne and Ramanuja (page 72) and he discusses Hartshorne's views.]

Wisteria: A Sumi Japanese Painting Through Zen Buddist Meditation

CATATONIC

James Parker

floating freely, never sinking, swelling with the cooling breeze.
ocean drifts carry forward, dreams of lands and tales untold.
mind to drifts on own accord, no restriction, no constraint, no forewarning, just letting go.

thoughts float freely, without meaning, flowering thoughts explaining the world,
philosophy once was my profession,
now i can not explain my own words?

"Momma, can he hear me?"

little children truly see,
the light and the life, the dreams that are dreamed.
it's truth not fiction,
life not fantasy.

"Mom, does he understand, does he see me standing here?"

"Yes, he knows, he's probably dreaming…"

"Dreaming dreams of oceans bold!"

"Yes, he's dreaming, dreaming dreams of oceans bold and blue, dancing waves and cresting tides."

yes, i'm dreaming. dreaming of life-long truths once forgotten, of seas and oceans, life's sweet song.

yes, i'm dreaming, but for once I wish these dreams would let me alone.

does the match light for me

Chuck Lee

Does the match light for me
as your slick silver lighter shoots off your knee

Sparks and a flame
to hit
your mannerism of addiction

Red, blue, white with brown
cardboard casing of 250 large kitchen matches
to heat the Earth tomorrow

I blow out the encased
by a vase candle
and light it again

Under the fluorescent kitchen light
that swings
rocking the fiery-pink seventies kitchen table
to sleep by hypnosis
and the earthquakes of my pencil
bring it back to manufactured life.

Faces & Hats

James Parker

chameleon Green, chameleon White,
Changing in the Shifting light.
singing here, dancing there,
sowing stories everywhere.

chameleon Green, chameleon White,
Changing in the Shifting light.
What am I?
That depends on you,
sad to say, but yes it's true.

Becoming this, becoming that.
Shifting, Changing,
wearing Hats.
A piece of me within them all,
SCREAMING, BAnginG on the wall.

"LET ME OUT!"
"Let ME in,"
a LITTLE voice from within

It's getting dimmer as the years go past,
the little voice amongst the hats.
I only wish that one could see, that of the Hats,
NONE are ME!

I am the voice deep down inside,
I am the voice that tried to hide,
Tried to hide for fear of loss,
so myself I gave a toss, and now in the hats I must reside.

chameleon Green, chameleon White,
He changes in the Shifting light.
Deep down inside he's really there,
Chameleon behind the hat he wears.

THOUGHT

James Parker

In my mind words trail endlessly, teetering carelessly on edge of conscious thought.
Holding hands the chain follows like lemmings to the sea.
Up the hill, though the narrow valley of life, into the pasture of imagination.

Vibrant colors tease the words, dancing rhythmically under no control.

Taunted by the awaiting reality, up and over the hill.

Tottering on edge of conscious thought, a few fall,
only to flow through ink.
The gap closes, the procession proceeds.

Through thicket of confusion, dense wood of hate and fear, to happiness and exhaultation of pure imagination.

Untitled

Chuck Lee

Four-toed footprints in the sand
Lord, our Lord
with the cross-toed man
walked the beach of life
Four-toed footprints in the sand.

Vita's Window

Chuck Lee

Someone made me and someone made this place
someone made me stare out this window space

racing cars outside people compelled to move
out past the window hooked on a groove

some are women there are also men
we make up the people that conduct sin

my window is cluttered with signs, letters, and numbers
however, no sign signifies who erected this view of slumber

a sign is information, and I'm told info is power
so I collect these signs they cling to my walls they hang with the spiders

signs with symbols for producers and consumers
fantasy pictures that may even cause tumors

signs designating disjunction between men and women
as sure as I am sitting here that distinction is clear

I want my own sign, large enough for all the people
in all those cars just driving by my window to see.

it would say me, I stopped driving by
sitting by this window I am alive inside

The Contributors

About the Contributors. . .

Cover Art

Michelle Bachand is a junior Art Therapy major. She recently won first prize in the *Cow Creek Review* art contest.

Introduction

Jennifer Janak is a junior English Education major. She has been a member of the PSU Philosophical Society for three years and is currently the president of the Society.

Aaron Bruenger is a senior English Education major. He has been a member of the PSU Philosophical Society for three years and currently holds the office of vice-president of the Society.

Articles

Dr. Larry Ranney has been an instructor at PSU in the Department of English since 1991. He received his Ph.D. in Comparative Arts last May at Ohio University. He was formerly a Major in the Army Infantry. This March Dr. Ranney presented two papers, "Westward the Wagons: Vardis Fisher and John Ford's Vision of the Mormon Westward Trek" and "Colts and Winchesters: A Historical Overview of Inaccurate Firearms in American Western Film," at the conference of American Frontier in Mythology and Literature held in Colorado Springs. Dr. Ranney is planning to participate in a reinactment of the Mormons' historical journey along the Oregon Trail. He will be walking with the group for 200 miles from North Platte, NE to Scotts Bluff, NE.

Keiichiro Yamamoto attended PSU from the fall of 1995 to the fall of 1996. He was a member of the Society for a year and a half. He has returned to his home in Japan and is continuing his studies in Philosophy.

Rebecca Viney transferred to PSU from the University of Oklahoma in 1984. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1986 and a Master of Arts degree in 1987, both in English. She also has a Bachelor of Arts degree in geography which she received in 1993. She has taught part time in the English Department at PSU and now holds the position of departmental secretary.

Layout & Design

James Parker is a senior Biology major at PSU with minors in Physical Science and Chemistry. He has been a member of the PSU Philosophical Society for one year. He has been accepted to KU Medical School and will attend in the fall. James' poetry and artwork is also included in this edition.

Artwork

Dr. Sandra Ranney was formerly the Art Historian at PSU in the Department of Art from 1990-1996. This fall she gave a talk about Grant Wood and Vardis Fisher to the Arkansas Philological Society at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR. While there, she hosted a session concerning the utilization of technology in the classroom.

Poetry

Chuck Lee was a senior Social Science major at PSU. He was also the chief editor of the campus newspaper, the *Collegio*. He died Monday, August 12, 1996, at his home in Overland Park, Kansas.

Dale Warkentien is a junior at PSU seeking his Bachelor of Art degrees in Literature and Creative Writing. He is also a Philosophy minor. Dale holds the offices of Fund Raising Chair and Editor of the *Cow Creek Review*, the English Department's Literary Magazine. He recently won first prize in the Sigma Tau Delta poetry contest for his poem "A Quarter-Pounder With Cheese." He is presenting a paper "Can You Spell Technology" at the National Writing Centers Association Conference being held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania April 17-29. He works as a tutor in the Writing Center.

Advisor

Dr. Donald Viney has taught philosophy at PSU since 1984 and has been the faculty advisor to the PSU Philosophical Society since the society's inception in 1987.