

it is characterized here. Also, Thomas Aquinas's doctrine of creation is every bit as strong as the pancreationism recommended by Clouser, with this difference: Aquinas thought creation was not just a matter of belief, but could be established by natural reason. This brings me to my second point. It does not seem to me that all ideas about what is self-existent (what I would call metaphysical rather than religious principles) are equally unjustifiable, and this for the very reasons Clouser mentions. The reductionist positions which he criticizes all lead to incoherence, whether self-referential, self-assumptive, or self-performative. Only a view of reality which lets reality speak in all its many aspects can avoid these incoherences. When reality is allowed to speak this way, it shows itself to be absolutely dependent on God the creator.—Montague Brown, *Saint Anselm College, Manchester, N.H.*

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DENNETT, Daniel C. *Consciousness Explained*. Illustrated by Paul Weiner. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991. xiii + 511. \$27.95—Dennett aims to develop an empirical, scientifically respectable theory of human consciousness—one that demystifies the mind by showing how the various phenomena that compose consciousness “are all physical effects of the brain’s activities” (p. 16). The model of consciousness as “Cartesian theater,” where “a light-and-sound show is presented to a solitary but powerful audience, the Ego or Central Executive” (p. 227), is to be replaced by a “multiple drafts” model of consciousness. Consciousness is not a single narrative, with an author of record, but rather the gappy product of many processes of interpretation in the brain (p. 94).

Dennett’s theory closes in on consciousness from “above” and “below.” From above, the theorist begins with a subject’s “heterophenomenology.” From below, the theorist studies underlying mechanisms in the brain. A subject’s heterophenomenological world is the theorist’s third-person description of the world as it seems to the subject (the world according to Garp; Sherlock Holmes’s London). The theorist relates the objects of the resulting heterophenomenological world to events going on in the subject’s brain at the time (p. 407). Whether or not the deliverances of introspection are true is an empirical matter, to be determined by whether or not portrayed objects bear a striking resemblance to the “real goings-on in people’s brains” (p. 85). (It is hard to see what in the brain could even count as bearing a striking resemblance to the notion of Santa Claus expressed by “I just can’t stop thinking about Santa Claus.”)

The multiple drafts model of consciousness is supposed to solve, or dissolve, the traditional philosophical puzzles of consciousness. Dennett acutely sets out the traditional puzzles, and meets some of them head-on: on his model, there is no inner display, no “Boss neuron,” no qualia. In other cases, however, it is unclear how Dennett thinks that his view addresses the philosophical problems that he so vividly

lays out. For example, an initially compelling reason for dualism, he says, is an intuition that nothing in the brain could “hate racism, love someone, be a source of mattering” (p. 33). Yet even if dualism is untenable, I do not see how Dennett’s overall argument either shows that the intuition is false or gives a mechanistic account of the intuition itself.

Dennett speaks of events of content-fixation in the brain (p. 365). This is the point at which Dennett’s theory of consciousness must be joined with his theory of intentionality, developed elsewhere. Despite Dennett’s cryptic remarks, it is not obvious how the pieces are supposed to fit together. Is a person in a “contentful” state in virtue of content-fixing events in his brain, as suggested here, or in virtue of patterns of gross observable behavior, as Dennett’s intentional-stance theory implies?

*Consciousness Explained* is written for a general intellectual audience, not just for specialists in philosophy or the cognitive sciences. (For philosophers and scientists, Dennett provides two extremely short technical appendices, which raise more questions than they answer.) To induce the reader to think about consciousness from an exclusively third-person, materialist perspective, Dennett employs surveys of scientific literature, thought experiments, analogies, “just-so” stories, and other devices. The book brims with provocative suggestions—such as the idea of the self as a “center of narrative gravity”—that others may want to develop (or refute) in detail.

This book is vintage Dennett. On the one hand, it is too swash-buckling for those with a taste for close argument; on the other hand, it is stimulating and suggestive, full of clever turns, and enjoyable to read.—Lynne Rudder Baker, *University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and Middlebury College.*

DILMAN, Ilham. *Philosophy and the Philosophical Life: A Study in Plato’s Phaedo*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992. xii + 139 pp. \$45.00—The *Phaedo* is usually taken to be among Plato’s metaphysically richest dialogues. Dilman argues that, at best, the views of Plato’s Socrates are here free of the taint of metaphysics, or that worthwhile, non-metaphysical theses are propounded alongside metaphysical ones. In these cases, Dilman attempts to separate out “Socrates’ spiritual and moral perceptions” from the metaphysical claims. The latter are “a mystification of the grammar of the language in which such perceptions are expressed” (p. x). Dilman’s objection to such metaphysical theses is Wittgensteinian. When philosophy goes beyond the attempt to articulate the role that a certain discourse plays in our form of life and, instead, attempts to provide some philosophical justification or explanation for our form of life, it degenerates into incoherence. Such language ceases to “do work” and is then “idling.”

Dilman interprets Socrates’ arguments for the soul’s indestructibility as investigations of the grammar of the language that Socrates