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Transparency and Vision

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Abstract

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Heidegger, Zhuangzi and the Quest for Originary Thinking

For the ancient Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi, words deceive humanity through their allure and grandeur, obscuring the true nature of reality. While words are reliant on thinking to express their content, thinking is not limited to words alone. Originary thinking for Zhuangzi can only take place when words have been transformed into their silent, non-word form. In the West, Martin Heidegger also blamed words for the preponderance of thoughtlessness plaguing the world. The world, Heidegger opines, has become too calculative in its mindset; what is needed is a return to the meditative. In addition to exploring how words incapacitate authentic thought, this paper will also discuss how releasing words of their self-attachment creates a clearing within which the question of being can be properly asked anew, and what is to be gained in doing so.

I am Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. I am the author of *Zhuangzi and the Becoming of Nothingness* (SUNY 2019), and editor of *Daoist Encounters with Phenomenology: Thinking Interculturally about Human Existence* (forthcoming, Bloomsbury), and editor of *The Dao Companion to Neo-Daoism* (forthcoming, Springer). My work largely deals with topics in metaphysics, phenomenology, and hermeneutics.

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Reimagining Sexual Ethics: Consent, Self-regard, and Reciprocity (Part I)

In this paper we explore the relationship between recognition, sexual self-regard, and reciprocity in the context of normative heterosexuality. We treat the work of Ann Cahill and Nicola Gavey as recent examples of productive attempts to move beyond a narrow and restrictive focus on consent as a means of thinking through the ethics of heterosexual sex. Both theorists focus on how dominant cultural discourses of male and female sexuality provide “scaffolding” for rape and other forms of non-reciprocal sex by encouraging women to perceive unwanted and coercive sexual encounters as normal and routine; as ‘just sex.’ In our paper we aim to build on this framework through a consideration of what genuinely reciprocal and ethical sex between men and women might entail. As part of this discussion we reflect critically on the concept of mutual recognition in heterosexual relationships and the virtues it calls upon. In particular, we focus on how collective imaginings of what it is to treat others with honour, dignity, and respect are implicitly gendered, and carry different weight and meaning for sexed subjects. If appeals to recognition are to be genuinely emancipatory for women, we argue, then they must involve a commitment to scrutinizing and reimagining what it is to ‘respect’ and ‘honour’ female heterosexual subjectivity. In the final part of the paper, we examine and defend the cultivation of sexual self-regard among heterosexual women as a habitual, embodied, intersubjective, and institutionally-supported practice of caring for the self that demands challenges to, and shifts within, multiple imaginaries and (in)sensibilities that cluster to support damaging norms of sexual conduct between men and women.

Dr. Millicent Churcher is a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Sydney. Millicent’s research interests include the early modern sentimentalist philosophy of Adam Smith, as well as contemporary studies on empathy, affect, and institutions in relation to social (in)justice.

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Transparency and Vision

Transparency is crucial to vision. Once the lived experience of transparency is established the ends of vision can be explored.

Transparency can be understood with an examination of water and of the human eye.

That is, water can be nothing but transparent because it makes up a large part of the ocular tissue.

Thus, the eye is the part of the body that allows transparency, and the transparency of water, to be visually embodied in human experience.

This type of sensory transparency is identified not to avoid and objectify the other scientifically.

The ends of minds seeking each other within the transparent means available to them; through the senses, through language and through the body is the goal of this examination.

That is, presence and absence are often discussed as crucial to our experience of the world.

To identify them as familiar and not alien encounters, familiar presences and familiar absences, a discussion of transparency is paramount.

This familiarity will be examined in the context of accounts from people with limited vision, time and again seeking the other to give vision its epistemological and ontological significance.

This paper will also discuss encounters and recollections of people from the fringe. People without any eyesight, and limited other senses, such as Helen Keller, but where the transparent qualities of mind has enabled them to engage emphatically with the other.

Conclusion: The ends of minds seeking each other within transparent ways of knowing is familiar because it is our shared lived experience.

Tommy Cleary is honorary fellow of the Australian Health Services Research Institute.