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Abstracts

Time and Love: Plato, Freud and Levinas

Hagi Kenaan

My talk grows out of a reading of Levinas' phenomenology of love, developed in the last part of his *Totality and Infinity*. Whereas in his later writing Levinas turns to non-preferential love (*Agape*) as a model for his ethical philosophy, in *Totality and Infinity* the question of *Eros* is still intertwined with the question of ethics. In this context, the uniqueness of love as a human relationship is explained in terms of an extraordinary temporal experience that love opens up. For Levinas, this experience allows the lover to break away and transcend the chronological structure of time and thus to introduce ALTERITY into the encounter with the other person. In my talk, I shall explain this understanding by reading Levinas against the background of two -- oppositional -- views with which he is in dialogue: Plato's position on love and transcendence (in the *Symposium*) and Freud's position on love and transience (in "On Transience").

***Sub specie aeternitatis* :Spinoza on the Eternity of the Mind**

Noa Naaman-Zauderer

In Part 5 of the *Ethics*, Spinoza asserts that we can conceive singular things as actual in two ways: “either insofar as we conceive them to exist in relation to a certain time and place,” and thus *sub specie durationis*, or “insofar as we conceive them to be contained in God and to follow from the necessity of the divine nature” that is, *sub specie aeternitatis* (5p29s). While denying the reality of time qua a certain determinate measure of duration, Spinoza acknowledges the reality of duration as the “indefinite continuation of existing” [2def5] of any singular thing, which constitutes that thing's *conatus* or unique actual essence.

In my presentation, I will explain this two-dimensional conception of existence through a discussion of Spinoza's most enigmatic and notorious doctrine of the mind's eternity in the last section of the *Ethics*. I will place special emphasis on Spinoza's challenging assertions that “we feel and know by experience that we are eternal” (5p23s), and will explain how in experiencing itself *sub specie aeternitatis*, the mind may transcend its own finitude and partake, in some sense, in the ultimate freedom and eternity of God.

The experience of Change and Self-Knowledge:

Bergson and Husserl

Yaron Senderowicz

By the ‘experience of change’ I refer here to the most basic aspect of conscious perceptual or perceptual like experience that includes both the awareness of a change of an *object*, the awareness of *the change of the experiencer's mental states* by which he/she refers to the changing object, *and* the awareness of the *passage* of time. When I am consciously seeing, say, that a man is walking, I am directly conscious of *him* as constantly changing his position in space – as *moving* from one place to another place – I am indirectly or implicitly aware of my *experience* of seeing his movement as a change that takes place in my *experience*, and I am aware of the *passage of time*. It seems that when human being are concerned, it is not possible to be *perceptually conscious* of the first aspect of the experience of change, i.e., the movement of the *object*, without being conscious of the change that takes place in my mental states and of the *flow of time*.

My intention in this presentation is to compare Bergson and Husserl's closely related and nevertheless different accounts of this unified phenomenon. I begin by examining Bergson's account of the experience of change as implying the *simplicity* of change (or duration), the heterogeneity of the temporal multiplicity (in contrast to the homogeneity of space) and the interpenetrability of the temporal multiplicity. I explain why self-consciousness is his paradigm for the experience of change. I then clarify why Bergson's account that underscores the first-person consciousness of change is nevertheless *unable* to account for the *objectivity of change* because he blurs the differences between the three levels of the experience of change. I then show how Husserl's differentiation of the three levels of time consciousness, that also underscores the role of self-knowledge in it, can account for the awareness of an *objective* temporal position that nevertheless leaves out an important characteristic of subjective experience. I end by presenting a brief sketch of a possible unification of the two positions.

Language, Objectivity and Social Recognition: Towards a Pragmatist Theory of Expertise

Roberto Gronda

Social problem-solving is one of the most pressing issues of our time: the growing influence of science and technology on our ways of life makes the understanding of scientific and technological problems and opportunities more and more relevant for an effective social and political deliberation. Yet, the deference to scientific experts is widely perceived as a major threat to our democratic societies. The goal of any sound theory of expertise is, therefore, that of balancing the need for expert judgment with the legitimate demand by the citizens of participating in the deliberative process. In my presentation I will firstly introduce some pragmatist concepts (inquiry, public, situation), with the purpose of clarifying the difference between scientific activity and scientific expertise. Then I will argue that scientific expertise is a form of social recognition, and highlight the peculiar structure of public inquiry. Finally, I will outline the notion of "expressive objectivity". The basic idea is that the objectivity of public deliberation concerning scientific and technological issues has also to do with the expressive resources of the language by which the deliberative process is conducted: a public deliberation can be acknowledged as objective if the values and concerns of all the participants in the inquiry are formulable in its language.