

INTRODUCTION

This issue of *Ethical Perspectives* is characterized by critical but discursive philosophy – our authors each explicitly approach the philosophy of another in an attempt to find its limit, and to offer a solution of how best to deal with this limit. As such, this issue features what at first glance is an eclectic group of thinkers: Sigmund Freud, Thomas Christiano, Bernard Williams, Jeremy Waldron, and John Paul II. But what unites these all is the approach our authors take toward them, a constructive approach aiming at tackling some issue present in these thinkers in a way not alien to the thinkers themselves.

Thomas Brooks begins with a reply to Thomas Christiano, who defends the principle of equal consideration of interests in his conception of justice, set within a theory of democratic equality. Brooks concludes that Christiano's position fails to meet his intentions, since Christiano's belief in minimal competency means that not all interests can in fact be considered equal; a theory of competency implies some ethical actors will be judged incompetent, and thus unequal. But, as Brooks suggest, if the standards of competency are justly applied, then the democratic inequality that Christiano de facto defends then need not be unjust, and democracy can be politically equal for all the competent, thus justifying what is nevertheless an unequal consideration of interests.

Joseph Okumu is in dialogue with Bernard Williams and his views of the relation between person identity and morality, a relation which Okumu does not see as explicitly spelled out within the works of Williams. Tracing this relation himself, Okumu argues that the very notion of morality that Williams wishes to defend depends completely on his ideas of personal identity, since William's notion of morality rests upon the finite, embodied, historically-placed, or empirically compelled agent.

Serge Pukas discusses Jeremy Waldon's attempt to ground the natural duty of justice account concerning one's moral obligation to the state. Pukas critically sets Waldron's arguments within the associativist

framework. Although Pukas is sympathetic to Waldon's attempts to overcome philosophical anarchism and concomitantly to ground justice, he finds Waldon's account unsatisfactory since it ultimately does not really supplement fairness accounts, as Waldon himself seems to think, but is instead silently buttressed by it.

Sigmund Freud is our next discussion partner, whom we meet anew through the eyes of Paul Moyaert. Moyaert attempts to correct what he sees as a problem in Freud's conception of sublimation. For Freud, sublimation is the economic process of desexualization in which the sexual instincts are diverted toward a non-sexual aim. Moyaert sees the practice of courtly love, or rapture, as contradicting this view in developing a kind of idealization. For psychoanalysis, idealization is simply a repression of sexual instincts. Moyaert argues that although idealization may inhibit sexual instincts, this does not mean that they are repressed, but instead idealization and sublimation may work together, both intensifying and inhibiting sexual instincts caused by the idealized object, a development which both art and religion can recognize in the concept of exaltation.

Finally, Uzochukwu Njoku tackles foundations of solidarity in the social encyclicals of John Paul II. Offering a historico-critical view of John Paul's writings, Njoku suggests that the Pope's personalist writings remain relevant to current questions of solidarity, but that his failure to take into account structural accounts of oppression means that his views need to be supplemented with an account which does so. Njoku thus finds assistance in Paul Ricoeur, whom he offers as a kindred spirit whose creative tension between the person and the structure provides a dialectic within which solidarity can in fact emerge.

John Hymers