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I-KAI JENG, On the Final Definition of the Sophist: *Sophist* 265a10-268d5

This paper defends the closing definition of the sophist in Plato's *Sophist* as a modest success. It first argues that it consistently articulates the sophist's class structure as someone who resembles someone wise without being in the same class as that being. Then it explains why this structuring principle satisfies the demands of a successful definition as stated in the *Sophist* 232a1-6, and how the earlier definitions, despite being informative, nevertheless are failures. Since a number of scholars consider the final definition to fail no less than the earlier ones, the paper then turns to address four common objections in the literature. The conclusion briefly discusses how this reading affects our understanding of the method of division (*diaeresis*) in Plato.

ERIC D. PERL, Lessened by Addition: Procession by Diminution in Proclus and Aquinas

Aquinas's doctrine of creatures as participants of *esse* in relation to God as *ipsum esse* is structurally parallel to Proclus's triadic schema of participating, participated, and unparticipated terms. For Proclus, a multiplicity of participated terms are diminished relative to their unparticipated monad in that each is confined to its participant. Since all things exist by participating one, unparticipated one itself is the first principle of all things. For Aquinas, all things exist by participating *esse*, and the *esse* of each is contracted to its participant. Hence unparticipated *esse* itself is the first principle. In both Proclus and Aquinas, therefore, we must "take away" all things, as participants of one or *esse*, from the first principle, leaving no thought whatever that grasps the first itself. Aquinas's understanding of creation as the posteriority of all things as participants of *esse* to God as *ipsum esse* is thus altogether Platonic and Procline in character.

RICHARD VELKLEY, The Fate of Human Action: The Agency of "Reason" in Modern Philosophy

A notable strand of contemporary philosophy criticizes the "naturalist" account of human action for its inability to grasp human agency as a first-person, purposive engagement with a world of already conceptually interpreted content. The "brute given" description of nature according to modern scientific theory (or "seventeenth-century picture of the world") cannot provide causal grounds for human thoughts and intentions, as these reveal capacities for self-critical, justificatory, and normative reasoning. Authors such as John McDowell and Charles Taylor would correct modern "naturalism" by drawing on German Idealist and phenomenological modes of thought. Still, they miss an important line of thought in modern philosophy that connects human action to imaginative projection of the possible future and to certain notions of "speculation." Philosophers like Hobbes and Descartes help in this regard to illuminate the problematic character of human action.

STEPHEN H. WATSON, Hermeneutics and the Retrieval of the Sacred: Hegel's Giotto (with and Eye Toward Mark Rothko's)

LISA LANDOE HEDRICK, McDowell, Whitehead, and the Metaphysics of Agency

In this paper, the author argues that the reason the problem of intentionality has persisted in contemporary analytic philosophy is because of an inadequate ontology of judgment and perception. This ontology stands in need of a corrective, so that we might render inferential practices continuous with other ways of relating to one's world. John McDowell has recognized this need, pointing out the almost incredible way in which, for instance, Robert Brandom claims that it is merely a contingent matter that discourse is bounded by perception and action, and that it could in principle exist without them. It is this isolative error common to contemporary analytic philosophy that perpetuates the problem of intentionality and, therefore, agency. The paper proceeds by showing how Alfred North Whitehead's aesthetic ontology can serve as a corrective. Whitehead's thought helps us to restore legitimacy to the idea of causal efficacy in perception – a crucial step toward a realist account of meaning and reference and, thereby, agency.