

Foreword

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This special issue of *The Journal of Mind and Behavior* contains the papers presented at "Root Metaphor: An Interdisciplinary Conference," held at SUNY—Buffalo on May 3-4, 1982, under the auspices of the Department of English, through funds provided by its Edward H. Butler Chair, and with a small grant from the SUNY—Buffalo University Research Development Fund. The conference was the first ever held on the overall work of Stephen C. Pepper (1891-1972), whose work in metaphilosophy, value theory, definitions, and aesthetics has grown to be a vital source for researchers in many disciplines. Above all, his Root Metaphor approach is being recognized as an original major contribution to understanding how theories work, with applications to discipline after discipline. Pepper's approach is one of the few that takes both cognitive adequacy and metaphor seriously—and as necessary to each other. He held that each of the relatively adequate world views (of which there are only four or five so far) is organized intrinsically around a root metaphor; but he also held that each of these views is relatively adequate only because it can pass the tests of unrestricted scope and maximum precision. Pepper is the only philosopher who maintained that all four of the world hypotheses (or all five, if we consider Selectivism, the world hypothesis that he himself proposed in 1967, in his book *Concept and Quality*), must be regarded as relatively adequate, without suggesting that one was actually superior to the others, and without flinging open the doors to any number of alternative world views which could not, in fact, pass the great tests of maximum precision and scope. This is a rare kind of pluralism.

If many now find Pepper's method highly useful in their work, it is probably because there is something unique, not merely different about that method. Pepper has not attained his present recognition because of his reputation within today's philosophy departments. When he died in 1972, he did not even have a *Festschrift* in his name. Yet his work is known to increasing numbers of people. The volume entitled *Root Metaphor: The Live Thought of Stephen C. Pepper*, edited by John Herold, a contributor to the present issue of *JMB*, and myself, and published in 1980 as *Paunch*, Number 53-54, came to be a much larger project than we had imagined at the outset, after a computer search showed Pepper's thought to be already in use in many fields. The bibliography in *Root Metaphor* (Duncan and Efron, 1980), I discovered later, was quite out of date in some respects at the time of its publication. In fact, whole fields were omitted from it: Michael T. McGuire's reconsideration of

psychoanalytic theory in the light of Pepper's world hypotheses (1979); Hayden White's extensive use of Pepper's original set of four world hypotheses to reevaluate the field of historiography (White, 1973, 1978); and Robert R. Hoffman's work on metaphor in science (Hoffman, 1980; Hoffman and Smith, 1981) escaped notice altogether.

But what is the unique quality in Pepper that continues to bring his work to new fruitions? I suggest that his challenge to philosophy, enunciated back in 1928, well before his books were published, is also a beautiful challenge to workers in all fields:

The philosopher strains every nerve to write plain matter-of-fact prose, and the nearer he comes to it the more powerful his metaphor and the greater his poetry So, in the search for the most pregnant metaphor, the philosopher should choose as if he were trying to avoid the use of metaphor. And the more nearly he succeeds in doing what he is bound to fail in doing, the better his metaphysics. That is probably why so often he resents metaphors he is as foolish as a card-player who resents the rules that make the game possible. (Pepper, 1928, p. 132)

If we substitute "theory" for "metaphysics" in this statement, we will have a general claim applying to all research fields. And while there is no "hotbed" of Pepper studies at any one university, it does appear that more and more researchers are realizing the nature of the creative tension between cognitive adequacy and the metaphorical underpinning of theory that Pepper set forth and organized into his own theory.

The present issue of *JMB* now brings to a new readership a wide selection of new papers in the field of root metaphor. It includes proposals for "basic" rather than "root" metaphors (in the contributions of MacCormac and Cua), some of the very first explorations of Pepper's Selectivism (Caraher and Herold), new applications of Pepper's thought to world-civilizational and not only Western cultural history (Richardson, Harrell, and again Cua), new work on the history of science (Patterson, Walls, and, in a different sense, Geddis), further developments of Pepper's methods in the field of education (Quina, Kilbourn, Geddis), a demonstration of how contextualism, as Pepper defined it, can contribute to the criticism of cinema (Grant), clarifications of Pepper's own intellectual development (Duncan and Boyle), a new application of Pepper, with reciprocal criticisms of his approach, through comparison with Kenneth Burke (Duerden), and an investigation of the paintings of Mondrian in terms of the world hypothesis of Organicism, again with a reciprocal questioning of the category of Organicism itself (Butler). The papers also show the use of Pepper in the continuing and very difficult inquiry toward a theory of human nature (Downing), a critical application of the root metaphor method in analytical aesthetics (Efron), and a re-positioning of Pepper within recent major work going on in the field of metaphilosophy (Reck). We also reprint one of Pepper's most concise formulations of his

entire root metaphor theory, his posthumous article, "Metaphor in Philosophy."

On behalf of all the contributors and, I am sure of many future readers of this issue, I wish to thank the editors and staff of *The Journal of Mind and Behavior*, for their perceptive comments, hard labor, practical support, patient understanding of the problems incurred, and for their sheer foresight.

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