

in the theory of ethics, and the extent to which Keynes's life work should be viewed as representing either the traditions of modernism or post-modernism. As I said, these are specialists' treatments for the most part, that lead into areas that would at first sight only appeal to scholars in each of those areas. But particularly the essays by Goodwin and Baldwin convinced this reader that both a full understanding of Keynes, and also of the wider question of what exactly is the contribution of economics to society and to human relations, would be left inadequately considered if the issues these writers raise were not considered.

Overall I think this volume is written to a high standard, its scholarship is solid and it is of good value to different audiences for different reasons. No "companion" volume is contemplated to be, or should be suggested as, a substitute for the original writings. In the case of Keynes studies we have now evolved to the stage where current commentary is often written on the secondary literature, as each of these entries somewhat involves. But each is also loaded with references that should point interested readers to the relevant parts of Keynes's own original work, and that of his contemporaries and successors, for a long time to come.

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Speaking of Economics: How to Get into the Conversation, Arjo Klamer.
Routledge, 2007, xxii + 199 pages.

"How to do" books are not often reviewed in academic journals, neither in philosophy nor in economics, perhaps because most of them are aimed at doing things that are of not much relevance for the audiences of these journals. Arjo Klamer's new book is an exception though. A journal that promotes the mutual enrichment of economics and philosophy surely will attract a number of philosophers interested in engaging in fruitful conversation with economists. Philosophers, though, are just a subset of the vast readership targeted by Arjo Klamer in *Speaking of Economics* (the list covers three pages: xiv–xvi), so they should not expect a preferential treatment. Klamer takes nothing for granted and constructs the book in the best tradition of the "How to" genre. The sections are short, with punchy titles, very few notes and not many more references. Readability is secured by avoiding technical jargon, adding illustrational personal anecdotes and intercalating boxes to clarify or expand difficult points. And it is only 185 pages long: an easy read or, at least, significantly less demanding than most other titles in the "Economics as social theory" series, where it is

published. The book is personal, warns the author, and it is written in a conversational style (xvii). This is something that cannot be captured in a review, but may explain the sketchy nature of the following summary.

In Chapter 1, Klammer reviews the *strangeness* of economics as a discipline, which can be appreciated through the *suspicion* and *derision* it often causes outside academia. Its subject is perceived as strange and its methodology is often considered peculiar. Against this popular view, the author claims that if addressed through the metaphor of the *conversation*, economics does not seem strange any more: it is as much a conversation as any other. In the following chapter alternative metaphors drawn from the philosophy and sociology of science are pondered (e.g. “research program”, “logic and mirror”, etc.). The different constraints which define a scientific conversation are then briefly reviewed (from the physical surroundings to its *topoi* and *ethos*) and, in view of these, the strangeness of economics is reinterpreted. For instance, against those who consider it a dubious science, Klammer proclaims: “the scientific tenor of a conversation may be disturbing, but instead of focusing on its unscientific character, it might be better to simply acknowledge a desire to change it, or to participate in another conversation altogether” (35).

In Chapter 3, Klammer introduces an expansive notion of culture, inspired by Clifford Geertz, that allows the author to address the oddities of academic conversation and its circumstances. “Not convinced that academic culture is different?” – concludes Klammer – “Read David Lodge’s novels”.

In Chapter 4, with a bit of help from bibliometry, Klammer studies why so few academics are read and cited, the effects that the skewed distribution of attention has on the social organization of scientific communities and how this impinges on their conversations. “The giving and receiving of attention is the mechanism by which the conversation lives and grows” (55). It does so, however, according to a certain normative standard which is stated in the title of the subsequent chapter: “A good scientific conversation, or contribution thereto, is truthful and meaningful and serves certain interests”. These values are then shortly justified in the form of imperatives. Klammer adds an appendix to this chapter as a ten-page primer on philosophy and sociology of science. The message this appendix conveys is, apparently, that there are no better criteria than his imperatives to assess the quality of a scientific conversation.

Chapter 6 introduces the rhetoric approach through a combination of short sections, a few boxes (often longer than the sections), and a glossary at the end. The chapter covers the usual *topoi* in the rhetoric of economics plus two brief tutorials on the structure of argumentation and the use of metaphors in science. The final section (and the subsequent box) presents divergences among economists in terms of the stories they tell and how these stories contribute to the cogency of their argument.

These disagreements are further analysed in the following chapter. On the one hand, Klamer warns us about the differences between ongoing kinds of conversations in economics and the difficulties to master more than one. On the other hand, conversations change over time and even though the current one is dominated by modernism (defined in eight points in a separate box) it seems to be in a late stage making way, perhaps, to alternative conversations. "The current state is worrisome", states Klamer, "late modernist economics is aloof from interested in finding out about and making sense of economic processes" (151). Worried as he is with the deconstructive turn in postmodernism, Klamer holds out for a revival of classicism, reintroducing values and virtues, traditions and interpretative approaches in economic conversation.

This revival is not a topic covered in this book, whose eighth and final chapter discusses the gap between mundane and academic conversation. Klamer argues here that the influence from the latter to the former is never direct: the stories will change in the process, and therefore no economist can expect to control them to best serve her purposes. This leads to an epilogue in the form of a *peroratio*: a good ending can save a dull argument, warns Klamer. The criterion to evaluate the success of his own argument: "if going through the preceding pages has produced an *Aha Erlebnis* now and then, or moments of recognition and identification, or the feeling that one's experience is quite different from the one described here, the argument has been successful" (183).

For anyone involved in one way or another with economists it will be easy either to identify or to disagree, now and then, with the many stories told in this book. In this respect, the success of the argument is guaranteed, even if a modest one. It would be a bit more impressive, if the metaphor caught on and we all started speaking of economics as a conversation. However the author is well aware that no academic can engineer the adoption of a metaphor by a given community, so perhaps the modesty of Klamer's goals is justified here.

Yet this awareness may explain a few things about the structure of the book: the author cannot control the fate of the metaphor, but he knows that this reviewer cannot either. Many readers of this journal, such as myself, are using metaphors different from Klamer's to address economics, and the sort of conversation we are engaged makes it very difficult to accept the arguments advanced in this book. They seem most often quick and inconclusive. But, as I said before, we are just a subset of the audience, quite a small one indeed, and a negative review pointing out these faults will not prevent the metaphor to catch on if most economists felt moved by Klamer's book and decided to adopt it. So there is no point in trying to please analytically minded philosophers.

Yet independently of our intellectual inclinations, "How to do" books can be assessed with a very simple criterion: do we learn to do what

they teach how to? In this particular case, are we better qualified to get in the economists' conversation after reading it? If a majority in the profession decided to adopt Klamer's metaphor, independently of the merits of his argument, the book will surely be a must. But this is just a *performative effect*, using Donald MacKenzie's terms: if a community reads a certain code and decides to behave according to its prescriptions, it will become a compulsory reading for anyone who wants to interact with its members. If, on the other hand, economists decide to ignore this essay for whatever reason, I don't think it will help us much to improve our communication with them, given that their conversation is currently far from satisfying Klamer's expectations. A better title for the book would then read: "Speaking of economics. How to get in the metaphor of economic conversation". It is up to the reader to decide whether to join Klamer in spreading the word and make the conversation with economists what he wants it to be or find alternative ways to get into it.

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Beyond Individual Choice: Teams and Frames in Game Theory, Michael Bacharach; edited and with an introduction and a conclusion by Natalie Gold and Robert Sugden. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2006, xxiii + 214 pp.

The economist and game theoretician Michael Bacharach died in 2002 before completing the present book. The book was to consist of nine chapters but Bacharach had only written four of them and drafted some materials for the rest of the book at the time of his death. The editors have written a preface to the book, a long introductory chapter, and a concluding chapter. They give a sketch of much of the material that was to be included in the unwritten chapters. They have also improved on the text of the written four chapters and used brackets to indicate their inserts. On the whole, the editors have done an excellent job in putting together Bacharach's materials. The end result is a theory of team game theory. While the book still is a torso, it does create a systematic approach purporting to show the weaknesses of classical game theory and to argue that team reasoning is needed as a remedy. The level of treatment in Bacharach's own text is not very technical and, indeed, the book is meant for a wider audience beyond game theoreticians and economists. The editors' treatments in the introduction and the conclusion are somewhat more demanding – not technically but in the sense of requiring more