Literature Review

Person and Technology is a theme with many facets. Books selected for review underscore without comprehensively exploring this diversity.

Taking the perspective of the employee, Worker's Rights by Mary Gibson, offers arguments for rights to bodily health and safety, to form unions, to employ work slowdowns, and to strike. In the haste to use technological developments such rights could be overlooked.

The goals business managers and executives set for themselves and their organizations together with the sometimes conflicting ethical principles by which the human relationships of business ought to be governed are the subjects of The Work Ethic in Business and Ethics and the Management of Computer Technology. Are the goals of business (profit and productivity) compatible with treating people as ends? Is "cost effectiveness" a "value neutral" goal? What are the new risks and opportunities raised by computer technology? These and similarly tough questions require attention.

How science and technology are related constitutes the theoretical framework for an intelligent appraisal of the role of technology in human life. This is the core of Ihde's Technics and Praxis as it urges us to abandon naive, simplistic approaches and, with the help of phenomenological analysis, to understand technology by focusing on its causes.

What is it to lead the life of a person in this technological world? The Thread of Life by Richard Wollheim considers this question. Taking an internal perspective that relies heavily on Freud's psychology of mind, the author hints that living authentically requires creative self-examination, the enrichment of life through friendships, and the transformative acceptance of

43

death. If technology does not corrupt, obstruct,
or prevent these essential endeavors, the meaning
of personal life will not be lost.

Worker's Rights, by Mary Gibson. Totawa: Rowman
& Allanheld, 1983. 166 pp. x. $23.50 (cloth);
$7.95 (paper).

Worker's Rights is more an assertion of the
author's belief that workers have certain inalien-
able rights than a discussion of those rights.
Indeed, in the Introduction Ms. Gibson states, "I
neither aim nor claim to be neutral about the is-
sues discussed in this book" (3). She does,
however, claim to be objective, asserting, "One
does not have to be on the fence concerning an
issue in order to be objective about it" (3).
This is not a book to read at bedtime; it makes
the reader think hard about the plight of workers
in this country. Moreover, it forces the reader
to take a stand on the issues, as they are pres-
ented. In a world of "neutral discussions," Ms.
Gibson is to be applauded for this.

Structurally, the book moves from a discus-
sion of a situation which is clearly indicative of
a violation of worker's rights (the case of forced
sterilization of women at American Cyanamid) to
cases that are progressively more and more dif-
ficult to analyze. While in the first situation
the women in question were told of the potential
dangers at the same time as they were forced to be
sterilized surgically or to change to much less
desirable jobs, the second chapter is a discussion
of a case in which workers were sterilized due to
factors they were not aware of, even though the
company possessed, in advance, adequate evidence
of the danger. The third chapter is an attempt to
prove that it is the workers who are the real
safety experts on the job. Those "experts" who
answer only to the management are subject to pres-
sures unsuitable to their jobs, i.e., they must

take into account such factors as company politics and the profit motive.

The fourth chapter uses the well known case of the J. P. Stevens Company to enter into a discussion of worker's rights to unionize. The chapter quickly loses sight of the specific situation in question, and becomes a rather detailed attempt to argue that all workers have a right not only to form unions, but also to strike. The second half of this chapter is devoted to the problem of the unionization of public workers. Perhaps this is the most difficult problem to be undertaken in the book, and deserves some admiring here.

The author enters into a discussion of the main arguments advanced against the right of public employees to strike. First is the doctrine of sovereignty, i.e., that "government is identified as the sole possessor of final power" (108) and, as such, cannot be subject to the demands of any special interest groups. This Ms. Gibson disposes of by appealing to Ronald Dworkin, who claimed that any individual right includes the right "to do something even when the majority thinks it would be wrong to do it, and even when the majority would be worse off for having done it" (110). Second is the claim that a strike by public employees would interfere with the normal political process. Here there are three subquestions, all based on the belief that government services are essential. From the claim that an interruption of government services might be fatal in the long run, it in no way "follows that any temporary interruption of such a service is intolerable" (112). The author uses public education as an example. To the claim that public pressure would force the government to yield to unreasonable requests to end a strike, Ms. Gibson claims first that public pressure is the only leverage public employees ever have, second that any result a resolution of the strike would have on the tax rates would be added incentive for the employer to bargain hard and would not be an advantage for the workers, and, third, that public

disapproval is insufficient grounds for the abrogation of a right (cf. Dworkin again). To the claim that a strike by public employees would violate the rights of the recipients of those services, the author's reply is that this latter right "is against government or society as a whole, whose obligation it is to create and maintain conditions in which qualified workers are willing to work and provide those services" (114). The police and firefighters are the only exceptions to these arguments, and even here the author claims a slowdown of services, as long as essential services continue, is within the rights of the respective employees. Certain lesser arguments are also discussed; however, this is a sufficient example of the author's thoroughgoing analyses.

If Mary Gibson could be criticized, it would be that she is too committed to the cause. Even when the evidence is weak, she still takes the side of the workers, claiming that employers cannot be trusted. Indeed, she gives voluminous evidence that some employers cannot be trusted, and that the rights of workers must take precedence over the rights of their employers. That she also fails to present any evidence of abuses by the workers (e.g., union violations of both the law and the rights of workers and employers) is excusable--after all, she never claimed to be neutral.

<div style="text-align: right">

Barry David Smith
Southern Illinois Univ.

</div>

The Work Ethic in Business. Proceedings of the Third National Conference on Business Ethics. W. Michael Hoffman and Thomas Wyly, eds. Cambridge, Mass.: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, 1981. 349 pp. + xxxiii. $25 (cloth).

Ethics and The Management of Computer Technology. Proceedings of the Fourth National Conference on

Business Ethics. W. Michael Hoffman and Jennifer Mills Moore, eds. Cambridge, Mass.: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, 1982. 175 pps., + xix. $22.50.

The Center for Business Ethics at Bentley College, Waltham, Mass., has been the sponsor of four national conferences for exchanging ideas on business ethics. Participants in these meetings were business executives, academicians, labor leaders, career government employees, and politicians.

A number of perennial issues in business ethics are considered in these two volumes of proceedings, including the "amorality" of business activity, humanizing job motivation and settings, the social revolution occasioned by growth in technology, individual privacy, dignity and autonomy.

Two earlier conferences had addressed the compatibility of business values with social justice and examined power and responsibility in business. Ethical issues concerning management of computer technology were discussed in the fourth conference. Although the stated theme of the third conference was the work ethic, most of the presentations and discussion focused on aspects of quality of work life programs.

Several analyses of polls, in the third volume, show an increasingly positive attitude toward business among the young, but less interest in working for themselves and less support of unions. Workers are willing to work but the locus of their work ethics has changed.

In their perceptive essay Michael Maccoby and Katherine Terzi trace the histories of four distinct work ethics and relate them to studies of work satisfaction. They conclude a self-fulfillment (consumer) ethic is replacing the traditional work ethics.

The quality of work life is explored from several perspectives. Both management and labor leaders offer proposals and evaluate existing programs for enhancing work life. Affirmative action, government regulation of the workplace, and the experiences of corporate social action are considered challenges for the business world to incorporate ethical values in planning models.

Profit and productivity interests, it is frequently insisted, complement commitments to people as ends in themselves and programs for improving the quality of life for workers. But many calls for corporate social responsibility and improving the quality of work life, even when reflecting humanitarian values, display a utilitarian mind set. Intangible and unquantifiable values do not compute. The worker, his work setting, health factors, and attitudes are quantified for analysis and viewed as a sort of investment or cost of production.

Two essays offer fertile bases for incorporating the ethical dimension more explicitly into planning. Building on the contractual relation between employer and employee (and the implicit recognition that each group has rights), Norman Bowie proposes a basis for appropriate recognition of employee rights and for resolving conflicts between pursuing profit and genuinely recognizing employees' dignity. Clarence Powers skillfully discloses the subtle antithetical tension, in both personal and institutional value criteria, between honor and dignity, loyalty and autonomy, role-based fulfillment and freedom, personalism and privacy.

The fourth volume of proceedings focuses on ethical issues of managing computer technology. Both business and technology are often considered to be amoral in our society. Decisions and choices are commonly viewed as being made in terms of such "value neutral" criteria as cost effectiveness. Clearly, business values and technological developments have mutually nurtured and

shaped each other. Business has been a principal patron and consumer of the computer and telecommunications revolution. In turn, computer jargon and structural models have impregnated planning, production and marketing procedures in almost every sector of business.

The participants displayed a shared commitment to the ethical perspective of both business and technology. They recognize in computer technology an occasion and challenge to reflect on what we really value. They also examine the new risks and opportunities regarding human autonomy, privacy, centralization of power, loss of individuality, and the emergence of new models of information management and decision making.

Joseph F. Coates raises a seminal issue: has the personal ethics of the Judeo-Christian tradition reached its limit? He argues that traditional personal ethics cannot provide moral guidance in an organization dominated society. An individual who really tries to use such atomic thinking cannot cope in our emerging molecular world. Similarly, he argues, our post-industrial and information-based business world lacks an adequate ethic of organization that takes into account the autonomy that the computer and telecommunications provide the workers. No successor has yet emerged to replace the zero-sum calculus of values which fails to promote general well being.

Several contributors to the volume consider the misconception of computer technology as a "neutral" tool. Abbe Mowshowitz argues that in addition to the biases of the historically conditioned social setting in which they emerge, computers subtly occasion value-laden changes in the loci and forms of social controls.

A number of ethical issues faced by the computer professionals are discussed: unauthorized use of computer systems for personal matters; property rights to programs and data; displacing workers by technological systems; guidelines and

procedures for maintaining confidentiality of personal and corporate information; use of computers to deceive and intimidate; the fostering of a value neutral "game playing" mentality among users.

The articles and discussions provide a balance of beneficial and dangerous as well as fearful and promising aspects in the growing and pervasive use of computer technology. This is especially evident in the ubiquitous consideration of human autonomy and privacy.

More and more detailed information about individuals is collected, stored longer, and disseminated more widely. Such data collection erodes control over it by the subject as well as by the collectors. The collected data is easily taken from context and conceded unearned reliability. As information is increasingly quantified, decision making becomes more automated and depersonalized. The volume and speed of data flow promotes reductionism, fragmentation, separation of control from performance, and centralization of control in social and political institutions.

Yet, the developing technology allows work to be done in non-traditional workplaces, extends access to information, and gives additional persons a share in decision-making. It provides new jobs, offers variety to jobs and lifestyles, liberates many workers from dehumanizing, maiming or stupefying tasks, encourages small decentralized enterprises, brings more leisure and education within the reach of all, erodes parochialism, and brightens the prospect of a genuine community of mankind.

These two volumes present a rich and varied fare. In addition to excellent introductory essays, the Third Proceedings contains twenty-five papers and twelve accompanying discussions. The

"transcripts" of the "discussion" sessions (composing a third of each volume) are a valuable feature. The interchanges retain an impromptu quality. Regrettably there is no index in either volume.

<div align="right">

Earl Kumfer
St. Francis College

</div>

––––––

Technics and Praxis, by Don Ihde. Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1979. $11.95.

The project of demythologizing technology has its origins in Heidegger's 1954 lecture, "The Question Concerning Technology." Yet, few in mainstream Anglo-American philosophy have participated in or contributed to an understanding of technology free from what Heidegger called a "stultifying compulsion to push on blindly with technology, or,... to rebel helplessly against it and curse it as a work of the devil."

Now that Western societies are very much into the information age and the technological envelope that comes with it, the orthodox utopian and distopian visions of technology are being challenged. it is arguable that the convulsions within positivist and analytic philosophy of science since Kuhn's The Structure of Scientific Revolutions are very much an effect of a poverty of understanding the nature of technology and its relationship to science. The dethronement of naive objectivism and the encroachment of values on the foundations of epistemology has sown the seeds of alternative ways to understand the science-technology relationship and its role in human experience. One of the more notable of these is Don Ihde's Technics and Praxis.

As a prolegomena to the philosophy of technology, Ihde's project is a product of the praxis tradition as that has been tempered within the

American school of phenomenology. It is an at-
tempt to invert the dominant interpretation of
conceptual and ontological primacy of science over
technology. It carries on the Heideggerian proj-
ect of undermining the Greek ideal of a value-
free, purely contemplative science. Ihde's con-
tribution is to extend this to "the science-
technology phenomenon" which, if action precedes
theory, would be inverted to "the technology-
science phenomenon."

The most important achievement of Ihde's ex-
tension of that project is to demonstrate the
power of phenomenological analysis to illumine and
broaden the otherwise naive or reductionalistic
understandings of the human experience of "tech-
nology-science." On the one hand, for example,
his discussion of the technological effects (am-
plicative, e.g., the telephone and distance, and
reductive, e.g., the telephone and absence of
"flesh-to-flesh" contact in communication) is
more than mere analysis. On the other hand, it is
more than mere phenomenological description. As a
study of the human direct perceptual field in
search of subtle and hidden structural features,
it is a uniquely American hybrid of analytic
clarity and rich phenomenological description.
Chapter 6 on the transformation of experience
through instrument mediation should be exhibited
as a model of clarity, brevity and richness as
phenomenological description.

The substantive project, namely, a phe-
nomenology of instrumentation, constitutes the
first third of Technics and Praxis. Ihde calls it
a prolegomena to the philosophy of technology, yet
it is more. It is a challenge to reconstruct much
of philosophy, or at least to find a new paradigm
for philosophical understanding. Reconstruction
is needed in philosophy of science, epistemology,
social and political philosophy, and applied
ethics (including medical ethics, business ethics,
computer ethics, accounting ethics). His provoca-
tive criticism of applied ethics in particular is
worthy of attention even though it is overblown.

Following the dominant paradigm of taking science for granted and treating technology as a "step-child," applied ethics concentrates on the effects or symptoms of technology (e.g., hunger, starvation, pollution, euthanasia, abortion, genetic engineering). A phenomenology of instrumentation, by contrast, Ihde claims would understand technology by focusing on its causes.

If these negative ethical or social effects are seen as tertiary phenomena following from science-technology, the only remedy is to revise the primary cause, namely, science. This presents a quandry if one assumes that science is neutral and a given. If the correct view of the relationship is technology--science, as Ihde insists, then a "materialistic" alternative would be preferred over the "idealistic" or "Platonic" orthodoxy that gives primary ontological status to science over its applied and social effects. Yet from a "materialistic" view, contemporary applied ethics is a myopic and distorting approach to understanding the human experience of instrumentation.

Although Ihde makes an important point about the ambiguity of contemporary philosophical inquiry, he draws the contrast between schools too sharply. Since the time of Ayer's Language, Truth and Logic (Dover, 1946) ethicists have struggled to come to terms with themselves. If they are little more than conceptual or linguistic technicians, their ability to contribute to personal and social understanding would seem to be limited. Perhaps Ihde's criticism of analytic and normative ethics will serve to illuminate the discomfort of the new breed of modern ethicists, many of whom are in non-academic institutions. Perhaps their discomfort with going beyond conceptual traffic-directing to make normative prescriptions within technological envelopes such as hospitals and government agencies is only symptomatic of a general lack of understanding of the perceptual and existential structures of human experience

which precondition the value conflicts they at-
tempt to clarify. And perhaps a deeper under-
standing would enable them to become the kind of
"therapists" they need to be to enable their
"clients" to engage the technological world au-
thentically, and to see its genuine possibilities.

However, Ihde's criticism implies that lack
of such understanding has generated an army of
contemporary sophists. This seems to be an over-
statement for two reasons. First, as a comment on
much of what passes for, say, medical ethics, in
the classroom or the textbook, Ihde's criticism
may well be cogent. However, the movement of sys-
tematic philosophical discussion to committees,
clinics, and board rooms has served to generate
much of the sort of understanding Ihde extols even
if it may not be as rich as he might wish. Inter-
change and mutual exposure within a technological
environment has its genuine and authentic trans-
formational effects for both the ethicists and the
medical professional.

Second, phenomenological "therapy" must, in
the end, both inform and terminate in an ethical
policy. Thus, it is not that applied ethics
"comes too late" to understanding, but rather that
it comes too impoverished descriptively and exis-
tentially speaking. In any effort to enable us to
see, hear, touch, or generally exist in the world
in a radically different way, one must take care
not to demarcate so graphically that vision that
it blinds one to the authentic and genuine pos-
sibilities of other visions. As technology is not
the "step-child" of science, much of what passes
under the label of applied ethics is not the
"step-child" of positivist or empiricist science.

In his novel and unprecedented discussion of
Heidegger's philosophy of technology Ihde alludes
to a unifying or integrating theme which may serve
to bridge the gap between the analytic and phe-
nomenological paradigms and, perhaps, aid the
search for a new paradigm. He points out that,
although Heidegger's critical attitude toward

54

technology was basically pessimistic, the hope which Heidegger saw standing against "totalizing closure" is aesthetics, that is, technics as art. If technology-science is a totality without a distinction and if our relationship to technology is not technological, but existential, then an artful praxis may serve as "the strategic counter-balance to what Heidegger fears is the threat of closure" (129). Insofar as art is already a technics and like all "praxical" activity, it may serve to deal with technology within its own realm.

To paraphrase Ihde's two questions following his discussion of Hans Jonas (140), (1) just as art is an expression of the essence of humanity in all its ambiguity, could not artful technology be the same? (2) Just as art amplifies the possibilities of being human, might not an artful technics amplify the possibilities which would enable humans to save themselves? It would seem that Ihde's prolegomena should be followed by an exploration of the conditions under which artful technology might be brought into being.

Donald M. Nolen
Parkland College

The Thread of Life, by Richard Wollheim. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984. 288 pp. + xv.

Readers with serious reservations about Freud's psychology of mind will not lack for criticisms of Wollheim's latest book. Such readers might find Derek Parfit, Reasons and Persons (a behaviorist view) or Hywel D. Lewis, The Elusive Self a more adequate view. As the reviewed and enlarged form of the William James Lectures (1982) The Thread of Life owes far more to Freud than to contemporary philosophers, although a debt to the "spirit" of analytic philosophy is acknowledged, and is apparent throughout. As a sketch of philosophy of mind compatible with

Freud's psychoanalytic theory, it may be appropri-
ately considered an extension and development of
Wollheim's earlier efforts in the volume, Sigmund
Freud (1971).   It contains no discussion of the
methodological notions--analysis, intuition, and
essence--that are used throughout the book, and
this is a serious shortcoming. But, it is a fresh
and interesting approach to a perennial question:
"What is it to lead the life of a person?"

If living is an embodied mental process, then
"a taxonomy of mental phenomena" includes interac-
tions between the person's past, present, and fu-
ture, between mental dispositions and mental
states, and between conscious, preconscious, and
unconscious aspects of mind.

Mental activities actuate mental states and
mental dispositions as well as initiate bodily
movements. Mental states are episodic, while men-
tal dispositions are persistent phenomena that are
manifest intermittently and are mutable. Mental
phenomena, generally speaking, have the important
characteristics of intentionality, subjectivity,
psychic force, and function, quality of conscious-
ness and significance. Mental dispositions ful-
fill their role indirectly by bringing about
modifications through mental states with causal
efficacy, while mental states depend for their
efficacy on their phenomenology.   Behaviorists
overlook the indirect role of mental dispositions,
while contemporary functionalists fail to recog-
nize the indispensability of phenomenology.

Discussing mental states that have the common
property of iconicity, Wollheim compares the mind
to a theater with its three interdependent roles
of dramatist, actor and audience. This analogy
provides insights into acentric and centered imag-
ination.   Centered imagining includes point of
view, plenitude, and cogency. Point of view con-
sists in taking the perspective of some character
within the event. Plenitude is the thinking, ex-
periencing and feeling that one imagines the pro-
tagonist undergoing as he does or says this or

that. These two essential features are the joint work of the internal dramatist and internal actor. Cogency, the work of the internal audience, is the cognitive, conative, and affective conditions in which the imagined mental states, were one to actually have them, would leave the individual. The analogy provides fresh insights into the ways memory and fantasy affect the life a person leads. Here Wollheim provides a major interpretative contribution.

For the author, following Freud, "derealization" and "depersonalization" are employed by individuals to deal with the intolerable in their lives. Both of these processes diminish the authenticity of living as a person in part by making difficult or impossible a creative self-examination. The loss of friendship and the refusal to accept death epitomize in extremity the alienation of the person from his world and life.

These two destructive ways, employed by human beings unwittingly, to deal with the intolerable in life are "mirror-images" of each other. They reflect images of each other in what they bring about and in the fantasies that they employ to convey their content. In derealization the individual denies a part of the world and comes to regard it as dependent upon his thoughts and feelings. In depersonalization the individual denies a part of himself and through fantasy regards it as independent of his thoughts and feelings. Both processes interact upon each other and deprive living a personal life of its authenticity. In extremes, these processes deprive the person of friendships and prevent the transformative acceptance of death.

The person who engages in derealization and depersonalization eventually lacks friends because he cannot be a friend. And the gist of friendship is simply being a friend. The individual who is incapable of being a friend desperately needs friends because of his own projective impoverishments. The person lacks the essentials required

for friendships: "sensitivity to the singularity of persons, an active sense of the distinction between oneself and others and tolerance both of others and oneself" (276).

Death influences the individual as a phenomenon and as a thought. As a phenomenon death simply marks the end of a person's life; as a thought (hybrid concept) it explains the end of a person's life. Wollheim argues that life without death would be meaningless since death authenticates the value of choice, is preferable to some circumstances in a person's life, and in itself is not painful. As a "misfortune" death deprives us of our phenomenology. It cuts the thread of life and prevents us from entering past, present, or future mental states. Refusal to accept death fosters a projective identification that alienates the person from his own life and world.

To accept death one must remove fear of death. Basic to the fear of death is a conflicting appetite and belief. The appetite is the insatiable thirst for phenomenology; the belief is "a belief about one essential feature of natural specieshood" (282). To bring the appetite and belief into harmony requires that the individual should live each moment as though it could be his last or as though the possibility of death was implicit in living.

For those who think Freud's approach provides the key to a philosophy of mind this book is indispensable. Those who take a different approach will find a wealth of insights, although not a complete perspective.

John Howie
Southern Illinois Univ.