

The Characteristic of Expert Bodily Skill and a Critique of the Principle of Automaticity

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Abstract

Barbara Montero argues against what she calls “the principle of automaticity,” even though this principle seems to be widely held. This principle offers an account of expert bodily skill, claiming that when all is going well, expert performance is automatic and involves neither significant self-reflective thinking nor mental effort. In this paper, it is argued that both the principle of automaticity and Montero’s positive thesis contain plausible thoughts, and a better characterization of expert bodily skill is provided by incorporating tenable ideas from the principle of automaticity, from Montero, from William James, and from John Dewey respectively.

Key Words: automatic, bodily skill, habit, Barbara Gail Montero, William James