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Alain Badiou

The Century.

Trans. Alberto Toscano.

Malden, MA : Polity 2007. Pp. 268.

US\$69.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-07456-3631-3);

US\$22.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-07456-3632-0).

This book is comprised of thirteen 'lessons', drawn from seminars conducted at the Collège International de Philosophie between 1998 and 2001, and accompanied by a commentary by the translator. In it Badiou reflects on the past century, asking the strangely philosophical question: what is the twentieth century? Appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, with Badiou posing it, this question is not a strictly historical one. Of course, the question asks about history, but is not itself directed at the historical. Rather, Badiou's concern is the thought of the century, our thinking about it and the thinking it occasioned, 'how the century thought its own thought, how it identified the thinking singularity of the relation it entertained with the historicity of its own thought' (3). In effect, Badiou's question is: what is the mode of thinking that characterizes the century as the century that it is/was? Considering the art, literature, philosophy, culture and politics of the twentieth century, treating each as an instance of the twentieth century's distinctive thought, Badiou offers not an answer as much as an illumination of the meaning of the past century and the philosophical necessity of both asking and thinking about its thought.

Returning to these points in later lessons (e.g., lessons 4-6, 10), in the third lesson of the book, entitled 'The Unreconciled', Badiou argues that there are two specific features that, perhaps above all else, characterize the century: the passion for the real and the paradigm of war. Let us examine each in some detail.

The passion for the real names the century's 'conviction, laden with pathos, that we are being summoned to the real of a beginning' (32). Exemplified by the political disasters of the 30's and 40's, the twentieth century thought of itself as a new beginning, the dawning of a new world and a true order through political, cultural, epistemic and artistic transformation — typically violent transformation — of the old. The old must end in order for the new to begin. Thus, to the extent to which the century thought the beginning, it also thought the end: 'the century thought itself simultaneously as end, exhaustion, decadence *and* as absolute commencement' (31). Citing Nietzsche as a prophet of the century, this entanglement of ending and beginning is contained in the charge of nihilism, whereby the modern world, which has become deteriorated beyond repair, will also occasion a complete transformation that brings about a 'Great Noon' and an overcoming of 'man' himself, an overman. According to Badiou, these two moments are bound together; they are entangled into, adopting Deleuze's turn of phrase, a disjunctive synthesis.

Because of this disjunction, which is constituted as both an intellectual and a political problem, the century is marked by objective and subjective violence: 'violence takes place at the point of disjunction; it substitutes itself

for a missing conjunction' (32). Violence is not here merely caused or occasioned; rather, as any observer of the century can see, it is justified. Because violence brings about the creation of 'the new man', the new and true era of history and of human being itself, it is more than excusable; it is needed. It is this violent passion for the reinvention of the human that Badiou calls the passion for the real, which is 'the source of both horror and enthusiasm, simultaneously lethal and creative' (32) and as such lies, as Nietzsche puts it, beyond good and evil, beyond moral categories (33).

In turn, this violent passion accounts for the second feature of the century, namely the dominant paradigm of war. By this Badiou does not mean the historical fact of war, as it proliferated through the century, but an unfolding of the century under the conception of a decisive war, the last war, the final solution through the final war. The final war is what brings about the coming of the new human and, when this fails, a new final war seeks to put an end to the previous presumption to a final war. In short, the century is dominated by the view that only war ends war and, by extension, ends and is the end of history. Lying in the disjunction of the end and the beginning, the decisive war has three features: it puts an end to bad war, it uproots nihilism, and it grounds the new order, the new history. Accordingly, the conceptualization of the decisive war undergirds and informs (perhaps infects) twentieth century thinking about itself.

This book does not present a history of ideas or of thought; rather, it thinks with and in the century, thinking even those thoughts that are difficult, that we often avoid thinking. For example, Badiou considers Nazism as a thought, not as an historical accident and mere aberration, since only in this way can the pernicious and abhorrent consequences of Nazism be avoided. Accidents are prone to be repeated but falsehoods and evils, when thought and grasped, can be jettisoned: 'as long as Nazi thinking is not itself thought through it will continue to dwell among us, unthought and therefore indestructible' (4). However, neither is this work a strictly philosophical text. This is neither *Being and Event* nor *Logics of Worlds*. Those who admire Badiou for his rigorous interjections into contemporary philosophy might, at first blush, be disappointed. However, there is an important implicit philosophical move here that is entirely commensurate with Badiou's philosophical work in general. The commensurability here resembles that of his more polemical essays that are expressly not philosophical, but attempt to undermine pseudo-philosophy or sophistry. In effect, Badiou's questioning about the century implicitly leads to the not yet fully determined space in which contemporary thought takes place and in which (and perhaps against which) contemporary philosophy thinks. The upshot of asking about the past century's thinking is asking about the present and its future, about how the present thinks and how its future will continue to think such that the new century will be distinctive. In short, this work serves to open up philosophical thought itself.

Edvard Lorkovic

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Jean Baudrillard

Forget Foucault.

Trans. Nicole Dufresne.

Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2007.

Pp. 144.

US\$14.99 (paper ISBN-13: 978-1-58435-041-5).

The 2007 Semiotext(e) edition of this work is divided into three sections. In the first section, Columbia university professor Sylvère Lotringer contextualizes Baudrillard's work from its Marxist roots to his implementation of the Foucauldian genealogical method, and finally to Baudrillard's maturation into his own system built around his concept of 'simulation'. The second section is the original essay itself in which Baudrillard composes Foucault's notions of power, production, and sexuality in order to supplant them with the concepts central to his own theory of simulation, such as challenge, seduction, and desire. The third section, an interview between Baudrillard and Lotringer entitled 'Forget Baudrillard', is an attempt by Lotringer to flesh out Baudrillard's methods as a meta-theorist and postmodern provocateur. Just as Baudrillard employs a Foucauldian discourse in order to turn it on its head, so Lotringer analyzes Baudrillard in his own terms thus returning the favor.

Lotringer situates Baudrillard in his historical context as one of many Marxists left disappointed and disillusioned in the wake of May 1968. Baudrillard's theoretical outlook, like those of many post-'68 French intellectuals, was shaped greatly as a response to this disillusionment. Baudrillard's response is to continue to fight or transgress all boundaries through 'the saturation of the semiotic code' or 'an absolute deterritorialization of theory itself' (11) in order to explode the hyperreality of the hegemonic capitalist ideology. Baudrillard begins by exploring the Foucauldian genealogical method in his own works, but ultimately finds this method unsatisfactory: just one more 'floating theory' among all the rest, interchangeable with Guattari and Deleuze's theory of desire (17-8). For Baudrillard, all that is left is total revolution, that is, theoretical violence. His weapon of choice: the unilateral gift of death. This gift cannot be returned or recompensed, and thus it explodes all exchange relations and tears asunder the existent semiotic code. Beyond desire, beyond power, beyond sexuality, Baudrillard seeks to do Foucauldian philosophy, namely genealogy justice by going beyond, or forgetting Foucault. 'This was a "gift" that he received from Foucault, and why he had to return it to him with a vengeance' (21).

Foucault's greatness lay in his ability to de-center the world of value; however, like Nietzsche's Zarathustra his message is distorted and in fact destroyed by the loyalty of his disciples. In reifying Foucault's methodology into a school of thought, 'power' becomes the new grand narrative and so Foucault becomes 'the last great dinosaur' (30) of the classical age. Foucault cannot take himself too seriously, and in fact, his greatness lies in his obsolescence; that we recognize the time for Foucault has passed is the legacy of Foucault. Part of Baudrillard's project is to overthrow the notion of power by

showing how it seeks its own death in striving to become a principle of reality. '(E)ven if it has no finality and no last judgment, power returns to its own identity again as a final principle: it is the last term, the irreducible web, the last tale that can be told; it is what structures the indeterminate equation of the word' (50). After doing away with power, Baudrillard supplants it with seduction which is a 'leading away' of all things to be subsumed in simulation. With seduction as his song, Baudrillard is cast as a pataphysical piper leading power, sexuality, psychoanalysis, and socialism to drown in the river of simulation.

For Baudrillard, power does not encounter resistance; rather it contains its own resistance. By combining resistance and power, he offers a new view of power as a challenge. However, this is not the positive sense of challenging that Foucault offers as expanding the discourse; rather it is in alignment with the futile, ever increasing complexity of power as a facade. Baudrillard likens power to a shattered windshield wherein every attempt to repair itself actually causes it to crack more. The increasingly 'shattered' nature of power does not make it more fragile, though, but strengthens it. Baudrillard, though trying to go beyond this principle of reality, shows how the inversion of power actually operates via a similar method. Power as a system with a recursive nature attempts to make itself a structure that becomes stronger and more impenetrable the larger it becomes.

Baudrillard believes that through his structure of simulation he is doing Nietzsche's bidding, that is, just as one must push what is collapsing so Baudrillard is pushing power, namely, in the guise of the Foucauldian discourse. Foucault thought that he was carrying out such a Nietzschean project by perpetually restructuring reality, transgressing it and redefining it. What Baudrillard has done is to square the process: transgress the transgression by transgressing the transgressor (Foucault). Once the process become reflexive it reaches the point at which it must transgress and transcend itself.

In this book Baudrillard focuses on two key Foucauldian concepts: power and sexuality. For Baudrillard, it is the simulacra of power and sexuality that constructs our present notions of power and sexuality. In the end, we are left with a very elaborate web of definitions that cannot give power or sexuality the force they need to be meaningful. Our ever-expanding web of definitions is alluring. We are lured away from the principles of the structures of power and sexuality and towards a new home outside of them. Baudrillard sees our willing excommunication from this reality as liberatory. His peculiar form of nihilism offers us 'not a more reassuring world, but certainly (one) more thrilling' (74).

Baudrillard claims that he is at heart a metaphysician, but Lotringer does a superb job of exposing Baudrillard as a pataphysician. Baudrillard demolishes not only metaphysics, but the condition for the possibility of a system of knowledge and along with it any principle of reality. Baudrillard praises this pataphysical 'dizziness' with which we are left. However, the reader should heed Lotringer's advice and beware of gentle pataphysicians with a big hammer. Baudrillard's methods may resemble Foucauldian genealogy, but they

are not a natural extension thereof. The Baudrillardian project of hyperreality is not designed to 'challenge' discourse in order to enhance it as the Foucauldian genealogical project does; rather it is parasitic on theory occupying the place of mere nay-sayer. Simulation may initially operate under the guise of an extension of genealogy; however it lapses into a parodic negation. Baudrillard leaves behind him a wasteland of theory in which liberation is supposed to be present.

Baudrillard maintains that metaphysical solutions have become impotent in their attempt to describe the physical, and metaphor has become impotent in enhancing the literal. The solution that Baudrillard offers is to abolish metaphysics and metaphor. He does so by showing how both result in distortions, that is, theoretical monstrosities. Instead of trying quietly to euthanize such 'meta' monstrosities as Foucauldian genealogy, power, sexuality, and desire, Baudrillard implements the hyperbolic strategy of outright philosophical confrontation. In spite of his postmodern prolixity, he does indeed find his niche in expanding the project of transgression. Although at times opaque, a flaw of most contemporary French philosophy that many wear as a badge of honor, due mostly to the continued relevance of Foucault's work this book is a welcome addition to the dialogue and remains as rich today as it was when it first appeared.

Nathan McCune and Jacob M. Held
University of Central Arkansas

David Benatar

Better Never to Have Been:

The Harm of Coming into Existence.

Toronto and New York: Oxford University
Press 2006.

Pp. 250.

Cdn\$72.00/US\$55.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-929642-2);

Cdn\$36.00/US\$30.00

(paper ISBN-13: 978-0-19-954926-9).

The title of this book is intriguing, and for those who are looking for something to give their undergraduate students to read and exercise their minds, this must surely be on the list, but first things first.

The book is divided into an introduction, which gives a brief overview of the argument of the book, five chapters that present the argument in detail,

and a conclusion. Most of the work is done in Chapters 2 and 3 ('Why Coming into Existence is Always a Harm' and 'How Bad is Coming Into Existence'). The next three chapters ('Having Children: The Anti-Natal View', 'Abortion: The "Pro-Death" View' and 'Population and Extinction') present the implications of the position that is argued in Chapters 2 and 3. In the conclusion Benatar wraps everything up by 'countering the counter-intuitive objections', 'responding to the optimist', in general taking care of outstanding matters, and dotting the I's and crossing the T's.

Why is this a good book for undergraduates? Because it is a very smooth piece of writing on a subject that will immediately engage their attention, even if they are not philosophy majors. Is it well-argued? Does it have philosophical merit? Well, that's another matter.

There is an old Jewish joke that goes something like this: A young man is walking down the street, wringing his hands and generally bemoaning his fate. Finally, he says, 'Life is miserable! I wish I had never been born!' A rabbi who is walking by overhears the young man and says, 'Ah, yes — but only one in a hundred thousand is so fortunate!'

Benatar begins his book with a version of this joke. However, unlike Freud (who also knew the joke), he takes it seriously. Benatar briefly considers what philosophers like Feinberg and Parfit have said about coming into existence as possibly constituting a harm, but he distinguishes his position from theirs by arguing that while they have focussed on special cases where the children that are borne suffer from serious conditions, etc., he is looking at human life in general. So far as he is concerned, coming-into-existence is *always* a harm. He argues that when we look at life without any preconceived notions and purely factually, we find that there is a preponderance of suffering over good experiences not only on an aggregate global level — Benatar points to natural disasters that affect us, hunger, war, disease, oppression, etc. — but on the level of every individual case as well. No exceptions. Being born is always a harm. As he puts it, 'pleasure and pain are asymmetrical in a way that makes coming into existence always a harm.'

The reason that existence is always a harm, argues Benatar, is that it inevitably involves some measure of pain and suffering, which would not exist if the individual had never been born. Therefore birth always introduces harm into a universe, where that harm would not exist if there were no birth. As to the counterargument that birth also introduces pleasure and joy into the world, and that a comparison between amounts of pleasure and pain would show that there are many cases where the total amount of pleasure outweighs the total amount of pain, Benatar dismisses this. He does so on the grounds that 'pleasure and pain are asymmetrical' and therefore that such claims are ill-founded. He therefore espouses what he calls an 'anti-natalist view' that is concerned 'to avoid the suffering of future children and the adults they would become.'

As to the fact that most people do not regret having come into the world, Benatar dismisses this as 'less than rational'. In order to make his point, he appeals to the concept of adaptive preference, which is the psychological

tendency to endorse what one cannot help, and he argues that such an attitude is psychologically not surprising given that everyone has had to come to terms with the fact that they have had no control over having been born. Moreover, so he continues, the fact that (most) people do not regret having come into the world is hardly probative. What has to be shown is not that people have this attitude but that it is justified; and here, so he argues, the facts all point his way.

Benatar's book really stands or falls with this reasoning. At its centre is the claim that 'pleasure and pain are asymmetrical in a way makes coming into existence always a harm.' He outlines this asymmetry by arguing that while 'the absence of pain is good, even if that good is not experienced by anyone . . . the absence of pleasure is not bad unless there is somebody for whom the absence is a deprivation.'

However, there are conceptual difficulties with this reasoning. Specifically, it involves two distinct notions of pleasure/pain: one is relativistic, the other intrinsic. That is to say, in the one case Benatar is talking about an epistemic property (pain) and says that its non-existence is good, whereas in the other case he maintains that the non-existence of another epistemic property (pleasure) cannot be bad unless there is someone whose experience it would have been, i.e., unless it would have been experienced. Benatar is here making two logically distinct kinds of claim and is treating them as though they were logically the same. In fact, they are not. In the case of the non-existence of pain, Benatar is treating pain as a property that has an intrinsic value and that can be talked about it independently of anyone whose property (pain) it is. On the other hand, when he is talking about pleasure, he is treating pleasure as a property that has only relative value and that can be talked about only if we can point to someone whose property (pleasure) it would have been. In other words, Benatar is treating pleasure and pain, which are on a par as epistemic properties, in logically distinct ways. No wonder he finds an asymmetry! By this treatment, he is defining the asymmetry into existence.

Having thus questioned Benatar's thesis at its core, why do I still say it is a good book for undergraduates? Precisely because the error is so subtle. Students will feel that there is something wrong here, but won't be able to put their finger on it right away. They will puzzle. They will argue. And that's all to the good. For that reason alone, a 'Thank you!' to Benatar.

Eike Kluge

University of Victoria

Talia Mae Bettcher

Berkeley's Philosophy of Spirit:

Consciousness, Ontology and the Elusive Subject.

New York: Continuum 2007.

Pp. 190.

US\$116.36 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-8643-1).

In this book Bettcher seeks to vindicate Berkeley's 'philosophy of spirit' against what she sees as a traditional dissatisfaction among scholars with Berkeley's views on self and self-consciousness. While the views of other early modern philosophers such as Descartes, Hume or Kant on self and self-consciousness have obtained 'an almost mythological status in philosophy', Berkeley views on these topics have been 'relegated to virtual ignominy' (1). The standard complaint is that Berkeley's account of spirit, as presented in his published works, is seriously undermined by incoherence. According to this story, the fact that he never published the promised second part of *Principles* (which was supposed to deal with spirits) did not help matters, but only confirmed that he did not in fact have a coherent account of spirit. Thus, a suspicion was born of 'a more duplicitous Berkeley who kept secret his *true* account of the mind, while officially offering up an indefensible theory' (2). In an effort to address this situation, Bettcher takes a closer look at Berkeley's writings to see if they are indeed marked by incoherence, with the explicit purpose to 'vindicate Berkeley's conception of spirit from this long-standing concern as well as other difficulties which plague it' (2). According to her, the accusation of incoherence is unfounded. Far from being incoherent, Berkeley's 'philosophy of spirit' is illustrative of an important 'transition from the older notion of a subject as supporter of accidents to the more modern notion of subject (as opposed to object)' (2). This makes Berkeley part of a larger early modern intellectual project on the issues of subject, subjectivity and subjecthood. For Bettcher, he figures prominently in this project alongside other major early modern figures such as Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Kant. Thus, Berkeley's views on self and self-consciousness become helpful for a better understanding of the modern notion of 'subjecthood and its connection to the theme that the self is mysteriously elusive' (2).

Bettcher builds up her argument on an analysis of Berkeley's ontology. According to her, in order to understand Berkeley's account of spirit one first has to examine Berkeley's ontology. In this context, Berkeley's rejection of the notion of material substance comes to be seen not as an isolated feature of his thought, but as something 'embedded within a general rejection of substance-mode ontology' (2). And it is precisely because Berkeley steps away from a traditional model of substance-mode ontology that he is in a position to adopt a 'transformed model of self-consciousness'. The advantages that the adoption of such a model brings about are multiple: this model 'grounds his dualism between perceiver and perceived, provides content to the view that spirits support ideas by perceiving them, and enables Berkeley to address the concern that we lack an idea of the soul' (2).

Bettcher's book is conceived of as 'a systematic argument' (7), with each chapter building on the previous one and playing a specific role in the unfolding of the overall argument. Chapter 1 ('Berkeley's Project') is of a more historical nature, as in it the author seeks to situate Berkeley's project within the philosophical and religious backdrop against which he emerged. It is the context delineated by the works of thinkers such as John Locke, John Tolland, Peter Browne, Anthony Collins, William King, Samuel Clarke, and others. In Chapter 2 ('The Rejection of Mode Ontology') the author opposes the view that Berkeley upholds the substance-mode ontology. As I suggested earlier, Bettcher sees this aspect as an important step in the development of her argument. Chapter 3 ('The Ruptured *Cogito*') analyzes Berkeley's response to Malebranche's claim that we cannot have an idea of the soul. Chapter 4 ('Purity of Spirit') discusses from several angles the concept of divine analogy, as well as Berkeley's notion of the incorruptibility of the soul. Chapter 5 ('Actions and Passions') provides an 'an overall account of Berkeleian mental operations' (71). Chapter 6 ('Identity and Time') is concerned with the 'identity of agents through time' and with Berkeley's account of bodily resurrection and immortality of the soul. Finally, Chapter 7 ('The Spirit and the Heap') proposes, for the most part, a reexamination of Hume's views about the mind from the particular epistemic angle of the book's main argument. The closing remarks are dedicated to Berkeley's importance for some of today's philosophical discussions. The author finds it 'strange and yet illuminating' that the 'distinctly modern concern about an elusive subject should, in part, derive from Berkeley's philosophy of spirit' (132). Also, she expresses hope that as a result of her vindication of Berkeley's 'philosophy of spirit' from the charge of incoherence, 'Berkeley can have an even greater impact upon our understating of contemporary issues concerning the philosophical concept of the subject of experience' (132).

Bettcher's is a well-documented and rigorous analysis of Berkeley's views on self and self-consciousness. Her analytical efforts are certainly to be commended. However, before concluding this short review, I need to formulate a couple of criticisms as well. First, I find it difficult to understand why the author chose to leave completely aside Berkeley's last published work *Siris* (1744). This is a Berkeleian work where the notion of 'spirit' is used most frequently as it plays a central and complex role. In spite of this, *Siris* is never mentioned here. Moreover, no explanation is given for this methodological choice, which I find very puzzling. My second criticism has to do with the author's complete avoidance of any reference to the broader intellectual context to which the notion of 'philosophy of spirit' belongs. Sometimes — for example, when reading a section of Chapter 1 entitled 'Toward a Philosophy of Spirit' (23-5) — the reader gets the vague impression that 'philosophy of spirit' is the author's own invention. Well, for at least two hundred years the term has been part of the conceptual repertoire of Western philosophy. The notion occupied (as *Philosophie des Geistes*) an absolutely central role in classical German philosophy (especially in Hegel's thinking, where it plays a crucial part). To give another example, it had a great career in 20th Century

Italy, where Benedetto Croce's four-volume masterpiece bears the general title *Filosofia dello Spirito* (1902-1917). To write a book with 'philosophy of spirit' in its title without ever mentioning Hegel is almost like writing a book entitled *On the Origin of Species* without mentioning Darwin's name at all! Certainly, Bettcher did not necessarily have to engage with these developments in her book (although that would have been indeed a novel and fresh way of reading Berkeley), but at least some terminological and historical clarifications would have been useful.

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Rebecca Bensen Cain

The Socratic Method:

Plato's Use of Philosophical Drama.

New York: Continuum 2007.

Pp. 160.

US\$110.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-8891-6).

In this short monograph (of 111 pages of text), Cain (hereafter 'C') presents an interpretation of Socratic method that differs in significant ways from what that method was commonly taken to be in the literature on 'Socratic philosophy' in the latter half of the last century. Rather than the conventional description of Socrates' method as epistemic, aiming at moral knowledge, C claims that it is 'psychological' (Chapter 1), by which she means that it operates through a demand for sincerity on the interlocutor's part, causes him to experience *aporia*, and uses his shame at this outcome to achieve aims that can be called morally pedagogical. Rather than defending Socrates, as was often done, against criticism for dialectical tactics taken to be unacceptable and for various logical fallacies, by linking Plato to ancient literary practices of ambiguity and linking his Socrates to ancient dialectical theories (Chapter 4), C finds a deliberate and creative use of ambiguity (Chapter 3) that is philosophically defensible because it aims at the moral improvement of the interlocutor. In C's view, Socrates' method is protreptic (Chapter 2), aiming to move interlocutors from the conventional moral views with which they began to the Socratic moral position that C believes can be deduced from certain *endoxa* (accepted views) that Socrates regularly employs, using in specific ways the different meanings given to the terms under discussion by Socrates and his interlocutors. Socrates' method, according to C, aims to revise the interlocutor's moral beliefs through persuasive use of endoxical premises.

There are several laudable features of the book. Unlike much scholarship on Socrates' method, C seeks to recognize the significance of Plato's literary

art and to distinguish what Socrates tries to accomplish within a dialogue from what Plato tries to accomplish by having him do so. Unlike that scholarship, too, she aims to look at whole dialogues rather than only parts and to interpret them in a more contextual way (5), by seeing the arguments 'within the framework of the drama' (51). And she recognizes that there is a 'complex psycho-dynamics' (4) at work in Socrates' treatment of his interlocutors.

On the other hand, despite being heavily weighed down by repetitive program statements, recapitulations and summaries, the book's argument against the Vlastosians is not as clear as it might be. It isn't clear at the outset who the argument is aimed at, and it seemed to make better sense to rearrange the chapter claims as I did in the first paragraph above. More seriously, however — and like her opponents — C's overall argument is based on false or dubious assumptions that are never discussed. The neat division of Plato's dialogues into early, 'Socratic' ones, middle, and late ones has long since ceased to be the scholarly consensus; and with it goes the very existence of a 'Socratic philosophy' of which the 'Socratic Method' under discussion here would be a part. This is the more surprising since she includes in her bibliography several books and articles critical of these assumptions, including Nails' critique in *Ancient Philosophy* (1993). 'Socratic philosophy' as it was often discussed was an intellectual construct based on a somewhat arbitrary — and inconsistent from author to author (see Thesleff, *Studies in Platonic Chronology*) — set of dialogues taken to be 'Socratic'. Worse, in the last ten years the Vlastosian program has been widely criticized and lost much of its old vitality and capacity to motivate scholarly work. From this perspective, C's book looks a bit like beating a dead horse.

Nevertheless, C is right about many things. She is certainly right that Vlastos 'decontextualizes passages and isolates the elenctic arguments from the dialectical context of the dialogues' (8), for Socratic dialectic is much more than just elenctic arguments, as C says. One's understanding of the arguments narrowly defined is enhanced by grasping the setting, the characters, and the plots in which they are embedded. The great challenge of contemporary Plato scholarship is precisely to read the dialogues 'as literature and as philosophy at the same time' (ix), though she needs to go more deeply into the literary aspects of the dialogues than she has done here; into their language, literary structures, humor, allusions, and mythic retellings. It is correct, too, that Plato and his Socrates aim to redefine the terms of moral discussion (35) in ways that both recover the terms' traditional substantiality and enrich them through an intellectual analysis and criticism that transcends simple realism and sophistic relativism. It is well said that the ends of many dialogues are better understood as ambiguous rather than as 'aporetic', and that in so being they are productive for the reader (17).

C is right that Socrates' refutations are protreptic (Chapter 2), though they may also serve other purposes simultaneously. He often uses the interlocutor's shame at being found to be in contradiction (23-6) and regularly handles interlocutors in particularized ways (47). This means that many refutative arguments are, in their dramatic settings, *ad hominem*, and C is

correct that this is not the problem it has sometimes been supposed to be, since Socrates' aim is not formal demonstration. Socrates does frequently use endoxical premises and play on the ambiguity of their central terms. C names three such premises as central: all humans desire the good, virtue is beneficial, and virtue is like a *techne* (43). Though I would agree with the first two, the third is a proposition never explicitly stated and open to challenge as a Socratic or Platonic belief, despite its long run in the secondary literature. But her general point — that Socrates uses endoxa as premises — is correct.

The greatest strength of the book, in fact, is the careful analyses of particular cases (68-93), of which there could well be more. They show more clearly than any number of argument summaries that and how Plato's Socrates plays on the ambiguity of central terms in these premises and employs psychological strategies to detach his interlocutors from the conventional or sophistic views they bring to the conversation and to re-orient them toward a more Socratic set of beliefs, values, and practices.

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Paul Churchland

Neurophilosophy at Work.

New York: Cambridge University Press 2007.

Pp. 262.

Cdn\$87.95/US\$74.30

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-86472-5);

Cdn\$27.95/US\$24.29

(paper ISBN-13: 978-0-521-69200-7).

This book is a collection of published essays from a pioneer and leading mind in neurophilosophy. The essays were all previously published (ranging over the years 2000 to 2006), and cover a wide variety of topics as they connect with Churchland's philosophical position on the human mind and behavior, a position firmly grounded in the contemporary neurosciences. Two common themes are evident throughout: (i) the power and promise of parallel distributed processing models of brain activity to explain various examples of animal (human and nonhuman) cognition and (ii) a conditional rejection of mental state discourse that either (a) explicitly helps itself to folk psychological entities like beliefs or desires, or (b) analyses cognitive states as types of propositional attitudes, when explaining or predicting human (or nonhuman) behavior. This will come as no surprise to those who have encountered Churchland's twentieth-century work in the philosophy of mind. Churchland continues to

offer what he takes to be a thoroughly biological theory of mind, free of the trappings of soul-talk that echoes in contemporary folk psychology.

As the discussion in many of the chapters is quite technical, the collection is clearly directed at philosophers or the philosophically minded. This probably marks out the book as a text for a higher level class in neurophilosophy or naturalized philosophy of mind. The wealth of topics covered in the collection guarantees that students of analytic philosophy of mind will have an interest in at least some, if not much, of what is discussed. Four chapters (1, 2, 7, 8) are squarely in the sphere of philosophy of mind. Chapter 2 contains a critical discussion of functionalism as a philosophical theory of mind (or the nature of mental states). Chapters 1, 7 and 8 contain relatively detailed discussions of, respectively, consciousness, the nature of intelligence, and neurosemantics. Most of the remaining chapters cover topics arising out of more focused discussions in neurophilosophy. Chapters 3 and 4 venture into moral psychology, revealing Churchland's perspective on moral virtues and moral reasoning, respectively. Chapter 6 discusses reliabilist epistemology devoid of folk psychological concepts. This Churchland does not just by offering another take on a connectionist model of brain function, but by questioning the prominence of propositional-attitude-discourse in naturalized epistemology. Chapters 9 and 10 focus on what neuroscience may have to say about color experience, which Churchland uses to provide more detailed comments on his perspective on phenomenal consciousness and how it should be understood from a neurobiologically informed philosophical perspective.

The odd choice in the collection is Chapter 5, which deals with American education, science and religion. Though an interesting piece that defends a sensible political liberalism, and a secular educational system, it does not explicitly touch on neurophilosophy. I suppose that, because all learning leaves its traces in the brain, this piece is an exercise in neurophilosophy. This liberal application of the term implies that *any* essay touching on behavior and cognition will count as a piece on neurophilosophy, but surely this is too liberal an understanding of 'neurophilosophy'.

Though not an eliminativist in my philosophy of mind (and so not committed to eliminating folk psychological terms or concepts from an enquiry into the nature of mind), I find myself in large agreement with what Churchland advocates or presupposes when developing specific views on consciousness, moral cognition and even naturalized epistemology. I agree, for example, that, to adequately explain goal-directed animal behavior, where the goals are acquired rather than 'innate', we must ascribe causally efficacious information states, with varying complexities of representational content. Given that only humans are linguistic, the requisite theory of representational content needed to fill out said explanations need not require linguistic capacity. Churchland seeks to provide such a theory using his connectionist model of brain function. I also agree that analytic philosophers are better off developing a theory of mind informed by the cognitive sciences, rather than conceptual analysis, though, like many naturalized philosophers of mind, I would not limit myself to the neurosciences.

I do, however, find myself unconvinced by Churchland's neuro-centric approach to the mind, and for at least two reasons. First, the conceptual framework that makes use of mental state discourse to explain intentional behavior is a cultural, or social, as well as 'biological' product. This means more than that it serves a critically social function in allowing us to predict, influence or even order the behavior of conspecifics. (Churchland himself would tentatively agree here, though he would bemoan the continued, exclusive reliance on folk psychology). Though this is true, our cognitivist conceptual framework also develops out of our interactions with both conspecifics and non-conspecifics and so serves a broadly social function of facilitating co-existence (with the relevant social group[s]). To develop a theory of mind that seeks to reconstitute such a conceptual framework using the insights of the neurosciences into the nature and role of various information or affective states implemented in the brain seems to miss these social features of our so-called folk psychology entirely. Second, and on a related point, there is an embodied, relational view of human agency, developed to a great extent by feminist philosophers, that many, both in and outside of the academy, find persuasive. This theory of human agency implicates other sciences, natural as well as social, in developing a better understanding of intentional human behavior. It is difficult to see how Churchland can accommodate such a move beyond the brain, the central nervous system, or the body.

Despite these concerns, I recommend this book to those beginning their work in the philosophy of mind, or to those who, though experienced philosophers of mind, are ready to revisit Churchland's neurophilosophy. As none of these essays are new, however, Churchland scholars, or neurophilosophers more generally, are least likely to find this collection useful. [This review was funded in part through a grant from CIHR.]

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Hannah Dawson

Locke, Language and Early-Modern Philosophy.

New York: Cambridge University Press. 2007.

Pp. 371.

Cdn\$100.95/US\$96.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-85271-5).

The history of philosophy of language has been sorely neglected. Contemporary practitioners tend to know almost nothing about it, supposing even that it originated with Frege. This is not merely unfair to the great minds

of the past: the study of the discipline's history stands to reintroduce important topics. What are the implications of philosophy of language for biblical and legal hermeneutics, and for the ethics of style? Does the world shape languages, or are their features causally fixed by the unconstrained will of speakers? And if the latter, which speakers: the knowledgeable elites, or the untutored masses?

In the context of this woeful neglect, Dawson's book seems especially promising. And it does deliver in some respects. It is exhaustively researched, covering an astonishing array of figures and texts; the materials presented can be deeply thought-provoking; and a large number of currently unfashionable yet philosophically important topics, including those above, are touched upon. Finally, its central interpretive thesis is fascinating: that Locke, far more than his predecessors, was especially interested in language proper (i.e., rather than representation generally); and that he was especially concerned with its inherent dangers.

Before I turn to the book's failings — which, I'm afraid, rather outweigh these positives — a caveat is in order. It may be that Dawson conceives of her book as broad-strokes intellectual history, not as philosophical engagement with an episode in the history of philosophy of language. Nevertheless, given the likely more philosophically oriented readership of this journal, it is appropriate to consider the merits of this book in the latter terms.

My criticisms divide into issues of style and substance/interpretation. Regarding style, the book is unnecessarily long and, in the later chapters, repetitive. It contains much unnecessary background, along with an abundance of inessential quotations and historical curiosities. (It reads, in this regard, like a doctoral dissertation.) Its occasionally florid prose illustrates, ironically enough, a point made repeatedly by the Early Moderns: that rhetorical flourishes often obscure. Here is one example among hundreds: 'Moreover, in the unregulated idleness of living minds, language sheds its subservience to ideas and takes on its ugly, domineering aspect, covering the vacuous and confused ideational reality with a pleasing plenitude of verbal clarity. Ceaselessly circulating in and out of our minds, language forges an indiscernible but gaping loophole in rational moralising' (284). Philosophers and historians of philosophy will also be frustrated by the general lack of arguments; the tendency to overstate massively throughout a chapter, only to retract the exaggerated claims later on; and the technique of 'addressing' alternative exegetical interpretations by merely mentioning them in footnotes (more on this below).

Turning to substance, the background chapters afford a very superficial survey, with figures and works in their dozens. Granted, a pattern is discerned, namely a nascent 'deep fear about the corruptible nature of words' (5). However, at this level of abstraction, and drawing on isolated quotations, any pattern could be substantiated. Thus the first half of the book is not only, in the main, of limited relevance, it is not compelling either.

As for the chapters on Locke, philosophical readers will find Dawson's book tremendously frustrating. She overestimates Locke's skepticism, both in general and about language in particular. Worse, having diagnosed Locke's

obsession with 'the *problem of language in philosophy*' (5), she then finds, in one of our greatest philosophical minds, 'intractable tensions' (303) — because Locke's practical philosophy fits ill with such extreme skepticism: 'We see Locke tussling, half-aware, with these two extremes, demonstrating the kind of stresses that are so characteristic of his linguistic theory as a whole and even of his general philosophical outlook' (211).

The core argument which allegedly leads Locke to radical skepticism, and thence to 'the contradictory heart of his philosophy of language' (281), can be reconstructed from Dawson's seventh and eighth chapters:

Premise 1: Each person can only assign as meanings what she knows.

Premise 2: Each person knows only her own ideas — got from sensation, reflection and abstraction.

Conclusion 1: Each person assigns as meanings only her own ideas — got from sensation, reflection and abstraction.

Premise 3: There being no innate ideas, and the world posing very few constraints on idea formation, our ideas are likely to differ wildly.

Conclusion 2: Our meanings are likely to differ wildly.

This conclusion is then shown, in Chapter 10, to be in severe tension with Locke's views on toleration, politics, and society.

What is especially vexing is that there is a natural rebuttal to this core argument. Moreover, as readers familiar with forty years of Locke scholarship will know well, it's a rebuttal that Locke himself arguably had the resources to mount. We may read Locke as endorsing both Premises 1 and 2, but in such a way that 'knows' is interpreted as 'knows immediately or indirectly' in the former, and as 'knows immediately' in the latter. Locke can then say: Conclusion 1 is arrived at by equivocating on 'knows'; given the fallacious inference to Conclusion 1, Conclusion 2 simply does not follow either.

Put otherwise, there is a standard way of reading Locke such that he is no idealist. Nor, for Locke, are we even trapped behind a veil of ideas. To the contrary, Locke allows that words can 'have reference to' things outside one's own mind; he simply insists that such reference is achieved in two steps: words are directly connected to one's own ideas, and those ideas are then causally connected to publically shared things outside our minds. Reading Locke this way, the alleged tensions (largely) dissolve.

My complaint is not that Dawson rejects this reading. It's that she fails to engage it seriously: she essentially by-passes the issue of direct versus indirect reference, even though it was for a long time *the* central debate about Locke's philosophy. It is mentioned twice, namely in footnotes 58 (195-6) and 147 (264). Then, despite the fact that such a reading would absolve Locke of inconsistency, it promptly disappears from view. Nor is this blind-spot restricted to her interpretation of Locke. Beginning at page 17, while considering the extra-linguistic correlate of words, Dawson repeatedly accuses philosophers of confusing mental concepts with worldly things; whereas a perfectly reasonable alternative interpretation is that (at least many of) these philosophers take mental concepts to be the immediate signification, while worldly things are, for them, a word's indirectly determined reference.

In sum, intellectual historians will benefit from Dawson's archival work, and all readers will learn many intriguing facts and arcana from her wide-ranging survey. But, in terms of redressing the sad neglect of the history of philosophy of language, this book seriously disappoints.

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Steve Fuller

The Knowledge Book.

Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 2007.

Pp. 231.

\$80.00 (cloth ISBN: 978-0-7735-3346-2);

\$27.95 (paper ISBN: 978-0-7735-3346-9).

Fuller's social epistemology expresses his normative project concerning how science should be organized through knowledge policy and democratically chosen goals. This interdisciplinary book (hereafter: 'KB') contains essays on forty two topics on the social nature of knowledge and its application as applied social epistemology. It has been updated as it was originally commissioned in Japanese with the title: *Social Epistemology: A Word Map* (2006).

KB is of interest to the generalist since Fuller discusses topics such as knowledge management and rhetoric that are not normally discussed in books on epistemology. A list of readings appears after the treatment of each topic. KB is comprehensive in terms of its breadth of topics, and on each topic Fuller provides an extended discussion. For the specialist, though it does not include topics such as belief or truth, which are usually discussed in books in philosophy of science and epistemology, KB discusses the cognitive content of science, the normative content of science, truth and reliability, and the ends of knowledge.

KB only devotes five pages to Fuller's social epistemology and five pages to analytic social epistemology. The rest of KB is on applied social epistemology, with essays in areas on different topics in business studies (knowledge management, information science), policy studies (knowledge policy, social capital versus public good), science and technology studies, rhetoric, postmodernism, social science, journalism (mass media), disciplinarity versus interdisciplinarity, evolution, and common sense versus collective memory. The essays also intersect each other; for example, common sense versus collective memory intersects with information science and analytic social epistemology.

Since feminism, rationality and social science are important in the scope of Fuller's social epistemology, I discuss them here. On feminism, Fuller's discussion concerns feminist standpoint social epistemology. Fuller argues that the problem with feminism is the ambiguity of whether it is about women as such or about women who from a privileged perspective pursue the universal project of humanity. The heart of the ambiguity lies in the dual meaning of the word 'standpoint', which is both a location and a source for an overarching vision. Epistemic privilege goes to women who are unprivileged in society because they provide perspectives that are not as distorted as perspectives generated by other social positions. Fuller does not address social epistemic issues concerning the privilege of women in science, as those issues have been addressed by feminist social epistemologists such as Grasswick ('Feminist Social Epistemology', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2006) Harding (*Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives*, 1991), and Rolin ('Why Gender is a Relevant Factor in the Social Epistemology of Scientific Inquiry,' *Philosophy of Science* 71 [5]: 880-891), writers who do not focus on the universal project of humanity.

Fuller's view of rationality differs from other accounts of scientific rationality, such as those of Kuhn and Rouse, who focus on practical wisdom or *phronesis*. For Fuller, scientific rationality is an external standard based on accountability conditions linked to his notion of pure criticoinstrumental rationality. A major problem is that the rationality of science cannot depend just on the instrumental efficacy of the means to the goals; it also depends on the rationality of those goals. The instrumental view deems science to be rational, if its procedures are instrumentally efficacious in achieving its goals. The rationality of science depends crucially, therefore, on a determination of those goals. Yet there are many rival and incompatible views concerning goals. Hence, the rationality of the goals has to be established first (Harvey Siegel 1985, 'What Is the Question Concerning the Rationality of Science?' *Philosophy of Science* 52, no. 4: 520). I suggest that Fuller does not try to establish the rationality of the actual goals of science because that is an empirical matter. Instead, he offers accountability conditions as instrumentally rational conditions of the rationality of actual goals. His view is that if the actual goals satisfied the accountability conditions, then they would be rational. Then, if the goals are rational, cases in the history of science can be judged as to whether science has been successful in achieving these goals. The four accountability conditions are: (A) Discernability. The ends of science are known to the social accountant, mainly because the accountant chooses them or participates in their construction. The ends are not mysterious or accessible only to some undefined entity. (B) Transcendence. The ends are more than the sum of the immediate ends of individuals whose actions are being held accountable. (C) Responsibility. The ends are not idiosyncratic to the social accountant. (D) Revisability. The ends may change, even quite radically, as the knowledge or identity of the social accountant changes.

Fuller's discussion of social science is novel in the literature in philosophy of social science. To address the implications for the social sciences of

the disappearance of the ontological distinction between humans and nature, Fuller discusses the influence on and challenge of biology to social sciences especially, in particular from sociobiologists who give genetic explanations of human behavior. Fuller considers 'bioliberalism', which includes sociobiology, to be the major threat to the social sciences. His view is that humanity is endangered since what it is that makes humanity distinct from nature seems to have disappeared. Nonetheless, Fuller recommends that social scientists accept the biologization of the social world, but he calls for an independent sociological understanding of biological knowledge.

Because KB discusses forty-two topics and is not an extended argument on one topic, its organization cannot be faulted. Nonetheless, Fuller does not inform the reader of the core issues of his social epistemology, and he does not specifically discuss the topic of knowledge. Though he uses the terms 'universal project of humanity' in feminism and 'humanity' in social science, he does not inform the reader of the significance of these terms in his social epistemology. These terms are explained in the *New Sociological Imagination* (NSI) (2006), in which Fuller's view is that the central project of the social sciences is a moral project of humanity. It is socially organized resistance to the natural selection and natural forces, through collective projects such as Christianity, the university and the state that 'defy the gene's eye-view of the world' (NSI 6). Participation in large scale projects allows humanity to control or reverse the effects of natural selection. Fuller avers that Durkheim, Marx, and Weber all agree to the project of humanity.

In conclusion, Fuller's book is a welcome addition since it covers many topics not normally discussed in the literature on social Epistemology.

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Arthur Gibson

What is Literature?

New York: Peter Lang 2007.

Pp. 530.

US\$99.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-3-03910-916-6).

Gibson's exploration of literature in this ambitious work positions itself as a response to Jean-Paul Sartre's series of essays published as *What is Literature?* in 1947. Gibson claims that the nature of literature is not, as Sartre asserts, 'finite and particular' but rather a 'series of infinite qualities' (479). He explains that literature opens up meaning continually and in surprising

ways. The concept of surprise is fundamental to Gibson's contention that literature is 'counter-intuitive'. Thus the main thesis of the book is contained in Gibson's assertion that 'great literature directs attention to new ways of seeing' (19). This statement could be just as usefully applied to Gibson's own book. In it he proposes a myriad of positions from which to consider the infinite and surprising nature of literature.

Gibson considers his conceptualization of literature as 'counter-intuitive' in relation to established definitions, including Aristotle's discussion of literature as mimetic. This Gibson challenges and modifies, claiming that '[c]reative literature deforms imitation of the world to achieve what we come to recognise as a new representation of the world's identity' (55). He expands upon this statement by explaining, 'imitation is not the mere copying superficial likeness. It is a creative conjunction of identities' (95). In these opening sections Gibson applies a descriptive, rather than an evaluative, answer to the question what literature is. He signals, however, that he is well aware that literary value is often conferred by commercial success, popular taste and scholarly interest.

The necessity to counter these forms of literary evaluation leads Gibson to a discussion of objective methods of evaluation that could be usefully applied to literature. He draws upon the shared qualitative elements in scientific method, forms of mathematical enquiry and literature. He contends that 'there are qualitative realms within science that display similarity to qualitative features in literature' (167). Key to this argument is the concept of qualitative singularities within scientific enquiry and mathematics. These singularities require researchers to consider creative approaches outside accepted methodologies. This discussion raises many interesting issues relating to human creativity, a shared element of all intellectual inquiry. However, while in scientific and mathematical analysis a qualitative singularity can be a problem to be solved, thus eliciting a creative response, it is often simply ignored as insignificant. In literature, according to Gibson, it is by contrast the qualitative singularity which creates the 'surprise' that reveals through 'counter-intuition . . . the fresh structure that comprises the new' (194). It is this 'new' that appears to be integral to Gibson's definition of literature. The problem with this argument resides in the fundamental difference in the value of qualitative singularities in science and mathematics as opposed to literature.

In Part 2 Gibson considers the relationship between literature and historic tradition. He maintains it is those texts that in some way distort, reinvent, challenge or engage in an unusual manner with literary tradition that can be considered literary. Within this discussion Gibson also touches upon authorial identity and its relationship to the literary persona. He engages with the topic of authorial intention, though he concedes that 'literary narrative and people are complex entities and the relations between the two are vastly intricate' (374). In Part 3 Gibson considers again the relationship between science and literature and the importance of 'creative singularities' (415). He employs a metaphor drawn from cosmological theory to discuss creative qualities in literature. He extends this metaphor by explaining that '[a] new piece

of literature has a mass of multiple relations to the literary past prior to it, rather like the relation of an exploding star to its surrounding space' (415).

Part 4 returns to the relationship between biography and the literary text by considering 'book death' and 'book abortion' (439). Gibson discusses the many social forces that contribute to the demise of a book either after it is written, or even before it can be written or at least completed. These include publishers or modes of production available at any given time. He also contends that conferring anonymity upon an author can have a deleterious effect on the text itself. He points to examples of editorial intervention and finally, in an extended discussion of Emily Brontë's alleged lost works, family interference. It is in this last section that problems inherent throughout this book become most apparent. There is a tendency to over-generalize as well as to make unsubstantiated claims and judgments concerning the personal lives of individuals. Most outrageously, Gibson asserts that one must reasonably assume Emily Brontë's completed second novel is in her grave, 'It was a Christmas present for Emily in death: Charlotte placed the manuscript (s) in Emily's coffin' (475). This claim is followed by several questionable suppositions intended to support this version of events. Indeed, Part 4 contributes very little to defining literature and obscures the more valuable aspects of this evolving discussion.

Gibson sets himself a daunting task in this book. He successfully inserts useful conceptualizations into the critical discussion concerning the description and evaluation of literary texts. Unfortunately, this discussion is too often interrupted by long asides that do little to illustrate and develop his ideas. Examples are drawn from a vast swathe of literary history, as well as multiple literary traditions in many cultures. Gibson also shows extensive awareness of critical and cultural theory as well as philosophy. However, key ideas are often obscured by the very breadth and quantity of exemplary material. There is also a tendency to imprecision and generalization that diminishes the value of this material. For example, in discussing 'the Socratic fallacy' he contends, '[w]e may understand that Shakespeare is the greatest English playwright, without being able to define the point' (132). The flippancy of this example does little to seriously engage with or even exemplify the topic. The use of fewer and more considered examples would have allowed for a more successful development of the book's main contentions. It would also have benefited from a more tightly focused and cleaner organizational structure. Gibson's book is a montage of incredible breadth; unfortunately its very richness interferes with the book's ability to communicate important critical concepts.

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Christina M. Gschwandtner

Reading Jean-Luc Marion:

Exceeding Metaphysics.

Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2007.

Pp. 320.

US\$65.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-253-34977-4);

US\$24.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-253-21945-9).

It is extremely difficult to give a comprehensive perspective on the work of a thinker whose interests are as diverse as those of Jean-Luc Marion. Marion's specialist knowledge not only of the history of philosophy (and, in particular, early modern philosophy, with a focus on Descartes), but also of phenomenology (especially Husserl and Heidegger), much that comes 'after' phenomenology (including Henry, Lévinas, and Derrida), fine art, and Catholic theology (particularly, but not exclusively by any means, its patristic and medieval formulations), makes him a formidable subject. Gschwandtner is to be congratulated on her attempt to integrate reflections on these many aspects of Marion's work, and, indeed, to articulate a theory of their unity. Gschwandtner portrays Marion's corpus through the prism of his Cartesian material, a perspective that has previously been suggested (by Derek J. Morrow, for example) but has awaited comprehensive articulation. Moreover, she argues that this is not just one, but the primary means by which we should understand Marion. In working out this thesis, Gschwandtner gives particular emphasis to the role of the theology of the divine names, the late medieval decline in the doctrine of analogy, and the relationship between the thought of Descartes and that of Pascal. My judgment is that Gschwandtner's is an important work that contributes much to the debate about Marion and is deserving of serious attention, though she and I may differ on some issues.

Gschwandtner puts forward a compelling argument that Marion's Cartesian material actually prepares for (or even determines) many of his phenomenological insights. This is set out most clearly in relation to Marion's definition of and attempts to overcome metaphysics, although it is also argued with regard to the subject. In the latter case this is less convincing. Gschwandtner is clearly comfortable within a modern philosophical framework, and moves through Marion's Cartesian texts with ease. The real strength of this book, then, is Gschwandtner's capacity to highlight the distinctiveness of Marion's interpretations of Descartes and to show how these interpretations may well be at work elsewhere. This marks a major contribution to the literature.

The author rightly situates her analyses within the context of Marion's overarching interest in overcoming metaphysics, whether by way of theology or by way of phenomenology, and she is correct to observe the similarities between Marion's theological perspectives and the way in which Pascal might be seen theologically to 'overcome' Descartes. One may be forgiven occasionally for suspecting that in Gschwandtner's treatment issues emerging in the philosophy of Descartes actually come to constitute Marion's main

philosophical and theological orientation. This leads us to note one of the more controversial aspects of Gschwandtner's text, which is her claim that *de facto*, if not *de jure*, 'both (Marion's) theology and his phenomenology precisely are attempts to recover a new version of a doctrine of analogy (with the notions of distance and the icon) and a quasi-Dionysian *via eminentia*' (129). The question of Marion's appreciation of analogy has previously been raised by Morrow in relation to Thomas Aquinas, although Gschwandtner's treatment of the issue here is more wide-ranging. While she is careful to point out that Marion himself does not articulate this idea, she maintains that analogy functions in his work at the level of naming, if not of being (133). In the contexts in which Gschwandtner explores the problem, there is a pertinence to her suggestion. The difficulty is, exactly, for Marion to establish a relation without relation, and his attempts may well resemble the thought of analogy — perhaps as an analogy of analogy, as it were. Further, one of the weaknesses of Marion's thought, as he attempts to describe the functioning of both the icon and distance, is that he frequently lays himself open to the charge of simply reinstating metaphysics by way of instituting a reciprocal intentionality. However, if he does mime analogy here, he would also have to come to reject it as such in naming, because his is ultimately a naming that defies not only understanding but clear identification, although admittedly, this too is a point of dispute.

Among the strengths of this work are a very useful discussion of Marion's theology, especially in its precise relationship to philosophy, and the fact that Gschwandtner is able to draw on a wide range of secondary material in a number of languages. Her detailed examination of Marion's treatment of 'the self that comes after the subject' is particularly helpful in many respects. At the same time, the material on *The Erotic Phenomenon* is limited and, given the importance of this work — Gschwandtner speaks of it in terms of Marion's 'most systematic proposal of a different way of philosophizing' (85) — it could have been explored more fully. Moreover, while Gschwandtner fairly points out, in relation to her own work, both that in a text so extensive in its scope it is not possible to engage in dialogue concerning every aspect of criticism, and that she seeks to present a point of view sympathetic to Marion, there are times when significant critical issues might have been addressed, or have been addressed more vigorously, e.g., the problem of recognizing the divine gaze or the question of the gift. Gschwandtner's book serves as a wonderful resource for the literature, but at times lacks decisiveness in this regard.

To my knowledge there is no work that yet does justice to the complexity of the work of Jean-Luc Marion. Gschwandtner has achieved a great deal in offering us a further and clearly significant perspective on that complexity. We await with great interest the dialogue to emerge as the fruit of her labor.

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Daniel Heller-Roazen

The Inner Touch: Archaeology of a Sensation.

New York: Zone Books 2007.

Pp. 386.

US\$33.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-1-890951-76-4).

This ambitious philosophical excavation traces the history of a concept that has borne various appellations: the 'common sense' of Aristotle's commentators; the 'inner touch' of the Stoics; the 'interior sense' of Augustine; the 'inner space' of Maine de Biran; and the medical idea of 'coenaesthesia' proposed by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scientists. The faculty denoted by these terms is complex, for it includes a kind of perception irreducible to the traditional five senses insofar as it can compare and judge different kinds of sensation, as well as sense the activities of the various senses themselves. Most significantly, however, the 'inner touch' is the source of a being's feeling of its own existence, its own life. The compelling thesis that emerges from Heller-Roazen's 'archaeology' of this sensation is that it is indeed a power of *feeling* rather than of consciousness, cognition, or even imagination. The author argues that, beginning with Aristotle, 'the ancients spoke little of consciousness and a great deal of sensing' (21), and he asks whether the activities of awareness and self-awareness attributed to the 'modern faculty' of consciousness 'were not forms of cognition but rather of sensation . . . What if consciousness were a variety of tact and contact in the literal sense, "an inner touch . . . by which we perceive ourselves"?' (40). Heller-Roazen finds concealed beneath the 'thinking thing' of modernity a tradition for which 'the relations between cognition and perception, thought and feeling, were not as they became.' In his conclusion, he argues that this concealment is responsible for human beings' loss of their 'animal power that was this sense of life'.

The important philosophical issues at stake in this book are perhaps in danger of being eclipsed at times by its author's entertaining and rather eccentric literary style, which exhibits a taste for quirky anecdotes. The book's *dramatis personae* include a cat, a boar, a tortoise, a mussel, a crab, a Great Dane, a hound, and a hare, in addition to a large cast of ancient, medieval and modern philosophers and scientists. This inclusion of as many different creatures as possible not only brings a refreshing lightness of tone to an extremely rich and rigorous scholarly discussion, **but also** serves to emphasize the serious point that the 'inner touch' is a power we share with other animals, and to accentuate the pathos of a breach with the animal kingdom.

The book comprises twenty-five chapters, the first of which introduces the 'sense of sensing' via the experience of Murr the Cat, a sensitive animal in the dark who exemplifies our own pre-cognitive, pre-conscious feeling of existence. The following eight chapters deal with Aristotle and his commentators, ending with two alternative responses to the question, left open by the Stagirite, of whether the 'sense of sensing' is specifically human, or shared by all animals. Heller-Roazen suggests that the tendency of subsequent generations to follow Philoponus and Simplicius in emphasising the distinction

between human and animal souls bears witness to a decisive, albeit gradual, 'transformation in the conception of animal nature' (98). Chapter 10 offers a lengthy and fascinating discussion of the Stoic notion of appropriation. Forming the basis of ethics, yet common to all creatures, this involves a being's sense of its own nature or constitution, which enables it to care for itself. The Hellenistic ethic of self-knowledge is thus grounded in a felt experience of familiarity and acquaintance, rather than in an exercise of theoretical reflection.

After discussing versions of the 'common sense' or 'inner touch' proposed by Augustine, Avicenna, and Aquinas, as well as by Egyptian and Persian thinkers of the middle ages, Heller-Roazen reaches the modern period. Although he begins on familiar Cartesian terrain, he very quickly moves to Campanella, Bacon, and Leibniz, who all challenge Descartes' decisive partitioning of the human from the animal, and of thinking from feeling. Campanella argues that not only animals but all things have a kind of awareness of being affected that includes the 'sense-of-self' without which no being could conserve itself or continue to exist; he describes the world itself as 'an extremely sensitive animal'. Bacon advances a similar thesis concerning the ubiquity of perception. The implication is, of course, that awareness is not synonymous with, nor dependent on, consciousness. While Descartes 'sunders the problem of "perception" utterly from that of "sense", setting the unconscious actions carried out in the mechanical world against the conscious acts performed by the cogitating "I",' his Italian and English contemporaries 'sought to conceive of the difference between perception and sense not as an opposition but as a threshold . . . linking every state of consciousness to the infinity of unconsciousness from which it arose and to which it could always return' (178). Influenced by these two thinkers, Leibniz identifies 'an infinity of perceptions' present in us at every moment, although unaccompanied by awareness, and thus denies 'that the Cartesians ever proved — or could ever prove — that every perception is accompanied by consciousness' (188).

This challenge to the Cartesian project is traced further through the works of Rousseau, Condillac, and Maine de Biran, but once he reaches the mid-nineteenth century Heller-Roazen shifts the focus of his 'archaeology' from the terrain of philosophy to that of medical science. The French physician Louis Peisse, for example, suggested in 1844 that, by means of the psychological perception of the physical machine, 'the body incessantly seems to the self to be *its own*, and . . . the spiritual subject feels and perceives itself to exist,' and that this manifests 'the indissoluble tie between psychic life and physiological life' (248).

Chapters 22 and 23 present detailed narrative accounts of cases of phantom limbs, and of what modern psychiatry diagnoses as 'depersonalisation': the state of feeling that one does not exist, even though one 'knows perfectly well that (one's) body lives and functions'. The argument here is that this pathology of sensations without a self, of perceptions without apperception, testifies to the possibility that human beings 'could live well after the demise of their "selves," and . . . could reason, with the lucidity of the sane, in

the absence of their own “persons” (279). The patient suffering from depersonalisation experiences not merely an absence of sensation but, as in the phenomenon of phantom limbs, a sensation of absence. According to Heller-Roazen, the emergence of these conditions in the nineteenth century points to a startling philosophical conclusion: ‘One metaphysical determination of human nature now reaches its fulfilment. The animal vanishes from man: in a speaking being, thought and existence remain, at last absolved from the animal power that was the sense of life . . . At the limit, one reaches the absolute certainty of an intellectual power divested of everything at all that can be perceived — not least existence’ (287). Although he stops short of interpreting this as an event of nihilism, another chapter in the history of forgetting of being, the author finds parallels between this eclipse of feeling by thought and the diagnoses of the modern predicament offered by Benjamin, Heidegger, and Lévinas, who write, respectively, of a ‘poverty of experience’; of ‘being left empty’ (*Leergelassenheit*); of an absolute ‘experience of depersonalisation’.

Some readers may be surprised that, given the theme and scope of this book, Heller-Roazen has chosen not to enter into dialogue either with Merleau-Ponty’s classic phenomenology of perception (which also draws philosophical conclusions from pathologies such as phantom limbs), or with Derrida’s more recent exploration of the sense of touch, *Le toucher*. The fact that Heller-Roazen’s book steers its own course is to its credit, for it is more original as well as more lucid and scholarly than *Le toucher*, which recapitulates its author’s trademark critique of the ‘metaphysics of presence’. More broadly, Heller-Roazen’s response to Cartesian anthropology offers an alternative to the standard phenomenological interpretations of perception and consciousness: in place of the concept of a ‘pre-reflective cogito’ or ‘pre-theoretical understanding’, he posits, more simply, a *feeling* of lived being, lived time, or life itself. If this work does fall short, it is in failing to develop its philosophical argument more fully and explicitly, and perhaps also in its apparent lack of interest in questions of philosophical method. In tracing the history of a concept, Heller-Roazen offers little reflection on the diverse ways in which the various thinkers discussed go about their investigation and analysis of the ‘common sense’ or ‘inner touch’. But these limitations are slight in proportion to the author’s achievement, for he has written a marvelous book — as enjoyable as it is impressive, and as accessible as it is erudite — that will appeal to a very wide range of academic readers.

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Thomas Hibbs

Aquinas, Ethics, and Philosophy of Religion: Metaphysics and Practice.

Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2007.

Pp. 232.

US\$39.95 (cloth: ISBN-13: 978-0-253-34881-4).

Hibbs aims to place Thomas Aquinas in dialogue with recent Continental and Anglo philosophers on the question of how metaphysics and ethical practice are related. He believes that the rising interest in virtue ethics, with its emphasis on ethical character and the primacy of prudence, presents a golden opportunity to examine more deeply the 'inevitability of metaphysics' (xii) for all of philosophy. Even those with a specific interest in Aristotle or Aquinas tend to compartmentalize metaphysics and ethics in a vain attempt to develop them in isolation from each another. This, Hibbs argues, contradicts the classical position that exalts metaphysics as the crowning jewel of philosophy, and detracts from the idea that philosophy is a way of life.

Hibbs begins by clarifying the subtle ordering of metaphysics and ethics. Although metaphysics is 'first philosophy', it is the last branch of philosophy to be studied. In part this is because key concepts in metaphysics, such as act, potency, and finality, are exemplified more readily through an analysis of moral action. Furthermore, even though 'theory' is superior in terms of the objects it investigates, 'prudence' is regulative insofar as it determines how theoretical and practical activities are to be woven into a unified human life. Conversely, the primacy of metaphysics becomes apparent when we consider that it deals not only with being, but also truth, goodness and beauty, all of which are essentially involved in the moral life. Yet Hibbs does not simply argue for metaphysics as a backdrop for ethical practice. He makes strong claims regarding metaphysics itself, asserting that it demands only as much precision as its subject matter allows, and that it culminates not in exhaustive certitude, but in a deepening sense of the mystery of things (which itself has ethical implications). For these reasons, and unbeknownst to its practitioners, analytic philosophy, with its debates on ethics and epistemology, already touches upon metaphysics.

The second half of the book delves into the question of how metaphysics might be integrated more thoroughly into practice, and how metaphysics itself *is* practice. Here the conversation partner switches from analytic philosophy to Continental philosophy. Hibbs attempts to modify the Continental account of the relationship between metaphysics and ethics by supplementing Jean-Luc Marion's 'metaphysics of the Gift' with what Alasdair MacIntyre, following Aquinas, calls 'just generosity'.

MacIntyre's presence is felt throughout the book, for he has brought to the fore the distinctive features of virtue ethics so important to Hibbs' comparison of it with Kantian, Utilitarian, and 'deductive' approaches. Virtue ethics shifts the accent from (Kantian) duty, (Utilitarian) consequences, and abstract (deductive) calculation to moral character. Whereas modern ethics

tries to arrive schematically at a concrete decision from an isolated set of unique circumstances, Aristotle starts with the moral agent and his immersion into an interlocking web of relations within the world of nature. And whereas the contemporary notion of free will tends toward the synchronic, Aquinas clearly views freedom as diachronic.

The contrast between the Aristotelian-Thomistic approach and contemporary ethics is illustrated by Hibbs through their respective approaches to the notion of 'justice'. Contemporary ethics collapses the 'goodness' of just acts into the goodness of the agent responsible for them. But for Aristotle and Aquinas, the core meaning of justice is giving to the other his due. The primary reference therefore is to external acts, persons, and things, rather than to the agent. Utilizing Iris Murdoch's terms, Hibbs describes Aquinas' view of moral theory as one 'attached to the substance of the world' (33). In more Platonic terms, this opens up the possibility for a metaphysics of participation and, according to Hibbs, a theological teaching on the internal life of God as self-communicative love.

The intellectual virtues offer us a privileged glimpse into the necessary connections between metaphysics and ethics. Hibbs asks whether it is possible to place Aquinas in the 'internalist' or 'externalist' camp in regard to contemporary 'virtue epistemology'. Internalism demands that we have cognitive access to the justifying conditions of our beliefs, and that our beliefs be formed in accord with appropriate rules. Externalism drops the requirement of internal access but demands that a belief be formed by a process that is reliably aimed at the production of truth. Hibbs demonstrates that for Aquinas, beliefs are ultimately influenced by volition and habit and are therefore subject to moral appraisal. Thus, even the intellectual virtues fall under the regulation of the moral virtues, especially that of prudence: not with respect to their objects or content, but rather with respect to their exercise. This relationship between intellectual and moral virtue 'points us in the direction of some sort of metaphysics' (54).

Hibbs perceptively lays out several reasons for which both analytic and Continental philosophies have shied away from a serious engagement with Aquinas' metaphysics. First of all, philosophers find the theory of abstraction arcane. Hibbs believes this is an unfortunate consequence of a poor representation of Aquinas' theory of knowledge. Aquinas was not concerned with the question of how a 'trapped' mind escapes from itself. Moreover, his notion of abstraction cannot be boiled down to a process of narrowing in on some core feature of a thing by systematically ignoring all other features. In fact, Aquinas taught that intellection is already 'present' in sensation itself. The intellect is both passive and active throughout the cognitive process. Moreover, for the intellect to be passive means that the things it knows are 'active' when in the intellect's presence: a very difficult notion for much of contemporary philosophy. Hibbs points out that for Aquinas, a sense of 'wonder' — that is, an active engagement of the intellect with the world through the asking of questions about things — 'takes priority over any reflective analysis of the modes of human knowing' (64).

Hibbs rightly concludes that there is a sorely underappreciated 'erotic' aspect to Aquinas' metaphysics, an aspect which emerges in several overlooked passages of the Thomistic corpus to which Hibbs draws needed attention. To underscore the point, Hibbs offers a highly original reading of James Joyce to show that metaphysics does not culminate in a cessation of desire once certitude has been obtained, but rather leads to an 'exacerbation of desire' as we experience the 'gap between what we long for in the way of contemplation' and 'what we can achieve by the powers of our own reason' (99). This insight alone makes Hibbs' book well worth the read.

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Keith Hossack

The Metaphysics of Knowledge.

Toronto and New York: Oxford University
Press 2007.

Pp. 320.

Cdn\$96.00/US\$99.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-920672-8).

This is an ambitious book. In the course of its eight chapters, central issues in metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of language are addressed. In these chapters, analyses of concepts like necessity, personal identity, representation, consciousness, content, and mind are offered. These analyses all presuppose that knowledge — conceived of as a simple relation between a mind and a fact — is both metaphysically fundamental and conceptually primitive.

Hossack's preferred 'knowledge-first' approach — inspired by the research program advanced in Timothy Williamson's *Knowledge and Its Limits* — aims to explain apparently non-epistemic notions in decidedly epistemic terms. According to Hossack, the fact that knowledge is metaphysically fundamental makes it an ideal analysans for various metaphysical concepts like necessity and personal identity, as well as mental concepts like consciousness and mind. And, since knowledge is conceptually primitive, it can be profitably employed to analyze epistemic concepts like warrant and justification, as well as linguistic ones like concept and representation. Hossack's case in favor of the metaphysical fundamentality and conceptual primitiveness of knowledge proceeds, in large part, by developing analyses of the concepts noted above. According to Hossack, the thesis that knowledge is primitive and fundamental earns its keep by its remarkable usefulness in explicating these various concepts.

The structure of the book is as follows: In Chapter 1, Hossack articulates the thesis that knowledge is a fundamental, primitive relation that obtains between a mind and a fact in the world, rather than a propositional attitude. In Chapter 2, a quasi-Tractarian metaphysics of facts is developed. In Chapter 3, these two theories are conjoined in order to develop a theory of compositional thought. In addition, Hossack outlines a theory of concepts and contents, and argues against the thesis that language is explanatorily prior to thought. In Chapter 4, an allegedly reductive rationalist theory of modality is presented that identifies necessary truths as all and only those truths that have an a priori mode of presentation. In Chapter 5, Hossack turns his attention from metaphysics and epistemology to the philosophy of mind. He argues that conscious mental acts are all and only those mental acts identical with knowledge of themselves. In Chapter 6, an account of personal identity is offered that relies upon the primitive knowledge relation. Chapter 7 broaches a variety of issues in the philosophy of language that Hossack holds to be easily resolvable once knowledge is taken to be a primitive relation. Finally, Chapter 8 revisits the nature of knowledge and defends Hossack's favored view of the status of knowledge against a variety of objections.

The scope of Hossack's uniformly lucid discussion is impressive but his engagement with a number of issues is, at times, too cursory to be satisfying. In a book on the character of knowledge, one might, for example, hope that recent contextualist accounts of justification would receive more than three pages of discussion (271-3). Similarly, if Hossack hopes to offer a satisfactory metaphysics of consciousness, at least some discussion of eliminativist proposals seems to be required. Despite worries about omissions of this kind, Hossack's book is rich in argument and interesting challenges to philosophical orthodoxy. In particular, his main project — defending the fundamentality of knowledge — raises a number of important issues, a few of which I'll note here.

One worry with Hossack's project is the methodology employed to defend the metaphysical thesis that knowledge is fundamental. If the accounts of various concepts offered by Hossack are intended to be conceptual analyses, it is unclear whether Hossack's desired conclusion can be plausibly held to follow from the adequacy of these analyses. The fact that certain of our concepts are related in the ways that Hossack claims does not straightforwardly entail anything about the metaphysical status of knowledge. (This complaint parallels a common criticism of David Lewis' defense of modal realism: Why believe that the usefulness of a reductive analysis of our modal concepts entails the existence of concrete possible worlds?) In addition, one cannot infer that the knowledge relation is fundamental solely because there is reason to believe our concept of it is primitive. If, however, Hossack's accounts are intended to be something other than mere conceptual analyses, it is unclear how to understand his defense of the thesis that knowledge is fundamental.

Those of a naturalistic bent, who take inquiry into knowledge and belief to be, in part, an empirical matter, will find Hossack's indifference to cognitive science and related disciplines vexing. In particular, ardent naturalists are

likely to find the prospects of exchanging Hossack's revisionary taxonomy of mental states for analyses of necessity or personhood a poor bargain.

These concerns are particularly striking in light of Hossack's denial of the Constitutive Thesis, which holds that part of what it is for x to know that P is for x to believe. Since Hossack's preferred view takes knowledge to be more fundamental than belief, he rejects the Constitutive Thesis. In its place, he defends the Causal Thesis, which holds that although x 's belief that P might cause x to know that P , x need not believe that P in order to know that P . Many philosophers will be reluctant to accept Hossack's claim that believing that P is not required for knowing that P . If, however, one accepts the various accounts Hossack advances, one is likely to be saddled with this counterintuitive thesis.

Some philosophers will likely complain that the concept Hossack calls 'knowledge' is not the same 'knowledge' of which belief is — in their view — a crucial constituent. If these philosophers are correct, the consequences for Hossack's project are disastrous: the concept he invokes as an all-important analysans is not the concept of knowledge we take to be epistemically important, but rather some other concept or, perhaps more plausibly, a concept without any common currency.

No philosophical project can be conducted without taking on at least some presuppositions. And, since this work encapsulates a large number of independent philosophical projects, it is understandable that its presuppositions are numerous. That said, given Hossack's novel picture of knowledge, a more focused discussion of its character and consequences, rather than of extant issues in personal identity and modality, would have made for both a more modest and a more satisfying exercise.

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Richard Joyce

The Evolution of Morality.

Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2006.

Pp. 283.

US\$32.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-262-10112-7);

US\$18.00 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-262-60072-2).

In this book Joyce examines whether, in what sense, and to what extent our capacity to employ moral concepts and make moral judgments is innate, and what the metaethical implications would be if it were indeed the product

of the evolutionary process of natural selection. Joyce avails himself of the latest results from psychology, neuroscience, biology, and anthropology — results that have a crucial bearing on moral philosophy. In this regard, he indicates that his ‘goals are synthetic and interdisciplinary’ because the issues under discussion ‘cannot be profitably addressed from within the bounds of a single academic discipline,’ although he is ‘aware of the dangers that such aspirations invariably bring’ (2). Joyce has, to all appearances, mastered such dangers. The clarity and insight of the analysis combine with a style which is straightforward and often witty to make for a pleasurable read.

The introduction is devoted to clarifying some key concepts and warding off certain serious misunderstandings. The issue of whether morality is innate is investigated over the course of the first four chapters, which deal respectively with the natural selection of helping, the nature of morality, moral language and emotions, and moral sense. The topic of investigation is formulated as whether morality ‘can be given adaptive explanation in genetic terms: whether the present-day existence of the trait is to be explained by reference to a genotype having granted our ancestors reproductive advantage’ (2). Joyce maintains that innateness in this sense does not imply the inevitability of having moral beliefs, simply because having a certain capacity does not in any way imply the inexorableness of its manifestation. He also remarks that the hypothesis under consideration does not deny that the content of our moral beliefs is determined mostly by culture, but claims only that the mechanism that makes possible the acquisition of such beliefs is in fact innate. Now, what is the conclusion Joyce himself arrives at on the general question of the innateness of morality? Even though he defends the thesis that morality is innate, he cautiously observes that the empirical evidence available does not allow us to draw a conclusion with any certainty, so that one cannot completely rule out the possibility that moral thinking is a culturally generated capacity. Thus, Joyce endorses only provisionally, as a plausible and testable hypothesis, the view that morality is an adaptation produced by biological natural selection. According to this hypothesis (i) moral sense evolved in humans because the ‘moralization’ of certain behaviors that advance reproductive fitness reinforces the motivation to perform them, and (ii) the process by which it evolved is the projection of one’s emotions onto one’s experience of the world. Joyce claims that moral projectivism finds support in the recent empirical research showing that emotions play a key role in moral judgment.

The remainder of the work (two chapters and the conclusion) is devoted to discussing the metaethical implications of the ‘descriptive evolutionary ethics’ expounded in the first four chapters. Joyce examines whether the evolutionary hypothesis ‘vindicates’ or ‘debunks’ morality, i.e., whether such a hypothesis supports moral realism or, rather, moral skepticism. He calls the former view ‘prescriptive evolutionary ethics’ and the latter the ‘evolutionary debunking of morality’. In Chapter 5, Joyce assesses four attempts by others at ‘vindicating’ morality on the basis of the hypothesis of its innateness and argues that, with each of them, the prescriptive evolutionary ethicist fails in his enterprise. The reasons for this failure are (i) that he disregards the

cognitive aspect of moral judgment and at most offers an instrumental justification of morality, which by no means renders moral judgments true or epistemically justified, and (ii) that he erroneously takes the non-moral normativity implied by evolutionary biology as if it were moral.

In Chapter 6, Joyce examines whether the evolutionary hypothesis undermines morality. He maintains that this hypothesis shows that our moral beliefs are not false, but epistemically unjustified. In other words, to accept that our tendency to make moral judgments is the product of biological natural selection leads, not to moral nihilism, but to moral agnosticism: we cannot say whether moral beliefs are true or false. The reason is that it is possible that the formation of beliefs about moral rightness and wrongness may have served to enhance our ancestors' fitness independently of whether there existed any moral properties or facts. Whereas a genealogical explanation of, say, how mathematical beliefs enhanced reproductive fitness would be undermined if such beliefs were false — because in that case they would not have been useful to our ancestors — the evolutionary genealogy of morality would remain a plausible hypothesis, even if there were no moral properties or facts. In a word, such a genealogy does not presuppose or require the truth of moral judgments — which of course is not sufficient to prove that such judgments are false.

A large part of Chapter 6 is also devoted to examining the moral naturalistic view, according to which moral facts are reducible to facts that can be investigated by science, including facts about natural selection. If this were the case, then morality would be 'vindicated' even if it was the product of biological natural selection. However, Joyce advances arguments against moral naturalism intended to show that this theory cannot account for the sense of inescapable authority or 'practical clout' that characterizes moral judgments, thereby showing that such a vindication fails. Finally, he argues that the hypothesis that morality is the product of evolution poses a serious challenge to the moral theories which purport to justify moral beliefs solely on epistemological grounds — namely reliabilism, conservatism, coherentism, and foundationalism.

In the book's conclusion Joyce further clarifies the agnostic skepticism he espouses, responds to those who might find such skepticism appalling, and argues that skepticism about the epistemic justification of moral beliefs does not eliminate one's moral thoughts and emotions, which exert a key motivational influence on one's practical deliberations. It is perhaps worth noting that, although Joyce thinks that moral agnosticism follows from the thesis that morality is innate, he is not himself a moral agnostic but a moral nihilist (244, n. 17). We seem to find a manifestation of such nihilism in Joyce's adoption of moral projectivism as a plausible and testable hypothesis (123-33), since this metaethical position denies the existence of moral properties or facts. Now, given his claim that the thesis that morality is the result of natural selection suggests moral projectivism (131), it appears that the provisional acceptance of that thesis would lead to moral nihilism rather than to moral agnosticism. This is why I perceive a certain vacillation in Joyce's

thinking as to what metaethical implications may be drawn from the evolutionary hypothesis.

The scholar interested in how the findings of the empirical sciences might affect our philosophical understanding of the origin and epistemic status of moral beliefs is heartily encouraged to read this book.

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Leonard Lawlor

This is Not Sufficient: An Essay on

Animality and Human Nature in Derrida.

New York: Columbia University Press 2007.

Pp. 192.

US\$29.50 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-231-14312-7).

Lawlor has recently established himself as a leading interpreter of twentieth-century French philosophy, in particular the work of Derrida, Deleuze, and Foucault. But it is a mural, not portraits, that he paints. In studies such as *Derrida and Husserl* (2002), *Thinking Through French Philosophy* (2003), and *The Implications of Immanence* (2006), Lawlor has shown that, their differences notwithstanding, these thinkers all in effect critically extended the phenomenological tradition by opening up radical new avenues of philosophical *interrogation*. The central outcome of this interpretive work is the recognition of the need for a new philosophy of life as the ground for a genuine overcoming of Platonism.

Lawlor's latest book, in which he thinks through the implications of Derrida's work for the problem of animal suffering, should be approached in this context. For Lawlor, as for Derrida, the suffering of animals in today's world is an undeniable injustice, a wholly one-sided interspecific war. What Lawlor seeks is a 'more sufficient response' to this problem. As with the book's title, the reference is to the Derridean critique of the radical *insufficiency* of the two predominant families of response: 'metaphysical separationism', those (essentially Platonic) views that posit a qualitative difference between human and non-human life; and 'biological continuism', those views that, conversely, assert a fundamental (naturalistic) continuity. While the former is clearly part of the problem, the latter, by simply reversing the metaphysical logic, lacks any means of overcoming it, and harbours a totalitarian risk of its own. The intermediate response that Lawlor seeks would thus account for human-animal relations in terms of what Derrida called a 'staggered [*décalée*]

analogy'. The idea is that overcoming Platonism can only be accomplished, as Heidegger said, by 'twisting free' [*herausdrehen*] of it — what is needed is neither the reinscription nor the erasure of the 'anthropological limit', but a new articulation of its *logic*. The hope is that this will ultimately provide a framework for perceiving ourselves and animals anew, and for fundamentally rethinking our relations.

The arguments unfold in three chapters. Lawlor sets the stage in Chapter 1 by discussing Derrida's view of the contemporary world. This involves an important contrast between 'globalization' and '*mondialisation*': whereas the latter is literally a kind of 'enworlding', understood as the realization of 'the world' as the shared space for all living things, the former denotes a process of biopolitical violence directed against life, the reduction and enclosure of the world to the domain of human concern. Anthropocentric domination of animals is a barometer of this violence, but Lawlor is clear that globalization, so construed, is no less destructive for humans. In fact, it portends what he refers to as 'the worst' (22-4): the end of the world, the foreclosure of the future — what Deleuze and Guattari called 'the suicidal state'.

The neo-vitalism that Lawlor seeks would thus be a 'mortalism' (37) that pre-empts 'the worst' by incorporating death, a 'mixturism' (31) that involves undecidable difference *within* vital immanence. Exploring this through a close discussion of 'the logic of autoimmunity' as developed in Derrida's analysis of the '*pharmakon*', Lawlor argues that life *in general* contains an inherent weakness — a minimal 'archaic' violence — that fundamentally destabilizes the anthropological limit, thereby opening up genuine points of resistance and the real possibility of 'twisting free of Platonism' (40).

Lawlor extends this discussion in the second chapter with an examination of Derrida's account of the '*khora*' as the primordial 'third genus' — the non-appearing, indeterminate common ground of vital finitude and mortality. The idea is to further disrupt the anthropological limit by deconstructing the axiom according to which it expresses the human possibility of pure autoaffection. To this end, Lawlor takes up Derrida's critique of Heidegger's view of death. In the most complex of the book's arguments, he shows that neither animals nor humans have access to death as such, that there is therefore an irreducible heteroaffection in all autoaffection, and hence that 'our fault resembles the fault of animals' (69). This common '*powerlessness*' — the inability to be present to oneself as such — will provide the basis for the 'staggered analogy' between human and non-human life.

In the final chapter, Lawlor considers what it would mean for us to own up to this inability. In general terms, it amounts to a revolt against sacrifice, against sacrificial thinking and 'the sacrificial structure of subjectivity' (98). As a response premised on powerlessness, however, Lawlor emphasizes that what makes this 'more sufficient' is that it is only the '*least violent*' — the minimal violence intrinsic to life is inescapable. Specifically, then, this response involves the paradoxical task of conjointly thinking event *and* repetition, singularity *and* iterability, uniqueness *and* sameness. Renouncing sovereignty for compassionate hospitality, it is a matter of 'de-closing the

globe of subjectivity' (101) through the use of non-universal proper names for animals (104). It is in this way, Lawlor suggests, that animals can form 'point(s) of resistance to propriety and determination' (107), such that steps toward *mondialisation* become possible.

Whatever this may entail concretely, and however ethically demanding that may be, it is by participating in this reversal from 'the worst' to 'the least bad' that Lawlor thinks we can be 'most human'. This dovetails with the ethos of radical interrogation that Derrida shares with Deleuze and Foucault, and it is fitting that Lawlor ends on a note that returns to this broader context. For while the philosophical force of the book stems primarily from Lawlor's inside-out knowledge of the Derridean *œuvre*, it is also premised on certain key *un-Derridean* moves — informed by Deleuze and Foucault — that he makes along the way.

Lawlor's capacity to bring all this together makes the book a provocative intervention. But as part of a mural in progress, it does not bring any sort of closure. On the contrary, if Lawlor has succeeded it is — as with Derrida *et alia* — by opening up new lines of questioning. In this way the book stands out from the recent wave of continental interest in the animal question — most importantly, for how it unflinchingly negotiates the dangers and potential follies involved in any attempt to 'overcome' the metaphysical structures that have made the question so urgent *for us* in the first place.

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Graham Macdonald and

David Papineau, eds.

Teleosemantics.

Toronto and New York: Oxford University
Press 2006.

Pp. 240.

US\$87.72 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-927026-2);

Cdn\$45.95/US\$35.00

(paper ISBN-13: 978-0-19-927027-9).

Teleosemantics is one of the more promising strategies for providing a naturalistic account of mental representation, primarily because it accounts for *misrepresentation*, something naturalistic theories have always foundered on. Suppose that, as indicator semantics has it, the meaning of a mental state

is the property that tokens of the state carry information about — that ‘dog’ means *dog* because tokens of the former are caused only by instances of the latter. The problem is that ‘dog’ tokens are sometimes triggered by non-dogs, as when a large cat is glimpsed in bad light. How, then, can we avoid the conclusion that ‘dog’ means not *dog*, but *dog or cat*. How, that is, can we account for the fact that ‘dog’ continues to mean *dog* even when it’s misapplied to cats? This is known as the disjunction problem, and it’s a doozy.

Teleosemantics solves the disjunction problem by appealing to functions. If the meaning of a mental representation is the property it has the *function* of indicating rather than the property it *actually* indicates, misrepresentation becomes a kind of malfunctioning. Just as sperm cells malfunction when they fail to fertilize an ovum, so do ‘dog’ tokens when triggered by cats. What’s left is only to provide a naturalistic analysis of function, which teleosemanticists do by appealing to natural selection. The function of sperm is to fertilize ova because that’s what sperm cells were selected for. Similarly, the function of ‘dog’ is to indicate dogs because that’s what it was selected for.

All of this is helpfully explained by Macdonald and Papineau in their introduction to this collection of essays written by leading figures in teleosemantics. The volume begins with an essay by Kim Sterelny on the evolution of language — an issue of obvious interest to the teleosemanticist. Sterelny challenges the widespread view that linguistic competence is the product of a specialized ‘language module’, which is innately determined and encapsulated from other parts of the mind. His best objection appeals to what he calls ‘the invasion problem’ (30). Since modules are insensitive to environmental stimuli, the languages to which they give rise would function like fixed conceptual schemes; distinct modules would therefore give rise to incommensurable schemes. Assuming that linguistic competence is selected for facilitating communication, lone variants would be selected against, making it difficult to see how mutations to modules could gain a foothold in an existing population. Thus, defenders of modularity have a difficult time explaining how language modules could have evolved, which is particularly ironic given that modularists typically appeal to evolutionary considerations in *defense* of their thesis.

In Chapter 2, Peter Godfrey-Smith notes the recent loss of faith in naturalistic theories of content and proposes that the time is right for a reassessment of the representational theory of mind. Teleosemantics is a species of representationalism, so any objections to the latter apply with equal force to the former. However, Godfrey-Smith’s strongest challenge is directed not so much at representationalism *per se*, but at versions that ‘explain intelligence by giving the mind access to something with the same structure as its target’ (54). The problem: ‘If the mind’s problem is dealing with things that exhibit (structure) S, how does it help to put something with S inside the head? The mind still has to detect and respond to S, just as it did when S was outside’ (54). At best, this objection gives us reason to reject resemblance theories, but, as we’ve seen, it’s possible for teleosemanticists to defend biologized versions of indicator semantics. Since indication is not resemblance, Godfrey-Smith’s objection misses its intended target.

With the next two essays, the focus turns to teleosemantics proper. In Chapter 3, Fred Dretske attempts to ameliorate the difficulty teleosemantics has with self-knowledge. If the content of our thoughts is determined by their selection history, then knowing what we're thinking would require empirical knowledge of the (often) remote past. Thus teleosemantics appears to make introspection impossible. Dretske valiantly attempts to make all of this seem less absurd, but the consolation he offers (introspection cannot reveal *that* we are thinking, but it can reveal *what* we are thinking) would probably be rejected by anyone with passing knowledge of Descartes.

In Chapter 4, Frank Jackson shows that teleosemantics yields similar paradoxes concerning our knowledge of *other* minds. Since we don't know the selection histories of other peoples' mental states any better than our own, it follows that most of us know nothing about the minds of others and that nobody had such knowledge prior to Darwin. Again, this is a bitter pill to swallow, and Jackson doesn't make it any easier. He defends this epistemological objection against various replies, and does so convincingly.

As Ruth Millikan observes in Chapter 5, teleosemantics has trouble explaining contents that don't have biological utility. This is a problem because it's difficult to see how, for example, Rover's representation of a ball helps him propagate his genes. Millikan attempts to defuse this worry by arguing that instrumental learning and practical reasoning produce their own sorts of biological purposes, derived from but not reducible to the 'purposes' of genes. Consider operant conditioning. There is an obvious similarity between the psychological process of reinforcement and the biological process of selection. In each case, randomly generated variations (stimulus-response pairs in the former case, phenotypic modifications in the latter) are selected for based on their agreement with environmental variables. Moreover, since the mechanisms of conditioning were naturally selected for producing stimulus-response correlations, there's a sense in which the representation of a given stimulus has the *derivative* function of eliciting its conditioned response. Thus, it's not too much of a stretch to speak of conditioning producing *acquired* content just as selection produces *innate* content. Rover represents balls when retrieving because nature has selected the mechanisms of conditioning for producing stimulus-response pairs and because his conditioning regime reinforced retrieval-behavior only when caused by ball-stimuli. More sophisticated content can be explained by appealing to the mechanisms of practical reasoning and compositional semantics.

In Chapter 6, Dan Ryder applies some of these themes to the difficult problem of representing kinds. It would seem that in order for the representation of a kind (H_2O) to exclude superficially similar kinds (XYZ) it would need to include something like an intention to refer to kinds. But, as Ryder observes, 'if concepts of *particular* kinds are difficult to account for . . . the concept of *kindhood* seems even more difficult' (118). Ryder's solution is to describe a class of neuronal structures that have the function of indicating kinds and that, when properly calibrated, have the derivative function of indicating specific kinds, thus explaining how kinds can be represented

without explicit representations of kindhood. Ryder's essay is an example of naturalistic philosophy at its best, expertly weaving together themes from teleosemantics and his own account of neuronal functioning.

Mohan Matthen (Chapter 7) and Karen Neander (Chapter 8) come down on opposite sides of the consumer semantics debate. Consumer semantics explains the content of a state in terms of the functionally appropriate *responses* to it. The problem is that for higher organisms there doesn't seem to be a *single* appropriate response to a given perceptual state. What, exactly, is the appropriate response to an apple or to the color blue? Matthen responds by locating appropriate responses *within* the sensing organism rather than in bodily action. The appropriate response to an apple is a certain change of epistemic state, which may be as simple as changing the weight on a synaptic connection. Since actions occur as a result of the interactions between epistemic states and other cognitive states, context-dependence is explained without sacrificing univocality.

Neander argues that the content attributed by consumer-oriented analyses of this sort is at odds with the content required by cognitive science. When we apply a consumer-oriented analysis to the frog's representation of flies, we get something like 'frog food', but when we consider the informational content, we get something closer to 'small, dark, moving object'. Neander argues that the latter analysis is better because only informational content explains behavior, and it's behavior that cognitive science aims to explain. Neander's essay is a welcome reminder that the goal is to provide not only naturalistic analyses, but analyses in the service of scientific explanation. Naturalists are supposed to be making the mind safe for science, so analyses that do not cohere with the sciences are otiose, whatever their naturalistic bona fides.

The volume concludes with Robert Cummins et al. (Chapter 9) arguing that teleosemantics cannot account for 'unexploited content' — 'content a representation *has*, but which the system that harbors it is currently unable to exploit' (195) — and with Carolyn Price (Chapter 10) arguing that teleosemantics has the unique resources to account for the not-quite-fully-cognitive content of our emotional states.

Teleosemantics is probably not the best introduction to the subject, although the introductory essay by Macdonald and Papineau is quite good. Many of the essays presuppose familiarity with the literature, and the papers are not fully representative of the major issues confronting the project — the problem of functional indeterminacy, for example, gets short shrift. It is, however, an excellent peek into the current state of the art and required reading for anyone interested in how things now stand with the project of providing a naturalistic account of mental representation. The impression one is left with is that new problems are piling up faster than old ones can be solved.

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Iain Macdonald and Krzysztof Ziarek, eds.
Adorno and Heidegger: Philosophical Questions.
Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2008.
Pp. 221.
US\$60.00 (cloth ISBN: 978-0-8047-5635-8);
US\$21.95 (paper ISBN: 978-0-8047-5635-5).

This book, born of a conference in 2004 in Montreal, has a short introduction, ten chapters, a selective bibliography, and an index. The intended audience is unspecified but evidently intended to comprise academics and postgraduates working upon Adorno, Heidegger, and, especially, on the philosophical relations between those two thinkers. I will discuss the chapters in turn — albeit, of necessity, rather briefly — and conclude with some general comment. I note that the book has no sections and that its chapters show no particular ordering.

The first chapter, by Iain Macdonald, considers Adorno's statement that Heidegger 'gets as far as the borderline of dialectical insight into the non-identity within identity' (6, quoting Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*). Macdonald argues that Heidegger, in his treatment of guilt and conscience, does in fact achieve the insight at issue. That insight is this: a bifurcation of the self is a necessary condition for any action being taken to be in any sense correct. Now, Macdonald's reading of Heidegger is plausible (and that is unsurprising, for it is through Heidegger that Macdonald first arrives at the formulation just given). Macdonald proceeds to impute to Adorno an *expanded* version of the insight, whereby the aforementioned bifurcation is a necessary condition of *all* 'norm-based action' and, thereby, of knowledge and rationality (18). Plausibly, Adorno does hold that non-identity, in some sense or senses, plays these roles. But Macdonald's elucidation of the requisite sense(s), together with his use of that sense(s) to further position Adorno vis-à-vis Heidegger, could be clearer. Additionally, and as interesting as Macdonald's chapter is, it provides little argument for either version of the alleged insight being true.

Chapter 2, 'Truth and Authentication: Heidegger and Adorno in Reverse' by Lambert Zuidervaart, has been published in almost identical form elsewhere. Zuidervaart sympathises with the early Heidegger's attempt to find something important about truth that does not involve propositions. Nonetheless, Zuidervaart criticises that attempt, charging Heidegger with (i) abolishing public criteria for truth; (ii) elevating contingent self-world and self-other relations into necessities; (iii) mistakenly thinking that, where social influence is, access to truth is not. Each criticism has something to it. However, in focusing upon the connection between truth and authenticity — developed in the second division of *Being and Time* — Zuidervaart neglects Heidegger's more basic, and surely crucial, account of truth provided by the first division. Zuidervaart proceeds to Adorno and argues as follows. Adorno rejects — or rather 'reverses' (39f.) — the aforementioned (ii) and (iii); but, unhappily, accepts (i).

The third chapter is by Matthew Grist. It argues, with impressive clarity, as follows. Despite providing cogent criticisms of traditional metaphysics, Adorno and Heidegger remain metaphysical, where 'metaphysical' means 'transcendentally realist' (47), and transcendental realism is believing in 'the One True Structure of Reality' (47). Grist starts with what he takes to be Kant's motivation for opposing such realism. Grist presents that motivation as a short argument (48) that condenses to this: 'there's no way of knowing whether our best cognitive practices track truth' (personal communication by Grist to the reviewer). Grist calls this 'the restriction thesis' and elaborates with an illustration. A physicist believes she has identified the world's smallest particle. Yet how can she know she has not, instead, exhausted 'the limits of her perceptual abilities and her methods of measurement?' (48) I take the thinking to be this. It is for the following reason that we cannot know whether our best cognitive practices — and the faculties and instruments they employ — track truth (restriction thesis). We have no external vantage from which to check the veridicality of those practices. There are indeed checks — we can check that a microscope is working properly, for instance — but such checks remain internal in that they presuppose results yielded by the same practices. (In checking the microscope, one presupposes ostensible knowledge of optics.) So formulated or developed, the argument recalls not just Kant (and Hegel) but also Neurath and Quine. But it is unclear that the argument tells against transcendental realism *as such*.

Being and Time accepts the restriction thesis but the later Heidegger does not. For while *Being and Time* had it that all understanding is indexed to practices, the later Heidegger seeks something called 'being itself' that, independently of practices, determines how the world is. Or so Grist proposes. But the reading needs supplementation. The later Heidegger shifts the agent of determination or (Grist) 'intelligibility' not only to 'being itself' but *also* to the infamous 'fourfold' and, thereby, to the entities Heidegger singles out as 'Things' (*Dinge*). Moreover, it is plausible that the later Heidegger tries to avoid anthropocentrism *and* realism. Still, 'tries' is the word. The result of that attempt seems to be — and this echoes Adorno on Heidegger — that 'being' haemorrhages content. Grist's dispute with *Adorno* is with Adorno as presented by Jay Bernstein. Grist accepts three Bernsteinian points. (a) There is a type of thinking, 'identity thinking', which is characterised by 'context-independent truth conditions' (58; this seems a nice if slightly brutal summation of Bernstein). (b) A different form of thinking — 'non-identity thinking' — has content the full explication of which requires demonstrative reference to its object. (c) Non-identity thinking can apprehend intrinsically motivating states of affairs, such as a crying child. What Grist denies, as others deny, is that such states of affairs must always be identically apprehended. One person's (or culture's) needy child is another's attention-seeker or cry-baby.

The contribution by Joanna Hodge aims to develop a position called 'poietic epistemology' (*sic*) from Husserl and to defend it against Adorno and Heidegger. Hodge submits at least 'three unfulfillable major promissory notes' (73); and perhaps there should have been more. For while Hodge has

some good points, often her claims lack elaboration and defense. Here are two instances. (i) Hodge pretty much just asserts that there is no issue about the ontological status of the Husserlian *noema* (75 and *passim*). This view is surely almost as lonely an opinion as Hodge's view (71-2 and *passim*) that Husserl is a great writer. (ii) Hodge claims that Adorno, in his work on Husserl, 'manages to be quite alarmingly offensive, in his deployment of sexual innuendo and political diatribe' (77; cf. 81, 85); but Hodge's references do not at all substantiate the accusation.

The chapter by Nicholas Walker explores Hegel on art in order to see where Heidegger and Adorno might meet. An erudite tour of the aesthetical views of the thinkers at issue yields the following suggestion. Hölderlin might serve to mark a united Adorno-Heidegger front against Hegel on the relation between art and nature. Walker finds some interesting Adornian echoes in Hölderlin. Confessedly, though, much of this remains (only) suggestive.

Krzysztof Ziarek's chapter aims to show, via Adorno and Heidegger, that, through an 'idiomatic, power-free language', some art 'transform[s]' 'the very grammar of critique' (123). A first section considers an idea of Adorno's that may roughly be rendered thus: when an artwork amounts to social criticism, that is an achievement of the work's form, not its content. Ziarek's presentation of that difficult idea is dark and uncritical. The discussion of Heidegger in the second section is very hard to understand. By the third section, matters are more difficult yet.

Ute Guzzoni's stimulating and readable chapter reflects upon 'the relation between human beings and things in Adorno and Heidegger' (124). Guzzoni unearths some rather arresting phrases in Adorno about the proper relation to inanimate things. By conjoining those phrases with better-known Adornian statements on 'reconciliation', and with Heidegger on 'Things' and 'fourfold', Guzzoni highlights some Adorno-Heidegger parallels. As I would put it, both Heidegger and Adorno present two ideas: humans have a deep but non-causal effect on at least some inanimate things; and that effect is not what it should be in modernity. While Guzzoni recognises that the parallelism has limits, the parallels suggest important questions. What is the ontological status of the anthropocentric or (Bernstein's term) anthropomorphic features of entities? If we take such features as ontologically considerable, what does that mean for criticism of modernity (or of other forms of life or experience)? Does it mean that such criticism occupies a particular and distinctively philosophical — as against psychological, sociological, cultural or even ethical — register?

'The Struggle of the Self Against Itself: Adorno and Heidegger on Modernity', by Josef Früchtel, is interesting, if brief, on Adorno's use of Bradley's dictum that, 'Where everything is bad, it must be good to know the worst.' Früchtel is good, too, on Adorno's views about 'the individual'. Further: in effect, Früchtel reinforces Zuidervaart's worry that many of Adorno's claims lack assessability. It remains the case that most of Früchtel's chapter presupposes an idea it never really explains, namely, that, 'To reflect upon modernity is inevitably to reflect upon the self' (138). The next chapter, Mario Wenning's

'Adorno, Heidegger, and the Problem of Remembrance', works from what is likely one of Heidegger's worst books (*What is Called Thinking?*) and operates, I find, at an unilluminating level of generality. Fred Dallmayr's 'Adorno and Heidegger on Modernity' starts with a decent introduction to *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. When he reaches Adorno's conception of dialectic, however, Dallmayr achieves little philosophical grip. As to Heidegger, Dallmayr manages to make relatively accessible some difficult texts written between 1936 and 1940. Yet the treatment is uncritical and, in praising the texts for their criticism of Nazism, ignores the fact that Heidegger never made those texts public.

At its strongest, *Adorno and Heidegger* supports a view expressed in its introduction. To wit: 'there is much to be gained from working through and reassessing the differences that have kept these two thinkers' works quarantined from each other for more than seven decades' (4). The editors of the book are to be commended for seeking, and to a degree for achieving, such gains.

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Cheryl Misak, ed.

New Pragmatists.

Toronto and New York: Oxford University Press 2007.

Pp. 216.

Cdn\$66.00/US\$55.00

(cloth: ISBN-13: 978-0-19-927997-5).

Pragmatism returned, after decades of neglect, to the focus of philosophical discussion in the 1970-80s, largely thanks to its most famous contemporary proponent, Richard Rorty, who died in 2007. Canadian philosopher Misak is one of the key figures of this new rise of pragmatism. She has authored and edited books on central pragmatist themes, including truth and morality; her most recent volume brings together eight re-evaluations of pragmatism by distinguished authors.

The label 'new pragmatism' should not be confused with Rorty's 'neo-pragmatism'. Misak and most of the authors of her collection seek to save the objectivity of truth and inquiry from Rortean postmodernist threats. These philosophers — or most of them — are themselves 'new pragmatists', and they discuss a number of thinkers also described as new pragmatists, for example, Donald Davidson, Wilfrid Sellars, Robert B. Brandom, John McDowell, and Bjørn Ramberg. Rorty's pragmatism, though often reacted against in the articles, does not receive any thoroughgoing examination; nor does, for instance, Hilary Putnam's version of pragmatic realism. The classical

pragmatists, especially Charles Peirce and John Dewey, are frequently commented on, but interpreting their views is not the authors' main goal. This is indeed new pragmatism, not old.

The realism issue, extensively debated by Putnam and Rorty, among others, is one of the book's central themes. The goal of the editor and most of the contributors seems to be the defense of objectivity and (moderate) realism, connected with a full recognition of the historical mutability and practice-ladenness — and the resulting non-foundationality — of human norms of inquiry. As Misak puts it in her introduction, 'standards of objectivity come into being and evolve over time, but . . . being historically situated in this way does not detract from their objectivity' (2). We are not doomed to relativism or irrationalism when recognizing that our thought and inquiry are historically contextualized efforts to understand the world we live in. The pragmatist challenge is to make this intuitively plausible idea of combining objectivity and anti-foundationalism more precise.

In this short review I will offer brief observations on each paper, as detailed analysis is impossible. In the first chapter, Jeffrey Stout sets the book's tone by promising 'pragmatism without narcissism', a pragmatism that respects our interest in getting things right, hence realism and objectivity. I find relatively little new in this paper compared to the lengthy discussions of pragmatism and realism in the (relatively near) past, all the way from Peirce and William James to Rorty's and Putnam's neopragmatisms. Putnam, for one, has also attempted to 'walk a fine line' between metaphysically realist correspondence theories of truth and mere Rortyan 'rhetoric'. Stout's most insightful observation is that there is, contrary to appearances, a sense in which Rorty maintains a form of realism after all (17), though Rorty ends up eliminating the normative notion of 'getting something right' (25) — his key error, from the new pragmatist perspective. It is easy to sympathize with Stout's acknowledgment, following Ramberg and others, of the 'inescapability and irreducibility of an essentially normative vocabulary of agency' (18), of the fact that our practices are 'normative all the way down' (30) — though this, again, is something that has been emphasized in (neo)pragmatist literature by Putnam and others.

The second chapter, in which Ian Hacking offers eight reasons for *not* being a pragmatist, is a personal story and thus one of the most interesting contributions to the book. Any pragmatist should agree with Hacking that it is not pragmatically important to stick to the label. One may admit that Nelson Goodman, one of Hacking's heroes, is a pragmatist, though he himself denied this, just as Hacking does. Indeed, Goodman is 'the only pragmatist from whom (Hacking) ever learnt anything' (46). Pragmatism is flexible and open-minded enough to welcome Hacking's contributions, especially his well-known, historically informed philosophical explorations of actual scientific practices, even if he doesn't want to be included in the camp.

Arthur Fine's third chapter is perhaps the most 'Rortyan' of these papers. Fine is thus to some extent a dissenting voice here. Without mentioning his (in)famous NOA ('the natural ontological attitude') by name, Fine

remains close to his earlier position, now explicitly defending relativism. It is not obvious what Fine can mean by the 'progress' of science (60) within his relativist framework. At least this cannot be progress toward truth in any realist sense. Still, Fine is right to point out that relativism need not be the absurd radical doctrine it is often considered to be. Reasonable relativists are, above all, pragmatic contextualists about knowledge, rationality and inquiry. Even so, one may wonder whether this celebration of relativism is compatible with Fine's earlier, thoroughly deflated 'no theory' approach to science and truth.

Misak herself returns, in the fourth chapter, to the pragmatist — primarily Peircean — 'indefeasibility' theory of truth, according to which a belief is true if it could not be improved upon by further inquiry. She contrasts this position with deflationism, updating some of her earlier views on the topic. For Misak, it is Peircean pragmatism, not deflationism, that successfully replaces 'metaphysical' theories of truth with healthy naturalism. The paper is a solid piece on the contemporary relevance of the Peircean conception of truth, but it adds little to what Misak has had to say about the matter in earlier publications.

In the fifth chapter, David Macarthur and Huw Price offer a systematic study of the relation between pragmatism (their own special brand) and Simon Blackburn's quasi-realism. This is one of the most carefully argued pieces in the collection. What worries me in this paper — and also in some others — is its straightforward way of reading pragmatism as an anti-metaphysical philosophical orientation. Pragmatism, for these authors, is 'metaphysically quietist' (93, 98-101, 118); it has a 'second-order, or "linguistic" focus' (94), beginning with '*linguistic* explananda rather than *material* explananda' (95). This sounds to me like Rorty — or even Carnap: recall the distinction between the formal and the material mode. Macarthur and Price ignore the importance of metaphysics for pragmatism, old and new. Instead of quietism, one may defend distinctively pragmatist forms of metaphysics with metaphysical categorizations themselves rooted in human practices. Even so, the essay offers a detailed reflection on quasi-realism, seen through the semantic minimalist 'challenge' and the distinction between 'global' and 'local' approaches.

David Bakhurst's contribution, Chapter 6, is also among the book's best. Importantly, it demonstrates the unduly neglected role pragmatism may play in debates over moral objectivity, normative reasons, values, etc., in comparison to a more mainstream view in analytic metaethics, particularism. Dewey was a kind of pragmatic particularist in emphasizing the situational, contextual nature of ethical problems and moral deliberation. Bakhurst's comparisons between Dewey and McDowell, among others, are illuminating, by showing how the pragmatist in (meta)ethics can maintain the idea of 'answerability' to the world. Realism and objectivity, pragmatically construed, are not restricted to scientific inquiries but apply to ethical ones, too. This is a very important pragmatist lesson.

In the seventh chapter, Terry Pinkard examines the Hegelian idealist background of pragmatism, with comments on Brandom's neopragmatism.

The paper is mainly about Hegel, however; references to new pragmatism remain largely implicit. Again, I am suspicious of the author's way of disjoining pragmatism from metaphysics. We are told that freedom is 'a historical achievement, not a metaphysical fact about us or a transcendental condition of our agency' (163). Why can't it be all these things, if both metaphysics and transcendental conditions themselves receive a pragmatist reinterpretation?

Finally, the eighth chapter, by Danielle Macbeth, starts from Peirce and Frege and applies pragmatism to the philosophy of logic and mathematics. Again, objective truth is at issue. Unfortunately, Peirce's pragmatic maxim is formulated slightly misleadingly as a conception of meaning that locates the meaning of a proposition 'in its observable, practical consequences' (169; cf. 175). For Peirce, it was crucial to emphasize *conceivable* — not necessarily actualized — consequences here, but Macbeth repeatedly overlooks this in her otherwise insightful paper.

There are other areas of pragmatist thought that might have been taken up in the volume. For instance, the new pragmatist concern for maintaining objectivity and 'answerability', now plausibly and successfully extended from scientific inquiries to inquiries concerning values and morality, might also be extended to the philosophy of religion, which is not a major topic in this book, despite its central place in the pragmatist tradition.

Furthermore, as already noted, it is a pity that Putnam's pragmatic realism receives so little attention. It seems to me that many of the ideas and arguments propounded by the present group of authors have already been thoroughly examined by Putnam, who has for a long time sought a synthesis of realism and objectivity, on the one hand, and the practice- and history-ladenness of inquiry, on the other. The Putnam vs. Rorty debate ought to have been analyzed in the collection, though it is understandable that the authors have felt this debate to be exhausted.

Though the Kantian background of the realism debate is obvious, Misak's collection does not particularly illuminate this aspect of pragmatism. Pinkard's chapter on pragmatism's relations to idealism is focused on Hegel, with only brief introductory remarks on Kant. However, sometimes Kantian-sounding claims are made by the authors themselves. For instance, Misak says that without the concept of truth, 'there could be no disagreement and no conversation at all' (4-5). This is like saying that the concept of truth plays a transcendental role in our conversation and inquiry as a necessary condition for the possibility of both agreement and disagreement. It is, in my view, this Kantian-like transcendental status — and even the metaphysics that possibly results — that ought to be turned pragmatic.

Despite my minor reservations, this collection is an important addition to the literature on pragmatism and its relevance today. I recommend it not only to pragmatism scholars but to anyone interested in the realism debate or related issues; it is worth reading by 'old pragmatism' specialists, too.

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Morten E. J. Nielsen, ed.

Political Questions:

5 Questions on Political Philosophy.

Roskilde: Automatic Press 2006.

Pp. 252.

US\$26.00 (paper ISBN-13: 978-87-991013-2-0).

Roger Crisp says, on the back of this book, that 'it's the kind of book that *once started* is difficult to put down' (emphasis added). Fair enough. But as a philosopher, with too many books and too little time, the usual sense for linguistic subtleties, and the usual (that is, pathological) degree of skepticism, I wonder whether Crisp would also recommend *starting* to read this book in the first place. If so, why didn't he say *that*? Does the fact that he didn't say it mean that he meant to imply that I shouldn't start reading it? Or maybe that I should start at a particular location, say, beginning with Peter Vallentyne rather than Allen Buchanan (the contributors are ordered alphabetically)? Well, I am not sure. In any case, this is the wrong way to approach this book. It's not about philosophical subtleties and pathological skepticism, but about the real world and the big picture, more specifically, about the role of political philosophy in it, as exemplified by the lives and ideas of the philosophers producing it. So I did read it, beginning with Kwame Anthony Appiah, ending with Bernard Yack, and, once I had started reading it, it was indeed difficult for me to put it down. Furthermore, I recommend that you read the book, beginning at the beginning, and ending at the end.

What is the book about, and why do I recommend you read it? This book is part of a series of books on topics of philosophical interest by Automatic Press, which has now published books on normative ethics, formal philosophy, philosophy of law, game theory and other subjects. Several others are currently in the making, and each publication gathers the most prominent players in a particular field, and asks them five questions about it and them. The questions are similar across the fields. In this book, they are: 1) Why were you initially drawn to political philosophy? 2) What do you consider your own most important contribution to political philosophy, and why? 3) What is the proper role of political philosophy in relation to real, political action? Can there ever be a fruitful relation between political philosophy and political practice? 4) What do you consider the most neglected topics and/or contributions in late twentieth-century political philosophy, or in related philosophical disciplines? 5) What are the most important unsolved questions in political philosophy and/or related disciplines and what are the prospects for progress? These questions were answered by Kwame Anthony Appiah, Richard Bellamy, Allen Buchanan, William A. Galston, Amy Gutmann, Andrew Mason, Martha Nussbaum, Chandran Kukathas, Philippe Van Parijs, Philip Pettit, John E. Roemer, George Sher, Larry S. Temkin, Peter Vallentyne, Michael Walzer, Andrew Williams, Jonathan Wolff, and Bernard Yack.

The result is a fascinating collection of personal recollections, down-to-earth assessments of the whole of political philosophy (!), and suggestions

for future lines of research, among other things. Unless you are in personal contact with the contributors, you are unlikely to ever get access to any information of this kind in any other way. My personal experience is that one often learns most about how to approach a subject and how to assess contributions in it through such rather personal episodes. Good teachers will not shy away from sharing such information, but the occasions are simply very limited even in the most fortunate circumstances. So, if you are interested not just in political philosophy, but want to understand why it gets done the way it does, this is a book for you.

Obviously, a review of such a book need not address the structure, argument, subtlety, originality, or academic brilliance in the way a review of a philosophical monograph would have to. The book has no weaknesses in this respect. It excels, however, in many respects in which many typical monographs, seeking academic brilliance, might be considered to underperform: it is lively, engaging, and personal. Let me give you some examples.

Philip Pettit recounts his involvement with the Spanish President, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. Mr. Zapatero has taken Pettit's principles in *Republicanism* as an official benchmark to measure the Spanish government by, and, since 2004, Pettit has been in contact with Mr. Zapatero and has been asked to assess his government's progress. This is a fascinating instance of direct influence of modern philosophy in politics. It is certainly a rare example, too, but it might help sharpen our thinking about what makes Pettit's way of thinking, writing, or dealing with political problems more useful than others'.

It is fascinating to read how John Roemer got into political philosophy in the late sixties. I recommend you read it for yourself, but can't resist pointing out the juicy detail that one of the people involved in suspending Roemer from his doctoral programme in economics for occupying a university building was a famous philosopher of language (he is named by Roemer), at the time vice-chancellor at Berkeley in charge of student discipline.

It is also interesting to see that more than a few contributors are skeptical about the impact political philosophy may have on the real world, or, even more interesting, about their own contribution to political philosophy. It's refreshing to see that philosophers who, by all reasonable standards, are at the forefront of the discipline, are not all self-righteous.

A few topics occur repeatedly. These might be fruitful areas for future research. One of them is the importance of religion to political philosophy, which, despite its apparent urgency, is still an under-researched topic. Another is the question how theories of justice, traditionally considered to be applicable in a single nation-state, may be extended to international contexts. A specific topic here might be the philosophy of international law, as Allen Buchanan mentions. Many other topics, such as the accountability of elected representatives, the role and shape of academic education, the role of electronic media in shaping interpersonal relationships, the relationship between ideal and non-ideal theory, and punishment, are discussed by the contributors.

To sum up: this is not a book of academic philosophy, but it is interesting for people who care about political philosophy. It may be more useful than many books of academic philosophy, especially for people looking for an overview of the field, or for stimulating thoughts that haven't yet made their way to the professional journals.

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Tammy Nyden-Bullock

Spinoza's Radical Cartesian Mind.

New York: Continuum 2007.

Pp. 192.

US\$105.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-8587-8).

In this book Nyden-Bullock traces the development of Spinoza's political and philosophical views from his early encounters with the intellectually stimulating figures of the Amsterdam 'Radical Cartesian Circle' through the completion of his magnum opus, the *Ethics*. Nyden-Bullock discusses in some detail both the Radical Cartesian pamphlets to which Spinoza was exposed and the key individuals with whom he interacted during the time that he was developing his own philosophical views. She concludes that Spinoza's political writings were strongly impacted by the views of his friends and associates in the Radical Cartesian Circle, and that while Spinoza's own mature epistemological views were in part a result of his rejection of Descartes' metaphysical dualism, they were also affected by his attempt to develop a coherent Cartesian political theory.

Nyden-Bullock begins her study in Chapter 1 with a general overview of the political conditions and the rise of Cartesianism in the Netherlands just prior to and during Spinoza's lifetime. The philosophical controversy of the time included a transition from scholastic Aristotelianism to the new and exciting ideas of Galileo, Hobbes, and Descartes. The changes included passionate discussions in the fields of philosophy, theology, politics, and religion. Indeed, debates on these topics were feverish and continuous among scholars, politicians, religious leaders, and the general public. This resulted in a change in the status of philosophy itself, from a subservient academic position to a field of study that was newly understood to have its own power and meaning independent from any other discipline.

In the second and third chapters Nyden-Bullock discusses the Radical Cartesian pamphlets of Lambertus van Velthuysen and the De la Court

brothers, and the political views of some of Spinoza's associates in the Amsterdam Circle. All of these thinkers are tied together by their beliefs in the views of Descartes and Hobbes regarding the role of reason in controlling the passions and the universal human drive for self-preservation — ideas well known to Spinoza scholars. Nyden-Bullock argues that Spinoza's close association with the Radical Cartesian group provides very strong evidence that Spinoza was thinking about the connection between epistemology, politics, and religion throughout his entire philosophical career. Further, she shows that given the overlapping views expressed in the writings of Spinoza and the other Radical Cartesians, it is virtually impossible to determine in which direction the lines of influence traveled between Spinoza and his Radical Cartesian associates.

The focus of Chapter 4 is on the content of Spinoza's political views and the order in which his political, metaphysical, and epistemological ideas developed. Nyden-Bullock argues that rather than creating his metaphysical system first and then expounding on the political views that easily follow from that system, it was the other way around, with Spinoza's political views giving birth to his mature metaphysical and epistemological theories. Indeed, in the *Theological-Political Treatise* we see many of Spinoza's more developed metaphysical and epistemological views. Nyden-Bullock again shows the ties between Spinoza and his associates. The central tenets of Spinoza's political theory — that true wisdom and knowledge are based on reason, that the social nature of human beings necessarily entails the drive toward self-preservation, that salvation requires knowledge, and that a healthy society (of which the highest form is a democracy) occurs only through the rule of reason — were views that were held by the members of the Amsterdam Radical Cartesian Circle. She also points out that the earliest version of Spinoza's 'three kinds of knowledge' (i.e., imagination, reason, and intuition), which is central to his mature epistemology, is found in van den Eden's *Free Political Propositions*. Her conclusion is that Spinoza's systematization of Radical Cartesian politics played a very large role in the development of his complete philosophical theory — entailing his metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, and political views.

The book's last three chapters trace the development of Spinoza's thoughts on error, truth, and falsity from the early 'Cartesian' stage found in his *Appendix Containing Metaphysical Thoughts* (CM) to the middle 'transitional' stage in the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* (TIE) and the *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being* (KV), through the 'mature' stage of his epistemology in the *Ethics* (78). Chapter 5 is dedicated to the early stage in which Spinoza begins to distinguish his views from those of Descartes. For example, in the early stage Spinoza still accepts the ideas that error results when the will extends itself beyond the scope of the intellect, that the will is free, and that the will and intellect are distinct from one another. However, Spinoza begins to strike out on his own when he offers both his own definition of the will and a new way of understanding the distinction between the will and the intellect. For Spinoza, the will is free in the sense

that the mental acts that we call volitions never follow from causes that are external to the human mind; rather, any volition is caused by the mind alone. Also, for Spinoza the will is the active portion of the mind while the intellect is passive.

In Chapter 6 Nyden-Bullock shows that in the transitional stage Spinoza continues to distinguish his own from Descartes' epistemology, by means of his monistic ontology and unique view of the mind-body relationship. In the TIE he begins to develop his view that the primary goal of humankind is to have true knowledge of the connection between the mind and the body, and the relationship between the self and the entire universe, including its cause, i.e., God. Nyden-Bullock argues that the main problem with the TIE is that it does not complete what it sets out to accomplish: it does not explain why an idea corresponds with its object, and hence, it does not explain the nature of the mind-body union. Nyden-Bullock says that in the KV we find the first textual evidence of Spinoza's denial of free will — a view in direct conflict with Descartes. Also, Spinoza begins to reject the will-intellect distinction, claiming that if they were really distinct from one another, then they would be substances; and since substances have nothing in common with one another, the will and the intellect could not interact with one another. We also have our first glimpse of the notion of 'parallelism' in the KV.

Nyden-Bullock concludes with a discussion of Spinoza's mature views on the mind-body union, intellect, truth, falsity, and error, and the parallelism that grounds his philosophy. While in the KV Spinoza still allows for some interaction between the mind and body, the *Ethics* completely abolishes that possibility. Indeed, in the *Ethics* we find Spinoza's thoroughgoing notion of parallelism — from the attributes of God through the entire spectrum of infinite and finite modes. Spinoza makes it clear that parallelism entails identity. Hence, each thing that is expressed under the attributes (whether an infinite mode or a particular finite entity) is one in nature. So, 'the face of the whole universe' and 'the idea of the face of the whole universe' are just two expressions of one thing, as are any particular finite body and the idea of that particular finite body. Nyden-Bullock also discusses the elimination of any distinction between the will and intellect, calling it Spinoza's 'most radical departure from the Cartesian theory of error' (122). Spinoza claims that there is no difference between singular volitions and ideas — both are simply thoughts in the intellect. Further, since the intellect is not free, neither is the will. For Spinoza, error has nothing to do with the will; rather, error is just a privation of ideas. Nyden-Bullock concludes that while Spinoza's mature philosophy grounds his political theory, his philosophical theory was largely the result of his Radical Cartesian political views.

What seems to be missing from this interesting and nicely written historical perspective on Spinoza's political and philosophical views is a literature review. A reader new to the subject might require a foundation of historical and contemporary views on the subject as a primer to Nyden-Bullock's study. Without this foundation, it could be difficult for a reader to evaluate her

claims about the influence on and order of Spinoza's political and philosophical theories.

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Patrick J. J. Phillips

The Challenge of Relativism.

New York: Continuum 2007.

Pp. 192.

US\$120.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-9795-6).

Relativism covers a vast range of subjects and takes many forms, anywhere from the crude pop culture idea that 'everything is relative' to narrow philosophical applications such as epistemic contextualism. Hence, covering relativism as such in 150 pages is an impossible task. In that light, the wide-ranging promises given at the beginning of this book are rather surprising. In the Introduction, Phillips declares his intentions to 'get to the bottom of the question concerning relativism's "evergreen" appeal' (1), 'comment on relativism's philosophical roots in the work of Greek, Enlightenment and Post-Enlightenment thinkers' (2), and to give a 'survey of the relativist phenomenon over a range of historical periods and disciplinary categories' (3). Phillips' engagement, however, seems to be with a general alethic relativism, the view that truth is relative to individual subjects or groups of subjects, so that the same proposition can be true for one person/group while false for another.

One of the book's main weaknesses is its lack of organization and focus. Phillips does not fulfill his first promise in any systematic way. It is only in the final chapter that he really engages with the issue of what is, or what may seem, appealing about relativism; the rest of the book does not seem closely related to that goal. Phillips' second promise is partly fulfilled — he does discuss relativism's Post-Enlightenment roots to a fair extent — but the discussion of, say, the Greek roots is quite short. The survey suggested in the third promise turns out to have a rather narrow scope. Throughout it is often unclear how the different parts fit together, and even how they are sorted into chapters.

The book is divided into five chapters. In the first, 'The Grounds of Relativism: A Plethora of Opinion', Phillips discusses some fairly general aspects of relativism and its roots. He traces relativism from Protagoras in Plato's *Theaetetus* through Locke, Pascal, Kant, Herder, Kuhn, and postmodern-

ism. He speculates about how various elements in contemporary society may have contributed to the appeal of relativism and raises some concerns regarding relativism's coherence. Phillips levels two charges against the proponents of relativism: that they frequently fail to define their position clearly, and that many or even most of them do not acknowledge their views as relativism.

In the second chapter, 'The Branches of Relativism: Classical to Modern', Phillips divides relativism into classical relativism and modern relativism. The view he calls classical relativism is the doctrine proposed by Protagoras in the *Theaetetus*: each individual is the measure of what is true for her. Modern relativism, on the other hand, or framework relativism, makes truth relative to social groups or conceptual frameworks rather than individuals. Phillips' main project in this chapter is to show how each of these branches is vulnerable to the charge of incoherence.

Phillips argues that classical relativism is incoherent in two ways: 1) Since according to this version of relativism, being wrong about something is impossible, a rejection of rightness is entailed. Therefore, the thesis cannot be right. 2) Since every opinion is right according to this thesis, someone holding the opinion that relativism is false must also be right. Hence, if relativism is true, it is false (as long as there is someone who takes it to be false). This second incoherence leads to a dilemma for the relativist. She can claim that relativism holds relativistically, i.e. that it is a relative truth that truth is relative and hence true for the relativist but false for her opponent. In this case she is not in any disagreement with those who reject relativism. Her other alternative is to claim that relativism holds universally and thereby recognize the force of a universal notion of truth. Phillips then argues that the charges of incoherence have force against modern relativism as well. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to answering possible relativist objections.

In the third and fourth chapters Phillips' focus becomes narrower. In Chapter 3, 'A Root of Relativism: Wittgenstein and Skepticism', he addresses two questions: whether some form of relativism can be directly attributed to Wittgenstein, and whether contemporary relativism can be derived from Wittgenstein's views. Phillips gives a negative answer to both questions and some convincing arguments. This chapter is well-structured, and the discussion is deep and thorough.

Chapter 4, 'A Root of Relativism: Winch and Culture' is dedicated to a historical study of the appeal of relativism through developments in anthropology challenging imperialist and racist assumptions of the past. Phillips specifically discusses the work of Peter Winch and his understanding of the role of ritual practice, and he then moves on to the question whether relativism involves tolerance and whether that might be its main attraction.

The first half of the final chapter is dedicated to a critique of Richard Rorty's pragmatist views, views that Phillips argues are a version of relativism. In this part, Phillips frequently cites Christopher Norris' critique of Rorty's ideas. Here it might have been interesting to get a clarification of

the extent and way Phillips' critique differs from Norris'. The second half of this chapter, on the other hand, is focused on relativism as a method to promote tolerance and diversity, and Phillips' convincing objections to it as such.

A good part of the book is dedicated to showing how various versions of relativism fall prey to the accusation of incoherence. However, these versions are ultimately fairly similar and all seem to boil down to some branch of the claim that truth in general is relative. There is no mention of weaker versions of relativism, such as some of the more convincing versions of moral relativism, or semantic or epistemic contextualism. Obviously, it would have been impossible to cover all possible versions of relativism in a short book, but an acknowledgment from the author of the existence of other types of relativism, and clarification that it is by no means a given that his objections to relativism apply to all of them, might have been helpful.

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Gail M. Presbey, ed.

*Philosophical Perspectives on the
'War on Terrorism'.*

Kenilworth, NJ: Rodopi 2007.

Pp. xxi + 490.

US\$145.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-90-420-2196-9);

US\$55.00 (paper ISBN-13: 978-90-420-2197-6).

There are two very different ways of discussing terrorism in the modern context. One is characteristic of 'mainstream' liberal political philosophy. It is likely to involve the following. 1. A careful, analytic discussion of the meaning of terrorism, with special attention to cases difficult to classify. 2. Clarification of just war theory, some critical discussion of its basis, recognition that terrorism violates the principle of non-combatant immunity, and discussion of whether terrorism could ever be justified. 3. Some speculation on the causes of terrorism. 4. Discussion of the best methods to fight terrorism, with great concern that a military response, especially as reflected through a 'war on terror', may be counter-productive. One characteristic of this approach is a focus on terrorism practiced by non-state actors, such as Al Qaeda. Proponents need not deny that states can engage in terrorism, as Michael Walzer affirmed in his classic book, *Just and Unjust Wars*. But the emphasis is un-

derstanding and countering non-state terrorists who threaten people going about their ordinary business in generally democratic societies.

The other approach is more political and ideological. It condemns non-state terrorism but is more sympathetic to the motivations that drive it, especially poverty, injustice, the violation of human rights, the absence of democracy in many countries, and the negative effects of globalization on the poor. The most culpable terrorists, it finds, are not non-state actors, but countries such as the United States and its allies. The war in Iraq, where many Iraqi civilians have been killed or maimed, plays a central role, but other situations also receive emphasis, including American support for Israeli military action against Palestinians, intervention in South America, including Haiti and Nicaragua, and the arming of the Mujahadeen to fight the Soviet state in Afghanistan.

Presbey's book reflects the second approach. The Bush administration and its policies are a central theme, both as causing civilian deaths on a wide scale in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and as increasing the threat of terrorism to democratic societies by its unilateral and militaristic policies. This focus reflects the outlook of two different kinds of authors. Some are deeply involved in efforts to bring about a less violent world. The editor is the Executive Director of Concerned Philosophers for Peace, and the book is a volume in a series entitled *Philosophers of Peace*. Many of these writers are moved by religious conviction. The other group of authors have quasi-Marxist views that see most world problems originating from the excesses of the world-wide capitalist economy. The United States is the chief progenitor for maintaining an unjust status quo and using its military to cause civilian deaths.

This lengthy anthology contains twenty essays plus a long introduction by its editor. It is a series of riffs on the themes reflected in the second approach. Although I am a practitioner of 'mainstream' political philosophy, I find myself sympathetic to many of the criticisms raised by the authors. In my view, the United States has projected its power in many places around the world and is responsible for much death and the maintenance of poverty and oppression, a phenomenon that has been dramatically enhanced by the policies of the current Bush administration.

Despite my sympathies, this anthology troubles my patience in many ways. There is very little analysis and argument. There is much repetition of what is fundamentally political criticism. The essays tend to be long and tedious, making reading this 508 page book a chore. There are a number of essays only marginally related to the main theme.

This book makes one think about the difference between political philosophy and political advocacy. Many of the essays are exercises in advocacy. The editor's essay, 'Is the US-Led Occupation of Iraq Part of the "War on Terror"?', is basically a critique of the Bush administration's decision to invade Iraq. It criticizes the reasons given (weapons of mass destruction, Iraq's supposed links to al Qaeda), it exposes the administration's false claims about the insurgency, it shows how the administration has manipu-

lated the media and the language used in this conflict. It's a persuasive critique which would be a fine newspaper essay (if shortened) or chapter in a book on the war.

It is somewhat arrogant to try to decide whether something 'really' is philosophy or not. I will just say that in my view there are articles in this book worth reading if one wants a good political critique of current U.S. foreign policy. But if one's chief interest is in figuring out under what conditions it is acceptable to kill innocent civilians, one must look elsewhere. One must also look elsewhere for criticism of the distinction relied upon in just war theory to justify civilians deaths — the principle of double effect. This differentiates between deaths directly intended and those foreseen but unintended and unwanted. In my view, clarity on the rightfulness of such civilian deaths is crucial for assessing modern warfare, but there is not much clarity here.

I want to end by mentioning the articles I find most useful, though some of these seem secondary to the main topic. There are two informative historical essays by Oidinposha Imamkhodjaeva on the development of Islam in Chechnya and in Central Asian countries such as Uzbekistan both during and after the Soviet period. Edward Grippe discusses the policy which would allow the U.S. military to shoot down a passenger plane that appears to have been high-jacked and is intended to be used as such planes were used on 9/11. In a densely reasoned essay he argues against the shoot-down policy on the ground that it violates the prohibition on the taking of innocent human life, a prohibition that cannot be overridden on consequentialist grounds. Harry van der Linden argues against preventive war, even if it were authorized by the United Nations, largely on the grounds of our inability to make accurate assessments of a nation's future behavior. Finally, Joseph Kunkel gives a helpful historical account of the conflict in Colombia and finds terrorism on all sides, including the American military's attempts to fight drug trafficking.

I note, finally, that this is a rather pricy book: US\$145, US\$55 paperback. It is unlikely to be read by those it is intended for. It's hard to see what purpose such an expensive book plays other than to get libraries to buy it. But as the world of scholarly publishing changes, libraries are less and less likely to give in to such extortion.

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Proclus Diadochus

Commentary on Plato's Timaeus.

Volume I. Book 1: Proclus on the Socratic State and Atlantis.

Trans. Harold Tarrant.

New York: Cambridge University Press 2007.

Pp. 358.

Cdn\$133.95/US\$120.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-84659-2).

Proclus Diadochus

Commentary on Plato's Timaeus. Volume III.

Book 3 Part 1: Proclus on the World's Body.

Trans. Dirk Baltzly.

New York: Cambridge University Press 2007.

Pp. 218.

Cdn\$99.95/US\$85.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-84595-3).

In the English-speaking world, the study of the final phase of philosophy in antiquity — the late blooming of the schools of Athens and Alexandria in the fifth and sixth centuries — has picked up tremendously over the past few decades. In recounting the whys and the wherefores of this development, it is impossible to overstate the importance of Richard Sorabji's *Ancient Commentators on Aristotle* project and its offshoots. The translation of texts has proved enormously stimulating both for a general philosophical audience unable to tackle the dense and forbidding technical prose of the late antique philosophers in the original Greek, and for the rather large body of scholars gathered around the translation project itself. Most heartening of all, a cross-over audience has developed in the form of students who start off reading an up-to-date translation, but then graduate to an examination of the original Greek text.

Though it emanates from a different source, the translation of Proclus' (d. 485 CE) commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* undertaken by Harold Tarrant and his associates is another fine addition to this late antique library. Proclus' *Timaeus* commentary may be the single most important philosophical document of post-Plotinian provenance available to us: Plato's cosmological dialogue is one of only a handful of philosophical texts to have attracted continuous attention over two millennia, and for much of the earlier part of its reception Proclus provides us with the best (in some cases only) witness we have. Much of what we know about Porphyry's and Iamblichus' views, for instance, comes from Proclus. In addition, throughout Proclus' commentary there are scattered references to the teachings of earlier Greek philosophers; and Proclus' commentary also gives us insight into what a philosopher in late antiquity would have made of the Orphic, Chaldean, and neo-Pythagorean materials that enjoyed great esteem in Hellenic religious circles. For these

reasons alone, improved access to Proclus' lengthiest surviving work constitutes a great service to the study of ancient intellectual history.

But Proclus' *Timaeus* commentary also possesses value for what it tells us about Proclus' philosophy, and ultimately about Plato's. As the translators' introduction to the series makes clear, Proclus had a very particular approach to Plato. Because the late antique Platonists believed each of the philosopher's dialogues to have a distinct *skopos*, which again every aspect of the dialogue was meant to serve, no detail was deemed too trivial to merit comment, and no shade of imputed meaning too far-fetched if it fit the overall picture. At the same time, the normative notion of a dialogue's scope set at least some limits to the proliferation of possible readings. Overall, the extraordinarily close reading imposed by the late antique curriculum on the reading of Plato's texts, as well as Aristotle's, resulted in an enormously useful set of structural insights and cross-references, one that can help the modern-day reader even when that reader no longer shares the metaphysical precepts that were assumed as a matter of course by the late antique school philosophers.

Proclus considers the *Timaeus*, in specific, to constitute a study of nature or *physiologia* which, however, has one eye constantly on theology. This is because a comprehensive account of nature, as much as the latter may be an immanent principle ('the last one of those causes that construct this sensible bodily world', *In Tim* 1:11.10-11), will account for its transcendent causes as well, and consequently recount also the ways in which the sensible world resembles its source. For this reason Proclus can extol Plato's sagacity in calling the physical world, which is always coming to be, a blessed god at *Tim* 34b (also a sensible god, *theos aisthêtos*, at 92c, though this falls outside the scope of the extant commentary). He censures other schools for excluding the divine from their understanding of nature — Aristotle is meant here — while at the same time reprimanding gently earlier Neoplatonists such as Porphyry and Iamblichus for concentrating solely on the symbolic and the allegorical to the exclusion of the plainly natural and the scientific. For Proclus, Plato's catholic concerns, wide interests, and careening literary style demonstrate the strength and comprehensiveness of his philosophical method, not its weakness or immaturity, as some modern scholars have been inclined to judge, typically on the basis of Aristotle's often unfair appraisals.

The first volume of this translation series provides an example, writ large, of the fertility of Proclus' approach. Many have wondered what to make of the prologue to the *Timaeus* (17a-27b), with its Atlantean allusions and a seemingly meandering setting of the stage which eventually gives way to a monotone exposition by the eponymous interlocutor. Elements of the *Republic* are rehearsed, though to what effect is not immediately clear. Talk of a *Timaeus-Critias* complex (or a trilogy encompassing the *Republic*), as is common in the contemporary literature, only serves to restate the problem more forcefully for the philosopher, who assumes that Plato was writing philosophically. For if the two works really do form a unity, then what function does the 'likely story' (*Tim* 29b-d) of the world's fashioning by the Demiurge serve,

sandwiched as it is between two political fables? Conversely, if in the *Timaeus* we are indeed dealing with *Plato's Cosmology*, as for instance Francis Cornford believed, then what is the purpose of the dialogue's stately introduction? Symptomatic of the difficulties faced by the modern reader is the fact that in his monumental 1928 commentary A. E. Taylor devotes 58 pages to the geographical and societal details covered by the proemium, while Cornford dismisses the entire introduction with a single paragraph.

Proclus' understanding of the dialogue's scope and method, coupled with his belief in how reality works, allows him to dispense with the problem in a single stroke. The *Timaeus* is a superior account of nature precisely because it deals both in paradigms and in images; consequently, it is only natural for Plato to teach about the supernal reality through its reflection first on the political, and later on the psychological, level. After all, in natural philosophy we must begin from what is primary and more knowable to us, before we ascend to what is primary of itself (cf. Aristotle, *Phys.* 1.1). The study of nature in Proclus thus runs parallel with an ethically attuned exploration of divine and human realities: whatever one may think otherwise of Proclus' elaborations regarding the reflections cast by the henadic series of gods upon the Socratic state and on Atlantis, surely this much at least can be said to be a legitimate lesson derived from Plato's middle dialogues.

The third book in Proclus' commentary is of a more technical nature, but likewise benefits from Proclus' systematizing approach. The third volume in the translation series recounts the way the world's body is fashioned (*Tim* 31b-34b); because Proclus in his proemium has established that the dialogue deals in parts and wholes as well as images and paradigms, it is natural for him to apply these concepts now to the endowment of the world's body. Specifically, the way in which the physical world constitutes a 'whole made out of wholes' (*Tim* 33a) or of 'whole parts' (*holon meros* — the term is Proclus') is at issue. A multitude of important points about Plato's ontological and cosmological assumptions are raised; Proclus also finds time to make sense of the difficult passages in which Plato describes the universe's generation in Pythagorean proportional terms, and to mount a defense of Plato's theory of four elements (as opposed to Aristotle's five) in light of this theory of proportionality. The results are instructive for all Plato scholars of every age, and it must be said that in his introduction Dirk Baltzly, the translator of the third volume, does a particularly sterling job of elucidating these dense passages for the reader's benefit.

Otherwise, too, the translators' introductions and annotations are highly informative and on the whole balanced in presenting the current scholarship (A few very recent works could have been mentioned, most prominently Marije Martijn's 'Theology, Naturally: Proclus on Science of Nature as Theology and the Aristotelian Principle of Metabasis', in Perkams & Piccione, eds., *Proklos: Methode, Seelenlehre, Metaphysik*, Leiden: Brill 2006.) The general introduction to vol. 1 practically constitutes an introduction to ancient Platonism all on its own. In my view, the only point likely to raise eyebrows is the way in which the five causes counted off by Proclus in the beginning of

his commentary are documented in the footnotes (93-5). Tarrant sees this fivefold division anticipated in Seneca and in Plutarch of Athens, but fails to discuss in any way its relation to the six causes standardly recognized in late antique Platonism (matter, form, and instrumental, paradigmatic, productive, and final). Of these six, three are true causes and three complementary ones (*synaitiai*: see, e.g., Philoponus, *In Phys* 5.7-16); the fact that Proclus in this connection drops out the instrumental cause (*to organikon*) raises some very interesting questions about the symmetric relations at play in the Neoplatonic picture and about the way Platonic cosmology relates to Aristotelian physics in Proclus' mind, but the scant documentation on this point serves to obscure the issue.

As for the translations themselves, these are uniformly lucid and faithful. One occasionally misses the hymnal tones affected by Thomas Taylor in his 1820 version, which manage to convey something of the stolid airs of Proclus' original Greek, but the loss is more than outweighed by the dependability and uniformity of Tarrant's and Baltzly's renderings and their ability to parse Proclus' convoluted phrasings into manageable philosophical nuggets, where this is achievable, at the same time preserving ambiguities where this is the safer course. Tarrant and Baltzly have also liberally applied headings and sub-headings to the text in an effort to assist and orientate the reader: these divisions are well-motivated on the whole, and the headings helpful.

Proclus' *Timaeus* commentary must have been truly monumental; the extant version, which only goes up to *Tim* 44d, already comprises 1131 pages in Ernst Diehl's Teubner edition. The translators argue that aspects of it must have been based on Syrianus' lectures, something that was standard practice in late antiquity. Proclus is supposed to have completed the work when he was twenty-seven, a prodigious feat if true (Marinus, *Vita Procli* 13). Ultimately, it may prove fortunate that this valuable translation series starts with those two segments of Proclus' commentary, and of Plato's *Timaeus*, whose merits have sometimes appeared less than obvious. We are yet to receive volumes on the central distinction between Being and Becoming; on the creation of the world soul and of time; and on the Demiurge's allocation of further creative tasks to the junior gods, all of which are poised to yield bountiful riches for students and scholars alike. But for now it is good to pause here, for 'here too there are gods' (Aristotle, *Parts of Animals* I 5, 645a20, citing Heraclitus), indeed a great multitude of them.

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Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, ed.

Moral Psychology, Volume 2. The Cognitive Science of Morality: Intuition and Diversity.
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2008.

Pp. 512.

US\$60.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-262-19569-0);

US\$30.00 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-262-69357-8).

This book, the second of a three-volume series entitled 'Moral Psychology', is a significant contribution to perhaps the most important live issue in current moral philosophy: the question of 'naturalizing' ethics. To ask whether and how ethics can be naturalized is to ask how far the empirical methods of the natural sciences, including both observations of human moral beliefs and behavior and investigation of how the brain processes moral decisions, can contribute to an understanding of human morality. There is a wide range of possible positions on this issue. A modest and uncontroversial program would hold that empirical investigation of how the brain works and how people make moral decisions is relevant and useful in informing moral philosophy, a field which is all too often restricted to the proverbial armchair. The more radical program, espoused by an increasing number of philosophers and non-philosophers, holds out the hope of wresting the field of human morality away from philosophy altogether, and bringing it into the fold of the natural sciences. This is an essential and extremely important debate, and one that has major policy ramifications given the central importance of moral and political decisions to every aspect of human society. Judging by this volume, the series will prove an essential and overall high-quality contribution. Volume 2 is constructed around a series of eight main articles, written chiefly by philosophers but also by psychologists and a biologist, along with responses by commentators. (One regrettable editorial decision is not to indicate the academic field of each contributor; it is quite relevant to making sense of some of the contributions to know what discipline they are writing from.)

A major caveat is in order. The reader should be aware that this is a book with an agenda. All of the authors of the main articles (and most of the commentators) appear to enthusiastically endorse the project of naturalizing ethics to one degree or another. What is missing from this otherwise admirable volume is at least one voice of dissent from the project, especially its radical version. The reader will find nothing in this book to indicate that the very project of naturalizing ethics is highly controversial, and that there are numerous quite prominent thinkers (including Hilary Putnam) who believe the project is not only misguided but positively incoherent. The argument for incoherence is quite simple: the natural sciences are restricted to descriptive knowledge; morality is essentially and irreducibly normative; therefore ethics cannot be naturalized. This is of course a very controversial claim, but it is troubling that the problem is not even mentioned in this volume. Readers who would like to see the other side of the debate might look at *Naturalism in Question*, ed. Mario de Caro (Harvard 2004). Indeed, failure even to ac-

knowledge this problem results in no small confusion in some of the articles as to the very question of the distinction between normative versus descriptive knowledge. However, despite this limitation, the volume is a must-read for anyone interested in this cutting-edge topic.

It would be tedious to review each of the contributions one by one, so I will instead pick out two of the essays which seem to me most controversial and most problematic. Not coincidentally, these two are by non-philosophers, and they both tend toward the radical program in naturalizing ethics. The contribution by the biologist Marc Hauser (coauthored with Liane Young & Fiery Cushman) is essentially a short version of his book *Moral Minds*, suggesting that it is time for biologists to take over the field of human morality. Hauser mentions the normative/descriptive problem, though in a remarkable understatement: he acknowledges the 'admittedly difficult challenge of using descriptive generalizations to inform prescriptive recommendations' (126). Hauser's approach to studying morality endorses the extremely problematic modular hypothesis, according to which the mind can be analyzed into numerous distinct modules of which one is the 'moral faculty'. But it is exceedingly unlikely that any such distinct moral faculty exists, if only because the field we call morality cannot be neatly divided from numerous other aspects of mental life, including aesthetic evaluation, religious beliefs, rules of etiquette, prudential reasoning, legal rules, customs, and traditions. His analogy with the human heart as a 'module' (124) only demonstrates the implausibility of the claim: a moral faculty is not a separate physical organ with a defined function, but rather a mental abstraction, and one that is intimately bound up with most of our mental life. Hauser's uncritical reductionism goes yet further, in his assumption that mental modules can be further divided into separate 'components'. And the analogy he makes between phonemes as units of linguistic analysis and actions as units of moral analysis falls flat; Hauser seems not to be aware of the well-known 'action description problem', which shows that actions cannot be neatly divided up and labeled the way phonemes can; indeed, what counts as the appropriate description of an action appears to be relative to one's theories and one's purposes; identifying the proper level of description of an action may even *presuppose* a moral theory.

Another contribution is by Jonathan Haidt (coauthored with Fredrik Bjorklund), a psychologist who has developed what he calls a 'Social Intuitionist Model' of moral behavior. Haidt castigates philosophers for failing to attend to the 'empirical facts of moral psychology'. He claims that philosophers are mistaken in their belief that morality is governed by reasoning; while this may be the way philosophers do ethics, Haidt claims, most people follow their gut feelings, biases and self-interest and use reason only for post-hoc rationalization. But of course Haidt has failed to recognize the elementary distinction between a descriptive and a normative account of morality. No philosopher to my knowledge has ever denied that as a *descriptive* matter, people rarely engage in sophisticated moral reasoning. What philosophers have argued is rather that people *should* use reason and try to avoid self-

serving and irrational prejudices and biases in their moral decisions. Haidt could have recognized his error had someone simply asked him: are you saying people *should* eschew reason and stick to their biases, gut feelings, and self-interest in making moral choices? His failure to distinguish the descriptive from the normative unsurprisingly leads him into endorsing a normative account that is simply an unreflective form of cultural relativism: 'moral facts are facts only with respect to a community of human beings that have created them' (214) (though he incomprehensibly denies that he is a relativist). He attempts to escape the troubling implications of his normative position, e.g. that it would seem to entail that slavery was morally justified within the Southern antebellum culture, by arguing that slavery was nonetheless wrong because it violated the values and desires of a large proportion of the population. But he is criticizing slavery by reference to the *modern* moral value of universal democracy that the slave culture did not accept. So either Haidt is endorsing moral objectivism (democracy is an objective moral value), contradicting his cultural relativism, or he is judging one culture by the standards of another, also inconsistent with his asserted cultural relativism. This is of course the familiar paradox of relativism. It is notable that in this book we constantly hear the refrain that philosophers had better start paying attention to the findings and methods of empirical science. Unfortunately nowhere is the equally important converse position stated: that psychologists and biologists had better start learning more about moral philosophy, especially if they are going to start delivering their opinions on such questions as the moral status of slavery.

My critique of these two entries should not however be taken to reflect on the value and importance of the volume as a whole and presumably the series as a whole. The quality of the argument in general is very high, and the commentary and response structure is extremely useful in bringing out the subtleties of this debate. This is a useful and timely volume on a topic of the utmost importance.

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Judith Chelius Stark, ed.

Feminist Interpretations of Augustine.

University Park: Pennsylvania State

University Press 2007.

Pp. 336.

US\$75.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-271-03257-3);

US\$35.00 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-271-03258-0).

Any reader's assessment of this book — published in a series which aims to re-read the Western philosophical canon through 'feminist lenses' (viii) — will depend on what she thinks should be the current agenda of the feminist intellectual project. For this reader, feminism is a present-day category and project; therefore claims to 'feminist interpretations' here must entail reading Augustine explicitly in the light of present concerns. Moreover, feminism has moved beyond the historical positivist phase of simply enumerating a (male) figure's contacts with women, discerning his attitude towards them, and discussing their opportunities for 'agency'. As the feminist theoretical conversation gets ever richer, it becomes possible to rethink fundamental assumptions and the half-submerged structures of thought upon which traditional philosophical and theological categories have been based, and to elaborate new possibilities and directions. For this, Augustine proves a marvelous subject. Not only have his works — abetted by copious redactions and blunt-edged iterations — been instrumental in forming these fundamental assumptions; but, re-read by feminists in 2008, those same works prove extraordinarily capacious, containing the very ideas which counter these assumptions.

So the best essays in this volume are those which unabashedly pursue a present-day revisionist project. Foremost among these is that of the editor herself, Stark, and the one by Julie B. Miller which follows it. Though discrete, they read as complementary pieces, and this is fitting, for they share the themes of relationality, intersubjectivity, and the simultaneous possibility of individuation and connection. Stark investigates Augustine's claim that women are made in the image of God — but only conditionally, and only in a spiritual sense. She points out that the *De Trinitate* offers 'a powerful paradigm' (217) to overcome hierarchical thinking and rigid dualities, then shows how Augustine steps back from the possibilities he himself has suggested. 'If . . . Augustine had stayed with the emphasis on the unitary nature of the human mind and its various activities as a *trinity* and as the *image of God*, the door would have remained open for him to affirm women's imago status unequivocally' (225, Stark's emphasis). But he does not, partly because of his 'failure to integrate more fully the spiritual and the physical' (235), which makes the notion of the spiritual imago worthless in practical, temporal terms. In some ways, this essay is a litany of missed opportunity; but the very assurance with which Stark develops her themes of 'equality, mutuality, and reciprocity' in the trinity (238) is grounds for cheerfulness. Miller, too, focuses on the relational possibilities inherent in Augustine's explication

of the trinity. Augustine fears the human, especially sexual, 'relations that obliterate the self'; and so he constructs a trinity 'that is perpetually remembering, knowing, and loving itself' (244). This could, but does not, provide a model for intersubjectivity and for overcoming the fear of self-obliteration in human relations; Miller argues that the way forward must be to accept women's full subjectivity, and to incorporate the anxieties of potential loss, in order to gain a 'full-bodied full-souled theology of sexuality' (274).

I was at first puzzled by the inclusion of an essay by Penelope Deutscher originally published in 1992, 'The Evanescence of Masculinity'; but it is a painstaking and sophisticated exposition of the infrastructure of gender on which Stark and Miller's critiques are built. Augustine is used as a tool with which to analyze that infrastructure. God disturbs sexed oppositions (286): 'it is as feminine that man negatively gives God the identity he himself identifies with as masculine' (290); at the same time, Augustine dissociates women from reason through using 'woman' negatively, to help establish reason's primacy.

The most significant intellectual precursor to Stark and Miller, however, is Hannah Arendt. (Stark's work on Arendt's doctorate, published as *Love and Saint Augustine* in 1996, in collaboration with Joanna Vecchiarelli Scott, has demonstrated Arendt's incomparable significance for this project of creative thinking through Augustinian structures). The third outstanding essay in this volume also draws on Arendt: this is Virginia Burrus' and Catherine Keller's 'Confessing Monica'. Easy to enjoy but hard to summarize, this essay reflects first on Augustine's search for wisdom in the *Confessions* — which he learns to recognize through and beside his mother Monica, in the 'inexhaustible maternal body of (scriptural) text' (130) — then on the tears he suppresses at his Monica's death, which represent fluidity instead of the 'eternal stability' he seeks. In *Confessions* 11-13, 'Has the text, drained of desire, simply petered out?' Or is it 'the performative reading of the scriptural sabbath' (121)? Burrus and Keller suggest that we can see in the *Confessions* the 'frozen embryo' of 'a constructive theology of becoming' (138) — based on the Arendtian notion of natality which is itself inspired by Augustine.

Stark, Miller, Burrus and Keller: these essays should be required reading for any discussion of feminism and Augustine. The remaining essays in the volume are useful, and engage similar themes — Stark should be praised for her consistent editorial perspective — but they do not contain the same clarion calls for intellectual paradigm shifts. Anne-Marie Bowery addresses relationality in Augustine's portrait of Monica as Christ-like mediator, Felicia McDuffie Augustine's loss of self in the need to learn "'feminine" humility and yearning' and come to God as his 'bride' (116); but neither has the depth or sophistication of Stark and Miller. Margaret R. Miles, Joanne McWilliam, and E. Ann Matter, all distinguished scholars of Augustine, each supply an essay which provides historical perspective on Augustine's notoriously nameless partner, his letters to women, and his overall theological position on women respectively. Each gives a useful overview, and provides a welcome reminder of the novelty of the theological conversations in which

Augustine was involved — that he was remaking social and intellectual ideals even as he lived them. To these historically-oriented essays should be added a piece by Rebecca Moore, though her attempt to recover something of the historical Monica yields such slender results (despite persistent positivism) that it seems hardly worth pursuing. The essay that seems out of place in the volume is the one with which it opens, by Rosemary Radford Ruether. It is a very general overview entitled ‘Augustine: Sexuality, Gender, and Women’, whose tenets are repeatedly complicated or contradicted later in the collection. This is an instantiation of the wholly negative feminist response to Augustine which has itself achieved a certain canonical status, and does not necessarily bear repetition: why, given the ‘total androcentrism of (Augustine’s) anthropology’ (56), should feminists bother to read him at all?

Fortunately, this volume supplies several good answers to that question. (It is less clear from the essays here why those working from a perspective other than Christian should engage with Augustine’s thought — but the generous reader could tease out some answers to that as well.) It closes with a poem by Ann Conrad Lammers addressed ‘To Aurelius Augustine from the Mother of his Son’, who cries ‘You cannot unmake me by theology’. The best of this collection shows how that nameless mother, and beyond her all women, can on the contrary be remade through the hints, signposts, and half-concealed infrastructures in Augustine’s expansive theology.

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Daniel Stoljar

*Ignorance and Imagination: The Epistemic
Origin of the Problem of Consciousness.*

New York: Oxford University Press 2006.

Pp. 262.

US\$75.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-530658-3);

US\$29.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-19-538328-7).

The traditional problem of consciousness is that there seems to be an unbridgeable gap when it comes to understanding how conscious experience could arise in a fundamentally physical world. In this book Stoljar suggests that the problem arises from our ignorance of certain nonexperiential facts. If we were aware of these facts, the problem would disappear. Until now, this epistemic solution has not received the attention it deserves. Stoljar’s book provides a much needed analysis and rigorous defense of this position.

Stoljar presents the problem as a set of three individually plausible yet inconsistent theses. He calls this the 'logical problem of experience'. (T1) There are experiential truths. (T2) If there are experiential truths, every experiential truth is entailed by some nonexperiential truth. (T3) If there are experiential truths, not every experiential truth is entailed by some nonexperiential truth (67).

T1 is supported by introspection; T2 is supported by what Stoljar calls 'manifest supervenience' (31-3), whereby all other facts appear to supervene upon the physical; and T3 is rendered plausible by modal arguments such as the conceivability and knowledge arguments. Stoljar rejects T3 and offers an account of why modal arguments lead us astray. This account is extremely simple and powerful: according to Stoljar our ignorance of certain experience-relevant nonexperiential facts explains why the modal arguments are *prima facie* persuasive and why they are mistaken. If Stoljar is right, then the problem of consciousness does not warrant conclusions about the nature of consciousness itself or our ways of thinking about it. For example, there is no need to resort to its irreducibly subjective character or the nature of phenomenal concepts. Instead we can simply accept that our ignorance of certain facts makes us go astray when we carry out these anti-materialist thought experiments.

Stoljar pins the error down to three 'standard mistakes': i) we think that we are imagining a certain state of affairs when in fact we are imagining a different one; ii) we imagine a state of affairs that does not appear to be impossible and falsely infer that it is possible; iii) we are ignorant of a defeater for the state of affairs we imagine to be possible. His identification of these errors and application of them to the conceivability and knowledge arguments offers a valuable clarification on modal reasoning and important insights into the strength of the arguments.

As well as considering and answering objections to the epistemic view, Stoljar critically analyses alternative solutions to the problem of consciousness. Most notable is his discussion of contemporary *a posteriori* entailment and *a priori* entailment responses. In each case he argues that these responses are either implausible or collapse into versions of the epistemic view. I suspect that proponents of alternative positions will find rejoinders, in particular to his discussion of responses to the knowledge argument. According to Stoljar, responses such as the ability hypothesis or the acquaintance hypothesis rely upon Mary having novel experiences when leaving her black and white room. Although he rightly points out that the force of the knowledge argument does not depend upon novel experiences, it seems that the ability and acquaintance hypotheses can reasonably accept this. These hypotheses attempt to diffuse the argument by suggesting that knowing 'what it is like' is a matter of possessing certain abilities or being acquainted with the experience rather than possessing factual knowledge. Novel experiences are not essential to either of these positions. Nonetheless, Stoljar's analysis of these responses is illuminating and he puts the ball firmly back in the court of defenders of these alternative views.

This brings us to a deeper concern with the epistemic view. The knowledge argument draws attention to the special access we have to our own phenomenally conscious states, and it seems right to say that the distinction between our first and third person access to phenomenal consciousness plays a role in creating the problem of consciousness. According to Stoljar this is not the case. For him, the problem of consciousness has nothing to do with the nature of consciousness itself. In an entertaining analogy he likens our epistemic position to a race of 'super slugs' who spend their lives roaming around a mosaic. The surface of the mosaic is covered in patterns of circles, rectangles, rhombuses etc. that supervene on two ontologically fundamental phenomena — pieces of pie and triangles (3-5, 69-72, 80-3). Since the slugs are not able to perceptually detect the pieces of pie, they face the 'philosophical problem of the circle'. When they perform their versions of the conceivability and knowledge arguments, there appears to be no place for circles in a world that is fundamentally made of triangles. The obvious answer to the slugs' problem is that they are ignorant of the circle-relevant, non-circular facts (i.e. the pieces of pie). The epistemic solution works well in this scenario. But the reason it works well is, arguably, that it does not include the distinction between our first and third person access to consciousness. Without this distinction it is a lot easier to accept that the slugs are simply ignorant of the relevant facts.

Despite this reservation, Stoljar's book offers an excellent exposition and rigorous defense of the epistemic view, making it a serious contender to established responses to the problem of consciousness. In addition, Stoljar offers an in-depth exposition of the problem, important insights into the role of physicalism in the problem of consciousness and powerful arguments against rival solutions. Taken together, these features make for an important contribution to the literature that will rightly attract the attention of both advanced level students and professional philosophers.

Alan Monahan

P.F. Strawson and Arindam Chakrabarti,
eds.

Universals, Concepts and Qualities:
New Essays on the Meaning of Predicates.

Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2006.

Pp. 325.

US\$99.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-7546-5032-4).

The main problem addressed in this collection is, as the title suggests, the meaning we assign to predicates vis-à-vis the universals they signify. A myriad of interrelated questions ensue: are universals real? If so, how are particulars related to them? If not, how could particulars ever relate to them? The articles of this collection provide elaborate expositions of these questions and insightful suggestions for answering them.

In the 'Introduction' Chakrabarti blends Socratic methodology with the Wittgensteinian notion of philosophy as a question-forming activity. He provides an array of clearly formulated, comprehensive questions and demonstrates how the ensuing articles attempt to answer them. Chakrabarti elegantly weaves together threads of ancient and medieval Indian realism and nominalism, Platonism, conceptualism and contemporary analytic philosophy, so that as Chakrabarti presents them, Strawson may be seen as a Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosopher and Navya-Nyāya realism as a Fregean theory of meaning. His achievement cannot be overestimated, as it is a task that could be accomplished only by someone with Chakrabarti's expertise in various schools of Indian as well as analytic philosophy. The book's introduction should be read carefully at the beginning and then reread at the end; and all the contributors should be grateful to Chakrabarti for an introduction that manages to elevate each article to a pedestal of its own. We boldly claim that this is one of the best introductions ever written to an anthology of this kind.

In 'Strawson on Universals' Sen argues that feature universals, numbers, facts and propositions, which are on Strawson's list of universals, are not proper universals. With feature universals the distinction between universals and their concrete instances collapses. Numbers, Sen maintains, are sets of sets, and sets are not universals. Facts and propositions cannot be universals since universals are broadly attributed to objects and facts and propositions are composed of objects and are not objects themselves.

In 'Reply to Pranab Sen', Strawson responds that feature terms designate universals to which no particular descriptions, e.g. 'water in a bath tub', apply. Numbers, propositions and facts, in spite of being abstract, intentional and non-spatio-temporal, have particular instances like all other universals, and are sense perceptible in the same way.

Ganeri, in 'Universals and Other Generalities', suggests that the feature universals Sen reclassifies as particulars could be viewed under the category of non-universal generalities, akin to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika conception of *upā-dhi* that are useful devices for understanding the content structure of cognition.

In respect of Sen's argument that in a closed sentence, e.g. 'Socrates is wise', wisdom rather than Socrates is instantiated, in 'Predicates and Properties: An Examination of P.K. Sen's Theory of Universals' MacBride argues that this leads to the possibilities that the instantiated predicates like wisdom are either tropes or facts, and following Quine and Carnap he shows that either choice leads to insuperable difficulties. MacBride, like Armstrong, claims that *a priori* accounts of the meaning of predicates are overrated, and he urges that we need to shift our attention to the *a posteriori* side of the debate.

The previous four essays are grouped together around Sen's denial of feature universals and the responses to that. The next three essays are quite diverse, but they do form a group that reveals the wide spectrum of the directions taken in discussions of universals. In 'Buddhist Nominalism and Desert Ornithology', Siderits claims that Buddhism provides a sufficient semantic background, without ontological commitment, for the meaning of subject or predicate terms. The meaning-bearing role of linguistic terms is explained through *anyāpoha*. A generic term delivers a meaning through negating what it conventionally does not signify. The mind has a tendency to gloss over the unique features of an object, which results in the formation of a mental image of the object guided by the contextual interests of the cognizer.

In 'Universals Transformed: The First Thousand Years After Plato', Sorabji demonstrates that the Sophists began the deflation of universals. Deflation is revived by the Stoics who explain away universals as fictions and consider predicate terms as generalities with which we think about the world. Sorabji maintains that even non-conceptualized perceptual episodes contribute to the recognition of universals in later episodes.

In 'Conceptualism' Swoyer observes that the classical Greek view of the relation of particulars to universals was based on the attempt to make sense of substance through concepts. Since then alternative theories have emerged to widen the horizon of conceptualism. These are more accommodative of the Buddhist type resemblance-based, exclusion-based theories, on the one hand, and cognitions-based mental representation theories on the other. In an effort to blunt the realist attack on the concept-based understanding of universals, Swoyer suggests an ontology of '*in re* properties' that are mind-independent but are the epicenter around which mental processes of classifying, recognizing, projecting and generalizing revolve.

Von Wright disagrees with Frege's proposal that predicates introduce functions based on patterns, because functions cannot be objects. Von Wright claims that predicates should be taken to refer to the object via concepts which ascribe to the extension of the property to which they refer. In 'The Concept Horse', Noonan concludes that although Frege's position is paradoxical, von Wright's proposal is not semantically robust.

In 'Universals and Particulars: Ramsey's Skepticism', Hale demonstrates that Ramsey rejects the distinction between subject terms and predicate terms because it cannot be sustained on empirical, grammatical and logical grounds. Based on the Aristotelian distinction between primary substances

and qualities, Hale carefully examines and supports Dummett's defense of the logical distinction between subject and predicate, yet he concludes that it does not imply a corresponding ontological distinction.

In 'How Not to Trivialize the Identity of Indiscernibles', Rodrigues-Pereyra, establishes the primacy of the discernment-grounding role of properties over their identity-stating role, through a meticulous use of the principle of the identity of indiscernibles. He claims that there is a meaningful 'property of properties' namely 'the property of being trivializing'. Rodrigues-Pereyra, opposed to Strawson, maintains that even impure properties — those which are relational and dependent upon the identity of a particular relatum — can be non-trivializing. He then proposes five different ways of defining trivializing properties, placing due emphasis upon qualitative difference over mere numerical oneness.

In 'Universals and the Defence of *Ante Rem* Realism', Bealer defends traditional *ante rem* realism against quasi-nominalist deflationary approaches like factionalism and substitutionalism, which consider properties as language-created and language-dependent entities. He presents a transmodal argument consistent with the requirement of *ante rem* realism to prove that properties, relations and propositions exist independently of things exemplifying them.

In 'Particulars Have Their Properties of Necessity' Armstrong espouses an anti-Platonist, empiricist conception of universals, a conception by which he rejects disjunctive, negative and unexemplified properties. Though a particular itself features in the world contingently, it necessarily has the property it exemplifies. Armstrong contends that the connections and relations among particulars that create particular states of affairs in the world are as real as the particulars that comprise them and the properties they exemplify.

In 'Properties in Abundance' Künne argues that reflecting on the role of the copula aids in understanding general terms that fall in the range of the copula in propositions. General terms introduce properties into a discourse only by connoting it. The relation transforms to denotation if the corresponding singular term is derived from the given general term, such that properties can be quantified over by quantifying into either of them. Taking an *ante rem* stand, Künne grants that general terms can connote properties even when they are not exemplified.

In 'A Category of Particulars', Strawson provides an Aristotelian bottom-up account of universals. He argues that certain non-repeatable particulars like unique gestures located in a particular spatio-temporal frame of reference, which come and go, are to be included among sortal universals. He contends, along anti-conceptualist lines, that universals are not objects of sense-experience though individual particulars are perceived as instances of universals, that universals are objects of thought rather than concepts, and that they lack efficacy.

In 'On Perceiving Properties', Chakrabarti considers arguments against the cognizability of universals, presented in Jayanta Bhatta's *Nyāyamanjari* as the opponent's view, and sets out to refute them. He observes that all

attempts at these refutations are based upon the lack of a focal point with reference to which universals are said to exist in particulars. Such reference points, instead of being prior to cognition, appear to be constructed after repeated cognitions, if we cannot explain its cognition in the first instance itself. Relying on commonplace examples he demonstrates that universals are cognized in each instance irrespective of their being a first instance or a repeated one. Chakrabarti argues, like a Nyāya realist, that the differences in different cognitions of the same kind of objects establish rather than undermine the case for the perceivability of universals.

The articles of this collection present a comprehensive account of different approaches through history to the problem of universals. The anthology is remarkable for its eclectic character, ranging from specialized debates on, e.g. predicates and tropes, to expository essays on classical Indian and Greek approaches. The editors have dexterously sequenced the articles in such a way that each paper provides the requisite background for the next.

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**Allison Weiner and
Simon Morgan Wortham, eds.**
*Encountering Derrida:
Legacies and the Future of Deconstruction.*
New York: Continuum 2007.
Pp. 215.
US\$144.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-9893-9).

This is a collection of essays by some of the world's leading Derrida scholars, whose contributions mostly date back to a 2006 conference entitled 'Counter-Movements: Institutions of Difference'. As the title of the conference suggests, what inspired the call for papers was not merely a desire to answer 'long-standing critiques of deconstruction's elitism, narrow textualism or apoliticism' (2), but a desire to explore the 'permanent motif' (3) of the *contre* or 'counter' (- institution) in Derrida's project(s); the aim being to deepen our understanding of the conditions of possibility and the specific force of such institutional set-ups and 're-think and transform . . . the *contre* relation to (and of) deconstruction' itself (9).

Opening, Geoffrey Bennington's 'Foundations' arrives at the critical question of the institution ('and more especially . . . the *institution* of institutions' (10)) by way of a 'militant melancholia' (10) driving the search for an origin

in Derrida's thought. Bennington's failure to find such an origin is shown to mirror Derrida's own originary 'deconstructive' insight (*sans* origin) that there is *no* origin but only the *instituted trace*, by way of which identity *in general* is produced as an *effect*. The result is the ruination of the whole archo-teleological schema of metaphysics and the opening of a political space within which all institutions (and indeed all politics), "live" in a kind of constitutive dissention or even permanent revolution that affects every institutional act or event imaginable, and explains their constitutive shiftiness and inevitable tendency to corruption' (18). And for Bennington, following Derrida, it is the responsibility of the *University* to disseminate this message, to 'subject the institution in general, the very institutionality of institutions, to a kind of questioning that institutions in general cannot fail to want to repress (18)' — a questioning that helps prevent our own enabling auto-immunity leading to 'a kind of death through foreclosure of any possible event' (20). The problem, as Peggy Kamuf laments in 'Accountability', is that the closing to almost nothing of the 'residual space of difference' (36) between the market and the university (in the US predominantly but also elsewhere) has led to the usurpation of this responsibility by *accounting*; that is, to the reduction of the value of university education — and 'thinking' in general — to the measurable, the calculable, the profitable. In response, she calls for a 'counter-institution of resistance' (35), which reflects Derrida's own desire not to be *simply* 'counted in', but to remain open to the incalculable which gives the other its chance. This desire is also the subject of J. Hillis Miller's 'Don't Count Me In': Derrida's Refraining', which follows the 'with-against' (45) relationship Derrida has to institutions *in general* — including notably the university, philosophy and the family — whereby his love and respect for such institutions is tempered by a 'fundamental and defining act' of refraining which 'nevertheless makes possible — and urgent — the ethical relation to the other, however impossible this may be' (5).

In ' "Rather than Nothing": Derrida, Literature and the Resistance of Nihilism', Shane Weller looks at a number of misreadings of Derrida's work which equate deconstruction with (skeptical) nihilism and subsequently question the value of its 'ethico-political interventions' (4). Weller argues that rather than being the 'realized logic of nihilism' (25) deconstruction may instead be defined as the '*resistance of nihilism*', a phrase in which both the subjective and the objective genitive are operative, indicating that Derrida's total refusal of the nihilist label will have to be weighed very carefully' (25). In a move that takes us through Derrida's privileging of 'literature' as that which grants an insight into 'writing in general', Weller argues that 'with and against' deconstruction, a thinking emerges which is neither absolute disrespect for the other (nihilism) nor absolute respect for the other and the 'rather than nothing' (anti-nihilism), but an *anethical indifferenciation of the other* (32) that shows deconstruction itself to be deconstructable.

The intersection of philosophy and literature is also a prevalent theme in Samuel Weber's 'Reading over a Globalized World' and William Watkin's 'Counterchange: Derrida's Poetry'. Weber concludes — via an etymological

analysis of the words 'globe' and 'world' as they appear in Derrida's work and elsewhere — that if philosophy is to be of value today, it 'might be less in defense of a homogenous and universally valid national or ideological program, than in its response to a heterogeneity that resists such an ideal' (5), a heterogeneity literary studies help us to recall by drawing attention to words as 'events that never entirely fit in nor leave the world unchanged' (67). Philosophy and literary studies are thus charged with keeping the world(s) open, countering the 'leveling and discriminatory' (6) effects of 'globalization'. Similarly, but concentrating on the relationship between philosophy and *poetry*, Watkin argues that in Derrida, poetry and philosophy partake of a kind of 'textual interchange' that does not render them commensurable but marks an idiomatic relation or 'strange institution' allowing him not only to come across the limit of their differentiation, but 'to think performatively the (very) concepts of limitation and difference' (80). Again there emerges a singularity — a *poetic* singularity — that resists homogenization and keeps the future open to (and for) the other, for deconstructive work to come.

That past and future 'deconstructive works' can be as heterogeneous as the movement they help to uncover, is evidenced in Tom Toremans' 'Disagreement as (Possible) Event, Derrida *contre* de Man'. Toreman discusses how the concept of 'materiality' has appeared to place Derrida *contre* de Man in the deconstructive 'movement', exploring thematics of inheritance and legacy in the process. These themes are also prevalent in Allison Weiner's essay 'The Counterpromise: Derrida on the Instant of Blanchot's Death', wherein via an examination of Derrida's memorial text for his 'friend' Blanchot, she examines the way inheritance 'leaves its own complicated burden of betrayal and fidelity, belonging and interruption' (7). Weiner thereby proceeds to examine the figure(s) of the counter-signature and counter-promise, not just as they operate with regard Derrida's mourning for Blanchot, but Derrida and deconstruction, 'Derrida's ... *futures*' (105), 'our' relationship to the 'undecidable reserve' (98) of the Derridean *legacy*.

Also examining thematics of the promise and the heterogeneity of inheritance is Joanna Hodge in 'Derrida's Transcendental Contraband: Impossible Acts'. Here, Hodge examines Derrida's concern to uncover a structure common to both an inheritance of transcendental philosophy and to the operations of contra-band, wherein the fictional work of the imagination undoes the conceptual work of determinacy. Read largely through Derrida's deconstruction of Husserl's theory of meaning, Hodge examines the way the impossibility of pure acts of intuition become recast in terms of impossible acts of promising and forgiving (among others).

'Entropics of Discourse: The "Materiality" of Affect Between Marx and Derrida', sees Karyn Ball look specifically at the impact of the Marxist legacy on deconstruction, and what deconstruction itself can be said to have meant following the all too frequent events of 'violence and persecution' (121) in the Western world. In particular, Ball seeks to understand how her own concern with the representation of collective trauma led her to 'pursue a relationship between affect and materiality' (123) in response to a perceived loss of

affective value in the discourse of deconstruction. Tracing the genesis of the concept of the 'material' through Marx and Derrida, Ball concludes that the academic institution has had much to do with fostering this perception of 'loss', and that deconstruction has an important role to play in helping us think *with-against* the academy.

In considering the legacy(ies) of deconstruction and the misconceptions that surround it, Stefan Herbrechter and Ivan Callus also remind us that there are fruits in examining what seems to be most counter-intuitive to it. In the 'Grammar of Deconstruction' they suggest that an awareness of deconstruction's propensity to counter the properties of grammar is 'needed all the more badly if it is thought that it might be possible to individuate a grammar of deconstruction, one that somehow impossibly lies outside what is generally comprehended as a grammar and/or within grammar . . .' (140). However, as Herbrechter and Callus remind us after having floated this 'counter-grammar', something proper to Derrida himself might be lost in all of this, something radically singular and thus beyond all grammatical view.

Finally, 'Dislocating Derrida: Badiou, the Unthought and the Justice of Multiplicity' powerfully testifies to the fact that an encounter with Derrida is 'part of the very *experience* of contemporary thought' (8), and that (according to a by now familiar structure) to think *against* Derrida is at the same time to think *with* him. Examining Badiou's dismissal of Derrida as part of a 'postmodern philosophy' that denies historical 'greatness' in favour of a 'plurality of registers and languages' (152) in thought and action, Moll argues that while 'Derrida's philosophy of literary criticism may imply attention to the non-great, the small and the very small, its linking of multiplicity to the imperatives of justice and of survival ultimately exclude it from the status of a merely dissolving postmodern discourse' (168).

If the contributors to this volume all seek to rethink and transform the *contre* relation to (and of) deconstruction, this volume can only be considered a success. The complex and challenging issues raised at the cutting edge of Derrida studies can only attest to the continuing significance Derrida and deconstruction have today, 'and, for that matter, tomorrow' (1).

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*Myth, Metaphysics and Dialectic in
Plato's Statesman.*

Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2007.

Pp. 282.

US\$99.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-7546-5779-8).

The *Statesman*, long overshadowed by Plato's more seductive and pointed dialogues such as the *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Phaedrus*, has in recent years come to receive the scholarly attention that it rightfully deserves. White's book represents the most recent in a flurry of scholarship about the late Platonic dialogue by a fine cast of scholars from Stanley Rosen, Cornelius Castoriadis, Kenneth M. Sayre, M. S. Lane, to Julia Annas and Robin Waterfield. The *Sophist* and the *Statesman* remained somewhat neglected because they compose long and tedious dialectical exercises that can be quite daunting to the faint of heart. Furthermore, since neither dialogue features Socrates as the main protagonist, neither offers any obvious trace of the characteristic playfulness we have come to expect and enjoy in Plato's Socrates, and without Socrates it seems to offer not the least insight into 'what Plato thinks'.

The *Statesman* can be especially daunting because no sense of unity is readily evident throughout its many and diverse twists and turns, which Castoriadis has named its 'quirky structure': three digressions and eight incidental points interrupt two separate attempts to achieve the stated purpose of the dialogue, a definition of the statesman. White attempts a rethinking of the *Statesman* on the assumption of just that dialogical unity. He presents the dialogue 'as a unified narrative whole' (vii), the seemingly disparate elements of the complex dialogue bound, he argues, by an underappreciated narrative and philosophical unity. While White's reading of the dialogue will ultimately place the *Statesman* in the line ofaporetic investigations that includes the *Lysis* and the *Laches*, his eloquent treatment shows as well a side of the *Statesman* every bit as seductive as the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*.

White argues that re-approaching the dialogue from the assumption of internal unity will have important and explicit consequences for how it is to be understood, as well as for an appreciation of the evolution of Plato's thought during his later period, redefining the dialogue from its previous position of (at best) secondary importance to that of a seminal document in the revelation of crucial metaphysical issues across the Platonic corpus. The *Statesman*, reread by White, will challenge previous Platonic theories about the status of the Forms, the relation between the Forms and particular things, and the relation of the Forms to the 'Good Beyond Being' introduced in the *Republic*.

In this dialogue, a brief preamble shows the Eleatic Stranger once again replacing Socrates as the main Protagonist (as in the *Sophist*) and the inexperienced Young Socrates serving as interlocutor. Together they will seek a definition of the true statesman, here introduced in the new terminology 'royal man', practicing the royal art (*basilike techne*). The definition of the

statesman as a divine shepherd (258b) is followed by a digression into myth (268d-277c), after which the dialogue closes in a redefinition of the statesman as the 'royal weaver' (279b ff.), first weaving the arts of the city (304b), and finally weaving the virtues of the city's citizens (306a).

For White, the myth does not merely compose a seductive digression to break the monotony of *diairesis*, but provides the 'pivot' of the dialogue. The faultiness of the first search for a definition and the soundness of the second, for White, stand as testimony to the importance of the content of the myth. The myth's metaphysical truths will ground philosophy rightly, to allow for its success. This represents a revolutionary development in Plato's thought, which has implications of crucial import, not only to the statesman, but to the philosopher. That dialectic functions successfully only after the myth is given, demonstrates for White Plato's conviction that the philosophical art requires a firm grounding in a fundamental vision of reality, for knowledge to be pursued with any success. A firm sense of totality must be in hand before any individual element in reality (sophist, statesman, or philosopher) can be epistemologically approached (10).

The second sailing of the dialogue shows not only that the true statesman imitates the *demiurgos* of the myth — in his bedside care of each citizen at every moment and in his weaving of disparate natures into the unified whole of the *polis* — but that the philosophical exercise is futile until metaphysically grounded at a high enough level. However, the high grounding of Kronos' golden age is insufficiently lofty for our intrepid White. He declares, against all traditional accounts of the dual-realms mythology, that the golden age of Kronos is not perfect. Incapable of taming the waywardness of matter, the god's skill is 'incomplete'. By extension, continues White, the 'science' of the statesman, mirroring the art of the god, is equally incomplete. White undermines the distinction between the two realms, rendering them both imperfect.

This has profound implications for the philosopher's art. Since myth is mere paradigm, the consequence for philosophical inquiry is that successful philosophical *diairesis* results at best in 'true opinion', not knowledge, a lesser object on the *Republic*'s divided line. 'If dialectic is pursued without the guidance of an appropriately fundamental level of reality, the results will be circular and fail to achieve anything higher than true opinion,' affirms White (10). But our fearless philosopher is not doomed to skeptical disaster. White allows instead that knowledge may still be secured by a leap of ontological faith that exceeds even the grasp of the *demiurgos*. The philosopher must look past the realm of wayward material 'goods', past as well the goodly circularity of the heavenly realm of cosmic motion, to the still, clear realm of the 'Good Beyond Being' introduced in the *Republic*. For White, the *Statesman* has built a ladder to eternal truth that the *Republic* had not yet designed.

White's treatment of the *Statesman* is charming. Yet it is not without its problems. His very infrequent use of the original Greek undermines his claims to a deeper reading of the dialogue than has previously been accomplished. Furthermore, since an Eleatic Stranger seems the perfect spokes-

person for the firm substantive grounding Plato seeks to affirm, White must explain, rather than simply note, the poverty of the philosophical proficiency of the Eleatic Stranger (8, 16). Given that the Stranger is presented as neither philosophical nor statesmanlike — his extended monological style is sophistic and his ungracious care of his young interlocutors Zeus-like — White must address why Plato has chosen his myth as indicative of the highest philosophical truth.

Finally, White's claim that the divine *demiurgos* represents incomplete knowledge is more than problematic. His claim that Kronos 'lacks the requisite philosophical vision to see the Good as systematically animating everything in the cosmos' (190) at best rests on shaky evidential ground, and at worst composes a sophism. The myth is clear that the limits of material things inhere in the matter from which they are formed, not in the formal knowledge of the artist. The *demiurgos* fails for the same reason that the statesman will fail in his management of the state — because human beings and other frail creatures need constant attendance at every moment if they are to be saved from running amuck. But if Kronos dictates every decision of the cosmos, if Zeus never steps in to loosen the divine grip on the cosmic helm, there exists little point in philosophy, as an exercise in moral salvation. By undermining the dual-realms ontology of the myth, White demolishes the distinctions that give reason to the philosophical life.

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