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Giorgio Agamben

Means Without End: Notes on Politics.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

2000. Pp. 160.

US\$44.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8166-3035-6);

US\$17.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8166-3036-4).

In this book we are presented with a collection of essays from this contemporary Italian philosopher. Although it is a collection of essays, they all relate to the theme of the subtitle: Politics. Indeed there is even a pleasing sense of continuity and development in some sections that give it the feel of a monograph.

Agamben's declared aim is to undertake a new, philosophical approach to the question of politics in which its traditional concepts such as '*sovereignty, right, nation, people, democracy, and general will...*' (110) 'have to be abandoned or, at least, to be thought all over again' (112). This rethinking takes the form of an examination of alternative and, for Agamben, more fundamental categories such as 'natural life', 'the state of exception', 'the concentration camp', 'the refugee', 'language', 'the sphere of gesture or pure means' (ix-x).

Agamben characteristically casts fresh light on political thought by reminding us of ancient and familiar distinctions that are largely ignored or taken for granted. He re-reveals their relevance in such a way that they appear as new and useful categories. Rather than producing neologisms in the manner of other contemporary thinkers he appropriates the extant terminology to challenge 'accepted' positions. For example, his category of natural life is taken directly and explicitly from the ancient Greek distinction between *zoē* (living) and *bios* (the way of living) (1-2). This is an unorthodox lesson in 'back to basics' in which natural (or 'naked') life becomes the most fundamental political category because it is what 'is kept safe and protected only to the degree to which it submits itself to the sovereign's (or the law's) right of life and death' (5). The destabilisation of sovereignty will only come about through the realisation that it is founded on naked life rather than political will.

Agamben's is a particularly parasitic form of philosophy, and this is not meant as a criticism in a largely parasitic activity. His is an honest parasitism that generously acknowledges those that it feeds off — Arendt, Aristotle, Benjamin, Deleuze, Debord, Foucault, Heidegger, Kafka, Marx, Nancy, Schmitt, to name but a few. The very title of the book is a motif of Walter Benjamin's, and the category of the state of the exception is taken from Benjamin's own use of Schmitt's thesis. However, it gains a freshness and potency in Agamben's hands when he reminds us that, fifty years after Benjamin's diagnosis, it is still the fact that 'the "state of emergency" in which we live is not the exception but the rule' (6). This can be seen most clearly in his meditations on the Camp, in which we are not only reminded of the horrors of the Nazi death camps, but also the fact that camps are still with us as '*the space that opens up when the state of exception starts to become the*

rule' (39). It is in this way that the camp, as an exceptional space which suspends the normal rules of statehood, or citizenship, begins to alter our understanding of the politics in which we operate.

One way in which camps are still with us is, of course, as refugee camps. Agamben positions the refugee as the pure human who, because of their statelessness, threaten the very concept of the nation state — and paradoxically, also the notion of human rights — because these notions are shown to be unthinkable outside of the exclusivity of belonging by birth to a territory (nation) rather than a proven inclusivity of humankind. Again, Agamben positions his thesis as a development of Hannah Arendt's description of refugees as 'the vanguard of their peoples' (16).

However, the trouble with Agamben's constant referral to proper names as shorthand for philosophical positions is that it assumes a fairly detailed knowledge of European philosophy if it is to avoid sounding like 'name dropping'. This is probably due to the brevity of the pieces which are indeed not much more than 'notes'. Those familiar with Agamben's work will be well aware that he is very capable of filling out the positions and arguments that belong to the names dropped. (See, for example his *Potentialities* [Stanford University Press 1999] for extended discussions of Benjamin, Heidegger, and Hegel.) Although there are notes accompanying direct quotations, there is no bibliography (or even first names in some cases) to enable those who would wish to familiarise themselves further with his tempting references.

This is an urgently contemporary book due to its insistence on the categories of camps and refugees; what is Camp X-Ray if not a localised state of exception? It is also in its call for us to revisit the language of politics, in a much deeper way than merely tinkering with the identity-politics of language, that Agamben provides the tools for an intervention in the current stagnant politics of political correctness. Language is treated as one of the categories of this new thinking of politics because it also ignores the boundaries of nation states and is therefore another aspect of the obsolescence of traditional political categories. 'We do not have, in fact, the slightest idea of what either a people or a language is' (64). It is on this question that Agamben also becomes most allusive and elusive in his own use of language. There is a tendency, due to an unfortunate Heideggerian influence, towards a confusing ontologisation of language in which it becomes 'pure communicability' (96).

This is also a peculiarly dated work. All of the essays were written between 1990 and 1995 and they are situated within the events of the late 1980s / early 1990s (the final chapter is a personal analysis of the state of Italian politics (1992-94). The events mentioned serve as either a call for attention to the significant and catastrophic events that happened during this period (genocide in Bosnia, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Timisoara, Tiananmen Square, The Gulf War, etc.) or a reminder of the shortness of human, cultural, or media-constructed memory.

Ewan Porter

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George Ainslie

Breakdown of Will.

New York: Cambridge University Press 2001.

Pp. xi + 258.

US\$55.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-59300-X);

US\$21.00 (paper: ISBN 0-521-59694-7).

Breakdown of Will should interest many philosophers of psychology. George Ainslie argues against the standard ideas of will and willpower that have been used by philosophers, psychologists and social scientists to explain both the successful resisting of temptation and the irrational giving in to temptation. He argues that we can explain the notion of willpower with an initially counterintuitive theory of *intertemporal bargaining*, and that this theory is the only one that is both internally coherent and is consistent with experimental results. Ainslie is not a philosopher, and his approach does not draw any sharp distinction between conceptual and empirical claims about the nature of will. Indeed, philosophers may well find it unclear exactly where Ainslie's theory stands relative to other philosophical views about the will. Nevertheless, there are interesting and important ideas within the text, and it should spur fruitful philosophical discussion.

Ainslie compares some well-known approaches to explaining irrationality. He contrasts the cognitive picture of choice with utility theory. He characterizes Davidson and Bratman as cognitivists, and says that this approach 'attributes self-defeating behavior to mental error' (14). Utility theory, on the other hand, he says, takes the view that people simply do what they are most motivated to do, and they are motivated to seek reward. Ainslie argues that both these approaches are unable to explain irrationality satisfactorily.

The theory that Ainslie prefers derives from experimental data about how people value future rewards. Standard utility theory holds that, to be rational, the value of a reward should decrease exponentially with time. Suppose, if I were to receive a gift now, I would assign it one unit of value, 1.0 utiles, and further suppose that if I know I will receive that gift tomorrow, I will assign the gift 0.8 utiles now. Then, if I am rational, and I am informed that I will receive the gift in 2 days time, I will assign the gift a current value of $0.8 \times 0.8 = 0.64$ utiles. As the receipt of the gift approaches, the value I assign it should increase exponentially. But experiments seem to show that people are not rational. The graphs of people's valuations of future rewards are not exponential curves, but *hyperbolic*. That is to say, as the time of a reward approaches, my valuation of that reward increases not exponentially, but hyperbolically. To make a gross generalization, hyperbolic curves start out flatter than exponential, but then more sharply increase in gradient. The importance of this difference becomes clear when we consider a person with a choice between two rewards, a reward in the near future versus a reward in the more distant future. If my valuation of these two different rewards grows exponentially at the same rate, then if I currently value the later reward more than the earlier reward, then my preference will remain for the

earlier reward as time passes. However, if my valuation of the rewards grows hyperbolically, even if I currently value the later reward, it is possible for my valuation to switch to the earlier one as time moves on and my valuation of the earlier reward suddenly increases far more quickly than my valuation of the later reward. This phenomenon is known as *hyperbolic discounting*.

In the debate between cognitivists and utility theorists, Ainslie sides with a modified form of utility theory, which includes this information about hyperbolic discounting. He describes an individual agent as 'a marketplace of hyperbolically discounted choices' (40). He denies that there is any organ of unification called the 'self' (43). He uses this model to explain not only the irrationality of addiction, compulsion, and weakness of will, but also the phenomena of pain and hunger.

Despite his Humean denial of the self, Ainslie says that people do have ways to affect their own future choices: they can change their environments or take medication; they can turn their attention away from temptation; and they can form personal rules, such as making a resolution. He devotes many pages to explaining different ways people can reconceive the options available to them, bundling different options together, so as to change their *resulting behavior*, and he uses some game theory, such as prisoner's dilemma situations, to explain how we can weigh different options rationally. He then explains that 'this intertemporal bargaining situation *is* your will' (104).

He goes on to defend this bold claim by explaining why introspection does not reveal this truth to us: the exertion of willpower does not feel like a piece of intertemporal bargaining. He suggests that the illusion is necessary for the bargaining to be successful, because to see oneself as intentionally manipulating one's own valuations of future prospects would undermine the belief that one is discerning the inherent value of those prospects, and could lead one to doubt one's valuation.

Ainslie systematically sets out why his model of the will is more successful than four competing models: eliminativism about the will; the will as an 'organ' or kind of mental muscle; the 'resolute choice' theory that says the will works by refusing to reconsider plans; and the 'pattern-seeking' theory that says the will 'consists of an appreciation of pattern that is intrinsically motivating' (118). He argues his theory fits best with the available empirical data. He goes on to explain how using intertemporal bargaining and personal rules also has possible serious side effects such as making one's choice-making rigid, magnifying the importance of individual lapses in rule following, and making one more compulsive.

While this is a provocative proposal, it faces an obvious problem that Ainslie hardly addresses. It seems that his account of the forming of personal plans and intentionally placing values on different options relies on a rich view of a person's mental life, including a strong distinction between mental actions and other mental events. So he relies on an unanalyzed notion of intentional mental action, and thus there are serious grounds for worrying that he has smuggled in a notion of the will that directs our mental life. In

the absence of an account of mental action, Ainslie's theory fails to go far in explaining the nature of willing.

Christian Perring

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Danielle S. Allen

The World of Prometheus:

The Politics of Punishing in Democratic Athens.

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

2000. Pp. xiv + 449.

US\$39.50. ISBN 0-691-05869-5.

Peter A. French

The Virtues of Vengeance.

Lawrence: University Press of Kansas 2001.

Pp. xii + 248.

US\$29.95. ISBN 0-7006-1076-6.

Danielle Allen's *The World of Prometheus* is a weighty book in every sense. Allen describes herself as 'trying to find my disciplinary place between classics and political theory' (xii). Her ambition to combine serious classical scholarship and normative political philosophy is evident in the ambitious purpose of the book, which is no less than 'to link historiography and political theory and to present ancient Athenian democracy in ways that may spur students of modern democracy (as well as students of ancient democracy) to new questions' (xi).

Allen's strategy is to examine Athenian democracy by an exploration of its practices of punishment and social control. The book is in three parts, with the addition of an epilogue and a number of appendixes. The first part sets the scene, describing the institutions and the cultural background that are relevant to understanding Athenian punishment. The second describes the different ways in which punishment could unfold in Athens, and the different roles taken up or prescribed to different actors (male citizens, metics, slaves, women, etc.). In part three, Allen uses Plato's account of punishment to show the extent of his revolt against Athenian politics and the degree to which he stood traditional Athenian concepts on their head. Finally, she considers Aristotle's 'compromise' between Plato and Athens. The appendixes deal with a number of technical questions (such as the number of magistrates in Athens, and the appearance of punishments in tragedy).

The book revolves around an understanding of punishment as 'a response to a designated wrongdoing that has staved off contestation of its legitimacy and that has garnered acquiescence and thereby become authoritative and final' (24). This understanding allows the thought that what is crucial in punishment is 'the attempt to establish a final moment as authoritative' (24). Hence the place of the story of Prometheus in the book. Allen presents that story as a contest between Zeus and Prometheus to convince the various onlookers either that Prometheus is justly punished in accordance with his deserts and by Zeus's legitimate authority (a version of what is happening that reinforces that authority) or that Prometheus has been unjustly and undeservingly bound by a despotic ruler (a version which if accepted would undermine Zeus's authority). The examination of punishment in Athens is unpacked in the light of this understanding. Desert and authority are contestable and punishment and penal practices provide an important playing field on which that contest is played out and (temporarily) won. In this analysis, Allen uncovers and deploys four central concepts: anger (*orgē*), honour, reciprocity, and the construction of social memory. In each, densely argued, chapter she shows how these concepts interact to explain Athenian practices, tragedies, and courtroom dramas, and in the case of Plato how his attack on retributive punishment is no less than an attack on the understanding of *orgē* and reciprocity that underpinned Athenian politics.

Allen's book invites different kinds of evaluations: is it good scholarship?; is the philology that underpins the interpretations of various texts competent?; is it good normative political philosophy?; and finally, is it true that her examination of Athenian punishment tells us something about, or opens up new questions for, our own practices of democracy and punishment? The first and second of these questions concern matters for specialists and specialist journals, although it would be a grievous error to suppose that there is nothing of interest either to the general reader or the political philosopher in the more scholarly parts of Allen's analysis. The chapter on Plato is particularly fascinating and should be read by all who engage with the *Republic* as political philosophy. More generally, the book is full of compelling philological, sociological, and historical discussions. Some of these are bizarre and funny (no-one who reads Allen's analysis of the charge of 'sycophancy' will look at a fig in the same way again) as well as being informative.

The third and fourth questions go to the heart of the ambitious nature of the book, and are more difficult to answer unequivocally. Allen is clearly well read in critical theory and there are nods to Foucault (in particular) at the start and finish of the book. The conceptual analysis is clear and the argument neatly constructed. However, it can also seem somewhat stretched, as when the fact that *orgē* is used in both iretic and erotic contexts is quickly translated into the claim of significant conceptual overlap between them. More important, it is not clear that Allen's account of Athenian punishment speaks to 'us' moderns as much as she seems to think. For us, the site of punishment is not often the site of contests over desert and authority. Allen

connects her account to the phenomenon of jury nullification (when juries refuse to follow the law) and her understanding of punishment undoubtedly casts light on this. But, jury nullification is a quirky exception to the norm for us precisely because of the modern understanding of law and authority. Allen does valuable service in showing how it was not always like this (although I suspect the kinds of readers with the stamina to get through her book will be the kinds who know this already), but to do that is not quite to accomplish the task she sets herself. This, though, says as much or more about the nature of the task as it does about Allen's scrupulous and compelling analysis of Ancient Athenian practices of punishment.

Peter French's *The Virtues of Vengeance* provides a near complete contrast to Allen's book. Whereas Allen can spend several pages on a single word, French favours the swift, synoptic style. His book is divided into two unequal parts. In the shorter first part, he discusses the role of vengeance in literary sources (Chapter 1), drawing on some of the same texts as Allen, but extending to, and beyond, Elizabethan revenge tragedies. In Chapter 2, which completes the first part of the book, he discusses vengeance in Western (cowboy) films. French, with admirable honesty, admits that these films do not provide particularly important resources in the study of vengeance. It is rather that he is 'a fan' (35-6). That said, it is the examples from these films that dominate the second part of the book.

The philosophical core of the book is found in the second part, which has chapters on the concept of vengeance and the three conditions that make vengeance virtuous: that the avenger has authority; that the offender is deserving; and that the penalty is 'fitting'. It quickly becomes clear that French is not defending vengeance as an *alternative* to proper punishment, but as a *form* of it. Moreover, it is also clear that what French is offering is not so much an argument in defence of the virtue of vengeance, but an essay in which that virtue is extolled. It is, at its best, a 'philosophical analysis', not a 'philosophical defence'. French would resist the dichotomy; he believes the purpose of moral philosophy is to articulate our moral experience as that experience is found in our sentiments, passions, emotions, and feelings. Moral philosophy is not, according to French, about rational enquiry into the foundations, or in defence, of our moral beliefs.

This vision of the nature of moral philosophy makes the book rather hard to assess. The 'argument' (and the scare quotes are appropriate rather than dismissive) is as follows: 1) wrong action calls for a hostile response (97-9, 160) (without such a response moral judgements are neutered). 2) The hostile response that is called for is not just moral criticism, but is hard treatment (220). 3) It is morally good that those who do wrong receive the response that they have coming. 4) It is at least morally permissible for a morally reputable avenger to inflict the 'fitting' hostile response on a wrongdoer.

At each point, French simply makes an appeal to the reader to agree. My guess is that most people would agree with 1). Culpable wrongdoing deserves — appropriately calls forth — a response. Indeed, Antony Duff, amongst others, has developed a sophisticated communicative theory of punishment

on the basis of this judgement. However, there the agreement ends. French is critical of anti-retributivists who, he says, fail to argue with the position and instead resort to name calling (207), but there is nothing in his book to support 2) and against which to argue. The book ends on what those who find the desert claim in retributivism to be mysterious might think is a *reductio ad absurdum*: 'What punishment fits rape? ... The tailored fit for the offense, in my view, is death' (226).

Three things are particularly puzzling about all this. First, French is insistent that his theory is what he calls non-karmic (175). What this means is that it does not rely on an enchanted universe in which wrongdoing is always punished and the doing of right rewarded. French's desert claims rest on the language of morality and our moral experience. Yet to get from Strawson's reactive attitudes, let alone Austin's philosophy of language (both of which are called upon by French for support), to the kind of substantive judgement expressed above requires a huge leap. Second, French is oblivious to what Allen calls the 'contests' over desert. Allen may overemphasise the disputes that we have in the realms of desert and authority, but her fractured and fragmented world is a great deal more appealing than French's vision of Clint Eastwood and John Wayne wandering about the world executing the hostile responses they deem appropriate when they come across what they perceive to be wrongdoing. Third, and finally, French's narrow focus blinds him to other important aspects of the penal process. He asks, for example, why we should prefer a judge and jury in a courtroom to an individual avenger of strong moral character (163) and he means the question to be rhetorical. The answer, because the trial represents judgement by one's peers and one's community, in which one is called to account for one's wrongdoing, is squeezed out by his single minded focus on whether the offender 'gets what's coming to him'.

What is left if one disputes French's convictions? The answer is a book that is still rewarding. If nothing else, French points to the important place that ought to be held by the notion that culpable wrongdoing calls forth some response. Moreover, in articulating a notion of vengeance with such passion, French provides a salutary reminder to those working in penal and moral philosophy of the difficulties of finding a theory that is at once philosophically defensible and that successfully captures our moral experience. Reading these books together makes one wonder whether this task is doomed because that experience is shaped by beliefs that are the ethical progeny of the classical era, an era of Gods and of an enchanted (if unreliable) cosmos.

Matt Matravers

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Artless Integrity:

Moral Imagination, Agency, and Stories.

Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield

Publishers 2001. Pp. 214.

US\$60.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-7425-1212-6);

US\$17.95 (paper: ISBN 0-7425-1213-4).

In her history of romantic friendship between women, Lillian Faderman describes the twenty-five-year love between writer Geraldine Jewsbury and Jane Carlyle as, in part, 'a mutual struggle to transcend the role allotted to Victorian women' (*Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* [New York: William Morrow & Co. 1981], 164). Jane could not write because of anticipated ridicule by her husband Thomas. Geraldine encourages her by speaking of both the significance of their struggle and of the difficulty of giving it appropriate significance:

I believe we are touching on better days, when women will have a genuine normal life of their own to lead. There, perhaps, will not be so many marriages, and women will be taught not to feel their destiny *manqué* if they remain single. They will be able to be friends and companions in a way they cannot be now. ... I do not feel that either you or I are to be called failures. We are indications of a development of womanhood which as yet is not recognized. It has, so far, no ready made channels to run in, but still we have looked, and tried, and found that the present rules for women will not hold us. (Faderman 1981, 165)

Geraldine characterizes herself as only a 'faint impression' of the development of which she speaks, a development that she cannot fully predict, articulate, or justify. Her companionship with Jane cannot now have the meaning that it might in the world towards which they act. Yet their lives express a direction of development and they are not failures.

Susan Babbitt's *Artless Integrity: Moral Imagination, Agency, and Stories* is an original and radical moral epistemology that supports the lives of those in situations of moral risk: those, like Geraldine, who are motivated by perceptions of beauty or moral possibility, by experiences of injustice, or by a sense of the rightness of their own feelings to pursue alternative visions of meaningfulness that may not secure social uptake or appropriate understanding. The circumstances that could explain and give importance to these actions are not in place; they are the very ones the agents seek to bring about. To so act is to be motivated to discharge a deep 'explanatory burden' through the direction in which one lives, and requires virtues of ardent patience, visionary faith and single-mindedness.

Babbitt's account of moral risk is meant to apply not only to a historical handful of famed revolutionaries, but as the book's stories tell, to countless

other ordinary visionaries who resist longstanding oppressive regimes, who revision gender, or, in Babbitt's most developed example, who live in Cuba working to support its direction against the powerful and destructive misunderstandings of the U.S. Part of Babbitt's point is that such misunderstanding is not a lack of information but the absence of appropriate interpretive conditions. An ironic and pointed example (from Chapter 4) is a study which misinterprets journalist Mirta Roderíguez Calderón's description of the situation of Cuban women as indicating the revolution's failure. And yet in the very article the study refers to, Calderón contends that to understand Cuba would require immersion in a very particular set of ideals and practices. This challenge is itself apparently not understood.

The core idea of understanding or grasping significance through participating in a direction determining of import is defended through reference to thinkers as diverse as Che Guevara, science fiction writer Samuel Delaney with his wonderful idea of a purport, and philosopher Richard Boyd. Babbitt's recurrent use of philosophy of science provides a model for thinking of the relation of background conditions to what will count as evidence or what will be unnoticed or discounted; it defends theoretical innovation as requiring commitment in advance of understanding; and it offers an account of our fluid individuation through historical processes which depend on our directions of development and our causal interactions with the world.

But Babbitt's naturalized moral realism owes as much to Lenin and Gramsci as to contemporary epistemology. In the social/political realm, our theoretical quest is existential rather than merely intellectual; to commit to the world's being a certain sort of way is to reciprocally commit to who one is and will be. Moreover, the world acts on us; we are in Lenin's 'dark waters' and understanding cannot be a process of distanced and controlled evaluation. Babbitt's earlier *Impossible Dreams: Rationality, Integrity and Moral Imagination* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1996), a fundamental and groundbreaking critique of the liberal models of rational choice, argued that persons socialized within oppressive structures may need to undergo transformative experiences that cause them to be and live differently in order to gain more adequate epistemic standards, an option multiply ruled out in liberal theory. *Artless Integrity* is, in part, about the process of such transformation.

There are several valuable foci in Babbitt's work that one simply doesn't find elsewhere in contemporary North American ethics. Though she shares with others an interest in moral perception, her concentration on expectations as expressing the social/historical conditions that structure our consciousness pre-reflectively and pre-suppositionally (36) highlights one of the most important and undertheorized notions in political psychology. When the demand for explanation is pressed upon those who challenge the naturalness of expectations, it can thwart people's abilities to imagine differently but can also galvanize action. So, second, there is Babbitt's account of the burden of explanation as both repressive, but also deeply and existentially generative, met only by bringing about change.

The most contentious focus for many feminist philosophers, including myself, will be Babbitt's insistence that moral risk involves the drive for unity. 'The argument of this book is that we would not see distinctness and novelty as significant as interesting and sometimes as beautiful, if we had not the imagination and energy to seek unity, or ourselves, our societies, and the world — according to specific determinate directions of thought and action' (xvi-xvii). This claim challenges the favoured direction of feminist theory towards a non-unified self, structured through diverse subject positions and able to gain political knowledge through the exploitation of its multiplicity in the service of different perspectives. For Babbitt, to form accurate judgements about significance, we must single-mindedly pursue a direction that inevitably limits our perspective. Some of the argument for a unified self and vision seems foreshortened. The book highlights experiences of disunity and fragmentation that lead people to struggle to greater integrity understood as a kind of wholeness. But many writers have expressed and argued for collective dimensions to selfhood as positively essential to who they are, and some of this theory needs more attention. I have other disagreements with Babbitt about unity, but find her work bold, compelling, and essential to confront.

A striking feature of Babbitt's previous work has been to challenge by practice a sharp distinction between moral theory and narrative and *Artless Integrity* pursues this strategy more dramatically. The book is itself an expression of moral imagination and I would argue that stories are an appropriate genre in which to express the theory. Because of our commitment to a certain (political) understanding of rational deliberation, we have not properly understood or attended to the kinds of stories Babbitt relates; it requires a theorist herself involved in the moral risk of trying to bring about new kinds of significance to give them appropriate importance. Once they are made salient to us, it is not difficult to appreciate the vision of moral agency that informs this work.

Babbitt's work is sometimes difficult, but the book would make an exciting and challenging text in a graduate course in ethics, political theory, or IDS. Her analysis makes accessible and necessary to North American audiences the work of important Southern political theorists like Che Guevara who offer models of freedom and well-being that those who do development ethics too rarely examine. Teaching Babbitt's earlier work has been a powerful reminder to me that students are passionate rather than cynical about the possibility of significant moral and social change.

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Georges Bataille

The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge.

Stuart Kendall, ed. Trans. Michelle Kendall and Stuart Kendall.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
2001. Pp. xlv + 305.

US\$39.95. ISBN 0-8166-3504-8.

A twelve-volume collection of Bataille's writings — *Œuvres complètes* — was published by Éditions Gallimard (1973-88). Although a handful of selections from that massive collection have been translated, in *The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge* Michelle Kendall and Stuart Kendall have undertaken a two-fold task — first, to gather in one place a condensed sampling of Bataille's heterogeneous range from that larger work; second, to situate this particular text in relation to the rest of his already published, revised, republished, mutated, lost, recovered others and in doing so, illustrate this particular notion of Bataille's, the idea of *non-knowledge*.

The 'Editor's Introduction: Unlimited Assemblage' is a lengthy (44-page) technical account of the entire arc of Bataille's writing career, an account whose underlying aim is to sleuth the disappearance of *The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge*, a text that Bataille had expressly set out to write as part of a five volume series, 'the first three had appeared in Gallimard's N.R.F. series during the war, in 1943, 1944 and 1945, respectively; the final two having been listed as "à paraître" (to appear)' (xi). We learn which texts appeared when, in which forms (Bataille wrote short stories, novels, essays, letters, poems, poetic aphorisms, polished lectures, whole treatises), under which influences, and to what degree their shifting-sands content matched the promissory notes Bataille had made about them. The eight parts of *The Unfinished System of Non-Knowledge* reproduce this temporal ordering, correcting, in some instances, the order and dates previously determined by the Gallimard editors. The first part begins with 'Socratic College', 'a lecture Bataille delivered at his Paris apartment, sometime during the spring of 1942' (281); the book ends with 'Outside *The Tears of Eros*', which 'represents the contents of a notebook for a new book of aphorisms kept by Bataille from 1959 to 1961 while he was writing [his last book] *The Tears of Eros*' (293). This introductory section will be of particular interest to those with historical interest in Bataille's life and work, and will serve to sharpen such biographical generalities as: 'Bataille was intricately connected with surrealism' (James Sallis, *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, Spring 1999, 183). Stuart Kendall's documentation of the mutual personal and intellectual animosity between André Breton and Bataille does more than just sharpen this casual remark: it reminds us of the heterogeneity that was 'late twentieth-century French thought', an appropriately Bataille-laced antidote. This section will also be useful to any with a general interest in late twentieth-century French intellectual history, since it appears that Bataille was not far from a number of its epicentres. The painstakingness with which the introduction situates

Bataille sometimes has the unfortunate momentary effect of reading like a highbrow tattler ('... Despite Queneau's testimony that Bataille occasionally nodded off mid-session ...' [xxxi]), but on the whole this section is invaluable for its capacity to synthesize and situate without systematizing. Among the hundreds of historical anecdotes, there is the one concerning a lecture given by Bataille on March 5, 1944 at the home of Marcel Moré, on the topic of sin and Nietzschean hypermorality. Kendall sketches the meeting: 'Despite the rationing enforced by the German occupation, Moré arranged a buffet lunch, and the guests took their places. The list of attendees is incomplete but impressive. Three fairly distinct but overlapping groups stand out: those associated with Bataille, people like Maurice Blanchot, Pierre Klossowski, Jean Paulhan, Jean Bruno ... ; second, the philosophers and/or existentialists: Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Camus, Merleau-Ponty, Jean Hippolyte, and Maurice de Gandillac; and third, the believers, including Catholics, the Jesuit and future cardinal Jean Daniélou, the priests Henri Dubarle, Augustin Maydiou, Moré, the religious philosopher Gabriel Marcel, and the Protestant Pierre Burgelin' (xxix). One's fly-on-the-wall wishes are fulfilled in Part One where that lecture, entitled 'Discussion on Sin' (which was later published in his book *On Nietzsche* [Paragon 1992]), Father Daniélou's prepared response, and the entire discussion that ensued, appears in full (26-74).

What *The Unfinished System of Non Knowledge* proper offers and which cannot be found, in any language at such high density, is a sustained meditation on *non-knowing*. Many of the book's twenty selections have this principle as their focus, either explicitly or thematically: 'The Consequences of Nonknowledge', 'Nonknowledge and Rebellion', 'Nonknowledge, Laughter and Tears', 'Beyond Seriousness'. Although the notion of *nonknowledge*, just as any of Bataille's other notions — sovereignty, heterology, pure loss, excess, ecstatic experience — cannot be understood apart from his 'theory of general economy, a guiding principle for all of Bataille's theoretical texts and fiction' (Leslie Anne Boldt-Irons, *Semiotic Review of Books*, 12.1, 2001:4), it plays a unique role in Bataille's thinking about thinking, especially philosophical and structuralist versions, as another wing of the story of restricted and general economies. Bataille writes, 'When I speak of nonknowledge now, I mean essentially that I know nothing, and that if I am still talking, it is essentially insofar as I have a knowledge that brings me to *nothing*. This is particularly true in the kind of knowledge that I am developing before you, since it is in order to succeed in placing myself before this *nothing* about which I am speaking, to put myself and my interlocutors, if it is possible, before this *nothing*' (140-1). The principle of, and the practices of *nonknowledge* are an attempt to confront the dialectical tradition in philosophical thought with a 'challenge to think' beyond its own well-calibrated homogeneities, its own restricted economies, to Bataille's mind, best exemplified in Hegel. Odd as it seems, like murder, sacrifice and meditation, nonknowledge can take us to the madness and the blindness — to nothing — which is, for Bataille, not only always present in thought as a kind of base, unassimilable

materialism, but which, when encountered (whether in thought or religious or erotic experience) is the only thing powerful enough to 'lacerate' the selfsame identify of the thinking subject so that it can be in the world, as a continuity and with others. 'What's required [for communication] is the overlapping of two lacerations, mine, yours' (30).

Bataille's writing here as elsewhere has as one of its aims is to use the whole gambit of tools of textuality and referentiality against themselves ('counteractualization' to use a Deleuzian term) in order to displace fixed referents for both the reader and the writer. This strategy, which Bataille uses, taking his cue from Nietzsche, and which Kendall and Kendall also use in their juxtaposition of his pieces, stylistically and thematically, is supposed to heighten anxiety, bringing us into relation with the impossible. Some will say, and have said, that this deliberative (in)attentiveness amounts to nothing more than 'perverse', 'strangely impenetrable', 'feverish jottings' (Nicholas Martin, *TLS* August 20, 1993:26) let alone accomplishes the not immodest task of spilling us out of restrictive economy to the 'exterior'. Bataille opened the road for Derrida and others with this deconstructive impetus. Whether or not *The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge* achieves what others after him have managed with such a lead, is impossible to say. That we now have an even wider base from which we won't know will be much appreciated by Bataille scholars.

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Ronald Beiner and Jennifer Nedelsky, eds.

Judgment, Imagination, and Politics:

Themes from Kant and Arendt.

Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield 2001.

Pp. v + 319.

US\$70.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8476-9970-6);

US\$26.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8476-9971-4).

One of the great merits of Hannah Arendt's work is its force of provocation. Her strong and often strange notions demand that one take account of them. For this reason Arendt has remained at the center of many contemporary debates in both philosophy and political theory. Arendt's provocativeness springs not only from her own ideas, but equally from her notoriously strong readings and interpretations of the ideas of others. One such reading that has generated much debate and discussion is her reading of Kant's writings on judgments of taste as an incipient political philosophy. *Judgment, Imagination and Politics: Themes from Kant and Arendt* collects much of the work

that has sprung from these debates, but it is also a continuation of the debates.

This collection on Arendt's work is to be welcomed as a scholarly and pedagogical tool. Beiner and Nedelsky have collected many probing essays that might otherwise be overlooked. And having all of these essays together allows one to easily see the sweep of issues that is entailed by Arendt's thoughts on judgment. The book is divided into two unequal sections. The first section begins with Arendt's essay 'The Crisis in Culture', which gives an early presentation of Arendt's reading of Kant on judgments of taste. This essay is followed by three essays which consider aesthetic judgment, moral judgment, and the public use of reason. These pieces can be taken together to set a minimal background for the detailed discussions and applications of Arendt's thinking that unfold in the book's second half.

The ten essays that make up the second section of the book focus primarily, but not exclusively, on Arendt's writings on judgment. These essays can be grouped roughly into three types. Some are concerned with critiquing Arendt's appropriation of Kant. Collectively, these critiques attempt to show that Arendt simultaneously misreads Kant and hinders her own project by using Kant as the soil of her thinking. Nonetheless, these authors believe Arendt has much insight into the questions broached by judgment in the political sphere.

Another group of essays is less concerned with the immediate relationship between Arendt's work and its Kantian sources, but is more concerned with extending what seems insightful and unique in Arendt's thinking. Here the questions of morality (something Arendt often rejected) and enlarged thought (something Arendt left largely unclarified) are central. These essays attempt to discern the necessary conditions under which an Arendtian vision of political judgment might be conceivable. The final group of essays attempt to use Arendt's thoughts on judgment to think through certain questions concerning the actual space of particular instances of judgment in the political realm, especially those made by judges in the courtroom.

From a philosophical perspective, the most searching essays on Arendt in the volume are those by Albrecht Wellmer and Seyla Benhabib. These essays most directly attempt to use Arendt's provocations to enrich our own understandings not simply of the intersection between judgment and politics, but more importantly of judgment's place in reason as a whole. Interestingly, both Wellmer and Benhabib think against Arendt by placing her thoughts on judgment within the realm of morality. In their own ways, Wellmer and Benhabib think it essential that if we are to grasp what is at stake in the question of political judgment, the kind of rationality that is entailed in moral judging and thinking has to be considered. For Wellmer this is the case because Arendt's disjunction of truth claims and political judgments is unfounded. Wellmer argues that our conceptions of truth need to be expanded such that we can endorse discursive argumentation for political judgments, and that a certain phenomenology of moral judgment can reveal this more open field of truth.

This said, the standout piece in this book is Onora O'Neill's essay, 'The Public Use of Reason'. It is to the editors' credit that they included this thoughtful essay, but the essay itself highlights the great weakness of this collection. O'Neill's essay does not discuss Arendt or judgment at all; rather it is a study of the relationship between tolerance and reason in Kant's writings. Through a patient consideration of many Kantian texts, O'Neill endeavors to show how Kant's advocacy of tolerance was not a consequence of simply being situated within an ethos of enlightenment, but rather was motivated by the conviction that tolerance is a constitutive source of the self-grounding unfolding of reason itself. At the heart of O'Neill's argument are the claims that reason is not transcendently grounded, and thus that we alone are responsible for cultivating the conditions under which reason can have authority in our political communities. This taking of responsibility entails attending not simply to the Kantian maxim to think from the standpoint of everyone else, but also Kant's other two maxims, to think for oneself and to think consistently. As Kant indicates in the *Critique of Judgment*, these maxims cannot be employed in isolation. In the same way, judgment cannot be taken as an isolated affair for Arendt. It is only by reading her work on judgment back into the first two volumes of *The Life of the Mind* and her writings on totalitarianism, revolution and the Eichmann trial, that we might begin to understand its ultimate scope. And while many individual pieces in *Judgment, Imagination, and Politics* do make these considerations, the volume as a whole seems to suggest that judgment might be a largely isolated issue; the editors see Arendt's unfinished work as a nascent 'theory of judgment' (x). This seems unwarranted in that what Arendt left unfinished would have been no more a theory of judgment than were the first two volumes of *The Life of the Mind* theories of thinking and willing. Rather, Arendt's writings on judgment must be taken as only one moment in her larger attempt to think the full sweep of human thought and action.

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Jane Bennett

The Enchantment of Modern Life:

Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics.

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

2001. Pp. vii + 213.

US\$55.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-691-08812-8);

US\$17.95 (paper: ISBN 0-691-08813-6).

Poor Modernity. It has come in for a rough treatment. Traditionalists voice a growing concern about the loss of personal relations in rationalized and bureaucratized societies. Scientists like Steven Weinberg urge people to grow up and accept modern science's bleak picture of matter in motion as *the* reality behind our illusions of a teleological, delightful natural environment. Although they might disagree in their evaluation, foes and fans of modernity share Max Weber's assessment that modernity was all about 'disenchantment'.

Jane Bennett offers what she calls an 'alter-tale' (8) indicating that 'enchantment never really left this world but only changed its forms' (91). The older enchantment was woven into a belief system which included a God in His heaven and a telos for the world (33). The baby of enchantment, Bennett tells us, need not have been tossed out with the bath water of a divinely ordained cosmos. There are alternative kinds of enchantment 'that do not depend on a world construed as divine Creation' (33).

Such a contention provokes further questions: what exactly is 'enchantment' and why is it so important? Weber, nicely summarized by Bennett, had provided the contours of disenchantment. Its slogan could well have been 'it's a calculable world' (57). Rampant and ever expanding rationalization of life was one hallmark, together with a desire for mastery occasioned and reinforced by progress in science. Along with increased power, order, and control, however, disenchantment comes to be accompanied by the 'uneasy feeling that the world has become meaningless' (59).

As heirs to the tale of disenchantment, we have become sort of 'wonder-disabled' (84). Because we are so conditioned toward disenchantment, we need road signs that will re-direct us. The pointers to the marvelous amid the everyday, 'sites of enchantment' (4), come from both artifice and nature. There are stories about strange creatures, Andoar, the mixed human/goat from Michel Tournier's novel *Friday*, Alex, the talking parrot trained by Irene Pepperberg, or Donna Haraway's Cyborg, each of which point to crossings that indicate novel possibilities. There is also Thoreau courting the wild 'so that he might experience the charm/disruption' of enchantment (95). Nobelist Ilya Prigogine provides another point of entry when he describes the behaviors of complex systems far from equilibrium (101).

These indicators lead us to a disposition described this way: 'To be enchanted is, in the moment of its activation, to assent wholeheartedly to life — not to this or that particular condition or aspect of it but to the experience of living itself' (159-60). Resituating ourselves within an alter-tale suffused

by enchantment has important social and moral implications. The revised story engenders sub-plots decisively different from those associated with the disenchantment tale. One great weakness of the latter is its tendency to transform ethics into a series of rules, a 'code to which one is obligated.' Such a code is inadequate for the 'enactment of ethical aspirations' (3). 'I tell my alter-tale because it seems to me that presumptive generosity, as well as the will to social justice, are sustained by periodic bouts of being enamored with existence, and that it is too hard to love a disenchanted world' (12).

Although she draws from a great variety of sources, e.g., Schiller, Kafka, Foucault, Adorno, Kant, and lesser known thinkers like Richard Flathman, and Stephen White, her 'ethics of enchanted materialism' (156) draws centrally on Epicureanism. The Epicureans envisioned their surroundings as vibrant and alive. At the same time, their cosmos was neither divinely ordained nor pre-committed to a fixed end. Their understanding of nature encouraged a particular ethical stance. Its central components: the ideal of 'ataraxy', characterized by Bennett as 'blessedness, contentment, tranquility'; a 'prudent pursuit of pleasant experiences', a 'simple lifestyle', a 'cultivated capacity to wonder at the invisible complexity of the most ordinary, everyday things', the 'exercise of freedom', and 'the refusal to dread death' (87).

Such 'pagan atomism', provides 'the resources for a view of matter as wondrous, for a materialism that is enchanting without being teleological or purposeful' (73). Ultimately, Bennett describes a grasp of things (an ontology) leading to an ethical orientation which encourages 'a stance of presumptive generosity (i.e., of rendering oneself more open to the surprise of other selves and bodies and more willing and able to enter into productive assemblages with them)' (131). Such a conjunction of ontology and ethics has not always been popular in professional philosophy. One of Bennett's strengths is that she recognizes how an 'onto-picture provides a more convivial setting for normative affirmations than does a discourse that strives to be post-metaphysical' (161). Any ethical orientation will have its guiding ideals more securely felt when it finds itself within the 'richer and broader context' (161) of what Stephen White, to distinguish it from dogmatic pronouncements, has called a 'weak ontology' (160). Such ontological situatedness allows one to avoid the extremes of 'individual preference' on the one hand and 'dogmatically heavy ... generalizable truth' on the other (161).

In its structure, *The Enchantment of Modern Life* is almost two books. One involves a scholarly positioning of Bennett's views in relation to a host of thinkers. The other gives hints of what a sustained characterization of an enchanted world might entail. The latter is tantalizing, but left mostly undeveloped. Especially problematic is the embrace of Epicureanism's positive side with no careful excision of its aspects suggesting an indifference that preserves a measured response to the world. 'Ataraxy' as avoidance of what disturbs tranquility cannot readily coexist with either emotional attachments (not stressed by Bennett, but usually considered important for a flourishing life), or the impulse to social justice (a major concern of Bennett's).

A full, good, socially active life often involves much that disturbs tranquility. Any neo-Epicurean position has to face this issue head on, a task, perhaps, for Bennett's next book.

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Peter Benson, ed.
The Theory of Contract Law: New Essays.
New York: Cambridge University Press 2001.
Pp. xiv + 349.
US\$64.95. ISBN 0-521-64038-5.

The theory of contract law has been one of the liveliest areas of jurisprudence in the last twenty-five or so years. As Peter Benson argues in his Introduction to this volume, the normative basis for the legal enforcement of contractual obligation remained unquestioned for a long time, until Lon Fuller's famous essay in 1936 on 'The Reliance Interest in Contract Damages' (46 *Yale LJ* 52). Fuller argued that the point of contract law was not so much to sustain expectation as reliance. Business presupposed reliability, and when reliance was frustrated damages should be payable. In the 1980s what Benson calls 'the first wave' of theorizing after Fuller took off. P.S. Atiyah grounded reliance in the bindingness of promises (*Promises, Morals, and Law* 1981). Anthony Kronman grounded it in distributive justice (articles in *Yale LJ* 1980, 1983). The Law and Economics movement grounded it in the pursuit of economic efficiency (Kronman and Posner, eds., *The Economics of Contract Law* 1979). Charles Fried grounded it in Kantian moral autonomy (*Contract as Promise* 1981). I would add, though Benson does not, Hugh Collins's explicitly collectivist grounding in *The Law of Contract* (1986). The 'second wave' Benson associates with work in the 1990s by Richard Craswell, James Gordley and Michael Trebilcock, work which showed that both the promise and autonomy approach and the economic efficiency approach could not in themselves be complete accounts of contractual obligation, but needed supplementation by wider normative principles. The essays in the present volume, each of which is substantial and newly published here, and which include further thoughts by each of the three scholars just mentioned, constitute a 'second wave plus', or even 'third wave', of jurisprudential investigation of the foundations of contract. I will say something about them in order.

Craswell's essay 'Two Economic Theories of Enforcing Promises' (19-44) distinguishes two different ways in which economic theory has grounded contractual enforcement. The first views enforcement as equivalent to performance, and thus that it is efficient just in case performance is efficient. The second regards enforcement as altering incentives by changing pay-offs: enforcement is then efficient just in case the new set of incentives is efficient. Craswell shows that the second theory is broader in scope, and that this breadth leads to a number of reasons for preferring the second theory. He argues that it makes the best sense of non-economic factors which have been emphasized by other theories — the reliance value, the relational view of contracts, the role of property rights and consent. He also claims that the second theory makes better sense of key contested issues — whether contracts should still bind when circumstances have changed; whether paternalistic enforcement should be permitted; the problem of detrimental reliance; the problem of imputed promises. The paper is written in a largely non-technical way, even though it presents and organizes a number of highly technical arguments.

Trebilcock's essay, co-authored with Steven Elliott, 'The Scope and Limits of Legal Paternalism: Altruism and Coercion in Family Arrangements' (45-85), takes a specific issue in contract law as a test case for the economic approach in general. The issue is that of arrangements within families whereby one member acts as surety in relation to business activities of another — for example, one spouse's interest in the family home pledged to support the other spouse's activities, or a parent's wealth to support activities of a child. Current law across jurisdictions is a patchwork quilt of precedents and theories. T & E find the issue challenging not only because of the inconsistency of doctrine, but also because the values called up — altruism, loyalty, autonomy — seem paradigmatically to be values resistant to representation in terms of economic efficiency. T & E argue that the cases can be satisfactorily rationalized by an economic approach. They argue that what may seem to be a paternalistic requirement of independent legal advice regarding the formation of intra-family surety contracts can in fact be justified in terms of economic efficiency; 'there is greater scope for efficient paternalistic aversion of contract failure than has commonly been thought by the courts' (82). Nonetheless, T & E acknowledge that economic analysis is stuck with revealed preferences, and cannot help if the preferences themselves are defective. Whether, however, paternalistic intervention is justified in such cases is a far deeper problem than just one in the foundations of contract.

T.M. Scanlon's essay 'Promises and Contracts' (86-117) applies his well-known 'contractualist' methodology to the issue of enforcement of contracts — that is, he asks what regulatory principles for a given enterprise would anyone engaging in the enterprise agree to whatever their role in the enterprise. The first half of the paper summarizes and extends Scanlon's earlier work on promises (cf. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 19 [1990] 199). The second half takes up legal contracts and enforceability: how does one get

from the moral obligation to compensate for a broken promise to the legal enforceability of a contract? Scanlon argues that a principle of enforcing reliance losses is too weak to bridge the gap. Rather, a principle of fidelity that backs up mutual assurances is needed.

In his own essay, Peter Benson argues for 'The Unity of Contract Law' (118-205). Benson aims to work out 'a conception of contract that is latent in the main contract doctrines', by a Rawlsian methodology that is 'public and non-foundational' (123). The root idea is of 'contract formation as effecting and embodying a transfer of entitlements from one party to another' (126). Contract formation so understood has its own internal logic, and Benson argues that this logic can be seen to be working itself out in the classic doctrines of contract law — offer and acceptance, consideration, and unconscionability. The analysis is extremely careful and detailed, advisedly so in virtue of the ambitious scope of the thesis.

Melvin A. Eisenberg in 'The Theory of Contracts' (206-264) develops a complex taxonomy of theories of contract. He distinguishes 'metric' and 'generative' theories (206), the former being more mechanical and the latter more flexible: he endorses the latter. Then he distinguishes 'axiomatic', 'deductive', 'interpretive' and 'normative' theories (207). The movement from one to the next represents a progressive waning of the influence of purely doctrinal principles. Eisenberg again opts for the last-named. He then slots existing theories of contract into their place in this taxonomy, before developing in the last third of the paper his own generative and normative theory. This is a pluralist Ideal Legislator theory; the ideal legislator is able to organize 'all relevant moral, policy and empirical considerations' (264) as applicable to differing circumstances.

James Gordley is as much a historian as a theorist of contract law. His essay here, 'Contract Law in the Aristotelian Tradition' (265-334) breaks less new ground than other essays in this collection, but it does have the advantage of presenting more concisely and accessibly the theory laid out in *Philosophical Origins of Modern Contract Doctrine* (1991). The theory is 'Aristotelian' not only in the sense that its historical roots are in Aristotle and Aquinas, but also in that the central concepts are those of liberality, commutative justice and distributive justice. Gordley opposes a theory of contract based on these substantive concepts to what he calls 'voluntarism': both autonomy-based and efficiency-based theories are 'voluntarist' in that they value choice independently of what is chosen. Gordley argues that his Aristotelian theory has resources which voluntarist theories lack to solve the central problems of the justification for contract enforcement, the content of contractual obligation, and the consequences of breach of contract.

These are all seriously interesting essays. Benson is to be congratulated on assembling such an excellent collection. The essays do indeed represent the next stage of progress in the jurisprudence of contract law. The discipline moved on from theories with one Big Idea — promise, will, efficiency, etc. — to theories which well recognized contract law as possessed of too much complexity to be captured by a Big Idea, but theories which were too close to

the complexity to give it theoretical illumination. In all of the essays in this book (except Scanlon's, which is too abstract, but has its own virtues), the complexity is elucidated by theories of appropriate richness but also appropriate reflective distance. Further work in the field must begin with this book.

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John Bruin

*Homo Interrogans: Questioning and
the Intentional Structure of Cognition.*

Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press 2001.

Pp. ix + 237.

Cdn\$/US\$26.00. ISBN 0-7766-0526-7.

Aristotle famously opens his *Metaphysics* by remarking 'All men by nature desire to know'. Hamlet, even more famously, muses 'To be or not to be, that is the question'. Is there really any other choice but to follow in Hamlet's and Aristotle's footsteps? In other words, does not to live and to be human mean to be perpetually facing the mysterious Sphinx?

John Bruin's *Homo Interrogans* recognizes the philosophical impetus that stems from the complex and deep nature of questioning. His book can be seen as a proposal to resolve that philosophical impetus. To be more specific, Bruin proposes to elucidate what he calls the 'question structure' of intentionality itself. Furthermore, Bruin argues that the only tradition capable of this task is the phenomenological tradition. Here is how he opens his book: 'What is "interesting" holds out different possibilities (maybe A, or B, or C); what is "informative" is the reduction of those possibilities (A, but not B or C). What is interesting elicits that response called "questioning." In the answering — in the actualization of the question — the act itself becomes informative. Thus the act rivets on its objects — this act is an act — so far as it is structurally that of either a questioning or answering, or somewhere in-between. Thus the "question notions" of interestness and informativeness must figure centrally in a theory of intentionality, or so I shall argue' (1).

Bruin critically examines a number of models developed to capture the essence of questioning. One set of these models belongs to the 'analytic' tradition, represented by Belnap, Hintikka, and Searle. Another set of models clearly belongs to what can be termed the 'Austrian' tradition of philosophy, represented by Bolzano, Brentano, Husserl, Reinach, and

Daubert. It is somewhat surprising that Bruin does not recognize the extent to which his analysis operates within the spirit of this school of philosophy. It goes without saying that Bruin favors the Austrian approach, and especially that of Edmund Husserl.

The first chapter of *Homo Interrogans* distinguishes between Bruin's approach and other traditional approaches (divided into the two main headings of logical and intentionalist approaches) to the study of the question. The second chapter defines the notion of a question, while the third chapter covers the constitution of the Object-in-Question. The fourth chapter develops a theory of answering and interpretation and the sixth chapter discusses the state of the theory and the prospects for the future. The chapters are clearly laid out; each chapter contains Introduction and Summary. The reader also finds elaborate and helpful notes at the end of every chapter.

Bruin does a great job of unraveling the complexity of the nature of questioning. He makes it apparent that the question is more than the grammatical structure, logical structure, or a kind of a speech act. His suggestion is that the essence of the question belongs deeper — it is constitutive of some crucial aspects of intentionality: 'Maybe the "what" of Q is linked up with the ABCs of intentionality. In fact, this is precisely the case, as we have already found out. Tentatively stated: a Q is a multidirectional act; and its aim is to reduce the "multiplicity" of its directedness' (51). Another strength of Bruin's approach is his insight that the study of questioning requires the study of answering. He makes it clear that the answer belongs in the process of questioning; it ensures the truth and informativeness, without which the process of questioning remains incomplete.

It is disappointing to see that Bruin's characterization of intentionality neglects the pivotal role of Brentano in resurrecting the very term 'intentionality' and making it central to every future study of mental phenomena. This is especially important in light of Husserl, the central figure of Bruin's book, being very much a disciple of Brentano (and Bolzano).

As well, I was sometimes puzzled and even amused by Bruin's assumptions and leaps in inference. Consider the following: 'More than that, I link up the notion of a Q with interestedness, that in terms of which this Q arises. I link up our notion of evidence with informativeness. And in the end I maintain how real one's relation to the thing "feels" is predicated on how interesting, and how informative, the thing is for the person looking at it. So far as it "bores" him, it begins to take on a look of a virtual reality' (21). Excuse my playfulness, but I cannot resist offering a complete reversal of Bruin's psychology of boredom and interest. (This psychology, by the way, probably depends on certain assumptions regarding the inferiority of technologically generated and enhanced experiences.) Let me suggest that even a cursory look at the contemporary media assures the observer that the things that 'bore' humanity most are actually things that belong to 'real' reality.

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John D. Caputo

On Religion.

New York: Routledge 2001. Pp. 147.

Cdn\$75.00: US\$50.00

(cloth: ISBN 0-415-23332-1);

Cdn\$19.95: US\$12.95

(paper: ISBN 0-415-23333-X).

This book attempts to explain, and indeed exuberantly to preach, the good news that postmodern philosophy has to offer for religious faith. Like any good sermon, it is peppered with readings of verses from the New Testament. The leading proponent of the new gospel is Jacques Derrida, whose religious 'turn' was the subject of another recent book by Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion Without Religion*. *On Religion* offers an accessible introduction to and extension of themes from that earlier book. Remarkably, Caputo has produced a genuinely popular work of postmodern philosophy, almost completely shorn of arcane terminology and word-play, and aimed at a general readership.

On Religion is largely a meditation on a question asked by St. Augustine in his *Confessions*: 'What do I love when I love God?' While Caputo empathizes with Augustine's existential situation, he rejects his doctrinal solutions. In fact, Caputo celebrates faith's unknowable mystic center. Any attempt to define the object of religious devotion merely trivializes it. Such is the sin of fundamentalism. While people who are convinced that they have achieved ultimate and final knowledge of God often possess tremendous spiritual energies, they are also prone to violent fanaticism and lack the humility required in order to appreciate the religious accomplishments of people outside their tradition. The overthrowing of all such ultimate and final answers is what deconstruction is all about.

The postmodern critique targets not only religious fundamentalism, but also the anti-religious tradition founded by the philosophers of the Enlightenment. There lies Caputo's good news for religion: the deconstruction of secularism clears new intellectual space for the return of God and the religious life. While we must never forget the hard won lessons of the modernist critiques of religion, postmodern philosophy allows us to once again approach and learn from the old theological masters. Unfortunately, Caputo does not offer any detailed explanation of exactly how the Enlightenment's deadly sting has been removed. In the book's weakest chapter, he seeks out evidence of the postmodern religious revival in elements of popular culture ranging from the Hollywood spirituality of *Star Wars* to the angelic incorporeality of virtual life on the internet. One wonders what these phenomena have to do with a serious appreciation of the limits of the 'Enlightenment project'.

The *content* of this new-style religion is, on principle, somewhat up for grabs. Traditional faiths still serve as useful repositories of potent symbols, myths and rituals, yet they must face up to their all-too-human origins and

engage in constant self-criticism and growth. Otherwise they may succumb to the fundamentalist temptation. Postmodern religion ('religion without religion') is less concerned with the cognitive content of theological doctrines than with living life as a morally engaged spiritual quest. The faithful have opened their minds to the realm of 'the impossible', i.e., to those goals and aspects of life that stand beyond the pale of prudential planning and control. *Love*, exuberant, inexpedient, indiscriminate, and disorienting, should be religion's guiding virtue. Love becomes indiscernible from the Deity itself. Absolute justice, symbolically represented by the Messianic Age, is another 'impossibly' imprudent religious compulsion. Here lies the hidden danger of Caputo's vision. Love and justice find their broadest realization through political action, and politics is, after all, the art of the *possible*. Twentieth-century history teaches us how easy it is for 'impossible' politics to pave the road to hell with radically good intentions.

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John D. Caputo, ed.

The Religious.

Blackwell Readings in Continental Philosophy.

Malden, MA: Blackwell 2002. Pp. xiii + 322.

US\$29.95. ISBN 0-631-21169-1.

It is a challenge to assemble a reader in a format that is original, informative and stimulating but John Caputo's efforts here have not been wasted. Caputo (somewhat arbitrarily) sees Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel as the beginning of the 'end of metaphysics', believing metaphysics has never been attempted in the same fashion (or to great effect) since. Hence, of each reading which he includes, Caputo asks what he believes to be a fundamental question: "Who comes after the God of metaphysics" or "What comes after onto-theologic?" What becomes of God and of religious faith after the onto-theological "first cause" has been sent packing? (2). In essence, he is asking how philosophers have spoken of God, faith and religion since the God of the 'old metaphysics' became untenable in the eyes of many thinkers, given the various critiques of metaphysics and theology dependent upon the old metaphysics, from the Enlightenment onwards.

Caputo then divides the 'Reponses' selected into two camps. Part I consists of 'Landmarks', i.e., classical readings, from Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Levinas, Derrida and Irigaray. Part II, he labels 'Contemporary Essays', from

noted commentators on postmodern philosophy and theology today. Perhaps surprisingly, most of these are *not* continental philosophers in the sense that they work in continental Europe but, of course, the term itself is not meant to indicate geographical but intellectual location.

What is refreshing is that Caputo's selections steer clear of the parlance of 'traditional' (read analytic) philosophy of religion. These readings stretch the limits of imagination, experience and indeed, language, without being straitjacketed by an obsession with logic (just as well, in some cases!). Caputo perhaps misrepresents older forms of philosophy and theology, for not all in these traditions were concerned merely with a 'God of the philosophers' though he has a valid point in relation to recent Anglo-American philosophy of religion. But it is certainly not a case of 'denying reason to make room for faith' (even in a Kantian sense), which guides this collection — although faith, unfettered by rationality's demands, certainly looms large in many of the essays.

The selections from Kierkegaard, predictably, cover his response to Hegel's agenda. The readings set out his conceptions of the 'moment', a meditation on time, eternity and finitude; the 'Absolute paradox' and, of course, the 'leap of faith' that has so 'offended' reason. In Levinas, we find God through the ethical and the engagement with the other, the rupture of time — 'diachrony' becomes a leading concept. For Caputo, both of these philosophers, these 'religious', describe a God who *lives* and seems more akin to the biblical God than the philosopher's deity.

Heidegger's contributions seek to get back to the understanding of being prior to its perceived metaphysical hijacking, resulting in the old ontotheology. They include the pivotal lecture 'Phenomenology and Theology', which cuts theology down to size as a 'positive science' reliant upon faith. Philosophy alone studies *Being* itself.

The extracts from Derrida and Irigaray are interesting because their answer to Caputo's project is to affirm the possibility of 'religion without religion'. Derrida (whose work Caputo has analysed in great detail elsewhere) offers a meditation which plays on parallels with Augustine's confessions, not least of all the death of both their mothers. This is how Derrida opens up on his 'religion'. Irigaray draws parallels between overcoming differences between male and female, and divine and human. She seeks to challenge philosophy of religion to remember our primordial separation from the womb and all the implications that follow from philosophy's failure to adequately face such a loss. In all, the 'Landmarks' are all worthy of the name, though more perhaps would have been welcome.

The 'Contemporary Essays' are a diverse collection and vary in quality and even relevance. The penchant of many for self-indulgence or, worse still, indulgence of the egoistic self, will certainly introduce readers to one of the more negative aspects of much postmodern philosophy. The first group reacts to the agendas of Heidegger and Derrida in particular, though also Levinas to some extent. On the plus side, we have Jean-Luc Marion seeking to answer the dilemma concerning the continuance of subjectivity; reflecting on grace

and 'givenness' — identified with experience of God — he offers a new critique of the limits of phenomenology. Dominique Janicaud challenges Marion's critique and the theological inflection he (and Levinas before him) bring to phenomenology. For Janicaud, Marion's methodology will not justify what he believes it can. Thus another critique of the 'veerings' of theology into unwelcome or unsuitable territory. Two very fine essays follow. The first comes from Kevin Hart, who weaves elements of Rahner into a Derrida-inspired understanding of challenges to the framework of experience as a challenge from/experience of God. Next, Richard Kearney uses the concept of eschatology to provide a tentative theology whereby we seek to understand the *possibility* of God and yet do not find dissatisfaction in our lack of certainty. He privileges the eschatological over teleological, dialectical, ontological and deconstructive notions of 'the possible'. Mark Wallace follows with a 'green pneumatology' that seeks to overcome ontotheology's 'binary oppositions' that always entail qualitative judgements. He wishes 'to retrieve language and imagery of the divine life that has been repressed or forgotten' (208). One might rightly call his essay a step towards new ('renewed?') form of pantheism, though he might not be happy with the limits of such a label.

Irigaray looms large as an influence in contributions from Ellen T. Armour, who contends that Christian theology remains in the vice of ontotheology so long as it remains phallogocentric; Grace Jantzen, who seeks to overcome the repression of sensual difference (typified even by Heidegger) with a discourse on divine love and divinisation; and Walter Lowe, who offers a radical and stimulating attempt to think of transcendence within the bounds of our finite existence; pointing a way to a truly immanent and thus incarnate God. Charles Winquist attempts to move beyond ontotheology by reclaiming the material and spatial — the notion of 'place' forms an enlightening motif.

Merold Westphal seeks to quell the pretensions of ontotheology through an affirmation of Augustine and Kierkegaard — we must not forget that God is mystery and love: our theology must acknowledge its limitations — whilst John Milbank seeks to do the same with 'neo-Kantian' theories of evil (J. Rogozinski, J-L. Nancy, S. Zizek) by returning to what *he* thinks Augustine said. He makes some interesting remarks, which entail that Christian theology has no *problem* of evil (no 'whence' for 'whence this evil', I take it) but spoils it with idiosyncratic readings of parts of Augustine and a misunderstanding of Kant along with the usual implications that the only way forward is to be in accord with (his version of) the agenda of Radical Orthodoxy (we even end up with a totalitarian critique of totalitarianism!). Sharon Welch rounds the volume off by transcending the debate — she does not want to privilege one account ruthlessly over another. Instead she explores the very nature of theological activity in an attempt to explain what we mean by 'the Religious'.

Caputo is not averse to making controversial assertions and decisions. For example, Nietzsche is cast apart for his differing agenda, but, Kierkegaard aside, it is hard to imagine any of the readings being possible *without* Nietzsche's legacy to theology being taken into consideration. Kierkegaard

and Levinas are, we are told, 'arguably the two greatest biblical or religious philosophers of the last two centuries' (4). Although his own introduction is very good and serves its general function, students will probably come to say that each reading would have benefited from its own structured introduction just prior to the text. So, too, will students search in vain for study questions and guidance. In an age when the publisher is mostly king, it is unfair to criticise reader-volumes for omissions; nonetheless, many would disagree with choices which *have* been included. However, Caputo's collection serves its purpose in allowing readers to engage with this particular philosophical tradition. Many undergraduates may well struggle with aspects of it alone, but it should make a stimulating text for any seminar.

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Thomas L. Carson

Value and the Good Life.

Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press

2000. Pp. xi + 328.

US\$45.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-268-04352-3);

US\$22.95 (paper: ISBN 0-268-04353-1).

This volume is a wide-ranging yet subtle treatment of central issues in axiology. In particular, Carson focuses on the nature of the good-life, and the nature of non-instrumental goods. Carson provides detailed and insightful analyses of the positions of both key historical figures and contemporary figures on these issues, in addition to presenting an innovative position of his own, a 'divine preference theory of value'.

Carson begins with two chapters devoted to the hedonistic theory of value, roughly the view that the only non-instrumental goods and bads are pleasures and pains. In the first chapter he carefully analyses (and finds flawed) several arguments from Mill and Sidgwick intended to defend the theory. In the second chapter he turns to common objections made to the theory, and draws attention to the fact that many of these arguments are driven by highly controversial intuitions. He concludes by noting that even so, the simple fact that many well-informed people have preferences that run contrary to the hedonistic theory will require explanation by the theory's proponents, and this will require appeal to some sort of normative or axiological realism. In a later chapter Carson argues that we lack adequate grounds for embracing any such realism.

Carson next considers desire or preference-satisfaction theories of value. He is sensitive to a number of subtle important distinctions that arise in considering various forms of such theories (for example, summative versus global desire-satisfaction, ideal versus actual desires, and so on). Carson concludes by tentatively endorsing a global version of the rational desire/preference satisfaction theory as a criterion of non-instrumental value (94).

In chapters 4 and 5 Carson turns to the theories of value and the good life held by Nietzsche, Aristotle, and more recent perfectionists. Broadly, Carson concludes that the accounts given by these philosophers tend to be inadequately explained, and that we are not given adequate reason to follow these theories compared to plausible versions of the rational preference satisfaction theory of value. On the other hand, Carson believes that certain aspects of the accounts of the good life given by these authors are appealing, and that our rational preferences for our lives should be shaped by our vivid awareness of what it would be like to lead the proposed types of lives.

The following chapters are devoted to metaethical issues. Carson provides a careful discussion of the concept of 'good', and proposes (roughly) that a necessary condition for something's being good is that it be correct (rational) to prefer that it exist. He also provides an insightful discussion of prominent contemporary forms of moral realism. Among other points, Carson argues that Cornell realism has yet to be developed with sufficient detail to allow for a complete evaluation; and at this point we lack any compelling reason to embrace such realism absent such development. With respect to British realism, Carson argues that its proponents have not yet adequately explained how to distinguish between correct and incorrect moral perception. Carson's arguments in these chapters mark a strong contribution to contemporary debates, particularly with respect to moral realism.

Carson develops his alternative position in the final chapter, the longest of the book. He begins by discussing certain problems that arise for full-information accounts of rational preferences. This discussion is clear, if rather brief relative to the extended discussions of Mill, Nietzsche, and moral realism. (Relatedly, Carson discusses such authors as Darwall, Gibbard, and Korsgaard only very briefly. More discussion of such prominent contemporary non-realists would have been a welcome addition.)

Putting aside certain qualifications, Carson's divine-preference theory holds that *if* there is an omniscient God who created the universe for certain purposes, who cares about human beings, and is kind, sympathetic, and unselfish, then it is correct / rational for a given person to have a certain preference if and only if God prefers that this person have this preference (250). We thus have a standard for the rationality of our preferences. On the other hand, if such a God does not exist, Carson argues that we need to appeal to another standard for the rationality or correctness of preferences. Very roughly, Carson holds that under such circumstances, if all possible ideal observers would prefer that a given person have a certain preference, then it is correct for this person to have this preference. If not all such observers

would agree, then a person's preference for X will be correct insofar as she would prefer X if she were to be in an empirically possible epistemic perspective (for her) concerning that preference such that there is no superior empirically possible perspective (for her) in which she would prefer not-X (256). Carson ably demonstrates how this divine-preference theory avoids certain problems that afflict related divine command and ideal observer theories.

Still, certain questions can be raised for Carson's account; here we can focus on just one issue. Carson attempts to ground all value standards in divine preferences. But consider his qualifications that the God involved must be caring, sympathetic, and kind. Carson attempts to give purely descriptive accounts of these traits (thus avoiding charges that these terms, and the corresponding characterization of an appropriate God, are normatively-loaded). But if Carson has succeeded in giving purely descriptive accounts of these traits, we must ask why these qualifications arise. Why not instead appeal to the judgements of a cruel God (where cruelty is given a similar descriptive characterization)? We seem to be making prior value judgements here (particularly that suffering is bad and that pleasure or happiness is good) — if not, how are we to explain the restrictions and qualifications concerning the nature of the God whose preferences are to set axiological standards?

Value and the Good Life is a very rich work, one that makes significant contributions to several contemporary debates, while also providing insights into the work of key historical figures; it is impossible to fully convey the range and depth of argument in a short review. Further, Carson's divine-preference theory of value is promising and should gain significant attention from a wide range of philosophers. Highly recommended.

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Emilios Christodoulidis and Scott Veitch

Lethe's Law:

Justice, Law and Ethics in Reconciliation.

Portland, OR: Hart Publishing 2001.

Pp. xv + 235.

US\$58.00. ISBN 1-84113-109-1.

The Greek word 'lethe' means forgetting. *Lethe's Law* contains essays organized around law's relationship to memory, disclosure, concealment and the construction of historical truth. The underlying claim that recurs throughout the collection is that law's relation to the past conditions, in important ways, the possibilities realized in the future.

For instance, Burkhard Schafer argues in 'Sometimes You must be Kind to be Cruel' that legal proceedings based upon the concept of amnesty actually often reconcile parties by redefining as private the import of acts originally thought of as political and public. This would happen, for instance, if acts of graffiti were originally thought of and brought about as political acts but are described for the purposes of an amnesty decision as individual acts. Schafer argues that such a redescription from public to private actually reinforces the power relationship as defined by the group that grants amnesty. If this is correct, then amnesty is a type of 'publicly sanctioned forgetting'. A type of forgetting that is not, it should be noted, necessarily benevolent — important issues may be defined out of the debate because of this move. In another article, Scott Veitch argues that the concept of legal amnesty is unavoidably fragmented due to the inherently political nature of acts requiring such a description. Specifically, law is a system largely based upon the controversies between private and individual parties, but amnesty is attached to political actions, and is therefore a socially based act. This conflict identified by Veitch, when combined with Schafer's argument, leads to the conclusion that acts of amnesty brought about under a model of court-based law might unavoidably lead to a narrowing or forgetting of the political nature of the actions.

David Dyzenhaus's essay offers further evidence that law is an area where institutionalized limits help define what is or is not a legitimate political question. He highlights the fact that when South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission held a hearing into the legal community's role in the system of apartheid, judges refused to attend. While the evidence suggests that many of the judges were strongly implicated in furthering the policies of apartheid (including the fact that many of the most 'liberal' judges took particularly hard-line pro-apartheid legal stances), when such questions were raised after the fact the judges retreated to a clearly discredited position of apolitical judicial neutrality. As another example of the political nature of legal activity, Dyzenhaus highlights the case of Bram Fischer — an attorney who fought against apartheid to the point of having to leave the country to avoid prosecution. The Bar, when confronting Fischer's anti-apartheid activities, chose to narrow the issue to the professional duties of an advocate. This

interpretive act therefore avoided acknowledgment of the wider issues of social justice involved. Strangely, Dyzenhaus's conclusion involves a lot of philosophical gymnastics in order to distance actual 'lawfulness' from the acts of the legal community in South Africa. But the underlying conclusion is clear — legality, law and 'judicial independence' are not neutral positions but political acts and institutions that demand empirical and analytical reasons in order to be considered justified.

Adam Czarnota argues in 'Law as Mnemosyne and as Lethe' that law actually tries to regulate collective memories in an official manner in order to control the meaning of the past. While this has a positive side — in that law opens an arena where historical narratives are offered up for reconstruction — a negative side is that legal standards of evidence, etc., determine in a previously constrained way what counts in the competing stories. These laws of admission to story construction determine what can be remembered and what will be forgotten because some stuff is not acceptable as legal storymaking materials. Therefore the outcome of what Czarnota describes as the 'battleground of memory' is determined largely by the powers already in charge of the received narrative. Leora Bilsky notes that law's binary framework is one of the major determinants in what story ultimately wins out. According to François du Bois, these factors show that in the context of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 'the truth identified by an institution meant to transcend the division between winners and losers in a democratic transition, jostles for space with their competing interpretations. The TRC's truth existed within, not outside, the arena of political conflict (99).' The important point here is that the move to certify a certain narrative as legally official is a political and not a neutral act. As Jennifer Balint puts it in 'Law's Constitutive Possibilities', such a move may hinder the possibility of reconciliation because 'Rather than law opening up discussion, law has in many ways confined the discussion' (147).

To a great extent, Emiliios Christodoulidis' essay 'Law's Immemorial' functions as a summary and elaboration of the claims made in the other essays in *Lethe's Law*. Christodoulidis identifies in law 'the logic of concealment both of *what* is forgotten and of *that* it is forgotten' (208). The argument is that because law carries an 'institutional imprint' a 'pre-selection of possibilities stands in the way of openness' (220). Further, that this aspect of 'selective suppression' and 'selective actualization' is the base upon which law necessarily rests. These claims seem to me to be largely correct and very important to face. Law is an institution that has been appealed to in order to vindicate the most various of interests. As a legal decision often has the air of justified conclusion, it is important to recognize what really is at stake in such claims. What seems to be at stake is, at the very least, often the question of what story of past events becomes officially sanctioned. But even the existence of events is up to questioning in court — therefore law functions as a source of official remembering and forgetting. Because of this, we should constantly remind ourselves of the limits and biases of legal systems, especially of the constant concealment of the mechanisms through which law

regulates meanings. *Lethe's Law* offers an important set of essays in furtherance of this goal.

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John J. Davenport and Anthony Rudd, eds.
Kierkegaard After MacIntyre:
Essays on Freedom, Narrative, and Virtue
Chicago: Open Court 2001. Pp. xxix + 363.
US\$56.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8126-9438-4);
US\$26.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8126-9439-2).

The editors and contributors offer this collection of essays as a tribute to Alasdair MacIntyre. Whether or not he deserves such an honor is of secondary importance. What this book offers is an opportunity for Kierkegaard scholars to debate some of the most interesting issues that surround this nineteenth-century genius. This collection of essays responds well to the renewed interest in Kierkegaard and his contribution to the contemporary debate on the value and importance of freedom, narrative and virtue. The Introduction presents the reader with the rationale and purpose for the work. The admission that MacIntyre does not think that Kierkegaard is successful in arguing for his ethical position and that he is an irrationalist, should not in any way deter the reader. This book does not attempt to convince us that MacIntyre is correct in his assessment of the Dane. What it does do is provide us with a view of the past debate together with valuable new material.

The Introduction lays out the two goals that the book strives to fulfill. The first part of the work, using *After Virtue* as its starting point, addresses some of the questions that MacIntyre raises. The second part presents new material that argues for a connection between the view of selfhood that Kierkegaard and MacIntyre hold. The Introduction goes on to present an outline of the essays that follow and argues for Kierkegaard's position in the history of ethical philosophy. As a prologue to the essays the editors have wisely included a section of *After Virtue*. The importance of its inclusion becomes apparent when we realize the impact that MacIntyre has had on the American philosophical scene over the past twenty years.

In addition to the standard overview of the material in the text that the Introduction provides, the editors have seen fit to include at the beginning of each essay a summary of what the essay contains. This approach helps the reader clarify the argument that is to follow. In addition each of the articles

is well noted with clear explanations on salient points in the notation. The Index is modest and adequate. It serves its purpose in that it helps the reader to find the important themes as they appear across the articles.

The final section of the book is made up of a response on the part of Philip L. Quinn to articles by Norman Lillegard and John J. Davenport and a response by Alasdair MacIntyre. This section is the only part of an excellent effort that lacked real direction. MacIntyre could have responded to the argument with more spirit, but chose to retire the field with a dictum that encourages the continuation of the debate. As to Quinn's response it is unclear why it is placed in the Response and not placed in the Section that contains the articles that are the subject of his criticism.

The discussion in the articles is far reaching in response to MacIntyre's wide ranging argument. The result of this is to place Kierkegaard at the centre of the philosophical tradition. As a result, existentialism is placed at the heart of the modern argument and is given the credibility that it rightly deserves. Kierkegaard struggles to come to grips with a world that has rejected many of the universal structures. It is imperative that this element is present in any analysis of Kierkegaard. The great strength of the discussion in this collection is that it not only acknowledges Kierkegaard's struggle, but is not afraid to engage the debate. This project is to be commended for clarifying the debate and renewing it as well.

Over against MacIntyre's position, it is important to remember that Kierkegaard clearly points out that the justification for his argument rests upon the fact that he is first and foremost a Christian. All that he writes must be understood in the light of this central truth. It is unfair, as a result, to ignore his Christian position when dealing with the aesthetic or the ethical in an analysis of his work. *Either/Or*, whether or not scholars like it or not, is a part of the greater whole. It is also important to remember that the whole is an analysis, albeit at times obscure, of the structures that make up the self and the structures that make choice possible. It is true that Kierkegaard does stand under the shadow of the dictum 'faith seeking understanding.' The contributors to this collection explore the problem of faith and understanding which is to their credit. It would have been helpful if they had been able to spend time with the explaining the true meaning of 'truth is subjectivity'. This discussion is critical to the understanding of Kierkegaard as a rational thinker. It is true that no one work can do everything, but in the light of MacIntyre's starting position with reference to Kierkegaard's irrationality, such a discussion would have added considerably to an already excellent project.

Whether or not you agree with MacIntyre's position with reference to Kierkegaard, and whether or not you think that his argument is based upon a rational analysis of the Kierkegaardian thesis, it must be acknowledged that MacIntyre has established for himself a foundational position in the Kierkegaardian world. For this reason alone such a project as this provides both the student and the scholar with an excellent introduction to both Kierkegaard and MacIntyre. Although one of its goals is to examine MacIn-

tyre's contribution to the Kierkegaard debate, its more important role is to engage the real protagonist. It is Kierkegaard, and the ongoing struggle to determine what he really has to say, that this book challenges the reader to explore against the backdrop of modern scholarship. The collection has more than lived up to its objective and is to be recommended to both student and scholar alike.

David Mercer

Mark Dooley

The Politics of Exodus:

Søren Kierkegaard's Ethics of Responsibility.

New York: Fordham University Press 2001.

Pp. ix + 285.

US\$40.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8232-2124-5);

US\$20.00 (paper: ISBN 0-8232-2125-3).

... at the heart of Kierkegaard's enterprise is a theory of community that calls for serious appraisal. ...

In *The Politics of Exodus*, Mark Dooley accomplishes two worthwhile tasks: for one, he effects a reconciliation between Søren Kierkegaard's emphasis on the *exclusively* inward connection to the divine and his advocacy of an attempt to *include* the other; and, in turn, Dooley also argues convincingly that this reconciliation is to see the Kierkegaardian spirit at the center of contemporary philosophical debate. For Dooley contends that it is in the recent writings of Jacques Derrida that Kierkegaard's social and political philosophy is clarified.

One of the more daunting problems one faces when confronting the *full* multiplicity of Kierkegaard's writings is squaring his notion that Christianity requires of the person both a development of inwardness and an outward commitment through 'good works'. Many prominent commentators have reinforced the popular notion of Kierkegaard as philosopher of inwardness *par excellence*. Dooley argues that inwardness as an end in itself is not the true thrust of Kierkegaard's authorship. Rather, the deepening of a person's inward relationship to the infinite is for Kierkegaard a *means* toward a humane understanding of and engagement with the community at large. That is, the movement inward is *preparatory* for a movement outward that, due to the inward move, is all the more impassioned *and* engaged. For Dooley, Kierkegaard's intention was that this inwardness be seen as a chrysalis state through which the spiritually fully formed human must pass.

For Dooley, the key to understanding how a Kierkegaardian theory of community fits with Kierkegaard's theory of self can be found in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* where, in one passage, Hegel treats irony as a means of individuation quite antithetical to the ethical. An undivided 'self-renunciation', Hegel argues, is necessary for truly ethical action. 'It could be argued,' Dooley states, 'that Kierkegaard's entire authorship is a meditation on this passage' (39). For though irony can certainly be employed to effect *désengagement*, Kierkegaard — with a nod to Socrates — maintains that irony can help build community. And here is where Dooley's notion of 'Exodus' is spelled out: '... to become an alien in one's own land, to resign from the given actuality, is the very process of inwardness — not a withdrawal from or abdication of one's cultural matrix, but rather the adoption of a critical posture in relation to the prevailing sociopolitical structures' (51).

Though a connection of Jacques Derrida's thought to that of Kierkegaard is often made, not least of which by Derrida himself in his book *The Gift of Death*, Dooley points out that such a connection puts Kierkegaard's works in a new light. Indeed Dooley argues that they help 'make a credible case for Kierkegaard's inclusion in mainstream ethical and political philosophy today' (145).

Both Kierkegaard's and Derrida's epistemological investigations feed upon what both see as a patent discontinuity between the limits of the humanly knowable and the fundamental human *desire* to know. But Dooley takes things further in two important ways. For one, he shows that Kierkegaard (and by implication Derrida) has no essential association with the Romantic movement. That is, such works as Kierkegaard's *The Present Age* should not be seen as a sort of proto-Nietzschean polemic against all things modern and social and ugly in favour of all things pre-Socratic. Rather, in Dooley's view, *Present Age* should be seen as containing the message that the mass media instigate a 'leveling' of social norms that are really an immanent threat to the possibility of outward community engagement *precisely because* they discourage the requisite preliminary move inward.

Secondly, Dooley suggests that both thinkers are very well aware that the friction created by the limits of knowledge is played out where the ethical and *the political* overlap in *responsibility to the other*. The essential kinship between Derrida and Kierkegaard is that each represent a clear challenge in the history of philosophy to the attempt to structure experience teleologically (161). The belief in the possibility of a full plenum of knowledge — along with the concomitant belief in the need to structure thought accordingly — is surely one of the axioms of Western philosophy. As Dooley puts it, "Human" knowledge ... lures the individual into believing that what is objectively (in the Hegelian sense) knowable is in fact the sum total of knowledge' (48). It is the instrumentality of such a belief that gives it an axiom-like allure. We can go back further than Hegel to Plato's injunction in the *Meno* that it is *best* to believe that we lack for only that knowledge which *can* be gotten; for this makes us 'brave and less idle' than the alternative (*Meno* 86c). Thus teleology is a virtual given in Western thought; and to question teleology's

hoped for closure tends to be equated with the abandonment of rationality altogether.

In any attempt to nail down Kierkegaard's *Weltanschauung*, the role played by Lessing's famous allegory of human being cannot be over-stressed. In that allegory, a person is faced with the choice between the contents of the right hand of God (total knowledge) and His left (the ongoing struggle to know) (See *Postscript*, 106ff.). Dooley's book provides a reminder that Kierkegaard — and Derrida — represent the view that humans are rooted in our *passion* to know and *not* in the wish to *overcome* that passion, as the predominant teleological ordering of the age demands. Indeed an obvious corollary of Dooley's argument is that the West's teleological bias may itself be symptomatic of man's 'idleness' in its hope to make an *end* of all inquiry and rest in a total and systematic solution.

Dooley makes it clear that one of his tasks in writing *Exodus* is to make Kierkegaard palatable to current discourse that connects politics and ethics; the notion that Kierkegaard has a 'theory' of community is helpful to this end. However, many Kierkegaardians — *and* Derrideans for that matter — will rightly wince at such a characterization of Kierkegaard's view. Similarly, many political philosophers may find the required receipt of God's proffered left hand somewhat arduous. At any rate, *Exodus* is a plainspoken and insightful book whose only serious demand on the reader — whether s/he be a social scientist or deconstructionist — is an ability to persevere in the face of such conceptual clashes. Ultimately what makes *Exodus* successful is how little these collisions impact the reader.

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Brian Ellis

Scientific Essentialism.

New York: Cambridge University Press 2001.

Pp. xiv + 309.

US\$54.95. ISBN 0-521-80094-3.

Could the laws of nature have been different from what they actually are? It is often assumed that they could, and that the range of 'metaphysically' possible worlds is greater than the range of 'nomologically' possible worlds. The motivation for this view is the thought that the elements of the world exist independently of the laws of nature, and that those same elements could have been subjected to very different laws. In *Scientific Essentialism*, Brian Ellis defends the opposite view. He argues that the laws of nature depend upon the essential properties of the most basic elements of the world. In doing

so, he attacks the prominent 'Humean' school of metaphysics on two fronts. He challenges the Humean view of laws by arguing that the dispositional properties of individuals determine the laws of nature, rather than vice versa. And he attacks the Humean view of possibility by arguing that possibilities are determined by essential properties, not by the range of happenings across possible worlds.

For Ellis, Humeanism (found most prominently in the 'Humean supervenience' defended by David Lewis and others) is the view that all natural properties ultimately depend upon categorical properties such as position, shape, and size, together with the assumption that objects themselves are 'passive' and 'inert' without the laws imposed upon them by nature. Against this, Ellis argues that many fundamental properties are irreducibly dispositional, and that these dispositions underlie the laws of nature and determine the ways in which an object can behave. Objects themselves are distinguished by 'real essences': properties which they could not fail to have. Since dispositions form part of an object's essence, they are properties which an object cannot lose without ceasing to be the same object. And since the laws of nature are determined by the dispositions of the things in the world, the laws of nature could not have been different from what they actually are.

The first three chapters of the book are devoted to laying the groundwork for scientific essentialism. Ellis argues that objects and processes are organized into separate hierarchies of natural kinds. The 'scientific' part of scientific realism lies in the belief that it is the aim of science to describe the structure of these hierarchies by discovering the essential properties of objects and processes. Like most in contemporary metaphysics, Ellis argues for a 'sparse' ontology of properties, where medium and large scale properties ultimately depend upon the structure of the world at the level of the very small. But unlike many, he sees dispositional properties as uneliminable, even at this micro level. Ellis's conception of dispositional properties, however, is broader than most: properties such as mass and charge, often considered by Humeans as the paradigms of fundamental *categorical* quantities, are counted as basic *dispositional* properties.

It is in the middle three chapters of the book (four through six) that scientific essentialism is put to work. Chapter four defends essentialism as the most appropriate view of the objects, properties and processes studied by physics and chemistry. At the level of elementary particles, all properties are essential: 'One cannot, for example, teach a copper atom or a proton any new tricks' (21). Discovering the laws of nature at this fundamental level involves discovering these essential properties. As we move up the usual hierarchy of disciplines, the connection with essential properties weakens and the laws discovered become less and less reliable. So chemistry still deals with real essences, but the status of natural kinds in biology is questionable at best. At the level of the social sciences, the objects of study no longer fall into natural kinds, and so do not have real essences. Since real essences underwrite the laws of nature, there can be no proper laws in the social sciences.

This is so even in economics, and Ellis devotes the bulk of chapter five to discussing economic theory and laws.

In chapter six, Ellis provides an account of the laws of nature in terms of essential dispositions. He lists three central problems for any theory of laws: the problems of necessity (in what sense are natural laws necessary?), ontology (in what features of reality are the laws of nature grounded?), and idealization (how is it that the idealized models of science help us to understand the non-ideal world?). Scientific essentialism addresses these problems by insisting that it is real essences which determine necessities, so that things could not behave contrary to their essences; ontologically, laws are grounded in the objective dispositional properties making up these essences; and the idealized models of science are useful because they accurately describe the *essential* properties and tendencies of objects, even if they sometimes fall short of capturing the *actual* ones.

The final two chapters extend scientific essentialism to a broader range of problems in metaphysics. Ellis argues that his view of necessity answers the question of the ontological status of necessity better than any Humean account. Humean accounts typically rely on a principle of recombination which allows any distinct existents to reappear in any configuration in another possible world. Ellis argues that this view confuses epistemic (or 'imagined') possibility with true metaphysical possibility: imagined rearrangements are only truly possible if they do not violate the essential natures of their elements. Possibility, even in the broader sense of 'metaphysical' possibility, is thus only determinable by scientific investigation.

This is an impressive book, but one that will probably leave at least two groups of readers somewhat unsatisfied. The first will be those looking for arguments featuring precise definitions, symbolic formulations, and rigorous proofs. While Ellis's arguments are never reckless, explicit definitions are only occasionally used, and some distinctions (such as a member/instance distinction for natural kinds which Ellis himself makes note of) are not always consistently maintained. The second group who may be unsatisfied with this book will those looking for a more intimate and detailed connection between philosophy and science. Ellis does provide some brief examples drawn from physics, chemistry, and biology, but these are often only broad generalizations, and one is left wondering how well scientific essentialism would fare in the more detailed context of a contemporary scientific theory. Both of these omissions stand out largely because of the scope of Ellis's work: what he has presented is a theory of the metaphysical structure of the world, and its impressiveness can only grow through its application.

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Robert J. Fogelin

*Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Berkeley
and the Principles of Human Knowledge.*

New York: Routledge 2001. Pp. x + 166.

Cdn\$97.95: US\$65.00

(cloth: ISBN 0-415-25010-2);

Cdn\$22.95: US\$14.95

(paper: ISBN 0-415-25011-0).

Interpreters of George Berkeley's idealism generally fall into one of two categories: first, those who view him as an astute critic of the naïve realism of his contemporaries and architect of an ingenious alternative, or second, those who dismiss him as a quack philosopher with an arsenal of exceedingly bad arguments against common sense. Fogelin's analysis of Berkeley falls in the first category, but with reservations. Fogelin's aim is to provide a sympathetic reading of Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge* balanced by a critical examination of the fundamental tenets of Berkeley's idealism (24). The result is a useful introduction to Berkeley's thought. Fogelin recognizes, as many commentators do not, that Berkeley's project contains both positive and negative elements. The familiar negative element involves Berkeley's attack on the coherence of materialism; Berkeley's effort to prove that only spirits and ideas exist constitutes the positive element. One virtue of Fogelin's book is his insistence on the importance of the positive element in Berkeley's arguments for idealism (5). However, Fogelin could have included a more expansive commentary on the taxonomy of 'idealisms' that have appeared in the western philosophical tradition. The novel aspects of Berkeley's idealism are seen more clearly when contrasted with the idealism(s) of Plato, Leibniz, Kant, and Hegel.

Fogelin begins with a sketch of the philosophical background to Berkeley's thought. According to Fogelin, the most influential figure among Berkeley's predecessors is Locke (5). In order to fully appreciate Berkeley's idealism, one must grasp Berkeley's critique of Locke's views on qualities, substance, and abstraction. On this interpretation, Berkeley rejects Locke's account of unperceived objects, his vacuous notion of substance, and Locke's reputed belief in abstract ideas, the latter being, according to Berkeley, the source of endless metaphysical blather. Fogelin's analysis of the linkage between Berkeley and Locke hits all the right points, but his account of the philosophical context of Berkeley's philosophy would have benefited from calling attention to the (rarely noted) impact of Malebranche. Berkeley read Malebranche and the latter targeted the same contemporary theories for criticism as Berkeley had, most notably the representational model of perception and the concept of matter.

The remainder of Fogelin's work follows the layout of the *Principles*. He outlines the arguments in the opening sections of the *Principles* which rapidly reach the conclusion that the only existing substance is spirit, or mind. Fogelin argues that Berkeley's ontological claims are supported by

appeals to intuition (29). According to Berkeley, if we carefully attend to the content of experience, it should be intuitively obvious that we exist as perceiving entities, that the immediate objects of perception are ideas, and that an unperceived object is inconceivable. After establishing these basic doctrines, the only tasks left for Berkeley are to answer objections and illustrate the advantages of adopting his version of idealism.

Fogelin organizes the objections into three categories: objections from common sense, objections from science, and 'last-ditch' objections. The objections from common sense are grounded in the conviction that Berkeley's idealism contradicts what seems obvious — that chairs and dogs exist 'outside' of one's mind. But Berkeley argues that his view is consistent with common sense since he claims that chairs and dogs are perceived immediately, whereas his realist opponents tell us that extramental chairs and dogs are detected indirectly through the medium of ideas. According to Berkeley, it is the realist's doctrine of unperceived matter that is foreign to common sense (80). Critics of Berkeley also appeal to the success of scientific explanations which rely upon the concepts of matter and motion. But Berkeley contends that matter and motion are reducible to collections of ideas. Therefore, science merely catalogues regularities in the structure and succession of ideas (93-4). If we adopt idealism we do not abandon science, we abandon the superfluous metaphysical apparatus of realism. Lastly, Berkeley claims that the effort to rescue the concept of matter by appealing to a purely negative description of material substance results in nonsense. If matter is 'an inert senseless substance' existing separately from extension, figure, solidity, and motion, then matter is equivalent to nothing (114). Berkeley's challenge to the realist is to produce an intelligible concept of an entity which is neither a perceiver nor an object of perception — he thinks this challenge cannot be met.

Berkeley thinks his idealist system removes a number of difficulties from science, mathematics, and philosophy, largely due to the elimination of unintelligible concepts (117-42). But Fogelin argues that Berkeleyan idealism is in danger of collapsing into solipsism. According to Fogelin, Berkeley's proofs for the existence of God and other minds are unpersuasive (149). Thus, Fogelin thinks Berkeley's idealism, although designed to avoid skepticism, is susceptible to the same skeptical difficulties faced by his realist contemporaries.

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Donald L. Gelpi

*Varieties of Transcendental Experience:
A Study in Constructive Postmodernism.*
Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press 2000.
Pp. xii + 364.
US\$34.95. ISBN 0-8146-5949-7.

Donald L. Gelpi

*The Gracing of Human Experience: Rethinking
the Relationship between Nature and Grace.*
Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press 2001.
Pp. xiv + 366.
US\$34.95. ISBN 0-8146-5594-7.

Donald L. Gelpi has quietly pursued an ambitious goal during almost thirty years of teaching and research at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California: 'to develop an inculturated American theology' (*Gracing* v). This effort has borne fruit in eight books published since 1990. While his ultimate aim is to develop a theory of divine grace, Gelpi's theological project relies on both careful philosophical criticism and deep mining in the history of American ideas. With apologies to those readers who might want more, this review will focus on the philosophical aspects of Gelpi's recent work, as it is represented in this pair of books.

Varieties presents an alternative reconstruction of the history of American ideas. Here Gelpi can be seen responding to Robert C. Neville's call for such a reconstruction in *The Highroad around Modernism* (SUNY Press 1992). Neville drew upon the work of selected American thinkers, especially Charles S. Peirce and Alfred North Whitehead, to propose an alternative to the foundationalism and individualism of modernist philosophy. Neville sought a philosophy that avoids the pitfalls of what is called postmodernism. Gelpi agrees with Neville in regarding postmodernism as a failed attempt to escape modernism's most basic assumptions.

In *Varieties*, Gelpi traces a dialectical development of metaphysics and religious philosophy from the enlightenment period, through transcendentalism, and into the fully articulated pragmatism of the first decades of the twentieth century. He thus provides a historical account of how North American thought arrived at the point identified by Neville. Or rather, he *almost* provides the account Neville's work calls for: Gelpi agrees that Peirce is key to finding a way around modernism, but differs in his evaluation of Whitehead. Gelpi significantly identifies Josiah Royce, not Whitehead, as the proper successor to Peirce in the development of an American alternative to modernism. Whitehead's philosophy does not make the cut, in Gelpi's view, because 'it acquiesces in a fatal fallacy of Enlightenment modernism, namely, in conceptual nominalism' (*Varieties* 344). Gelpi's theological project

is thus built upon the anti-nominalistic pragmatism of Peirce and the later Royce.

Gelpi's reconstructed history of ideas is generally persuasive, if necessarily incomplete. Familiar religio-philosophical figures are discussed at length. Franklin, Paine, and Jefferson represent varieties of enlightenment thought; Emerson's thought is presented in contrast to the Calvinism of Jonathan Edwards and the two Mathers; and of course Peirce and Royce represent pragmatism. Gelpi's history is somewhat idiosyncratic, however, both in its inclusions and omissions. He does a service by bringing attention to a number of thinkers who are ordinarily neglected. Ethan Allen, Elihu Palmer, John Wise, and William Ellery Channing all get their due; Theodore Parker, Orestes Augustus Brownson, and Francis Ellingwood Abbot each receive a complete chapter. William James and John Dewey, who advocated more 'nominalistic' versions of pragmatism, do not figure prominently in *Varieties* (they each receive considerable attention in *Gracing*). Some of Gelpi's omissions are simply puzzling, however. To pick only two examples, Henry David Thoreau receives only passing mention and Margaret Fuller is altogether absent. Gelpi's omissions and inclusions may well reflect doctrinal constraints arising from his theological project. The reader must bear in mind that while these volumes contain valuable contributions to intellectual history, Gelpi's ultimate purpose is not to write a comprehensive history of American thought. Rather, he uses history to develop his own philosophical and theological position. The final chapter of *Varieties*, 'Toward a Constructive Postmodernism', sketches Gelpi's vision of a highroad around modernism.

In *Gracing*, Gelpi follows his highroad into theology proper. The first three chapters explore what Gelpi regards as serious mistakes in mainstream philosophy and theology. His main objections center on essentialistic and dualistic views of human nature (derived from Aquinas), excessive pessimism (Augustine) or optimism (Joseph Maréchal) concerning human nature, and the nominalism he finds in contemporary theology (Edward Schillebeeckx and Whiteheadian process thought). Though focussed squarely on theological issues, this part of the book should be of interest to non-theologians. Gelpi's survey of Biblical and medieval sources serves as an effective primer on the context in which many familiar philosophical questions originally arose, while his survey of medieval and contemporary positions highlights the ways in which diverse philosophies inform ongoing theological discussion.

Part Two, the central chapters of *Gracing*, presents pragmatist responses to the 'mistakes' identified in Part One. Peirce's thought provides both a critique and a metaphysical alternative to essentialism, dualism, and conceptual nominalism. Gelpi argues that Peirce's alternative of 'synechism', the doctrine of continuous spreading of general (real) ideas, also mediates the extremes of pessimism and optimism when applied in a religious context. In Gelpi's hands, Peirce's late essay 'A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God' is happily no longer neglected.

One of the most significant contributions of *Gracing* is Gelpi's presentation of Josiah Royce as Peirce's proper intellectual heir and first major interpreter. These two philosophers' biographical connection has long been known; here we have one of the more detailed and persuasive accounts to date of their intellectual connection. Gelpi most importantly argues that Royce's well-known philosophy of loyalty fulfills Peirce's undeveloped concept of normative aesthetics; he also reinforces Royce's own view that *The Problem of Christianity* is an extension of Peircean concepts to theology. One caveat to Gelpi's presentation should be noted, however: the central metaphysical concept of 'semiotic realism', which is explained in chapter 10 of *Varieties*, appears without reference or explanation in *Gracing*.

Gelpi's chapter on John Dewey as amplifying Peirce's logic and philosophy of common-sense needs to be read cautiously. It is plausible to say that Dewey's instrumentalism 'articulated a formal logic for what Peirce called the practical sciences' (*Gracing* 204), and that Dewey's philosophy of art 'does develop in new and interesting ways aspects of the mature Peirce's critical common-sensism' (*Gracing* 212). The presentation downplays their well-known disagreements concerning just those logical and metaphysical issues that feature so prominently in Gelpi's project, however. Dewey does amplify Peirce, as Gelpi says, but only in what Peirce would regard as very limited respects.

The pragmatist emphasis on the social dimension is also central to Gelpi's theological vision. Excessive individualism is not a mistake arising from traditional theology, of course, which has always emphasized the centrality of church as community. Gelpi here references the sociologist Robert Bellah's work on individualism as a major source of discontent in modern industrialized society. Gelpi focuses his concerns via a critique of William James's individualistic philosophy and psychology. As an alternative model he offers the social psychology of George Herbert Mead, and the more recent sociology of knowledge advanced by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman.

In Part Three, Gelpi argues for an experience-based alternative to the traditional but 'mistaken' accounts of human nature and metaphysics. He outlines his pragmatist-realist alternative as a naturalistic 'Metaphysics of Experience' (*Gracing* chapter 8), which is finally extended to allow for 'Experiencing the Supernatural' (*Gracing* chapter 9).

Taken separately, each book is valuable. *Varieties* provides an interesting if idiosyncratic study in American philosophy as an alternative to modernism. *Gracing* provides an introduction to problems in contemporary Catholic theology, an important addition to our understanding of the relationships among several major American pragmatist philosophers, and a promising contribution toward developing a full philosophy of experience. All books have some flaws: here one finds distracting typographical errors in some footnotes, a writing style that is at times obtrusively stiff (especially in the chapter-by-chapter survey of figures and positions in *Varieties*), and occasional exaggerations or oversimplifications of individuals' views. Taken as companion volumes, these books present an important addition to the litera-

ture on American pragmatism and a welcome extension of pragmatism into theological discussion.

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Raymond Geuss

Public Goods, Private Goods.

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

2001. Pp. viii + 148.

US\$19.95. ISBN 0-691-08903-5.

Everyone who has ever taught Mill's theory of liberty, struggled to articulate Arendt's notion of political action and the public realm, addressed the vexed question of the relation between law and private morality, or dealt with Machiavelli's bold assertions weighing means, ends and the inevitability of dirty hands in politics, will have felt that the language available to us tends to betray us at the very point it is needed the most. A discussion which presupposes firm and sharp distinctions between public and private, which demarcates one and only one boundary for us to philosophically patrol, turns into a thousand fragments on closer inspection: and we are often left wondering whether there is anything useful to say at all.

From this it should perhaps be clear (but what is conceptually clear is not always obvious) that what is falsely taken as a single boundary line of demarcation is in fact nothing of the sort. We cannot, as Geuss says (113), begin with an ontologically realist account of the public/private distinction 'as a single unitary distinction'. The distinction is neither unitary nor necessarily coherent: 'the public/private distinction is ... an ideological concretion' (10). This is the main point of this wonderfully compact and invigorating book.

Geuss's approach is deceptively simple. In a phrase it might be termed 'analytically-historical'. He is not presenting a theory so much as making a number of related claims: 1) there is no single public/private distinction and therefore no single theory; 2) we should examine the nature and characteristics of the various distinctions we make; 3) we should be wary of claims which overlook differences between the ways these distinctions are made; 4) we should not assume that appeal to the public/private distinction will in itself provide an automatic justification for any particular action or inaction; 5) we should always ask ourselves 'why exactly do we want to distinguish private and public? What are our purposes and values?' (113).

In his illuminating historical chapters Geuss is able to show simply and clearly the differences between the many things living on the public/private boundary: shamelessness and the public world (what we ought to do in public and private); the idea of the *res publica* (the public things we hold in common); the spiritual dimension of the distinction (where public and private are separated by cognitive or epistemological barriers).

Following Dewey, Geuss argues that 'it is not that we discover what the distinction is between the public and private and then proceed to determine what value attitudes we should have to it, but rather that given our values and knowledge we decide what sort of things we think need regulating or caring for — and then stamp them "public" ' (85-6). In other words, the designations 'public' and 'private' should not be conceived as categories which provide *antecedent* justification, but rather as indicative of our agreements concerning where the boundaries are drawn in particular contexts. Thus, in his summary (106-7) Geuss writes that:

there is no such thing as *the* public/private distinction ... the purported distinction between public and private ... dissolve[s] into a number of issues that have relatively little to do with one another. ... it would be a good idea for us to think again before appealing unreflectively to "the public/private distinction" in justificatory contexts. ... It is not the case that we must or should adopt a two-step procedure, *first* getting clear about the public/private distinction ... and *then* ... going on to ask what we can do with that distinction. ... Rather, *first* we must ask what this purported distinction is *for*, that is, *why* we want to make it at all (106-7).

This will bring us back to a concrete context of human action within which the distinction can make sense. It is therefore mistaken, when asked why we should not interfere with something, to reply by saying simply '*because* it is private' as if to end the discussion. This is to beg the question, because: 'by saying it is private, we just shift the locus of the argument to the question of *why* we think we ought not to interfere' (107). At this point the discussion begins.

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John Gray

Two Faces of Liberalism.

New York: The New Press 2000. Pp. 161.

US\$25.00 (cloth: ISBN 1-56584-589-7);

US\$13.95 (paper: ISBN 1-56584-592-7).

This book is a continuation of Gray's ongoing efforts to work out the implications of value pluralism for liberal political philosophy. While initially of the view that a proper understanding of value difference can support a strain of liberal theory he called the 'agnostic liberalism' of Joseph Raz and Isaiah Berlin, Gray now holds that even this variety of liberalism cannot fully deal with the challenges awaiting a much needed 'post Enlightenment' liberal theory. *Two Faces of Liberalism* is thereby addressed to both traditional liberals and agnostic liberals (though mainly traditional liberals), and does so by critiquing the normative foundations offered by liberals defending toleration.

Two Faces of Liberalism argues that there are two approaches to justifying tolerance in the liberal tradition. One defends the value of toleration through appeal to an agent-neutral, homogeneous account of the good promoted by toleration (e.g., 'truth' or 'flourishing'). A second defends toleration without appeal to Enlightenment-based views of moral value, aiming instead at civic stability in a divided society through piecemeal political mediation of political conflicts, rather than by retreat to a philosophic foundation supporting a unifying monistic good. Gray argues that liberal toleration defended by Locke and Rawls represent the first approach, while Berlin and (surprisingly) J.S. Mill represent the second. It is this second aspect of liberalism that is better suited to recognizing the import of the value pluralism, though this agnostic liberalism is still not as good an approach to toleration as what Gray calls a non-liberal 'modus vivendi' toleration directly premised on value pluralism. *Faces of Liberalism* defends this latter account of toleration.

After establishing the existence of these two themes within liberalism, Gray then explicates the nature of value pluralism, alternately modifying and rejecting Berlin's and Raz's earlier pluralist accounts because of the prioritized roles that values like autonomy and liberty have within their arguments by invoking Wittgensteinian observations about the often unrecognized implications of the incommensurability of 'ways of life'. The fact of such incommensurability simply precludes appeal to the monistic values that liberal accounts of toleration use. Gray's own account of a value pluralist based toleration is not, however, an 'anything goes' approach, and Gray unsurprisingly supplements his account by discriminating between its variety of moral realism and generic 'relativistic' and 'subjectivist' accounts of moral value. The tolerance required by the recognition of multiple, agent neutral yet incommensurate accounts of the good life simply dictates a different kind of tolerance than liberals are used to, though agnostic liberals like Berlin come closer than traditional liberals like Rawls.

Gray then turns to a value pluralist critique of Rawls' account of both the 'general liberty principle' and the 'chain linked' account of civic rights and liberties from *A Theory of Justice*, arguing that such liberty-protecting rights are indeterminate in application, as well as founded upon as contestable and necessarily conflicting account of human interests as anything else found in ethical theory. Finally, Gray concludes his short book by challenging the link between human rights observance and state legitimacy, as well as the communitarian school's approach to establishing legitimacy through renewed communities. For Gray, civic stability is best established not through the communitarian hope of common ways of life, nor the liberal vision of universal rights observance, but through 'common institutions through which the conflicts of rival values can be mediated' (121). It is such an activity that also provides a basis for a 'modus vivendi' account of tolerance, superior to all other accounts as it need not be wedded to liberal refusals to treat communal identity seriously, liberal inability to see the import of community as a locus of value, nor liberal insistence upon resolving all political conflict through constitutional accommodation of rights. It is a view of tolerance capable of promoting civic stability through 'practice with fewer illusions' (139) and that best recognizes Gray's contention that 'the claims of liberalism as a system of universal principles were never defensible. Today, when reconciling different ways of life to the fact of their coexistence is an urgent task nearly everywhere, they have become harmful.' A more flexible modus vivendi tolerance thus also allows the preservation of other valuable forms of life instantiating multiple ways of life beyond those valued by uniformity-producing liberal defenses of the value of tolerance.

The work is interesting, and Gray understands liberal philosophy better than most others. However, readers sympathetic to 'Enlightenment liberalism' may find Gray's treatment of the meta-ethical issues involved in the 'value pluralism' they allegedly don't really understand to be reflective at times of the mysticism of Wittgenstein's own work. Thus Gray can tell us 'value pluralism does not leave everything as it is' (22), and yet leave us wondering exactly how this fits into his overall argument.

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Karen Green

Dummett: Philosophy of Language.

Malden, MA: Polity Press 2001. Pp. xi + 236.

US\$50.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-7456-2294-1);

US\$14.99 (paper: ISBN 0-7456-2295-X).

Philosophers are too often characterized solely in terms of one or another of the particular doctrines that they advocate during their career. While Dummett is most widely recognized for his scholarship of Frege and for his avid defence of anti-realism, in this thoughtful study Green shows that a perhaps even greater service lies in his having mapped the terrain of possible positions on a number of key philosophical problems.

The book is divided into two parts. The first traces the development of Dummett's thought in relation to the three key influences upon it: Frege, Wittgenstein, and the intuitionism of Brouwer. Through a limited endorsement of the latter, Dummett sought to produce a theory of language that could exploit strengths in both the realism of Frege and the holism of Wittgenstein, while avoiding what he saw as the potential pitfalls of each. The opening chapter gives an outline of Dummett's main philosophical project and explores a number of issues regarding his reading of Frege. Of particular note, critics have questioned Dummett's attributing to Frege the aim of giving an account of the general workings of language, pointing out that Frege's interests in language were rather entirely subservient to his interests in the foundations of mathematics. While sympathetic to this complaint, Green points out that on close inspection the projects of these two philosophers are less distant than they initially seem, for what both sought was to give an account of the cognitive core of language, that which enables us to grasp, communicate and infer truths.

Much of this first section is dedicated to explaining how the anti-realist position rises out of the tensions between Frege's realism and Wittgenstein's holism. The main difficulty that Dummett finds in Frege's conception of meaning is that, although it purges this notion of mentalist content, it leaves mysterious the process by which the sense of an expression is grasped. Dummett addresses this concern by adapting Wittgenstein's treatment of the same problem. He argues that, in addition to giving an account of truth, a theory of language must also provide some account of the way in which our knowledge of meaning is made publicly manifest. In Dummett's view, this requirement must be met in terms of potential warranted assertibility. A challenge to this view, however, lies in the existence of propositions having apparently undecidable truth values. Here, Dummett's response is to incorporate the intuitionists' challenge against classical logic into his theory of language. One might deny that the principle of bivalence applies unrestrictedly to all domains of discourse, and Dummett regards such a denial as constituting the position of anti-realism. Green's presentation of this issue highlights the important fact that Dummett sees the realism / anti-realism debate as involving, at base, a dispute over theories of meaning. She is

critical, however, of Dummett's too simple equation of bivalence with anti-realism. She argues instead that denying bivalence for statements involving, for instance, counterfactual conditionals or infinitely extendable totalities, is in fact consistent with a robust realism with regard to the objects of ordinary experience, which are what most realists are concerned about. Green further argues that, despite his recent claims to the contrary, Dummett's brand of verificationism does not commit him to anti-realism with regard to the past.

The last two chapters, comprising the shorter, second section of the book, are focused upon the relation between language and thought. Earlier, Green relates Dummett's rather controversial view of Frege's context principle. Dummett held that with this principle Frege initiated the linguistic turn in philosophy, which was founded on the belief that a philosophical account of thought can be obtained only through a philosophical account of language. In this second section, Green develops ideas found in Dummett's criticisms of Chomsky, Davidson and Husserl, and argues that this 'linguistic priority thesis' is both true and important. What many will find especially interesting is Green's consideration of how this thesis impacts upon recent philosophy of mind. If Dummett is correct in holding the linguistic priority thesis to be the foundational doctrine of analytic philosophy, then it appears that the field shall be left behind by cognitive scientists who seek, rather, to explain linguistic understanding in terms of pre- or non-linguistic thought. Green responds by arguing that, though cognitive processes do underlie and precede our capacity for language, these processes must be differentiated from thought, the structure of which is entirely derived from the linguistic environment. Consistent with the linguistic priority thesis, our intentional and representational capacities can be explained only via an account of language.

As an introduction to Dummett's thought, what some might find off-putting about this book is that Green at times goes well past merely presenting Dummett's work in order to develop her own perspective on the key issues. Though this perspective is in one case argued to be 'the view that someone impressed by Dummett's arguments ought to adopt' (175), it does extend a fair bit beyond what Dummett himself had claimed. But Green takes great care to delineate between those ideas explicitly found in Dummett's writings and those that his work is thought to imply. And indeed, her approach is not unsuitable given that much of Dummett's own philosophical perspective was developed through his exposition of Frege.

Overall, this book demonstrates Green's remarkable command of the whole of Dummett's writings, and a great merit of her thesis is that it steers us away from viewing Dummett as a steadfast proponent of any one philosophical view. In holding his primary contribution to be the providing of a kind of philosophical map, Green shows Dummett's wider aims. His discussions of anti-realism, for instance, serve to illuminate the connection between our account of meaning and our concept of truth, and thereby provide us with a strategy by which to assess the foundation of our ontological beliefs. By having shown the cogency of the anti-realist position, Dummett calls into

question our often unexamined realist presuppositions. Green's discussion of these issues offers a well argued and remarkably cohesive perspective on the great breadth of Dummett's work.

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Charles H. Kahn
Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans.
A Brief History.

Indianapolis: Hackett 2001. Pp. xi + 195.
US\$34.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-87220-576-2);
US\$14.95 (paper: ISBN 0-87220-575-4).

A welcome addition to Hackett's publications in Greek philosophy, Kahn's new book (a revision of his 1993 Italian monograph) is precisely what the title indicates. In less than 200 pages he surveys the Pythagorean tradition from its foundations in the sixth century B.C. to its end in the seventeenth century, with chapters on The Pythagorean Question (viz., whether Pythagoras was a great scientific thinker as well as a religious leader; the question is merely broached in this chapter), Pythagoras and the Pythagorean Way of Life, Pythagorean Philosophy before Plato, Pythagorean Philosophy in the Time of Archytas and Plato, The New Pythagorean Philosophy in the Early Academy, The Survival of Pythagoreanism in the Hellenistic Age, The Pythagorean Tradition in Rome, The Neopythagorean Philosophers, and The Pythagorean Heritage.

Regarding the Pythagorean Question, Kahn sensibly sets out the early evidence, which does not attest any specifically scientific or mathematical interests in the Founder, on which basis Burkert and Huffman argued that the tradition of the scientific Pythagoras began (perhaps not seriously) with Plato and was taken up (in all seriousness) by the Early Academy. Kahn resists this deflationary view, but mounts a case (persuasive, in my view), based on indirect evidence (e.g., Heraclitus B40 and B129 and the archaic-sounding *akousma* relating to the *tetractus*) that the Pythagorean interest in Ionian *historiē*, mathematical proportion, the harmonic intervals, and cosmic order is earlier than Philolaus and could well go back to Pythagoras himself (14-17, 34-8). Kahn also debunks the claims of scholars that Pythagoras took his ideas of immortality and reincarnation from the Egyptians or from Shamans, and opines (without perhaps giving enough consideration that Pythagoras might simply have originated these ideas) that the source could

have been India, where the doctrine of reincarnation was known even in pre-Buddhist times (18-19).

One of Kahn's purposes is to make available the ideas of important Pythagoreans. His summaries of Philolaus (23-6) and Archytas (39-47) are notable examples, based on, and yet not subservient to the important editions of Huffman (Philolaus: 1993; Archytas: forthcoming). Also, further on, the *Pythagorean Notebooks* of Alexander Polyhistor (79-83), Sextus Empiricus VII.94-108 (83-5), and five Neopythagorean philosophers: Eudorus of Alexandria (second half of first century B.C.) (94-9), Philo of Alexandria ('a generation or two later') (99-104), Moderatus of Gades (second half of first century A.D.) (105-10), Nicomachus of Gerasa (second century A.D.) (110-18), and Numenius of Apamea (second century A.D.) (118-33). There is also discussion of the *Lives* of Pythagoras written by the Neoplatonists Porphyry (late third century A.D.) (133-5) and Iamblichus (fourth century A.D.) (135-8).

The manifold elements of the Pythagorean tradition are not given equal attention throughout. In particular, the important chapter on The Neopythagorean Philosophers is confined to 'those thinkers in the Platonic tradition who derived Plato's philosophy from Pythagoras' even though 'the term "Neopythagorean" is used very widely to refer to those who had a semi-religious belief in Pythagoras' wisdom' (94). The mystical and magical sides of the tradition, which of course go back to Pythagoras himself, are noted (e.g., with Nigidius Figulus, 'Pythagoricus et magus', who renewed Pythagoreanism in Rome in the early first century B.C. [90-1, 139-40]) but not much discussed after the initial chapters, until the final chapter, which includes a section on The Pythagorean Tradition of the Occult and the Supernatural (139-46). The same holds for the doctrine of the immortal soul and its reincarnations, which is reflected in the *Phaedo*, but which also largely drops out of sight in the discussion until the final chapter which takes it up again in a section on Transmigration and Vegetarianism (146-53).

The principal focus of the book is the philosophico-mathematico-cosmological strand, reflected in the cosmology of the *Timaeus*, and developed in various ways in the Western philosophical and scientific tradition up to Copernicus and Kepler. In the absence of writings by Pythagoras himself, this strand of the Pythagorean tradition is largely founded on the interpretation of certain writings of Plato, who was the first to present Pythagoras as the creator of mathematical philosophy (*Republic* 530c, *Philebus* 16c), and who regarded him as a semi-divine source of philosophical wisdom grounded in mathematical principles. This picture was developed by Plato's disciples and the Platonic tradition (14). In the *Timaeus*, the mathematical construction of the cosmic soul and body represents a genuinely Pythagorean blend of number theory, geometry, astronomy, and musical harmony. If the inspiration is Pythagorean, the result is Platonic, as is the case too with Plato's other adaptations of Pythagorean ideas (54-7). The same holds for Plato's oral teachings, in which the Pythagorean derivation of the cosmos from the One and the Unlimited (which are corporeal principles) is replaced by a derivation from the One and the Indefinite Dyad (which are incorporeal) (59-63).

Aristotle recognized this deviation from authentic Pythagorean thought, but he was the last to do so. Plato's followers Speusippus and Xenocrates took Plato's picture of Pythagoras as historical, accepting as Pythagorean the derivation from the One and Plurality (which Speusippus substitutes for the Indefinite Dyad) and the cosmology of the *Timaeus* (64-5). And beginning with Aristotle's pupil Aristoxenus, who wrote a Life of Pythagoras, we have the elements of the picture of Pythagoras that was dominant until the end of antiquity. Pythagoras is now a legendary figure, the subject of marvelous tales. Moreover, he becomes the originator of many features of the moral systems of Plato and Aristotle. In fact, Plato is actually charged with plagiarizing Pythagoras (70-1). The tendency to identify Platonic thought with Pythagorean continued throughout antiquity and is responsible not only for the survival of the Pythagorean tradition but for its most important developments. Indeed Kahn tells us that in the third century B.C. the followers of the 'mathematikoi' tradition in Pythagoreanism were absorbed into the Academy of Speusippus, Xenocrates and Polemon (72) and that after the second century A.D. the Neopythagorean tradition is fully absorbed into Neoplatonism (133).

Even after the apparent demise of self-identified Pythagoreans in the third century, interest in Pythagoras continued, especially at Rome. Pseudonymous texts purporting to be written by Pythagoras and his earliest followers appear in the third or second century B.C. and continue to be written for over a millennium. They tend to be based on doctrines of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics, and later contain Neoplatonic material as well (74-9). A revival of Pythagoreanism is begun in the first century B.C. by Eudorus and other Platonists in Alexandria, and in Rome by the mystic and astrologer Nigidius Figulus. The Alexandrians reinstated Pythagorean philosophy, and Nigidius was the chief member of a Pythagorean ritual community. The practice of some kind of Pythagorean life continued in Rome into the first century A.D. (the philosopher Seneca was briefly attracted to it) (90-3).

Kahn's summary of the doctrines of Neopythagorean philosophers Eudorus, Philo, Moderatus, Nicomachus and Numenius, emphasizes the development of Neopythagorean metaphysics, particularly with reference to the several philosophers' views on the One and the importance of numbers in their relations to Forms and as principles of cosmic order. Numenius receives the fullest treatment, as is appropriate to 'the last important Neopythagorean philosopher, perhaps the most original thinker and certainly the most colorful writer in the ancient Pythagorean tradition.'

The final chapter, on The Pythagorean Heritage, is divided into three sections. The first, on The Pythagorean Tradition of the Occult and the Supernatural (139-46), discusses Nigidius Figulus again, as well as Apollonius of Tyana, whom Philostratus presents as a Pythagorean saint, and Alexander of Abunoteichos (second century A.D.), another holy man who combined a highly eclectic Pythagoreanism with a quasi-medical tradition. The second section, on Transmigration and Vegetarianism (146-53), shows

how the latter, which was not an early practice (9), came to be regarded as specifically Pythagorean and surveys the arguments in favor of vegetarianism that are based on the doctrine of transmigration, on our sympathy for animals and our sense of moral community with them, on asceticism, and even on the idea that eating meat will assimilate our soul to the souls of irrational beasts. Kahn notes that today's interest in vegetarianism, which is based on moral and dietary considerations, has no historical connection with the Pythagorean tradition.

The final section, on Mathematics, Music and Astronomy (153-72), covers the only strand of Pythagoreanism that has remained vital until today — though only in a limited sense. In late antiquity and the middle ages, the quadrivium, which was the Pythagorean curriculum since the time of Philolaus and Archytas, formed part of the basic school curriculum, and the basic textbook for arithmetic was Nicomachus' *Introduction to Arithmetic*. The Pythagorean tradition in music or harmonics, in the sense of explaining the musical intervals and concordances in terms of numerical ratios, was pursued in antiquity as well. Ptolemy's *Harmonics*, which follows this Pythagorean conception, had a decisive influence on Kepler. In the Renaissance Pythagorean philosophical thought was rediscovered by Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, and Johann Reuchlin. But the most important contribution of Pythagoreanism came in the area of mathematical astronomy. And after a brief discussion of its importance for Copernicus (159-61), Kahn concludes with a nice treatment of Kepler, 'perhaps the greatest Pythagorean of them all' (161-71), whose last work, *Harmonice Mundi* (which was inspired by Ptolemy's *Harmonica*), contains a long discussion of the tetractis and owes a heavy debt to the *Timaeus*. Kepler's determination to find simple mathematical relations in celestial phenomena and his success at doing so ironically brought an end to classical cosmology, with the discovery that the orbit of Mars is an ellipse.

For the most part this is (appropriately) a book of intellectual history rather than critical philosophy (particularly after the first few chapters). Kahn's excellent knowledge of the texts is apparent and his familiarity with the scholarly literature is manifest, although in general unobtrusive. The volume is attractively written and produced, and will do a real service in making the Pythagorean tradition, which has until now been a rather esoteric field of study, accessible to non-specialists.

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Dudley Knowles

Political Philosophy.

Montreal & Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen's University Press 2001.

Pp. xv + 392. Cdn\$/US\$70.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-7735-2236-0); Cdn\$/US\$27.95 (paper: ISBN 0-7735-2237-9).

Dudley Knowles has written a concise, clear, and portable companion to the undergraduate study of political philosophy. His book is, however, misleadingly titled. Unlike the subject matter suggested by *Political Philosophy*, Knowles in fact makes no claim to treat the twenty-four odd centuries of Western political thinkers or the full range of their ideas. Far more accurate might have been *Modern Political Philosophy for Western Democracies* or perhaps *Enduring Issues in Modern Political Philosophy*. For while the issues he treats are arguably of concern for any political society — Knowles devotes a chapter each to liberty, rights, distributive justice, political obligation, and democracy — his emphasis is on the meaning and justification of these concepts for those of us who live in the long consolidated democracies of Western Europe and North America. Away from the unique problems of the transitions to democracy (and, in some cases, market economy) that characterize Eastern Europe and South and Central America, Knowles has quite rightly discerned that *our* pressing need is to provide a philosophic justification for those comfortable intuitions we have about the constellation of values undergirding our political institutions. When it comes to the menu of justifications, Knowles turns to 'Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Locke's *Second Treatise*, Hume's *Treatise*, *Second Inquiry* and *Essays*, Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* and *Social Contract*, Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, J.S. Mill's *Utilitarianism* and *On Liberty*, [and] Rawls's *Theory of Justice*' (xiv). Having made his emphasis clear, it is no surprise then when the entire tradition prior to Hobbes receives barely a handful of mentions and the post-modernist tradition receives none.

This restricted scope is well suited to the book's method: to unpack each of these concepts and to reassemble some of the pieces into an argument that can sustain our philosophic allegiances in the context of our everyday political commitments and institutions. Knowles's tool is the sharp edge of analytic philosophy. Accordingly, he carefully and clearly differentiates among the various meanings hidden within each of these concepts, unearths the arguments and justifications they imply, and works through their political consequences. This process, which might otherwise tend towards scholasticism, is kept engaging and concrete by the frequent use of examples that are, for the most part, drawn from domestic life and crafted with that particularly British style of dry wit. A number of examples were laugh-out-loud funny. Although Knowles makes frequent reference to those political philosophers mentioned above, with the exception of an analysis of Rawls's argument, he does not provide any extended exposition or interpretation of

either their texts or central ideas. Rather, his purpose is to connect these political concepts to their intellectual origins and in doing so uncover obscured possibilities. He is equally diligent in mentioning contemporary exponents and commentators, thus providing a sense of the secondary literature.

In laying out the full range of alternative meanings and justifications of the book's central concepts, Knowles is not afraid to let his allegiances be known. These allegiances rest in an appealing combination of utilitarianism to deal with normative issues and non-metaphysical Hegelianism to justify the more fundamental institutional organization of society and the mutual relation of citizen to community in which these issues receive their shape. Even if one were to disagree with his conclusions, he provides the resources (and the encouragement) to fashion one's own. More importantly, his method of unpacking and repacking the concepts provides a wonderful window on a mature scholar, fully in command of the texts, thinking through problems and working out solutions right there on the page.

The exception to Knowles's method is the book's first substantive chapter. The first half of that chapter is devoted to an exposition of utilitarianism in its variations; its second half explores the utilitarian understanding of liberty, rights, distributive justice, and the state. Since Hegel's political thought also forms part of Knowles's approach to these critical issues, it might have been helpful to devote some space to an exposition of his decidedly un-atomistic conception of the political community and the individual's place within it. As it stands, the chapter on utilitarianism not only seems at odds with the thematic approach taken in the remaining five chapters, but requires him to visit most of the concepts twice over — once as the utilitarians understand them, the second time as they are understood by the most appropriate philosophic contenders.

As with most such textbooks, Knowles's *Political Philosophy* reveals its true utility in relation to the classroom teaching of political philosophy. In terms of supporting apparatus, the book comes equipped with an extensive bibliography of secondary and primary works, a good index and notes, pleasantly composed pages, is sturdily constructed and of a size that makes carrying it to and from class no burden at all. In terms of subject matter, the emphasis of the book is firmly on the title's second term, *philosophy*, both in its analytic approach and in its reference to contemporary scholarship. For this reason, the book will not have the same resonance among political scientists who teach political philosophy as it will among academic philosophers. Similarly, with its dominant thematic orientation, the book cannot be effortlessly integrated into courses on the history of political philosophy with their usual emphasis on 'great' political thinkers. Yet, because Knowles's book in many ways presupposes the sort of elucidation which such courses provide, it could fruitfully be used as companion reading to connect what might otherwise appear as ideas of purely antiquarian interest to current problems. However, the best fit for the book is likely to be upper year classes

on the perennial problems in political philosophy. There, the book's many fine qualities will make themselves most clearly felt.

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Jean-François Lyotard

Soundproof Room: Malraux's Anti-Aesthetics.

Trans. Robert Harvey.

Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2001.

US\$39.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-8047-3749-5);

US\$12.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8047-3750-9).

Soundproof Room: Malraux's Anti-Aesthetics is a bilingual edition that comprises both Jean-François Lyotard's original French text *Chambre sourde: L'Antiéthétique de Malraux* and its English translation by Robert Harvey. Lyotard, who has written a biography of Malraux, *Signé Malraux*, follows up in this work his study of Malraux's reflections on art and literature. Yet Malraux is really, in this book, an occasion for Lyotard to pursue his own reflections on aesthetics, politics, and modernity. This time turning to poetic prose, Lyotard reminds us once again of our moral responsibility.

It is the end of a century and the beginning of a new one. Is there, however, such a thing as an end and a beginning? The modern self believes itself to be a beginning or to have the power to declare one. That is, the modern self imagines having the power 'to speak and realize the truth' (28). Lyotard claims that this human aspiration to institute a new order manifests itself in various spheres of human activity and thought. In *Soundproof Room*, Lyotard explores some of these attempts at instituting a new order to show how old this aspiration is, and how it is always characterized by failure. Let us take the political sphere, for instance. Fascism, Nazism, Francoism, and Stalinism all declare the end of an era and the beginning of a new one. The beginning, however, does not really take place. The beginning is merely a promise; politicians ask us to have faith in the future realization of a beginning that is constantly postponed. The American and French Declarations, to take less extreme examples, are also promises. They declare: 'Here we are, free peoples' (6), but freedom and equality have not yet been realized. We forget, argues Lyotard, that nothing, not even this aspiration to institute a new order, 'is anything more than an episode in eternal redundancy' (18), and that there is no reason why we should have more faith in a 'new' promise than in preceding ones.

The modern self aims at speaking *and* realizing the truth. Nazism, for instance, is not merely an ideology or theoretical point of view. Nazis claim: 'This is the truth', but their ultimate goal consists in transforming the world according to the truth. The Final Solution is part of the Nazi project to institute a new order. The Nazis assume that the world belongs to them and that they have the right to make it a better place. So the aspiration to be a beginning or to declare one has important moral implications, and it is these implications that Lyotard has in mind when criticizing the modern self and modernity. What is at stake in any project that seeks to speak and realize the truth is not the truth, but power.

For Lyotard, there is no such thing as a beginning or an end. No one begins or ends anything. Similarly, no one can comment on a beginning or an end. For this presupposes an ability to situate oneself outside of history and determine its meaning. Our freedom and knowledge is necessarily limited; meaning escapes us. Instead of attempting to transcend the human condition, we must acknowledge our inability to fully possess ourselves, the world, and others — despite our obstinate aspiration to do so — and look for occasions to experience this very impossibility of totalizing meaning. This, in fact, is where art and literature come into play. Artworks — Malraux's, for instance — do not pretend to make an authoritative statement on the meaning of history. On the contrary, artworks resist this very temptation by giving rise to a plurality of voices or interpretations. Is not art, however, merely, fiction? Are we not interested in reality? According to Lyotard, the distinction between fiction and reality is meaningless, for all kinds of narration take place within history. Again, it is impossible to adopt a point of view outside of history to determine what kind of narration is closer to the truth: 'Universal history exists solely through the books that contain it, and no single one of these holds the privilege of pronouncing the beginning or the end, let alone the privilege of being one or the other' (30).

Lyotard does not discuss the question of happiness, for the desire for happiness is made trivial by some human tragedies. Yet Lyotard mentions how our failed attempt to transcend the human condition and to fully possess ourselves, the world, and others inevitably leads to disappointment or hopelessness. So Lyotard opens up the space for a reflection on happiness. Contrary to what we think, happiness does not consist in being in control but in coming to terms with both the impossibility and the immorality of exercising control. The fact that some contemporary philosophers are quick to deny the significance of 'postmodern' philosophy and to qualify it pejoratively as literature perhaps has something to do with philosophers' entrenched desire to be in control — or their habituation to disappointment! In *Soundproof Room*, Lyotard not only explains the irrelevance of the distinction between philosophy and literature, but exemplifies it. No voice has a greater authority than others, including the philosophical voice. What matters is our ability to be receptive to the voice of the other in whatever form this voice takes. Lyotard has always argued for this. But in *Soundproof Room*, one of Lyotard's last planned published books, the philosopher's voice is particu-

larly poetic and forceful. (And precisely for this reason, one must ideally read it in French.)

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John Meyer

Political Nature.

Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2001.

Pp. xii + 210.

US\$55.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-262-13390-3);

US\$22.95 (paper: ISBN 0-262-63224-1).

Political nature: What a title! I can imagine several environmental philosophers reading the title and thinking to themselves: 'Hold on; is John Meyer with us or is he against us?' Because if nature is to be kept natural, what does he mean by '*political nature*'? The answer is on the one hand simple because Meyer is devoted to environmental conservation and policies, but on the other not simple at all, because Meyer refuses to reduce politics to a black and white picture. Politics is complicated, and therefore so is reasoning about it. More on this below.

In the last twenty or so years we have been witnessed to a widespread ecological worldview, according to which if only we become aware of nature's moral status and 'follow nature' (whatever that means) everything (in terms of environmental policies) will be fine. Others reject this attitude and claim that if only we become more democratic and listen to the people (whatever that means) we'll get it right. John Meyer dismisses both ideas. Here again we see an author who acknowledges that you do not solve political problems with slogans and tricks. In order to see why he rejects those views, the reader is first invited to analyze nature-politics relationships.

Meyer describes first what he calls the 'dualist account' of nature and politics, namely that the two are divorced from each other. He analyzes works of seventeenth century political theory to see whether the source of this attitude lies in the 'social contract' theory. Another account he rejects is the 'derivative interpretation' which argues that conceptions of nature (e.g., Darwinian natural selection) should constitute (even replace) our political thought. Meyer chooses to analyze Aristotle's works, and his teleology, as well as several environmental philosophers, in order to claim that this approach also fails to comprehend the full picture of nature-politics relationships, as well as the simple fact that politics is often constituted by considerations other than 'nature'.

So how can we relate nature to politics without one of them dominating the other? Meyer wants the two to be first separated in order for them to live

happily together. Otherwise, he convincingly argues, theorizing about each one of them, not to mention the way we want them to relate to each other, is biased by a pre-conception of both. Moreover, we have to see how in fact our politics and political conceptions do make an impact on the way we understand nature, and vice versa. Similarly, we have to be clear about what conceptions of nature we hold, and become aware of the fact that we have so many of them. (Here Meyer is very useful in mapping the various arguments about different conceptions of nature, even if he does make a stand with regard to certain conceptions, e.g., nature as constitutive to human beings — which he adopts.) One thing we must keep in mind is that if we use the concept of ‘nature’ to describe something like ‘a condition’, or ‘a physical place’, we end up with a concept of nature whose boundaries are not well defined, hence is vulnerable to become political, if not subjective. And therefore we come to a dialectical process of nature and politics defining each other (131-4). In other words, we have in hand ‘political’ nature.

Once we establish this, Meyer claims, our most crucial goal is to see which political institutions serve environmental concerns and how they can do this. Our institutions, in turn, are political. But by claiming so, what do we mean? We have to reflect on politics, with an eye open to environmental questions. In fact, Meyer seems to claim, we have been doing this, at least in part, in Western political thought. But we have to do it more and more often. Easy saying, he goes on; but how would such an attitude affect our political thought?

It is with this question that Meyer moves from being an angry critical prophet to a political theorist, who is, one gets the feeling, rather optimistic (141, 154-6). Such optimistic conclusions rest on an attitude that reminds me of environmental pragmatism. Environmental movements, he reminds us, often act from a unique perspective, which already takes into account place, locality, experiences, and local political thought. All this allows them to have much more profound understanding of nature-politics relationships (145-53).

It is well known that many of the ancient Greeks who attended lectures and devoted themselves to studies were much older and experienced than contemporary students and academics. John Meyer — so we learn from the book’s preface — had been a political organizer for several years before returning to the university for his graduate studies. Indeed, this no doubt makes this book much more ‘mature’. It is ‘mature’ not only in the sense that Meyer writes clearly and attractively, but also in the sense that he acknowledges — unlike many Green authors — that politics is a tough matter; that our world is not easy to handle, and that philosophy must be self-critical because social changes cannot be achieved by a meta-ethics hocus-focus. His book therefore is a must read for both students of environmental philosophy and environmental politics as well as for activists, politicians and those ‘out there’.

If there is anything I have to criticize, it would be that once again an American wrote a book for mainly Americans. Admittedly, Meyer is much more open to works published outside the USA than most American environmental philosophers, and yet, there are so many great works written outside the USA, there are wonderful case studies to learn from in Europe (if one

wants to remain within the Western world, as Meyer does) or Asia, Africa and so on. I am not writing this as a politically correct comment; I am writing this as a worried academic who believes that too often American environmental philosophy is too narrowly focused on America and its environment. This, I am afraid, makes America blind to most interesting ideas raised, and policies issued elsewhere.

Despite this comment, this is a great book. Go and read it!

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Robert Nozick

Invariances:

The Structure of the Objective World.

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

2001. Pp. x + 416.

US\$35.00. ISBN 0-674-00631-3.

As he explains in Chapter 1, 'Truth and Relativism', Nozick holds that relativism about truth is a coherent position, and that we should judge whether it is true or not by 'discovering the interesting empirical nature that truth actually has' [28]. 'A property is relative only when there is an unobvious nonexplicit factor such that the presence or absence of the property (or the degree of its presence) varies with the factor ... [and only when] the different states of the factor can obtain simultaneously, in different respects' [17]. Then truth is relative just in case the set T of truths is such that 'the members of T are true and there is a factor F other than the obvious ones (the meaning of the utterance, the references of some terms within it, and the way the world is), such that the factor F can vary, and when F is varied, the truth value (viz. truth or falsity) of the members of T varies. The different values of the factor can coexist, and they are on a par. So the truth value of the members of T is a *function* of factor F as well as of meaning, reference, and the way the world is' [19]. Truth values on this account are not simply the True and the False, but rather *true relative to factor F1* and *false relative to factor F2*. Against this backdrop Nozick takes direct critical aim at the conventional wisdom that a fully specified proposition or statement has a fixed and unvarying truth value: 'the timelessness of truth is a contentful empirical claim, one that might turn out to be false' [27]. A first step is to orient investigation toward the notion of what 'determinately holds', for instance, its being determinate at a time that an event occurs at another time.

If determinateness turns out to be more rooted in time and space, its span drastically smaller, than once was thought, then whatever apparent distinct content the further notion of “true” may have is drained of interest because of the way the world is, the way we have learned it to be. It is determinateness that stitches the universe together, or fails to do so. A timeless truth that floats free of determinateness is a non-science fiction. [29]

In particular, allegedly necessary truths in tense logic, such as one that he labels (B) — ‘If it is true at a time that event E occurs at that time, then it is true at all earlier times that E will occur at that time’ — turn out to be false, on ‘a plausible reading of quantum mechanics that equates determinateness and truth’ [29], equating (B) to (2): ‘If it is determinate at a time that event E occurred at an earlier time, then it is determinate at that earlier time that E occurs at that time.’ But Nozick’s reading of quantum mechanics implies that such statements as this latter do not (always) hold true. Specifically, ‘the stochastic character of quantum mechanics’ undercuts (B) and hence (2), as illustrated by ‘erased measurement’ experiments via the premise that all actualities can have effects. ‘Something can be true at a time, yet it is not true at a later time that it was true at that earlier time. The erasure of the effects of the measurement erases the truth that the measurement revealed’ [36]. In this same passage Nozick attacks another purported truth of tense logic — (A) ‘If it is true at a time that event E occurred at an earlier time, then it is true at that earlier time that E occurs at that time’ — by reference to the ‘delayed choice’ experiment and realism about theory:

It can be true now that a certain event occurred at an earlier time, although it was not true at that earlier time that the event occurred then. It was true at the earlier time that the particle was in a superposition then, but it now is true that the particle followed a particular path then and was not in a superposition then. (The delayed-choice experiment admits this interpretation but does not require it, since the usual formulation of quantum mechanics offers a consistent description according to which it now is true that it was in a superposition back then. We can say, though, that any realist view that could be developed that keeps Wheeler’s lessons from delayed-choice would also amount to a refutation of [A].) [37]

Curiously, Nozick writes that a realist interpretation remains to be developed [34], suggesting that he was not familiar with David Deutsch’s realist interpretation of quantum mechanics. He relies on the standard Copenhagen interpretation, and characterizes his relativism about truth as ‘the Copenhagen Interpretation of Truth,’ as well as the ‘Aristotelian-Copenhagen’ interpretation of truth, because his critique of (C/3) has an affinity with Aristotle’s discussion of future contingents [43]. However, Deutsch’s realism might not be welcome to Nozick, since it interprets probabilities within the determinism of a ‘many worlds’ view. Probabilities on that view are actual outcomes distributed over various worlds, each of them deterministic, so quantum-level

probabilities in our world don't betoken indeterminism in it. Deutsch's realism would seem to prevent Nozick from appealing to the stochastic character of quantum mechanics to defeat the (B/2) and (C/3) pairs.

In addition to indexing truth to time on the strength of the delayed-choice and erased-measurement experiments, Nozick also indexes it to place. Again he relies on the notion of determination, 'upon what facts holding at some place-times *fix* about other place-times' [40], suggesting that what's fixed is sparser than we had assumed, that truth is more localized than we previously thought [40].

This brings the reader to page 40 of Nozick's 416-page book, and the reviewer close to his word limit. So the remainder of the review will be *very* brief. The foregoing detail was deemed necessary in order to distinguish Nozick's defense of relativity of truth from more familiar postmodernist accounts and alert the reader to Nozick's 'quantum turn'.

The book takes its title from the next chapter, 'Invariance and Objectivity', in which Nozick investigates an aspect of objective facts, that they are invariant under various transformations, quoting Dirac in support of the claim that the practice of physicists is to treat what is invariant under Lorentz transformations as more objective than what varies under them. Such objectivity is what lends ontological significance to space-time, for only it, and not its lesser dimensional parts, shows something that is invariant under Lorentz transformations [77]. Furthermore it explains less basic marks of objectiveness, such as accessibility from different angles, intersubjective agreement, and independence from the observer. The remainder of this chapter, which purports to reveal a gradation rather than a dichotomy in our concepts of objective and subjective, and also considers complicating factors like theory-ladenness for the standard Popperian model of science, I hereby pass over.

True necessity for Nozick is invariant under reduction [138], and in Chapter 3, 'Necessity and Contingency', he is skeptical about it, finding it relative to a scheme of classification [127] or even relative to worlds on the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics [130], as he proposes when discussing the Kripke-Putnam account of the necessity of water being H₂O. (Against this account, he suggests that water may have another chemical structure in other worlds.) The necessity of nothing's being red and green all over is not metaphysical necessity but at best relative necessity, relative to our biological wiring [138]. A patina of necessity attaches to logic and mathematics is explained away by reference to the filtering function evolution has selected them for [142]: 'I conjecture that logic functions as a filter to weed out data that can safely be ignored' [144]. As for the actual world, Nozick is sympathetic to Brian Greene's report that, 'within string theory, space-time can be viewed as stitched together from many strings undergoing the same orderly graviton pattern of vibration' [164]. This coherent state of strings, and the origin of space-time itself, would arise from an incoherent state of strings, 'which occurs in no place (space doesn't yet exist) and at no time (for time also doesn't exist)' [164].

Sympathy with qualia leads to emergent laws in Chapter 4, 'The Realm of Consciousness'. Nozick proposes that qualia occur because even low-level theory about objects in the world is underdetermined by data, so that 'an *experience* of the world might be a way of fixing upon one hypothesis among the many that fit the data' [207]. The hypothesis that the subject acts upon is the one presented phenomenologically. This is so, at any rate, for the pre-linguistic experience of animals, and 'such experiences might continue also for linguistic organisms' [207]. In order to accommodate these qualia, he postulates 'nomologically special' laws that apply only to states that are identical with conscious states: 'Conscious states are different ... States of consciousness are not ontologically special, but they are *nomologically special*' [230-1]. He appeals to quantum mechanics in order to establish this idea [230ff].

You may be relieved that the final chapter, 'The Genealogy of Ethics', contains no arguments that turn on references to quantum mechanics. Like the other chapters, this one is wide-ranging. He returns to the four-level moral structure he sketches in *The Examined Life*: the ethics of respect, the ethics of responsiveness, the ethics of care, and the ethics of Light. The ethics of respect is essentially what's given in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. As for the 'higher' levels, he says: 'I do not say that the ethics of each higher layer is more obligatory. It just is lovelier, and more elevating ... All that any society should (coercively) demand is adherence to the ethics of respect. The further levels should be matters for a person's own individual choice and development' [282]. Taken out of its proper context, this is somewhat misleading. As Nozick's Closest-Continuer theory of personal identity in *Philosophical Explanations* implies, and as his defense of taxation of bequests in *The Examined Life* makes explicit, 'a person's own individual choice and development' may change the contours of the self in such a way as to create a *we*, a social entity that can oblige me, perhaps through a democratic vote among us members of the *we*, to accept a death tax that I, apart from my membership in the *we*, deplore. As I understand Nozick, such an individual may be legally coerced into adherence with *our* will. This streak of Rousseauian romanticism in his later work is at odds with the atomism about personal identity in *ASU*.

A final caution about criticism of this book: Nozick writes,

Is objectivity just a male trait? Worse, is it (in the current phrase) merely a "white, heterosexual, male" trait? (The complete contemporary locution is "dead, white, heterosexual males.") What I really object to is the "dead" part. Leaving aside the vapidness of assuming that the only statements worth attending to are very recent ones, it is not nice to pick on people when they cannot fight back. [75]

So be nice to America's greatest philosopher since William James.

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Thomas Pavel

The Spell of Language:

Poststructuralism and Speculation.

English version by Linda Jordan &

Thomas Pavel.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2001.

Pp. v + 178.

US\$30.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-226-65066-4);

US\$16.00 (paper: ISBN 0-226-65067-7).

Analytic and linguistic philosophy never really caught on in France, although later in the twentieth century French humanities, including philosophy, were heavily influenced by linguistic structuralism. To explain this late interest in language in French academy is precisely the aim of Pavel's recent book *The Spell of Language*. But the book also aims to account for the gradual downfall of linguistic structuralism and poststructuralism as a paradigm for the French humanities.

Pavel's book is organized in 6 chapters and a postscript. Chapter 1 quickly tells the story of the rise and fall of the so-called structuralist paradigm in France, providing the reader with an historical overview. The chapter is divided into 3 sections. In the first, we are told that linguistic structuralism arose in France as a reaction to the humanism of previous thinkers, and also that structuralism harboured the promise of modernizing various disciplines of the humanities. French structuralism is further classified into 3 different varieties: a) moderate structuralism; b) scientific structuralism; and c) speculative structuralism. The second section, expounds the concept of the end so widely employed by structuralist and poststructuralist thinkers. The end preached by these thinkers is that of a certain historical period, philosophical or scientific tradition. The final section hastily reviews a couple of themes relevant to a speculative structuralist like Jacques Derrida.

Chapter 2 describes Lévi-Strauss's own choice of the linguistic domain for his anthropological investigations. Again it is divided into 3 sections. Section 1 is concerned with the supposed modernization of French anthropology brought about by Lévi-Strauss's adherence to the main principles and methodology of Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics. Section 2 contains an example — Lévi-Strauss's analysis of the Oedipus myth — of structuralist anthropology's importation of the methodology and principles of structuralist linguistics. It also contains a criticism of Lévi-Strauss's apparently unwarranted borrowing of principles valid for other disciplines into anthropology. The chapter ends with a short section concluding that in fact the technique employed by Lévi-Strauss, far from achieving the modernization expected from the new methodology of phonology, reverted to ancient methodological practices.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the question of whether this apparent impossibility of modernizing the methodology of anthropology and some of the other humanities had to do with a confused return to well-known techniques of

interpretation or with the very nature of the object of study of these disciplines. The chapter is divided into 4 sections. The first section outlines the contrast between structuralist and hermeneutic explanations, suggesting that they are mutually exclusive. The second section examines the tensions between language and the thinking subject who renders it possible. The third section deals with Derrida's criticisms of Edmund Husserl's distinction between the indicative and expressive sign and of the emphasis Husserl puts on the expressive mode of signification. The fourth section presents and criticizes the approach of Saussure's disciple Louis Hjelmslev: glossematics, a synthesis of structural linguistics and the Vienna Circle's philosophy. It also elaborates on Derrida's criticism of Husserl's phenomenology and on Derrida's consequent rejection of the transcendental subject.

Chapter 4 discusses a different structuralist attempt to dodge subjectivity and its kin notions of intentionality and mentality, namely: distributionist linguistics. The chapter is organized in 3 sections. The first expounds the belief common to linguistic structuralists and other schools that applying different analysis to the same linguistic phenomena will yield the same or at least isomorphic results. The second section illustrates this belief with the case of distributionist linguistics. The third section discusses the behaviouristic account of the history of the sciences due to Michel Foucault.

Chapter 5 presents yet another example of the application of structuralist methodology to a discipline of the humanities: the employment of the techniques of generative semiotics to literary theory. The chapter consists of 5 sections. The first describes the application of the formal schemes of generative semiotics to the analysis of some novels. It also contains an interesting discussion of various objections to the employment of formal methods in the humanistic disciplines. The short second section presents the case of the French fictional narrative analysts of the '60s and '70s who attempted to dispense with the intentional notions of representation and reference. They proposed instead a conventionalist account of fictional discourse. The third section approximates Roland Barthes's account of representation in art to Nelson Goodman's view. The fourth section is also very short; it continues with the structuralist analysis of some other novels. The fifth and last section further elaborates the conventionalist approach to fiction and to art in general. It contains a short discussion of David Lewis's notion of linguistic convention, only to conclude that the conventionalist attempt to eliminate intentional notions from the analysis of works of art is a total failure.

The last chapter is the climax of the book. There Pavel presents us with a picture of the French academic establishment that shows why linguistic structuralism exerted such a strong influence in the French humanities in the '60s and '70s and lost this privileged position in the ensuing decades. Again the chapter is organized in 3 sections. The first enumerates the reasons for the delayed emergence of linguistic preoccupations within French philosophy in the twentieth century. They include, for example, the lack of influence of the Vienna Circle and also of the late nineteenth century German philosophy in France. But there were other reasons, related to the social

structure of the French academic establishment, that can also explain the above mentioned facts; these reasons are described in section 2. Finally, the third section rounds off the discussion by adding that it was the affluence of French post-war society which produced the kind of discretionary intellectual behaviour that opposed speculative and scientific structuralists.

In the postscript to the English edition, Pavel describes the debate about the character of Martin Heidegger and his collaboration with Nazism. One of Pavel's interrogations is why Heidegger achieved such notoriety among French philosophers of the '70s and '80s. And part of his answer is this: the post-war disenchantment with humanism and modernity allied with the association of Marxism with Stalinist imperialism prompted French intellectuals to turn to Heidegger's conservative, anti-modernizing and anti-humanistic philosophical project.

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John Perry

Knowledge, Possibility, and Consciousness.

Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2001. Pp. xvi + 221.

US\$29.95. ISBN 0-262-16199-0.

This book issues from the Nicod lectures delivered by Perry in Paris and Lyon in 1999. In it, he articulates a doctrine he calls 'antecedent physicalism': the view that physicalism ought to be accepted as *prima facie* plausible, and that its defense in the face of counterargument succeeds as long as it can be shown that it has not been established that physicalism is beset by 'inadequacies, incoherencies, or inconsistencies' (28). He then mounts such a defense of physicalism against three 'neo-dualist' arguments intended to establish its inadequacy: Chalmers's Zombie argument, Jackson's Knowledge argument, and the modal arguments of Chalmers and Kripke. Perry's treatment of the second is by far the most extensive and it will be our topic here.

The proponent of the knowledge argument (KA) claims that someone (Jackson introduces the character 'Mary') who knew the complete neuroscientific and ultimately physical account of color vision but who had never seen color herself would learn something when first seeing color — when, attending to her new experience and demonstrating it, she acknowledged that '*this* is the state of seeing red'. From this claim one is supposed to be led to conclude that there are things — red sensations, say — which are not mentioned in a complete physical account of the world, by the following line of thought: Mary 'learns a proposition about what it is like to have a certain

experience ... this fact or proposition seems to involve a property, the subjective character, that she has never associated with the experience ... She learns an additional fact about that experience, a fact that involves this what-it-is-like property. It then wasn't one of the physical facts, and physicalism is false' (94-5).

Perry's contention is that KA shows the falsehood of physicalism only given what he calls 'the subject matter assumption' (SMA): 'the content of a belief is simply whatever is believed about whatever the belief is about' (113). Given SMA, the premise of KA implies its conclusion, since if new knowledge individuated by new content is gained with color experience, there must be properties or things in the world that a complete physical account would omit. Perry, however, argues that SMA is false on general and independent grounds.

Properly understood, views about what content is are underwritten by views about the explanatory projects the attribution of content serves, and the essence of Perry's strategy for undermining the apparently 'almost tautological' (113) SMA is to broaden our conception of the explanatory role of content to the point where we recognize that new content for belief and hence knowledge does not necessarily require new objects and properties in the world. The discussion here continues the development of views that stem from Perry's early work on Frege, identity, and indexicality, and in it Perry argues that there is a theoretically well-motivated role for *reflexive* belief content as well as for the more standard *subject matter* content. The latter is what determines the explanatory role of a belief-state given certain assumptions about the embedding of that belief-state in a context, while the former is what determines its explanatory role when certain facts about context are not held fixed. The difference between believing 'Paris is Paris' and believing (in Paris) 'Paris is here' is not one of subject-matter content, since both beliefs ascribe the same properties to the same objects. The difference is rather one of reflexive content: the first belief requires for its truth that Paris bear the relation of identity to itself, the second that it bear the relation of identity to the place that the subject is. The latter belief plays a role in motivating action that the former doesn't. This is a difference in reflexive content since it concerns the embedding of belief states themselves in their context: even when I am in Paris my belief that 'Paris is here' requires something of the relation between itself and Paris that the belief that 'Paris is Paris' does not. Fruitful extensions of these points touched on in the book include views about the informativity of identity statements and the problem of deduction, and Perry clearly explains why his view is not a version of the metalinguistic treatment of the former.

Applied to beliefs about subjective characters and brain states, the view explains how knowledge could be gained by the subject of KA without there being any extra things or properties in the world. The difference between believing or knowing 'brain state x is brain state x ' and believing or knowing 'brain state x is *this* subjective character' needn't force a distinction between the brain state and the subjective character themselves. The difference is

rather of a piece with the difference between believing 'Paris is Paris' and believing 'Paris is here': moving from believing 'x is x' to believing 'x is *this* subjective character' involves in part coming to be able to recognize state x in a way one previously could not.

The committed anti-physicalist will, of course, find this result rather disappointing since it fails entirely to address the feeling of bafflement that might be expressed by saying 'how on earth could *this*', attending to a sensation, 'be a physical state?' However this is where Perry's antecedent physicalism maintains that the ball is in the neo-dualist's court: Perry has explained how knowledge could be gained in the scenario of KA without its following without further assumption that there is something non-physical. That identities can be surprising or informative is, he maintains, nothing specific to physicalism about subjective characters.

Perry's book represents a victory of clear thinking over some curiously persistent confusions, and it will be helpful to anyone working in the philosophy of mind or language at or above the advanced undergraduate level. It is not, however, without blemish: two chapters are devoted primarily to reminding the reader of what it is like to have sensations, and throughout, perspicuous semantic and logical doctrines are often obscured by imagistic discussions of how the mind works in terms of mental files, wiring, plugs and sockets, or Humean ideas. Nevertheless the book is important and highly recommended.

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David Daiches Raphael

Concepts of Justice.

Don Mills, ON and New York: Oxford

University Press 2001. Pp. 256.

Cdn\$66.50: US\$35.00. ISBN 0-19-9245711.

Initially the title of the book struck me as incorrect: isn't it rather the case that there are different *conceptions* of justice but only one *concept* thereof? I concede that reading the book made me, to say the least, question the certainty of that first belief.

Raphael's is a bold essay in the history of philosophy that undertakes the task to reconstruct the evolution of the concept(s) of justice from its early days in the classic philosophies and the biblical texts (chs. 2-5), through the thinkers of the medieval and the modern times (chs. 6-15) up to its contem-

porary versions in Rawls, Nozick and Barry (chs. 16-20). The exposition is quite abstract and although Raphael keeps the analysis tied down to selected philosophical sources, he frequently engages in sophisticated conceptual analysis. As a result, the exegetical outlook that usually pertains to any historic-philosophical essay is here upgraded to a subtle analysis of the content of 'justice', its conceptual components and the reciprocal connections between them. A distinct feature of the book is the density of the writing, owing to the author's effort to account for all possible interconnections between the elements of justice, which at times makes the text hard to follow.

Painted with a very broad brush indeed, Raphael's exploration of 'justice' unfolds as follows: Raphael locates the beginnings of justice in the realm of law (the law of the Polis or the biblical law) rather than of morality. Justice here refers to the *punishment* of those who disturb the public order of the community and coincides with the retributive role of criminal law. As such it aims at preventing harmful action and incorporates the old 'revenge' rule: 'what you do shall be done to you'. Along these lines Raphael argues that punishment falls under the concept of *desert*. Hence, in this early form, justice is understood as incorporating desert. However desert is closely related to the notion of *fairness* and the maxim 'rendering to each person what is their due'. From fairness it is only a very short way to *impartiality*. Impartiality ensures that punishment and desert are carried through by the legal system in a cool, rational way. Raphael is keen to observe that impartiality does not necessarily coincide with *equality*. Impartiality amounts to giving equal treatment to equals and unequals alike but does not make any additional commitment to the equal worth of individuals (as some versions of equality do). In any event, fairness and impartiality import equality into the discussion about the content of justice. Finally, one further element that is added to 'justice', however not until later in history, is *the relief of need* which postulates a fair distribution of wealth to the needy. Raphael is careful to note that this is not recognised by all as constituting an element of justice, as some prefer to subsume it under an obligation of charity/benevolence. In this context Raphael also discusses rights and the concern of the individual with regard to justice. Raphael's overall conclusion roughly is that even though justice emerged from the legal order and served the purpose of protecting social order, eventually it evolved into a moral concept with an individualistic outlook that turned out to be the 'shield of the individual against encroachment by social authority' (250).

Raphael identifies each one of the different elements of justice by critically discussing the work of various philosophers. But apart from identifying those elements he constantly attempts to shed light on the interconnections between them. One underlying assumption for the whole project is that the concept of justice varies according to the proportion in which each of the conceptual elements is involved. One further assumption is that those variations are so important that at the end of the day it might be impossible to talk of one single concept of justice. Obviously there is a contradiction lurking here: if the variations of 'justice' throughout history were as radical,

why try in the first place to identify any diachronic conceptual ingredients? Since if the latter were possible then the concept of justice would be indeed one and the only thing that would vary would be our different conceptions or understandings thereof. As a result, to the extent that Raphael believes that it is possible to discover stable elements of justice, he appears to undermine one of the central assumptions of the book.

One point that could puzzle the reader: Raphael argues that 'justice' originated in the legal order of the primitive political community and that it was only later upgraded to a moral concept, independent of law. This is debatable, to say the least. The majority of authors in the area of legal history/sociology agree that law is a highly differentiated normative order which arises much later in history along with the appearance of more complex political communities. Instead, it was morality that had to undertake the regulatory role in early political communities. Having said that, Raphael is right in saying that early normative orders were exhausted by basic rules of conduct which mainly served the purpose of preserving social order.

Finally a short comment on justice and rights: Raphael argues that there is no necessary connection between rights and justice. So far so good: however when it is time to account for the role of justice as a 'shield of the individual' against the authority of the community, he appears to have deprived himself of a very powerful argument: usually theories of justice that give a normative priority to the good of the community over the individual (mostly utilitarian theories) are blocked through deontological arguments that rely on rights. By ignoring such arguments Raphael has to turn for an explanation to the contingent changes in the history of ideas as reflected in the various philosophical authors. However interesting this exploration might be, it can hardly compensate for the loss of a normative argument that pertains in deontological theories of justice and morality.

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James B. Reichmann, SJ

Evolution, Animal 'Rights', and the Environment.

Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press 2000. Pp. xiii + 399.

US\$49.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8132-0931-5);

US\$29.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8132-0954-4).

The traditional position of the western world is that rights are attributable, universally, to human beings *alone*. However, the 'traditional view', we are informed by James B. Reichmann, is being challenged by present day life-scientists and philosophers, some of whom argue that rights ought to be extended to include nonhuman animals (Regan, Singer and Taylor), and some of whom argue that rights ought to be extended yet further to include the nonhuman inanimate environment (Callicott, Rolston, Westra, Rachels, and Sylvan). Reichmann's book *Evolution, Animal 'Rights', and the Environment* '... strives to address this line of reasoning, and [examines] both the proposed extension of rights to the nonhuman animal and to the environment ...' (2).

First of all it is important to realize that the above-mentioned project of the book is set firmly within the ongoing debate between creationists and evolutionists. Reichmann clearly sides with creationism when he writes: 'It is from the author [God] of nature and not from nature itself that humans incur the responsibility of respecting the garden-world in which they live' (346). It is hardly surprising from this perspective that Reichmann sides with tradition to promote a theological version of weak anthropocentric environmental ethics. He writes, '... to maintain that the human is the highest form of life on the planet is not to deny the obligations of humans to the environment. We have shown that humans have real, though indirect, obligation to respect the environment' (346). It is then from the perspective of a God created world that the book evaluates and ultimately denies the merits of ethical extensionism.

Reichmann argues for an old and familiar *form* of ethic (Weak Anthropocentrism — familiar to the discipline of Environmental Ethics) on the basis of an old and familiar *form* of argument. The argument and conclusion of Reichmann's work is basically all and only humans have rights because all and only humans are the right kind of being, that is, possess the capacities that make the possession of rights possible. The right kind argument (RKA) demands that human beings differ in *type* from the nonhuman and that human beings are the *right type* of beings to possess rights. It is against these prerequisites of the RKA that Reichmann's treatment of two assumptions of the extensionist's project is worthy of mention.

The antithesis of the 'humans differ in type' position is, of course, Darwinian evolutionary theory. Reichmann argues that the extensionist's position is always, nearly without exception based on Darwinism. The chief protagonists are, according to Reichmann, philosophers like Regan, Singer, Callicott

and Taylor. However, Reichmann rejects Darwinism as a suitable base for rights arguing instead that 'the only anvil upon which an inalienable rights theory can be forged is natural law theory' (3). The rejection of Darwinism is based on two separate threads of thought. First, there is a critique of Darwinism *as a theory* running throughout the book. In chapter one the focus of the critique is particular; it is an examination of the '... coherence of an evolutionary theory ... that excludes all teleological considerations' (10). Reichmann's conclusion is that Darwinism is incoherent in the absence of teleological concerns. In chapters two through to four the critique continues with arguments supporting the position that humans differ in type from nonhuman animals in the areas of intelligence, freedom and language. Reichmann's basic tactic is to *compare* the actions of human and nonhuman, declare that there is a vast gap between the nature of the actions of the two parties, and then explain the gap by an appeal to a difference in type, not degree. With Aristotle and Aquinas echoing in our ears the difference in kind is put down to our *essentially* intellectual nature — capacity for conceptual thought.

The critique is largely disappointing as it is based on several misunderstandings of Darwinism. For example, Reichmann's reference to Wallace, 'How were any of these [intellectual] faculties first developed when they could have been of no possible use to man in his early stages?' (39), and his comment on the irreducibly complex structure of the human, 'Man could not have evolved bit by bit, since all parts must be in place in order for the human to function ...' (225), appeal to the fallacy that 'the current utility of a given feature ... explains "why" the feature originally evolved' (R. Dorit, Book Review: 'Darwin's Black Box', *American Scientist*, 1997).

The second thread of thought is more telling. It examines the relationship between rights and Darwinism. Reichmann brings up several puzzles that should cause concern for any Darwinian-based ethic of nature. For instance, the relationship between the idea of non-interference, often central to the rights position, and the idea of man as part of nature. 'If one advocates "letting species be," ... then why bracket out the human species from this dynamic equation ... Why is the human singled out from all other species as the one species that is the "unthinking upsetter" of an "unplanned environment"?' (326) If we are part of nature, and nature ought to be left to its own ultimately purposeless drift, then why cannot humans simply be left alone to do what they want toward the rest of the natural world? It seems that Darwinism moves against the attribution of rights to the nonhuman.

The second assumption of the extensionist's project to come under the microscope is the assumption that human beings are the subject of rights. It is usually from this given that the project of extending rights begins. However, Reichmann does not take this assumption for granted. He takes a more general line of inquiry asking and addressing what he terms as '... three seminal questions: What are rights? Who has them? and Why? ... The book ... [argues] ... , therefore, that before assigning rights to this or that individual or group, whether human or not, we need to be clear about what it is we

are assigning' (3). The book undertakes then an investigation of the meta-ethical grounds of rights theory with a special focus on the issue '... of whether creatures other than humans can and should be considered authentic subjects of rights' (3).

The upshot of the examination is a theory of rights based on the natural law theory of Thomas Aquinas. What is a right? According to Reichmann, 'A "right" therefore specifically demarcates an area of behavior that one is morally free to incorporate into one's life plan ... with the assurance in doing so one is acting justly, which means in a manner consonant with one's nature' (260). Who has them? 'Rights and duties are corollaries of freedom, and all those that are subjects of rights are persons, for a person is "... whatever subsists in an intellectual ... nature ..."' (261). Why? '... the ... nature of a right is the safeguarding of the responsible exercise of freedom by placing moral restraint on the consciences of other free, acting beings ...' (262). The nature of a right, it seems, presupposes beings with a capacity for moral conscience, that is, in this case, persons. The qualifying criterion for rights is personhood, which is ultimately founded on intellectual nature, the essential nature of human beings.

There are, unfortunately, significant omissions in *Evolution, Animal Rights, and the Environment*. Reichmann completely fails to address well-known objections to the right kind argument. The deeply counter-intuitive nature of such a structure of argument has been made clear by both Rachels ('The Prodigious Chimp Argument') and Regan ('The Argument from Alien Genetic Variation'). In addition, there is no real consideration of the scientific literature on subjects such as self-consciousness in nonhuman animals and the recently discovered use of syntactic structure in monkey calls. These sorts of phenomena, arguably, require a level of mental sophistication intellectual in nature. This said, Reichmann's book will be a source of reassurance for the believer, a source of frustration for the evolutionist and source of new problems for the environmental ethicist.

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Joseph Salerno

On Frege.

Belmont, CA: Wadsworth 2001.

Pp. v + 98.

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This short introduction to Frege's philosophy is clearly written, and the topics have been selected so as not to unduly puzzle the undergraduate student it is aimed at. In particular, 'thoughts' are foregrounded as the center of Frege's non-technical work in philosophy of language, metaphysics and epistemology. Chapter 1 briefly rehearses some of the milestones in Frege's life. In chapter 2, sense is distinguished from reference for singular terms, though Salerno uses the Fregean technical term 'proper names' without explaining its generality. In chapter 3 objective senses are distinguished from subjective ideas. Chapter 4 introduces thoughts as the compositional senses of assertoric sentences, analyzable in terms of function-argument structure, and as the primary bearers of truth value. This leads naturally (chapter 5) into Frege's conception of truth as the nonrelational, undefinable object of sentential reference. In chapter 6 the challenge of intensional-opaque contexts to Frege's compositionality principle are handled by Frege's notion of indirect sense and reference. Finally, chapter 7 presents logic as the laws of truth (of thoughts) pitted against psychologism — logic as a branch of psychology; the good guys win.

Although I think this is a very good survey of Frege at this level, I do have some reservations. First, the book lacks an index, which in a text, can be a problem for students. More seriously, except for a couple of pages in chapter 1, there is no discussion of Logicism — Frege's life project. Maybe Salerno thought the topic too difficult for the intended audience, but his success with related topics suggests otherwise. Regarding actual content, three points. First, Frege's central notion of a concept, as a function from objects to truth values and the reference of a grammatical predicate, is never explicitly introduced, though there are suggestions of it. For instance, after discussing the incompleteness of the sense of predicates Salerno says (43) 'the job of a predicate-expression is to predicate something of or ascribe a property to, an object.' But this does not rule out that a sense is being ascribed, because nothing so far rules out senses as properties. And in a figure (78) representing the referential structure of a simple sentence, the predicate has as reference 'a concept (or predicative function)'. However, the student should find this mysterious, since the notion of a concept as the reference of a predicate has not been explicated. This puts Salerno in an awkward position when trying to explain phenomena that concepts explain. For instance, he asks (38): what must a thought be like to have the essential feature of being true or false? After surveying function-argument analyses of sentences at the level of sense, he concludes: 'Given the saturated versus unsaturated nature of arguments and functions, respectively, we have an explanation of how senses may combine to yield something capable of being true or false' (45). But of

course we have no such explanation, because saturation at the level of sense only guarantees, at best, that thoughts are objects, not that they have or determine truth values. To get that one needs Frege's doctrine of concepts. Second, although the notion of an 'assertoric sentence' is introduced (36), the explicitly Fregean doctrine of the act of assertion as the manifestation of a judgment (the acknowledgment, *anerkennung*, of the truth of the thought expressed) is never set out, and so the connection between what is asserted and what is grasped is left hazy. Third, some dubious claims are repeated over and over. (i) Sense is 'linguistic meaning' (Preface, 1, 86, 92). Salerno repeats this even after noting (53) that indexical sentences can express different senses on different occasions of utterance (but presumably do not change their linguistic meaning). (ii) Principles of substitution are presented as principles of compositionality (40, 67, 68, 77), though they are once correctly distinguished (91). (iii) Thoughts are said to be true or false 'in virtue of their internal structure' (71, 86, 92). This might be correct for logical truths, but for the rest, the world must cooperate (for Frege, the world must provide references for the sentence to have a truth value at all). (iv) Senses are 'that part of meaning that is necessary and sufficient for logical inference' (86, 94). No citations are given, but I suspect this Brandomization of Frege is a case of incorrectly importing the *Begriffsschrift* (1879, #3) identification of 'conceptual content' with inference potential into the later sense-reference theory of content. After the two-factor theory (1891), Frege does not connect content notions with inference notions. (v) Neither does Frege explicitly endorse the principle that 'two sentences have the same cognitive value (or express the same thing) when and only when it's impossible to believe one without believing the other' (10, 92, 94ff). Again, no citations are given, and Frege seems to have explicitly subscribed only to the weaker principle of difference: the thoughts expressed by two sentences are different when one can be believed without believing the other.

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Stephen Toulmin

Return to Reason.

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
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Toulmin makes the interesting and correct move of arguing that modernity has emphasized rationality at the expense of reason. Toulmin associates the term rationality with the ideas of necessity and certainty, finding rationality

in those processes that seek such certainty, for example, the scientific method. Reason and reasonableness, on the other hand, associate more with practical living without certitude. This distinction finds itself also in the distinction between formal and substantive argumentation. Whereas formal argumentation focuses exclusively on the propositions of an argument, reason brings in the situational and rhetorical aspects. The call to move to a fuller understanding of reason goes out to skeptics, irrationalists, and post-modernists who deny the power of rationality, and to rationalists who deny anything outside of rationality.

Toulmin's book begins with an analysis of changes in the understanding of reason in the modern period. To the standard history of science, he adds an account of how changes in science relate to developments and changes in disciplines, as well as discussions of economics and of clinical medical practice. His discussion focuses, moreover, on changes in the understanding of reason, such that his history of science is told in light of its effects on that understanding. He begins by noting the turn, in early modernity, to mathematics and logic as forms of argumentation and reason. He moves, then, in chapter three to discussing how that emphasis led to an invention of scholarly disciplines. Claiming that before the 1600s scholars respected the multiple ways in which they each pursued knowledge and human understanding, Toulmin argues that print culture gave rise to two new products — The Humanities and The Exact Sciences — undermining the previous respect given divergent ideas about philosophy and human reason. Such a division, while having its positive moments, led to greater bureaucratization in the university that itself led to various problems, particularly the bracketing of ethics from academic social sciences. In short, print culture led to the division of fact and value.

According to Toulmin, the emphasis on disciplines has led to a narrowness of occupation and interests. Such narrowness cuts off intellectual growth where it might benefit from more interdisciplinary discussion. Further, such an emphasis on discipline in the social sciences implies an oversimplified understanding of human life and human society (153). With the division of labor between the exact sciences and humanities, social scientists took as the model of their work Newtonian physics as they imagined it — not as it actually was. In so doing, social scientists 'hoped to win three prizes at the same time: developing (a) an abstract theory with a rigorously valid axiom system, (b) deductions of the nature of human institutions from its universal principles, and (c) scientific explanations of the character of particular social institutions' (54). These goals were impossible and had never been achieved in physics. Toulmin uses historical examples from economics to highlight how, trying to model themselves on physics, economists caused damage by abstracting from situations and attempting to apply economic principles to cases they did not fit. Such a reliance on a natural science model focused attention on doing the sums right, while avoiding the question of whether one was doing the right sums (66).

Toulmin's most interesting argument comes in his discussion of clinical (or practical) practice. Rather than not seeking universal laws, we ought —

like the Greeks — to understand ‘universal’ to mean on the whole. Individual cases should be understood individually and engaged personally. Each patient in medicine, for instance, has a particular history that helps the physician not only understand, but also diagnose, the illness. Similarly, such personal and individuals analysis must apply to ethical practice.

Toulmin, decrying the quest for certainty (a phrase he takes from Dewey, leaving one to wonder why he does not address Richard Bernstein’s work), claims that the solution to the problems of rationality in modernity lies not in elevating practice above theory, but in restoring practice and theory to a proper balance. Recognizing the connection between reason and our needs is key in restoring this balance. Practice has its own certainty in the knowledge of the skilled; thus we must return to an account of Aristotelian *phronēsis*. Finally, such a restoration of the balance between reason and rationality — between practice and theory — means that we must live with skeptics and pragmatists.

Unlike most critics of modernity, Toulmin recognizes the exact problem that haunts contemporary philosophy and science, philosophy of social science, and the social sciences — the imbalance between rationality and reason. He, however, refuses to recognize his true allies in this cause: members of the early Frankfurt School and MacIntyre. Toulmin seems to favor Habermas over the early Frankfurt School and MacIntyre (claiming, for instance, that MacIntyre favors theory over practice). A clearer reading of the early Frankfurt School and MacIntyre, as well as an attempt to engage with Bernstein on these issues, would bring more perspicuity and force to Toulmin’s worthy cause.

Return to Reason is a useful, brief account of changes in philosophy, science, and the social sciences, and of how those changes affected the everyday practice of, for example, economists and doctors. Indeed, I would recommend this book for courses in philosophy of social science or professional ethics, because it highlights so succinctly and well problems that professionals and social scientists currently face, and why. *Return to Reason* is not simply a useful textbook, though, or helpful only to those concerned with science, social science, and issues of reason. Rather, it is a call to notice the central problem facing philosophers, and society as a whole. Indeed, Toulmin’s concluding remarks point to what could follow from understanding the modern separation between reason and rationality, and to what philosophy should truly be: philosophy is less of a discipline and more of a ‘calling to put reflective analysis to work as an instrument in handling moral, medical, and political issues’ (214, Toulmin’s emphasis).

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