# Canadian Philosophical Reviews Revue Canadienne de Comptes rendus en Philosophie

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#### Robert John Ackerman

Nietzsche: A Frenzied Look.

Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press

1990. Pp. 205.

US \$24.95. ISBN 0-87023-722-5.

#### **Keith Ansell-Pearson**

Nietzsche contra Rousseau. New York: Cambridge University Press 1992. Pp. 284.

US \$49.95. ISBN 0-521-41173-4.

#### Leslie Paul Thiele

Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of the Soul. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1990. Pp. 233.

US \$35.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-691-07376-7); US \$9.95 (paper: ISBN 0-691-02061-2).

As a 'Darwinian' psychologist with interests in the survival value character traits might have for an organism, Nietzsche was conscious of the pervasive and, he thought, the once and perhaps still necessary role of vice in the general economy of life. A fair portion of what he wanted from his readers when calling on them to think 'ultra-morally' was for them to recognize that deception, cruelty and cupidity have proved their historical utility, and that maybe they should still be assigned a higher value for life than honesty, pity and selflessness — that sometimes life might countermand virtue. Nietzsche used this line of argument to attack the 'idiocy' of Kant's stern vision of civilization gradually propelling the species from rule by amoral inclination toward rule by onerous sense of duty in a kingdom of ends to come, thereby earning for himself notoriety as a moral and cultural nihilist. But how much of that charge is justified? How close to 'must' and 'for certain' is each 'might' and 'perhaps' in his texts?

'Very close, indeed' is the implicit answer to that question of the three works under review, and it might well be the answer most anyone would give when commenting on what might be called 'the indictment side' of Nietzsche's treatment of the problem of civilization. In exchange for the primal goods of equality and freedom and the natural virtue of pity, Rousseau argued, we became unhappy, unequal and vice-ridden under the conventional tutelage of civilization — a position that Nietzsche dissents from in its entirety by rejecting as gauges of worth happiness and equality, and by taxing civilization with having made us a resentful, moral animal with a pathological sense of guilt and a disdain for life's necessities that an artificial, nihilistic facility for piteous response testifies to. The claim that the problem with civilization is that it has made us virtuous does invite readings of Nietzsche as an amoral atavist.

Noting that Nietzsche regards all beliefs as parts of the human organism's economy of life, and so subject to diagnosis but not refutation, Thiele professes a desire to present Nietzsche's own work as the 'fossilized remains' of his experience — and so to 'bridge' the usual gaps between conceptual analysis and biography. Yet there is little biography in his book and even less analysis - 'conceptual comprehension' is eschewed as an aim - so what remains is only the bridge: a lively description of Nietzsche's texts. Still, a clear view does emerge from Thiele's pages of Nietzsche's point of view, if not of his doctrines. Thiele's hero is an amoral narcissist. He is said to be the tragic breaker of all taboos - including that against incest - and the destroyer of morality. His only politics is that of his own complex soul. His task is to become through self-apotheosis a philosopher, saint or artist in heroic isolation from society, its morals and even its systems of belief there seeing the world with a hundred eyes, but all of them his own. The danger of such isolation is that skepticism will falter and the hero will be made mad by lending credence to his contradictory speculations. In this work Nietzsche is made out to be the pure voice of asocial nature protesting repression.

Robert Ackermann's book portrays Nietzsche just as asocial and even more atavistic than does Thiele's. Its thesis is that Nietzsche never abandoned the position of *The Birth of Tragedy* where the reader is summoned to return to the pre-moral outlook of Homeric Greece. Nietzsche was a life-long critic of the 'value table' of 'scientific modernity' and sought its replacement by the 'value table' of 'the Hellenic tragic vision.' His views on women, history, and society all show his commitment to the noble, aristocratic ethos of a community so in accord with nature and its cruel god, Dionysus, that its members felt neither guilt nor remorse. Even Nietzsche's aphoristic style that foreswears argument in favor of 'poetic knowledge' was cultivated as a weapon against two thousand years of civilization and in defense of an ancient wisdom that saw evil in nothing.

Nietzsche did understand that a social reversion to the past was unlikely and so, Ackermann claims, he offered his obscure doctrines of the will to power and eternal return as a formula on how to live as an Hellene that requires no detailed knowledge of ancient Greece. The will to power is simply celebratory of undirected, Dionysian flux. Eternal return is two-fold. Neither component can be stated coherently, for language is inadequate to the task. Nonetheless, one is pessimistic and cosmological, and stems from the intuitions of Heraclitus. The other is optimistic and moral, and grows from *The Birth of Tragedy* where moments of epiphany in aesthetic suspensions of time are said to be where deep minded Hellenes found their justification for living. Eternal return asks us to search out such moments. This formula on how to live as an Hellene fails as a formula on how to live, for it is too individualistic. It fails to 'theorize' social bonds. Yet those who would not emulate Nietzsche's isolation may still be moved by his example, Ackermann concludes, to 'transvalue' present inanities, urged on by a vision of Dionysian, aimless flux.

Keith Ansell-Pearson's study is a very good work that stresses the centrality of social and political themes in Nietzsche's mature writings. Its concluding finding is that, for all their power as a critique of modernity, they are deeply flawed by a dismissal of the distinctively modern concern with legitimacy. What gave intellectual force and historical importance to Rousseau's writings was their steady focus on the illegitimacy of the historical state and on the social contract that would, if ever enacted, make history whole by bringing it to a legitimate end. In contrast Nietzsche never recognized the legitimacy of herd agreements. Any social contract would be for him a sham akin to those arrangements Rousseau protested that allowed fools to govern the wise. It would be a mere certification of the right of the weak and the base to dominate the strong and the noble. Life is on the side of the latter; history is on the side of the former. Any appeal to legitimacy would be a ploy in favor of history, not life. Thus all that Nietzsche could do was to demand obedience to nature in the form of the will to power in order to subjugate and repeal the past, not redeem it. His prophecy of a great politics to come was a Machiavellian vision of that triumphant repeal. It was a vision filled with the spirit of resentment that he claimed to have seen in Rousseau's critiques. It remains a vision of spurious oppositions between freedom and greatness and pity and power that lends itself to totalitarian ends. Above all it shows itself to have been motivated by a longing for the rebirth of a tragic culture so in harmony with a nature shaped by aimless power that its members would not ask for proof of meaning, justice - or legitimacy. Like Ackermann and Thiele, Ansell-Pearson sees Nietzsche as never having moved away from the atavism of his first work.

The obvious point to be made about this joint reading of Nietzsche is that it cannot be right. It leaves out of account what might be called 'the defense side' of his treatment of the problem of civilization. Culture has made us ill, but our sickness is a pregnancy that offers hope of a healthy, superior progeny. Our pre-moral ancestors were healthy beasts who had to be made sickly, moral men for the sake of an experiment by an evolutionary will to power — an experiment destined to end with post (not pre) moral 'overmen.' Civilization is thus the agent of a thwarted nature, not its unmediated opposite. It is 'nature mended.' After The Birth of Tragedy Nietzsche never argued for a reversion to the past. On the contrary he castigated Christians, democrats, and Rousseau for secretly wanting to escape from the cage of culture to an earlier, less stressful stage of life. We are embarked on a species-wide experiment that we can and should do nothing about. We are becoming the civilized animal, and it would be cowardly, decadent and base not to participate willingly in the process that has us in its power. Nor does Nietzsche dismiss the values of modern science. His Joyful Wisdom celebrates them. Likewise, he finds with Zarathustra nothing more precious than honesty - however dangerous it might be. That Christians are dishonest is what damns them. That we have become an animal that can make a promise is a wonderment and a glory. Some of us, it is true, have not adapted to the virtues that civilization requires of us. They are like fish on land trying to breathe through gills. Yet others show signs of being able to cope and even to flourish. What is needed is a separation of the two types.

The not so obvious point to be searched out is why none of the authors considered here gives a nod of recognition to these laic, but providential, themes in Nietzsche's work that make of him an old-fashioned moralist who is a defender of civilization as well as a critic, and who hopes for a redemption of history in novel social developments, not for its erasure through a return to a tragic age. One has to guess the explanation, but a likely cause is the doctrine of eternal return. All three authors see it as crucial to Nietzsche's efforts to justify life, but not one can accept it, at least in whole, as a cosmological tenet that says we shall live again exactly as we now do. Ansell-Pearson rejects this literal reading as absurd on the ground that it is incompatible with choice. He argues that willing the truth of the doctrine really has to do with the affirmation of the 'eternal now' - an affirmation that destroys time by bringing past, present and future together in a 'moment of eternity'. Such moments are salvational epiphanies, and in them, not in some future state, lies whatever justification life has. Ackermann's account is much the same. Eternal return is not endless time but the timeless present of the epiphany-like moment. Although Thiele refuses to discuss the conceptual content of Nietzsche's doctrine, he also writes of it as referring to an 'ecstatic experience.'

If redemption lies in the quasi mystical, eternal now, it does not lie an any providential conclusion to an historical experiment in which an animal is being made fit for culture. A non-literal reading of Zarathustra's message that we will return again thus seems to be a sufficient explanation for why Nietzsche's indictment of history as the annals of a madhouse is recognized, while his defense is ignored. If this explanation is correct, then justice to Nietzsche's positive assessment of culture would require a dismissal of claims that Zarathustra's message is about the timeless present.

There are grounds for doing just that, the first being that Zarathustra says we will return. A second is that Nietzsche shows disdain for eternal moments. In The Genealogy of Morals III-6 he calls the antithesis between the Sabbath of 'a moment' and the usual wheel of Ixion pathological. A third, more important ground is that the motive for reading Nietzsche's doctrine as a thesis without cosmological significance is misguided. A literal reading of it poses no threat to the reality or effectiveness of choice. If the claim that Caesar crossed the Rubicon on a certain date is true. then he had to have crossed that river at that time, but such an inference marks only a formal point of logic and contributes nothing to an explanation for why Caesar behaved as he did. Any such explanation would refer to events and conditions at the time Caesar acted. Present truth of a proposition cannot affect the past. Likewise, if the claim that Caesar will again cross that river in a life to come is now true, then it must be the case that he will cross it, yet the 'must' of this trivial inference has no causal significance. The complete explanation for Caesar's future behavior will lie in the future. A confusion of logical with causal necessity motivates the effort to construe Nietzsche's doctrine in a way that hides his providential reading of history — a reading that still awaits the attention of scholars interested in doing full justice to his far from amoral, and decidedly nonatavistic, wrestlings with the problem of civilization.

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## Theodor W. Adorno

Notes to Literature: Volume One, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen. New York: Columbia University Press 1991. Pp. xv + 284. US \$35.00. ISBN 0-231-06332-6.

Notes to Literature contains some of Adorno's finest pieces of literary and cultural criticism. They were written in the 1950s and published in two volumes, the first in 1958 and the second in 1961. A third volume, not included in this translation, came out in 1965; a fourth volume, compiled after Adorno's death, appeared in 1974 as part of his Gesammelte Schriften. Although six of the seventeen essays collected here have had other translations, none of the earlier attempts matches the precision and elegance of Shierry Weber Nicholsen's renderings. The entire intellectual community is in her debt.

The translation captures the verve and commitment of Adorno's work in the 1950s. Having returned to Frankfurt after a lengthy exile from Nazi Germany, Adorno quickly established himself as an imaginative scholar, a provocative public intellectual, and an outspoken opponent to doing business as usual in education, politics, and the arts. Many of the essays have an occasional character, including seven that originated as radio talks and three that marked the publication of works by Ernst Bloch, Georg Lukács, and Paul Valéry. Hence the book is more accessible than complex monographs such as Negative Dialectics and Aesthetic Theory and closer to the concerns of writers and critics. It should be read as a companion volume to Prisms, the first of Adorno's books to be translated into English, by the same translator and Samuel Weber, in 1967.

Adorno has a fascinating ability to elicit wide-ranging insights into culture and society from specific literary works and events. As he announces in the justly celebrated opening piece on 'The Essay as Form', he rejects the prejudice 'that what is transient and ephemeral is unworthy of philosophy' (10). Instead he seeks an historical truth content in particular texts. Adorno considers the essay form particularly well-suited to challenging the dichotomy between science and art in twentieth-century culture. He uses this form to oppose both logical positivism, with its privileging of supposedly neutral science, and existentialism, with its reverence toward purportedly revelatory poetry. The two camps of philosophy express a deeper cultural rift whose bridging would require a transformation of the West's political and economic order.

Other pieces of particular interest to philosophers include two on the aesthetics of Valéry, one on the literary theory of Lukács, and one on the theatre of Samuel Beckett. The first of these, 'The Artist as Deputy' (98-108), uses Valéry's *Degas Dance Drawing* 'to attack the stubborn antithesis of committed and pure art' (99). Whereas the proponents of political commitment turn art into an impotent means of psychological manipulation, aesthetes such as Valéry see that pure art acquires political significance by pointing toward a truly human society. Adorno's argument here foreshadows his 1962 article on 'Commitment' in the third volume of *Noten zur Literatur*.

A related essay, 'Valéry's Deviations' (137-73), comments on two volumes of prose published in German in 1959. While acknowledging the reactionary aspects of Valéry's aestheticism, Adorno wishes to wrest progressive moments from them. A similarly perverse strategy occurs in several other essays as well. When it works, the reader gains new insight into the text and subject matter under discussion. When the strategy misfires, as it often does, Adorno seems to make silk purses out of sows' ears. In several places, for example, he claims that Valéry anticipates contemporary art's 'tension between emancipation and integration' (138, 142-4, 147-9). Yet the passages quoted from Valéry bear little resemblance to the tortured dialectic of enlightenment in Adorno's own aesthetics, nor do they offer much material for constructing the tension, say, between chance and serialism in music of the 1950s. To read Valéry as anticipating such matters is both forced and unnecessary.

'Extorted Reconciliation' (216-40), Adorno's famous diatribe against Lukács' Realism in Our Time, has appeared earlier as 'Reconciliation under Duress' in the anthology Aesthetics and Politics (NLB 1977). Weber Nicholsen's new translation serves to sharpen Adorno's tone. With the hindsight of the 1990s, readers may wonder what the fuss was all about. The essay's polemic against Marxist-Leninism now seems greatly exaggerated, and its defense of modernism in literature finds little resonance in a postmodern culture. Yet the contested question about how a text has political implications remains as crucial now as it was during the height of the Cold War.

The volume concludes with Trying to Understand Endgame' (241-75). Translated twice before, this essay remains the benchmark against which other philosophical commentaries on Samuel Beckett should be read. It epitomizes Adorno's search for the faint stirring of a new humanity amid the cultural debris of Europe after Auschwitz. Long before postmodernism became fashionable in North American academe, Adorno was dismantling the

myths of instrumental reason and the modern self in search of their social constraints and possibilities. His use of Beckett's drama to such ends is nothing short of brilliant.

This is Adorno the philosopher-critic at his best: not simply reclaiming reactionaries or denouncing fellow progressives, but probing the social significance of a text to which he has an 'elective affinity.' Critical explorations of this sort make *Notes to Literature* an important resource for the entire intellectual community.

Lambert Zuidervaart Calvin College

Arthur S. Berger and Joyce Berger eds.

To Die Or Not To Die: Cross-Disciplinary,
Cultural and Legal Perspectives On The Right
To Choose Death.

New York: Praeger 1990. Pp. xii + 194.
US \$42.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-275-93585-X).

This collection contains some well-written and valuable, if not always original, papers. Those dealing with alien cultures and value systems are especially interesting.

Kwasi Wiredu presents a glimpse of the Akan philosophy of life, death, human capability and destiny that might enlighten many self-professed Christian moralists. Eastern ideas of the chain of being and of 'a religious holism swallowing individual consciousness' are treated from both a Japanese Buddhist-Shinto perspective (Kato) and from an Indian Vedantic-Buddhist perspective (Shanker). In both of these traditions certain kinds of suicide — the Samurai's harakiri or the saint's samadhi are considered most honourable forms of dying (104). In addition to these 'good deaths' permissible for males, there are also in the Hindu tradition the rituals of sati and jauhar in which females, at the loss of husband or protector are expected to commit suicide. Despite their historic acceptance of suicide, neither tradition entertains the notion of a right to die; justification is always in the name of humanitarianism (164).

Parallels between the rituals of *harakiri*, *sati* and *jauhar* and euthanasia in contemporary society may be easily drawn. The attending physician in a Japanese hospital or hospice can be seen as the heir of bushido, analogous to the *kaishaku* who stands ready to shorten the samurai's death agony by swift decapitation. Even the apparently inhumane rituals of *sati* and *jauhar* are supposedly exercised in order to spare the female from starvation, 'dishon-

our', mutilation and/or worse. The fact that sati, as ever, is often precipitated by relatives in order to retain property that would have accrued to the wife suggests a very different consideration relevant to contemporary debate. Despite ages of abuse of the custom, Shanker argues passionately that a society that could endorse ritual suicide for females should be even more prepared to legalize humane euthanasia.

The social customs cited are all of active euthanasia. The US contributors all too often cringe from the thought of deliverance, wishing to dissociate passive euthanasia (sitting back and letting people die) altogether from what is frequently a more humane alternative. This casuistic distinction seems to be peculiarly associated with the US.

European attitudes also differ from those in the US. Barrington even observes that in the UK, although the law 'takes no cognizance of euthanasia,' the idea of euthanasia is more popular than that of self-deliverance and that: 'Doctors who discretely practi[c]e euthanasia usually carry their discretion to the point of not consulting the patient' (87). It remains, however, that euthanasia is still deemed as simple homicide — though in reality rarely treated as such — and legal steps have even been taken against publications designed to acquaint people with efficient modes of deliverance (431).

It is the Dutch experience that will excite most attention, not least from critics of euthanasia. Although euthanasia is contrary to the Criminal Code, it is practised almost openly and may even be considered legalized in case law. The graceful exits of Maria van Dyke and Marie Barendregt, together with the sensible guidelines arising from the case of the latter's physician, Dr. Schoonheim, epitomize the civilized attitude of the Dutch. Active euthanasia is preferred to passive euthanasia, because the latter 'would not address the issue of unbearable pain' and because it represents such extreme action it will be 'more controlled than passive euthanasia' (125).

The treatment of the Dutch attitude is marred only by the attempt of the US commentator to draw parallels between the approach of a highly civilized country — where physicians are universally respected for their good faith, where medical malpractice suits are almost unknown and where reasonableness reaches even into legal practice — with that of a totally litigious environment dedicated only to ambulance-chasing and where moralists almost universally mistake ethics with law and a gerrymandered Constitution.

Other low points of the collection, apart from a worthless commentary on the *Shari'ah*, are also contributed by US authors.

McCartney's attempt to discover a right to die or a moral equivalent thereto in the Catholic and Judaic traditions proves only that, whether it be called casuistry or pilpul, human ingenuity can make supposed holy writ justify just about anything. McC blithely identifies a permanently comatose condition as a terminal illness and accepts uncritically a Jewish suggestion intended to solve the problem of the difference between withholding and withdrawing treatment, that a patient 'be put on a respirator run by batteries so that when the batteries run down a new decision can be made' (19). As if

somehow a *new* treatment were thereby involved and as if somehow this made a difference. But such absurdities appeal only to the Thurgood Marshall school of moral investigation, which says: 'I know what decision I want, now go out and find some reasons'.

Lutz does provide some interesting thoughts on withholding versus withdrawing treatment and extraordinary versus ordinary treatments, but her '[Aristotelian] approach that arises from experience' (26) fails to convince that moral principles are merely secondary. No matter how complex a problem may be, a moral solution must always be underwritten by adequate moral imperatives. Or is it a sign of hopelessly obsolete thinking to believe that an 'ought' cannot be derived from an 'is'?

The other major criticism of the US contributions is that they continue the tradition of wishful thinking. 'By addressing such issues [as increased costs and survival rates] at an appropriate time,' opines Schapira (3), 'the use of expensive medical care in the pursuit of prolonging a patient's life would be averted.' Although there is much talk of patient denial, beliefs and values, the fact that medication might reduce the capacity for judgment, family grief or guilt, fear of legal liability, early education and living wills, palliation and caring rather than curing, so much is an exercise attempting to demonstrate that the intuitively correct judgment is also that which would reduce costs. More Thurgood Marshall.

This collection has its drawbacks; nonetheless, it should prove interesting and informative to the novice and the advanced student of medical ethics alike.

## Paul Langham

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## Radu J. Bogdan ed.

Mind and Common Sense: Philosophical Essays on Commonsense Psychology. New York: Cambridge University Press 1991. Pp. x + 208. US \$44.50. ISBN 0-521-40201-8.

#### John D. Greenwood ed.

The Future of Folk Psychology: Intentionality and Cognitive Science.

New York: Cambridge University Press 1991.

Pp. x + 293.

US \$44.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-40335-9);

US \$12.95 (paper: ISBN 0-521-40898-9).

The Churchlands should be pleased with the attention their eliminative materialism (EM) has won: these two volumes are mere samples of the hue and cry against their idea that folk-psychology (FP) may go the way of alchemy and astrology into the dustbin of science history. But are they chagrined that nobody seems to believe them? Here we see many of the big stars of philosophy of mind, and other bright lights, allied against them. Aside from the essay, 'Folk psychology and the explanation of human behavior', by Paul Churchland, which appears in both volumes (but with an extra section in the Greenwood volume (G)), only two arguments are ever raised in their support: A. Rosenberg's, in the Bogdan collection (B), against the charge that EMists commit 'cognitive suicide', by believing that there are no beliefs; and that of W. Ramsey, S. Stich, and J. Garon in G to the conclusion that if brains are connectionist devices, then there are no such things as beliefs (at least not on the Fodorian model, as D. Dennett and J. Heil point out). Everyone else in the nine essays in B and the twelve in G think FP is here to stay. So death and taxes are not alone among cosmic certainties! Or so say the majority of the major players. But when the Churchlands see their intellectual child getting the same reception that Quine's smearing of the analytic-synthetic distinction got in 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism', a grin, not chagrin, is in order.

Though only the one uncharacteristically understated Churchlandish essay appears in both B and G, the Churchlands' presence is felt throughout both as their essays and books which feature EM come under fire individually and collectively. Stich also comes in for some criticism, both with and without his cohorts, for his destructive critiques of FP. But Fodor is right when he says in his 'Fodor's guide to mental representation: the intelligent auntie's vade-mecum', reprinted in G, that Stich's syntactic theory of the mind has much more in common with realism about propositional attitudes than with EM; his syntactic theory takes mental states to be real, but because of scepticism about the semantics of such states, denies that there are beliefs. In the essay Stich writes with Ramsey and Garon, a connectionist antecedent

yields a conditional reinforcement of this scepticism via the consequent that 'there are no discrete, semantically interpretable states that play a causal role in some cognitive episodes but not others ... propositional attitudes, like caloric and phlogiston, do not exist' (G 116). Now there's the characteristic battle-cry of EM! J. Heil, D. Dennett, and T. Horgan paired with J. Woodward respond with effective counter-attacks in subsequent papers in G.

Both books are a good read, but G is better than B. In B everyone talks past everyone else, and disagreements do not lead to actual engagement between adversaries. Perhaps because G is the result of a conference, later essays are full of commentary on earlier ones, which makes a coherent book out of the collection. The methodological solipsism (so to speak) of the essays in B is exacerbated by the fact that three of its nine essays make only tangential contact with the battlefront between EM and FP: R. Cummins', Adam Morton's, and C. McGinn's (more about these anon). Greenwood's introductory essay does a nicer job than Bogdan's in setting out the issues, providing the historical context, and making salient points about the debate. Add to all this the 85 extra pages in G, and you get a clear winner.

Both editors take the opportunity to include a substantive essay of their own. Greenwood tries to pry apart the descriptive and the explanatory roles of theory, arguing that abandonment of FP explanations would not require giving up beliefs and desires as well, just as we may give up, say, the theory of evolution while retaining dinosaurs and dogs. So Greenwood must argue that beliefs are more like dogs and dinosaurs than like witches or caloric: 'self-knowledge of beliefs, emotions, and so forth' (81) is cited. But this preaches only to the converted. What is needed is the inter-theoretical necessity or usefulness of the ontology in question. Dogs may be referenced by a host of theories old and new in mechanics, optics, biology, psychology, and so on. Greenwood does provide something like the same inter-theoretic usefulness of intentional states, although entirely within the psychological domain - but is this enough to make the case? Bogdan provides a 45-page neo-quasi-Wittgensteinian picture of FP which is as well focused as the later works of the master himself, but which has a far more pat ending than anything he himself would have tolerated: FP is really the practice of 'commonsense-making'; 'the very conditions of the practice guarantee that the [FP] concepts apply' so FP 'cannot possibly be an empirical theory of anything' (B 205). Such industrial-strength modality is suspicious.

McGinn's very interesting essay (in B) carries the banner raised by T. Nagel under which marshall those who intuit that though materialism is true we cannot hope to understand how. Well, materialists might admit that they do not yet completely understand how, even if they haven't embraced despair, and so McGinn's sort of exercise may be of interest to all. He deserves praise for his honest, dogged pursuit of his intuitions, for he owns that they have lately come into conflict. His earlier work essayed a positive theory of content for mental states, and 'what fixes content fixes qualia' (B 76), so it would seem that we can explain why mental states have the phenomenological properties that they do. However, McGinn has denied that we can have

such an explanation, and to resolve the paradox he resorts to more carefully drawing the line between what it is we can, and what it is we cannot, understand about the mind. It seems that McGinn is on the verge of a cognitive breakthrough of the sort reminiscent of a one-liner from William Blake concerning persistence and wisdom. This is a good essay for both sympathizers and critics of the Nagelian idea. But it is not about FP or EM. Cummins' essay (also in B) is a very pretty critique of the method of thought experimentation about beliefs, but is also neutral with respect to the FP-EM fight. Morton (in B) leaps from some reflections about the dynamics (qualitative mechanics) of complicated systems like the brain to the admittedly speculative conclusion that FP is, and will one day be recognized as, an aged, venerable example of the new-fangled mechanics. An interesting prophecy, but too speculative to be convincing. More importantly, does it miss the point?

Time for a reality check. The EM argument is that FP is a theory, and like all theories a possible target for replacement by a better theory in the same domain, which new theory, if it is incommensurable with FP, mandates its (so-called) elimination; so given FP's shortcomings and the promise of neuroscience, its elimination is a live possibility, intriguing to some and hideous to others. Many try to nip this in the bud by denying that FP is a theory, while others argue that it is a theory. The first unsatisfying aspect of the EM-FP battle is that so few adequately discuss theoryhood. Second, many anti-EMists argue that FP will not be replaced — but a careful reading of the. Churchlandish corpus and that of their forebears show that no respectable EMist deals simply in prophecy: EM says FP is eliminable, not that it will be eliminated. Third, EM is concerned with the eliminability of FP as a scientific theory, not with its eliminability in the lives of the folk (though the folk often do dabble in the user-friendly bits of science). Fourth, there is more to FP than propositional (belief-desire-action) psychology: for example, we may explain a student's failure in terms of laziness, carelessness, emotional distress, ..., or sheer stupidity. Attention to these details shows EM to be a much more modest and clearly defined target than it is generally taken to be (J. Foss, 'A materialist's misgivings about eliminative materialism', in David Copp and J.J. MacIntosh, eds., New Essays In The Philosophy Of Mind, 1985 Supplementary Volume of the Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 105-33). Thus seen, EM is less worthy of drawing the fire of big guns — were it not that it portrays itself as a defense of materialism and a solution to the problem of mind, rather than a mere forecast possibility.

All our writers miss some of these aspects of EM, and some ignore them all. K. Wilkes (in B) denies that FP is a theory on a number of grounds, notably that it is used to 'rule, warn, woo, ...' (the list goes on for lines), and that the generalities of FP 'depend entirely upon the *ceteris paribus* — sometime *ceteris absentibus* — clauses which are indeterminate, unspecific, highly context dependent, and which do all the work' (B 149-50). She ignores the facts, and P. Churchland's pointing out of them in the same volume, which argue that these characteristics of FP are common to many other theories. We use folk-physics to walk, catch, carry, cool porridge, ...; all its laws are

shot through with ceteris paribus clauses: you can walk up a hill, but only if it is not covered with oil, and you're not heading into a high wind, and .... The same holds true for non-folk theories: consider the use of physics in a rocket launch, and the countless things which must be present or absent for the launch to come off. Not that Wilkes must be wrong, but more argument is called for (what is it about inter-personal use that separates FP from the theoretical herd?). Her examples of FP are from propositional attitude psychology, but if she had considered such platitudes as that people who stay up too long become sleepy and unable to concentrate, the lawlikeness of FP could be addressed in a stronger, simpler, more intuitive form (as could the implausibility of such platitudes being wholly incorrect). Finally, Wilkes argues that 'commonsense and scientific psychology do and must coexist' (B 145). Although she promises not to give us 'a potted history of psychology' (144), she nevertheless argues her case be presenting a history of psychology in a similarly small compass, designed to show that FP has played a necessary role for 'millennia' (B 146) and will continue to do so, while scientific psychology is a quite independent newcomer. The history itself may be questioned. Homer, e.g., is cited as an adept of our eternal FP, but his psychology, wherein the gods directly motivate and sometimes conspire with people, is quite different from that of the folk hereabouts. And Fodor, a notable proponent of a school of scientific psychology, is not independent of FP inasmuch as he thinks there really are beliefs encoded in people's heads. But aside from questioning the history, Wilkes' argument is simply not to the point, for EM does not say that the folk will abandon FP, but rather that it is possible that scientific psychology may one day be both superior to and incommensurable with FP.

Wilkes is certainly not alone in not correctly sizing up the opponent: Morton, Bogdan, R. McDonough (G), and J. Margolis (G) provide company. To be evenhanded, I should detail the virtues of these essays as well, but space does not permit. Let me instead simply note that they are well worth reading, and go on to note in similarly clipped form the other attractions.

S. Blackburn's essay in G shows how fruitful cross-classifications (consider temperature and atomic structure) are the normal business of physics (still the paradigm science), and argues this disarms the Churchland position that since the categories of FP will not reduce to (will be incommensurable with) those of the presumedly better future neuroscience, they must be eliminated. J. Rosenberg provides a careful, penetrating reply.

J. Bennett provides two closely related essays, one in B and one in G, and it would appear that the latter is the successor to the former. This essay, especially, provides what is today rare entertainment: an exercise in philosophical analysis. These days, analysis is rarely done outside the privacy of one's own home. But here is Bennett publicly trying out a series of necessary conditions (for goodness sakes!) for the ascription of intentionality. In the end he provides something like a conceptual groundwork for a position admittedly much like Dennett's, thus displaying both rhyme and reason. Maybe my greying beard signals a phase apt for returning to the past, but I found

Bennett's solid march through the FP territory, with its en passant swipes at familiar positions, even though it never reaches the EM line, not only illuminating, but a refreshing break from scrying the future of psychological science.

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#### Allen Buchanan

Secession: The Morality of Political Divorce from Fort Sumter to Lithuania and Quebec. Boulder: Westview Press 1991. I74pp + xvi. US \$38.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-8133-1132-2); US \$14.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8133-1133-0).

In this concise and well-written book, Allen Buchanan surveys grounds given for secession, e.g., by Quebec independentists or provinces of the erstwhile Soviet Union, rationally reconstructing and evaluating their arguments. Having reviewed standard counter-secessionist arguments, he concludes that secession may sometimes be morally justified for one or more of several reasons; some justifications, though, are stronger than others. A penultimate chapter of the book advocates that constitutions lay down conditions under which secession is justified and examines some of the problems confronting such a task.

The normative basis of Buchanan's prescriptions is liberal individualism, of the robust variety defended, for instance, by Will Kymlicka, wherein collective rights are recognized provided their exercise is required to promote the goods of individuals. The methodology of the book abstracts from the details of political debates to distil a list of analytically distinct putative grounds for secession, namely: (1) to protect the liberty of those who want to secede; (2) to promote diversity; (3) to avoid the 'liberal paradoxes' of multiculturalism (by promoting relative cultural homogeneity of states); (4) to dismantle unions that have become superfluous; (5) to honour an understood right to exit from a union as a condition for entry into it; (6) to avoid distributions that systematically discriminate; (7) to promote economic efficiency; (8) to recognize a right to national self-determination; (9) to preserve a national culture; (10) to permit self-defence; (11) to rectify past injustices; and (12) to recognize the right of secession as a condition for consent to a union.

Given the situation of Quebec, Canadian political theorists cannot but find this book interesting and useful. It would make a good text in a graduate or

senior undergraduate course that strives to apply solid political philosophy to our pressing and complex current situation. Indeed, Buchanan makes many references to Quebec/Canada, all of which are apt. (I do confess, though, to being put off by occasional announcements that his is 'the first' or 'the only thorough' treatment of topics such as whether to grant special powers to restrict individual rights as a way of preserving union [59], topics which have received so much attention in countries like Canada where they are live issues. What Buchanan means is that such topics have not received sufficient attention among U.S. theorists writing in his political-philosophical tradition.)

Of Buchanan's list of secessionist grounds, (8) and (9) are those most often appealed to by Quebec separatists. He concludes that appeals to a right to national self-determination are 'placeholders' for more philosophically fundamental grounds, chief of which in the case of Quebec is preservation of its dominant franco-quebec culture. Buchanan considers this a strong ground, not just for Kymlicka's reason that such preservation is important to provide individuals with options but also because cultural membership is part of the content of what they consider a good life. However, Buchanan regards this as grounds for providing individuals with 'some culture or other' rather than with any particular culture, since some cultures are illiberal and oppressive. For this reason, too, he defends a 'presumption' against secession on cultural grounds, which could only be justified if there were no ways to preserve a culture without it (52ff.).

This conclusion, which clearly does have implications for debates over Quebec independence, seems to me to strain Buchanan's individualist normative basis and his methodology. Just as he pushes Kymlicka's individualist defence of group rights in a more collectivist direction, so Buchanan's analysis can be pushed. Part of conceiving one's culture as implicated in the content of a good life is wishing this culture (and not just some culture or other) to flourish beyond its effects on one's life. This creates a kind of paradox for the individualist defender of cultural rights analogous to that for ethical theorists for whom it is problematic whether, after people's deaths, there is a moral obligation to honour promises made to them.

One feature of Buchanan's methodology relevant here is his analysis of grounds for secession into discrete arguments. This allows him to consider appeal to national self-determination as nothing but a placeholder. An alternative is to see such appeal as an encapsulation or a way of articulating a unified political-cultural viewpoint among several of the other grounds he lists, perhaps typically (2), (6) and (9), but in the Quebec case also (11). Considering such grounds in an integrated way does not escape the problem Buchanan raises about oppressive dimensions of a culture, but it might shift the presumptive weight such that the onus falls on the anti-secessionist to show that a presumption in favour of independence is outweighed by other considerations, rather than on the secessionist to show that no way of advancing valued goals can be found short of secession.

Then again, a more methodologically holistic approach might *not* argue to this conclusion, depending on the specific complexities of a case at hand. This suggests a second limitation of Buchanan's methodology, which, in surveying real-life situations, largely confines itself to identifying ideal-typical justificatory arguments. This leads to more categorical conclusions on Buchanan's part about such things as where burdens of proof lie or about relative weights among the 12 arguments he has identified than an approach more attuned to historical, social and political specifics might yield.

To describe these features as 'strains' on the analyses Buchanan offers, rather than as proofs against his approach, is to acknowledge the usefulness of this work for identifying problems and offering hypotheses. An alternative to what was called above Buchanan's robust individualism is the liberal-democratic communitarianism deployed among others by Charles Taylor (also explicitly applied to by him to Canada/Quebec). Contextual analysis, sensitive to the pervasive and vexing complexities of such actual situations of multi-nation states and other places where the topic of secession is a live one exhibits points of potential convergence of these two approaches. Also, where the approaches diverge, as where they converge, application to current macro political problems at once illustrates both the usefulness and the tentativeness of such applied political philosophy.

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#### Terrell Carver, ed.

The Cambridge Companion to Marx. New York: Cambridge University Press 1992. Pp. xiii + 355. US \$59.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-36625-9);

US \$17.95 (paper: ISBN 0-521-36694-1).

It may be a radical non-sequitur to infer the refutation of historical materialism from the collapse of Soviet regimes in Eastern Europe, but such is the fashionable fallacy of the times. Though a fallacy widely disseminated even by philosophers — Richard Rorty, for example, has recently advised us that we must 'free ourselves from Marxist vocabulary in "the wake of the event of 1989 and 1991" (Richard Rorty, 'For a More Banal Politics', \*Harper's Review\*, May 1992, 16-21 [reprinted from \*The Yale Review\* Spring issue 1992]) — there is surely some cause for reflection as the triumphal capitalist system we are left with continues to hurry us along a path of ecological and social breakdown. The volume under review provides us, in contrast, with an almost

serene series of academic papers on well-travelled terrains of Marxian thought, and avows from the outset its willingness to 'examine thoughts from the past' so as to understand the present more deeply (Carver, 1-3).

The collection consists of thirteen articles written specially for this volume by ten British and three American philosophers and political theorists who share a concern to clarify Marxian thought. Their topics are diverse and essentially unconnected. They cover, in turn (these are summative descriptions, not titles), the history and context of the development of Marxist theory (Terrell Carver and Paul Thomas in separate articles), an overview of Marx's social and political theory (Richard W. Miller), the idea of a Marxian philosophy of science (James Farr), Marx's 'possibilist' philosophy of history (Terence Ball), Marxism and moral philosophy (Jeffrey Reiman), Marx and radical democracy (Alan Gilbert), reproduction analysis and historical materialism (Susan Himmelweit and Jeff Hearn in separate articles), aesthetic theory and creative freedom in Marxian thought (William Adams), the meaning of dialectical contradiction (Lawrence Wilde), Marx's concept of society as an Aristotelian substance (Scott Meikle), and the sacred-secular antithesis in Marxian and religious thought (Denys Turner).

With such a wide selection of topics by different authors with different perspectives, it is difficult to summarize or thematize this volume. But we can begin to tell the overall shape of what is present here by recognizing what is not - and in this case the problems which are left out of the book's discussion tell us much about this collection and about the state of Marxian thought today. As is the wont of philosophy, the analysis looks backwards to what has been discursively established, not forwards to what has not. Accordingly, nothing is said here about the most fundamental problems posed to Marxian thought by post-Marx changes of the world: in particular, the breakdown of the natural environment under human numbers and technologies, the militarization of economic and political structures of the world's most dominant and most undeveloped societies, the now pervasive hold of corporate-owned electronic media over human consciousness, and the transition from nation-state economies to a global, multinational system. These structural transformations of the human condition should be of deep interest to a philosophical Marxism because they confront some of the most basic principles of historical materialism - that mankind's project and necessity is to subjugate nature to human control and deployment without remainder, that development of productive not destructive forces is the ultimate determiner of modern social formations, that human consciousness is in an irreducible, dialectic relation of opposition to ruling ideologies of containment and repression, and that the 'battle of democracy' can be waged and won by the organized powers of the producer classes. But all of these themal principles of Marxism seem challenged by deep structural patterns of ecological collapse, military domination of technological and political development, the flattening of human consciousness into a controlled circuit of corporate-sponsored images, and the insulation of capital from electoral

and regulatory limitation by a capitalist regime where investment and social wealth can be relocated across the world at the speed of an electrical signal.

Can dialectical reason save us from the systematic abolition of diversity and opposition which seems to be at work here? One of the most interesting topics of this book's inquiry concerns the meaning of dialectical 'contradiction' - long a bugbear for Anglo-analytic philosophers, who widely reject talk of 'the unity of contradictories' as incoherent. Nonetheless, many of the essays in this collection make central use of the idea of contradiction, and all of them in a way which is coherent. Lawrence Wilde's essay, 'Logic, Dialectic and Contradiction' (275-96), deals with the concept most explicitly. He charts a careful path of explanation, working from Aristotle's logical laws of identity, non-contradiction and the excluded middle through Hegel's historic break from these laws in The Science of Logic to Marx's little known and anti-Hegelian idea of 'essential contradiction'. An essential contradiction is a contradiction between essences which cannot be understood in the Hegelian way as an integrated 'unity of opposites'. The ultimate example of such an essential contradiction, for Marx, is between the human and the inhuman. The essence of the human is to be consciously self-governed, while the essence of the inhuman is to be dictated to from without. The capitalist commodity embodies this contradiction for Marx by being at once a conscious use-value for humanity and at the same time an exchange-value for capital, which employs humanity only as an instrument to expand itself by money profit. The contradiction here is between final goals or ends sought. Since these are conceived as in ultimate conflict, they cannot in Marx's view be overcome until the expansion of capital as the goal of social production is abolished and humanity's intrinsic end becomes the purpose of production (i.e., the fulfilment of human needs and capacities). This view does not, Wilde argues, entail a 'new logic', because it does not entail any acceptance of formal contradictions such as A = not-A. Rather it refers to a contradiction between final goals, the human and the capitalist, within society's process of development. To obliterate this sense of contradiction, concludes Wilde, is to 'destroy Marx's humanist philosophy and blunt the critical-revolutionary edge of his approach' (294). We may be able to understand from this how at least some of the great changes in the post-Marxian world referred to earlier might be changes which can be conceptualized in terms of the 'essential contradiction' Marx emphasizes.

This theme is also the main concern of Scott Meikle's article, 'The Metaphysics of Substance in Marx' (296-319). Meikle builds a painstaking case for Marx understanding society as an Aristotelian substance, i.e., something which has an intrinsic goal which defines it as what it is. But, he argues, two 'natures' occupy capitalist society, one whose aim is the pursuit of ever more capitalist profit or exchange-value, and the other whose aim is to 'fulfil humanity's needs by the exercise of human capacities' (308). These conflict systematically — for example, in 'adulteration, planned obsolescence and other forms of deliberate defectiveness' (315) and the ultimate point of Marxism is to resolve this contradiction of goals on the side of humanity.

Yet again, this theme of a contradiction of goals at the heart of our society's process is a fundamental concern of William Adams' 'Aesthetics: Liberating the Senses' (246-75). On the one hand 'at the very center of Marxism is an extraordinary emphasis on human creativity and creation' (Raymond Williams' forequote, 246). On the other hand, capitalism promotes a 'society of withered sensibilities' (253), where all of life's possibilities are channelled into the production of commodities for profit. What aesthetics does for humanity, according to the Marxian view explained by Adams, is to liberate us in one way or another from these trammels of commodity containment by a 'negative hermeneutic' of unmasking the ways in which cultural artifacts condition us into acceptance of the given power relations (Fredric Jameson, 261-3), by art's 'subversive power' which breaks open a new dimension of experience beyond and negating the established order (Herbert Marcuse, 265-7), or by an aesthetic revolutionizing of work so that all men become artists in a realm of freedom beyond confinement by division of labour (Karl Marx's early view, which Adams is correct to observe changes into a later Marxian pessimism which locates freedom outside of necessary labour, 267-74).

The concept of contradiction also ungirds Denys Turner's 'Religion: Illusions and Liberation' (320-37); only here it is the opposition between the 'text' of ideology (e.g., the liberative egalitarianism of a celibate priest's sermon) and the 'context' in which it is uttered (e.g., a patriarchal hierarchy of rule allied with capital in the domination of women and the poor). In such cases, the discourse can be perfectly coherent within itself, but in evident contradiction with the social reality within which it is spoken. Marx's response is thus to reject religious talk as 'illusory' and an 'opium', whereas the religious response is to reject the real world as 'fallen' and regard the transcendant realm of God alone as ultimately real. Is there a possibility of reconciliation of these contradictory views? Liberation theology has attempted such a synthesis in a Christianity which employs Marxian analysis in understanding institutionalized sin. Turner holds that Marx 'rejected the terms of the choice itself (337). That is, he sought to overcome 'the sacred-secular antithesis' by repudiating both the other-worldly transcendence of religious ideology and the God-negating materialism of Feuerbach. The implications of this solution for a Marxian Christianity are not clear, but Turner indicates some optimism on the coherence of the possibility.

The remainder of the essays in this collection are less interesting because they seem to proffer little in the way of new perspective or problematic. They are, however, all non-opaque, consistently well-informed and, in several cases, command the heights of clear overview explanation. For example, Richard Miller's well-reasoned exposition of Marx's position on such matters as class, state and revolution (55-105), Terence Ball's tonically clear explanation of the master-slave dialectic in Hegel's and Marx's philosophy of history (see especially pp. 125-7) and Jeffrey Reiman's critique of Kantian, contractarian and utilitarian moral theories as 'idealizations of capitalist exchange relations' (161-6), are English-speaking Marxian thought at its

best. They are shorn of the indirection and prolixity of continental Marxism, on the one hand, yet free of the absurd distortions of Marx's thought which have typically characterized Anglo-American views of Marx's theory in the mainstream academy. On the whole, this is a solid and useful book for introducing students and non-specialists to the learned and clear-thinking discourse which has come to characterize much scholarly Marxian inquiry in the closing decades of the twentieth century.

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### **Stanley Cavell**

Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1991. Pp. xxxix + 151. US \$8.95. ISBN 0-226-09821-4.

This book consists of Stanley Cavell's three Carus lectures now augmented by a preface, introduction and appendices almost as long as the lectures themselves. The occasion of these lectures, namely their presentation to the academic profession of philosophy, provides a continuing - sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit - theme for them. Cavell has taken the occasion as an opportunity to reflect on his relation to what has been called philosophy. This reflection involves situating his readings of certain central texts principally of Emerson, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Wittgenstein - against texts which are generally acknowledged to be in the mainstream of academic philosophy, here represented by works of Rawls and Kripke. The titles of the individual lectures give some idea of their contents: 'Aversive Thinking: Emersonian Representations in Heidegger and Nietzsche', 'The Argument of the Ordinary: Scenes of Instruction in Wittgenstein and in Kripke', and 'The Conversation of Justice: Rawls and the Drama of Consent'. As is usual in Cavell's work, a great many issues and texts are discussed which may seem very disparate - and yet, I would argue that, for the attentive reader, Cavell exemplifies what Nietzsche claims is alone fitting for a philosopher, a lack of isolated acts. In these lectures he deals with: moral philosophy and the place in it for what he calls 'Emersonian perfectionism'; Emerson as a philosopher; the relation of Nietzsche to Emerson; Wittgenstein and his relation to skepticism including Kripke's account of that relation; Eric Rohmer's film of Kleist's The Marquise of O; the film genre Cavell calls 'the comedy of

remarriage'; Ibsen's A Doll's House; John Rawls' critique of perfectionism as a principle of justice; and much, much, more. In the brief compass of this review, I shall not attempt to argue for the unity of the philosophical outlook within which these issues and texts are intricately related. Here, I shall neglect most of these topics including the very important discussion of Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein and skepticism, in order to concentrate on Emersonian perfectionism and its relation to the work of John Rawls.

Part of Cavell's conception of his task in these lectures is to 'recommend Emerson' — Emerson as a philosopher; Cavell insists on this term — to the attention of the already attained philosophical community in the hope of turning that community toward another, attainable, condition. He makes this recommendation in the awareness that it will, to many, seem incredible. Cavell's strategy is to meditate on certain moments in Emerson's texts (here especially 'The American Scholar', 'Self-reliance', and 'Experience') to read them seriously, that is interpretively (assuming both that we are to take their surfaces seriously, and that their surfaces are the surfaces of something.) Further, he traces the relationship of these moments to moments in texts of Heidegger (What is Called Thinking?) and Nietzsche (Schopenhauer as Educator). The importance of Emerson to Nietzsche was, of course, well-attested by Nietzsche himself, and Nietzsche's importance for Heidegger is obvious. Hence the lines of affinity which Cavell notes have a certain historical plausibility. More importantly, if his reading is correct they have a philosophical plausibility, though, for those who are skeptical about the status of Heidegger and Nietzsche as philosophers, such affinity will not in itself justify the name of philosopher for Emerson. The crucial issue here is Emersonian perfectionism, Timothy Gould has described Cavell's characterization of this perfectionism as 'the possibility of self-transformation according to an ideal that is internal to the self's constitution rather than one that comes from without.' The relevance of this characterization to the various projects of Heidegger and Nietzsche is clear. Why, however, does Cavell concern himself with this perfectionism?

It is at this point important to turn to the discussion of Rawls. In A Theory of Justice, Rawls rejects what he calls the principle of perfection (though he considers it in several different forms). As an exemplar of the most extreme form of perfectionism, Rawls presents a few lines of Nietzsche. Since these lines are a virtual transcription of Emerson, it might appear that Emersonian perfectionism is somehow inconsistent with justice or at least inconsistent with Rawls' view of justice as fairness. Moreover, this is the old charge against Emerson and against perfectionism generally — that it is antinomian, unjust. Cavell writes 'if the perfectionist position I adumbrate is incompatible with this attention of and to justice, the position is morally worthless' (xx). Hence, Cavell conceives his task to be to articulate a perfectionism that is not only compatible with, but is required by, a democratic, just (or just enough) society. It is a genuine question for him as to whether anything he wishes to assert, or to read Emerson as asserting, is denied by Rawls. Let me suggest one way of accommodating Cavell within the structure

of Rawls view, and say why the accommodation doesn't fully work. One might say that what Rawls rejects is a teleological reading of a principle of perfection as either (1) the fundamental principle of justice, or (2) a principle of distributive justice constrained by a more basic principle of equal liberty. Since Cavell rejects the notion that his perfectionism is a teleological theory. indeed that it is a competing moral theory at all (he calls it (2) 'a dimension or tradition of the moral life') and he requires that perfectionism be constrained by justice, there is no disagreement. Rawls makes room for the dimension of moral life with which Cavell is here concerned in, for example, his discussion of the good for individuals, the 'Aristotelian Principle', self-respect and excellence, and perhaps in supererogation. Then one might add that there is a disagreement between them about the proper reading of Nietzsche (also of Emerson) but that it is not a substantive disagreement about perfectionism. While in the long run, some such accommodation might be worked out. I don't think it can be reached quite this quickly. Paradoxically, this is because Cavell is a more careful reader of Rawls than many of those who have either accepted or rejected features of Rawls theory. He attends closely to the rhetoric of Rawls' text (involving what I have elsewhere called 'the argument to the original position) and he raises questions (for example, about our judgments of how well our actual society conforms to the justice of ideal theory, or about why I take a interest in justice at all) at the exact place where Rawls allows for the ultimately inescapable element of intuition. Cavell's important book could, in addition to revising our judgment of Emerson, give us a deeper reading of Rawls by locating the implicit (and explicit) view of the self in his work - the very issue around which Emersonian perfectionism centers.

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Fraser Cowley
Metaphysical Delusion.
Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books 1991. Pp. 200.
US \$29.95. ISBN 0-87975-669-1.

Metaphysics has been dogged by doubts about its legitimacy as a field of inquiry throughout the twentieth century. But the misgivings Cowley expresses in *Metaphysical Delusion*, unlike those of the positivists, do not turn on the purported meaninglessness of metaphysical problems. Rather, in a manner reminiscent of some ordinary language philosophers, he claims that metaphysical problems have simple, obvious, and acceptable solutions, so

that although they are meaningful, they hardly deserve to be called problems. The overwhelming majority of philosophers who reject these solutions and opt instead for those unnecessarily abstract and extravagant metaphysical theories which give rise to apparently interminable debate are making mountains out of metaphysical molehills. Cowley claims, for example, that we know there are persons; hence both dualism and physicalism are false. We know there are ordinary material objects; so both idealism and those reductive theories which grant existence to atoms but not to objects such as rocks and trees are equally mistaken. Further, since these metaphysical theories run counter to knowledge that is continually reinforced as a result of our interactions with mundane reality, their espousal is essentially a modern act of faith which fills the psychological void that resulted from the abandonment of religious faith. Even supposedly tough minded metaphysical views such as nominalism and physicalism are held on the basis of something akin to religious faith.

Cowley's criticisms of metaphysical theories take a number of different forms, but the central method involves combining a kind of transcendental argument with a *reductio* to show that metaphysical theories are self-refuting. Cowley claims that certain preconditions such as the existence of persons, pens, and books must be met if there are to be any theories, metaphysical or otherwise. Any theory which implies that such things do not exist refutes itself by its very existence. The following is a brief example of this method; 'Berkeley was of course a person, a man of flesh and blood, and could not have written a word had he not been. It follows that his professed immaterialism is false. But likewise any physicalist is of course a person and it is as such that he addresses us. It follows that physicalism is false' (75).

Now as Cowley recognizes none of this is terribly new, and there exists a well rehearsed move to counter this sort of attack, which holds that metaphysical theories in fact do not have the implications that are imputed to them. It does not follow from Berkeley's theory that there are no rocks or books; neither dualism nor physicalism denies that there are persons. Rather, terms such as 'rock', 'book', and 'person' mean something different in the language of idealism than they do in the language of common sense realism. Meaning is relative to a language, which in turn is the expression of, or in some versions of the doctrine identical to, a conceptual framework. Cowley refers to this related set of claims as linguistic transcendentalism and points to Quine as its most prominent proponent. Since the arguments he advances against metaphysical theories can be turned aside by appeals that derive their plausibility from linguistic transcendentalism, Cowley devotes most of the second half of the book to a critique of this doctrine.

At the heart of linguistic transcendentalism is the view that the meaning of a general term is a concept; concepts may be construed either as mental ideas or in a more contemporary way as linguistic entities. Thus the materialist's definition of the term 'rock', what he means by that term, differs from that of the idealist, inasmuch as 'being immaterial' is part of the idealist's but not the materialist's concept of rock. This distinction is systematic; it

occurs for all object words and consequently although the idealist and common sense realist are using the same words, they are really speaking two distinct languages. So an idealist is not being disingenuous or arch when he claims that as an idealist he does not deny that rocks exist.

The alternative account of meaning which Cowley offers is certainly one of the most controversial proposals of the book. He suggests that the meaning of a general term is not what is commonly called its sense or definition. Rather, a general term signifies or means a kind of thing, and by 'signifies' here Cowley means 'refers to' (101, 108). In Cowley's example, the term 'horse' means or refers to the kind, horse. So whatever we say about horses, the descriptions and definitions we offer, are all synthetic statements.

Now although this proposal is interesting, it raises a series of problems. many of which Cowley anticipates and seeks to address, but some of which remain troubling. Perhaps the most important is that it is unclear exactly what kinds are for Cowley. He rejects both nominalism and traditional realism, and since he argues that particulars and kinds are not themselves kinds of entities (90), he must think that questions about the ontological status of kinds are otiose. But then what are they? They cannot be ways of thinking about the world, for that puts us back on the road to linguistic transcendentalism. This omission makes it difficult to evaluate the plausibility of his theory of meaning. For example, Cowley's account of meaning commits him to the view that general terms have a referent, and the referent is a kind. Now typically we think that one refers to particulars of one sort or another, although, depending on one's ontology, one might accept reference to such diverse particulars as sets, individuals, or universals. Thus it would seem that if general terms refer to kinds, then kinds must be particulars. But we have seen that Cowley rejects this claim. He does offer the sentence That is one of my favorite flowers,' to show that we can refer to kinds: the demonstrative 'that' refers to the kind or variety of flower of which the particular flower being pointed to is an instance (86). But whether this is a genuine case of reference to a kind is problematic, as we are unsure of what a kind is, and because the sentence can easily be taken to mean That is (an instance of) one of my favorite flowers.' So it remains to be seen whether Cowley's proposed alternative to linguistic transcendentalism has a coherent and defensible foundation. On the other hand, the book is particularly effective in demonstrating that linguistic transcendentalism has implications that some of its adherents might prefer to disregard.

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#### **Charles Crittenden**

Unreality: The Metaphysics of Fictional Objects. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1991.

Pp. xiii + 177.

US \$26.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-8014-2520-4); US \$9.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8014-9754-X).

Charles Crittenden's book has two principal theses and a moral. The first thesis is that we genuinely refer to fictional objects, and say true or false things about them; such reference is not mere pretense and cannot be paraphrased away. The second thesis is that these fictional objects of reference do not exist. These two theses are defended as the results of a conceptual analysis of ordinary discourse; the moral is that this is the appropriate philosophical methodology: 'my concern in this study is not only to put forward a view of the nonexistent but also to support a way of doing philosophy — analysis of the conceptual structures present in common thought — through showing how it can deal successfully with the problem of nonbeing' (112).

The first thesis, that we genuinely refer to fictional objects, is defended in the first two chapters of the book. Crittenden defends a speech-act account of reference, according to which an expression refers to an object if a speaker uses the expression to identify the object for an audience. Names of fictional creatures, Crittenden argues, are used to do precisely this, and so should count as genuinely referential. Attempts to explain away reference to fictional creatures are unsuccessful. In particular, Russell's theory of descriptions mistakenly treats statements about fictional beings as though they were false attempts at historical statements of fact, while the view that 'assertions seeming to be about fictional characters are really about authors and the sentences they write' ignores the fact that fictional names are used rather than merely mentioned. Crittenden also criticizes the view that reference to fictional creatures is pretended rather than genuine reference. a view he attributes to Kendall Walton and Gareth Evans. Here his criticisms are less successful. For example, Crittenden suggests that the author of a story and its hearers or readers do not really pretend to have knowledge of the events and characters the story describes. Someone who did pretend to take the Holmes stories to be giving information might show this by going to London and looking for Holmes' gravesite while only feigning the expectation of finding it' (49). Well, a child pretending to be hit by a ray gun during a back-yard game might show this by going to the hospital and pretending to be in pain, but surely a failure to do so does not show that the child was not really pretending to be injured. Again, Crittenden objects that 'stories can depict events that are physically and even logically impossible.' But we can also pretend that such things are true, and children often do.

Crittenden's second thesis is that, while language as we ordinarily use it involves frequent reference to fictional objects, ordinary use also commits us to the view that these objects do not and cannot exist. At this point, the precise

nature of Crittenden's thesis becomes rather unclear. Crittenden writes that fictional objects 'have no type or degree of existence whatever' (64), and that they have 'no rating at all on a reality scale, not even a low one' (65). On the other hand, he insists that *there are* fictional objects. The tension between these two claims threatens to become flat-out inconsistency, as Crittenden recognizes when he argues that both the following sentences are true: 'There is (actually exists) a fictional character, Sherlock Holmes' and 'Sherlock Holmes does not exist'. He goes on to say that the latter sentence 'does not deny what [the former] asserts, [namely] the occurrence of "Holmes" and other expressions in the text of a work of fiction' (102). But this analysis of the former sentence seems to involve precisely the sort of reductive paraphrase Crittenden earlier rejected. It is hard to see why we should take one but not both of these sentences to be genuine attributions of a property to a fictional object.

A further apparent oddity results from combining the first thesis with the second. When Crittenden argues that the very same fictional being, Holmes, both smokes a pipe and does not exist (43-4), one immediately wants to object that, in the sense in which Holmes smokes a pipe, he does exist: the same stories that attribute to him the property of smoking also attribute to him the property of existence. In Chapter 4 Crittenden addresses this sort of worry by distinguishing between three sorts of statements that might be made about fictional objects. First are the statements which constitute the story itself, 'the remarks made in the very telling of the tale' (90). These 'have no truth value and themselves serve as criteria for the truth-values of assertions about the contents of the novel' (91). (The view that such sentences are truth-valueless fits oddly with Crittenden's claim that they also contain genuine references to fictional objects.) Second, we have 'inside statements,' reports about the content of fictions. Such statements should be understood to be prefixed by some such operator as 'the story says that ....' Third, there are 'outside statements,' such as 'Holmes was created by Arthur Conan Dovle.' These also have truth values; moreover, they do not involve an implicit operator like 'The story says that.' Outside statements appear to be true in the real world rather than merely true in the fiction. (Crittenden mentions that there are statements which do not fit this classification well, but does not pursue the point.) So it is an outside truth but an inside falsehood that Holmes does not exist, and an inside truth but (presumably) an outside falsehood that Holmes smokes a pipe. But shouldn't the fact that few if any of the properties outside-true of Holmes are also inside-true of him, and vice versa, make us uneasy about the thought that the entity that smokes the pipe is identical with the entity that doesn't exist?

In addition to the these emphasized here, the book contains discussions of whether historical names in fictions denote actual individuals (no), whether fictional characters are 'logically complete' (yes), and 'pan-fictionalism', the doctrine that everything is fictional (which is treated sympathetically but rejected).

The moral, as mentioned earlier, is that the appropriate methodology for discussing these issues is that of ordinary-language philosophy. In reading the book, I often felt that metaphysical issues were not so much dissolved as ignored. But one need not accept Crittenden's methodology to agree with his observation that ordinary discourse about fiction 'constitutes a marvelously rich conceptual deposit awaiting philosophical excavation' (2).

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#### Robert D'Amico

Historicism and Knowledge.

New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall 1989. Pp. xiv + 174.

US \$39.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-415-90032-8);

US \$13.95 (paper: ISBN 0-415-90033-6).

Robert D'Amico makes it clear in the Introduction to his book that he is not concerned with the history or genealogy of the word 'historicism' but with the philosophical problem which now goes by that name. 'Historicism' has indeed been used in such different and even contradictory ways in the last hundred years that one almost despairs of clear communication on the topic. The confusion characteristic of much writing on historicism is circumvented here by the author using a rich but also specific literature in his analysis of the topic. The writers who figure prominently in his account are Karl Popper, Imre Lakatos, Hilary Putnam, James Conant, Thomas Kuhn, W.V.O. Quine, Ian Hacking, Michel Foucault, Larry Laudan, Donald Davidson, and Jürgen Habermas. This is not an exhaustive list, but D'Amico comes to terms with historicism, in the end defending a subtle form of it, very much by working through the debates in philosophy of science and philosophy of history to which the above have been major contributors.

By historicism D'Amico has in mind a philosophical theory about the limits of knowledge, about how human understanding is always 'captive' of its historical situation. Concepts, standards of judgment, and presuppositions are treated as parts of historical traditions which constitute a kind of objectivity within themselves. Knowledge thus 'expresses' or manifests a perspective on the world, a context which cannot be transcended. Furthermore no understanding of the world can claim a direct or unmediated contact with reality.

The early chapters of the book consider Popper's refutation of historicism idiosyncratically defined by him as an approach to the social sciences which

seeks the discovery of laws of social development with predictive power. D'Amico shows that this very attack on historicism, so defined, led Popper, ironically, in the direction of historicism in its more widely received form in which historical interpretations are judged with regard to their '... practicality, utility, simplicity, or theoretical fertility, but not as representations of reality' (21).

In the middle chapters D'Amico probes the strengths and weaknesses of conceptual scheme and rational reconstruction theories, noting the shift from preoccupation with logical models of explanation to narrative accounts of the history of science, and noting the growing acceptance of conceptual schemes as constructed, not discovered, and of facts as inseparable from categorial schemes. A measure of similarity among ostensibly disparate concepts such as paradigms, styles of reasoning, discursive formations, problematics, third world notions, themata, and conceptual schemes is demonstrated in the practice of many philosophers of studying reference and representation '... only as defined, made possible, or embedded in frameworks which can be viewed as historical traditions rather than logical structures' (34).

Foucault and Laudan are taken as points of reference in posing the question whether histories of knowledge can avoid assuming a fixed meaning for rationality — whether there is, in this sense, an historical a priori. Foucault claimed to be able to discover an 'historical a priori' in each period he studied, but these are not revelations of being but just possible arrangements. In the end D'Amico says that to go beyond historicism Foucault '... must confront the traditional philosophical debates concerning scepticism and relativism without dismissing them as so many cultural expressions' (95).

In an engaging chapter on Objective Mind, the attempts of Foucault and Popper to avoid relativism and historicism by considering theories independently of subjective foundations — free of the 'anthropological theme,' to use Foucault's expression — are considered and found wanting. Such attempts, according to D'Amico, respond to psychologism and empiricism, but not to the challenge of historicism.

The final chapters deal primarily with the efforts of Davidson and Habermas to avoid scepticism. It is argued that Davidson, in giving up the dualism of scheme and world, is driven to an impossible direct acquaintance theory of knowledge, asserting immediacy between subject and object. And it is noted that Habermas in the Postscript to *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1973), and in his later article 'What is Universal Pragmatics' (1979), abandons the transcendental strategy for avoiding historicism in favor of a 'weak naturalism.'

In the end D'Amico defends historicism as initially defined, carefully avoiding simple oppositions between objectivist and subjectivist, and absolutist and relativist, stands. The book is well argued, if not entirely free of grammatical infelicities and printing errors. It is a useful examination and assessment of an important literature, though older scholars may wonder whether significant progress has been made over the efforts of earlier

philosophers such as R.G. Collingwood and Karl Mannheim to understand the historically conditioned character of all knowledge in such a way that the objective validity of that knowledge is not compromised.

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# **Stephen Davies**

Definitions of Art.

Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1991.

Pp. x + 246.

US \$31.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-8014-2568-9); US \$12.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8014-9794-9).

In this closely argued book, Stephen Davies discusses a rich assortment of recent works in analytic aesthetics dealing with the problem of defining art. That problem has proved particularly vexing to philosophers in view of the inability of traditional definitions to address - let alone accommodate some hard cases from twentieth-century art. Consider how audiences, conditioned to think of art along the paradigmatic lines of a Constable painting or a Rodin sculpture, must react to Duchamp's Fountain or Warhol's Brillo Boxes (works reputed to be art yet which cannot be perceptually distinguished from, respectively, real urinals and real Brillo boxes). Or to Christo's Running Fence (an artwork now experienced mainly through photographs recording its intentionally brief physical presence across a twenty-four-mile stretch of California hillside in 1976). Definitions of art as either an imitation of reality, or an expression of emotion, or a formal arrangement of a medium's properties appear irrelevant to the salient features of such cases. And so the fundamental question seems inevitable: Can there by anything essential to the concept of art if works so wildly diverse as these are allowed to fall under its classificatory umbrella?

Davies constructs a coherent narrative of the philosophical debate that followed Weitz's 1958 anti-essentialist paper, which denied that there are any properties shared by all and only artworks. Davies sees that debate diverging in three directions. First, there are the anti-essentialists, such as Weitz, Gallie, Ziff and Kennick (7), whose main historical significance, ironically, was not to dampen essentialist zeal, but to reinforce it by leading definition seekers to recognize the futility of looking for some 'perceptible, intrinsic properties' of an artwork on which to build the desired definition (22). After all, one cannot just look and see something about Duchamp's Fountain that distinguishes it from a urinal (19-22); nor can one discriminate

some observable property of Christo's *Running Fence* that it shares distinctively with other artworks. Essentialists now came to search for proposed definitions by focusing on 'external relations between artworks and other things' (22, 37-8). But when they did so they found themselves dividing into two further camps: functionalists and proceduralists (37-8).

The functionalist view is epitomized by Beardsley, who sought the definition of art in an artwork's distinctive function, which is to cause the audience to have (what Beardsley went on to characterize as) a peculiarly aesthetic experience (52-5). Although such a view tries to overcome the difficulties in focusing on intrinsic properties, Davies sees it too as flawed, since it does not allow for the possibility that in a work such as Duchamp's Fountain there may well be no idea of supplying a satisfying aesthetic experience at all; 'arthood' here (as in many of the hard cases in twentieth-century art) may have simply 'drifted free from its own function' (74, 38, 41, 218). And so Davies gives his support to the third, or proceduralist, view (218), which, despite his criticisms of Dickie (78-114), is epitomized by the latter's institutional theory. That theory defines art in terms of the procedures by which something acquires status as an artwork (78, 83-4). Duchamp's Fountain can be accommodated under this view because whether the work serves the reputed functions of art appreciation is irrelevant; what is important is that artists, critics and art historians came to refer to Fountain as an artwork (74), and that such procedures are 'continuous with the use of institutionalized conventions by which art status has been conferred in the past' (73).

Davies' discussion of this three-way split takes us through the first part of his book. In the second part he takes us into even more recent writing (for example, on historicist and intentionalist definitions, offered by Carroll and Levinson, among others). The writing throughout the book is carefully crafted and the positions are critiqued in a responsible and thought-provoking manner. The sheer number of philosophical pieces cited (many discussed as well as mentioned) is evidence both of the vigor with which contemporary analytic aestheticians have pursued the issue as well as of Davies' conscientiousness in tracking them down (often to widely scattered journal sources) and then placing them in perspective. The book admirably fulfills one of Davies' avowed aims, which is 'to provide a resource for those who work in the area of philosophical aesthetics' (ix).

Davies wishes to do more than organize and assess the work of others; he also has several theses of his own to offer. One prominent claim attempts to eliminate the alleged circularity of Dickie's institutional definition. According to Davies (and others), Dickie seems unable to state what the artworld and its art-conferring procedures are apart from 'presupposing what is supposed to be defined — what an artwork is' (109). Davies addresses the problem by asserting that artworld members occupy certain social roles that give them the authority to confer art status on object/events, and it is this authority that enables them to be identifiable independently of identifying any particular artworks (112). Davies applies this notion of authority-gener-

ating roles to deal with several other philosophical problems as well (177-8, 17-20, 138-9, 214-15, 218-21).

The notion is a promising one, not only for addressing the issues as Davies sees them, but for removing the suspicion that the institutionalist or proceduralist approaches risk reduction to a vulgar relativism, where ultimately it is the power of the artworld members that rules rather than some legitimizing idea of entitlement. I wish Davies had spent more time developing the notion, however, because in its present form, it appears too obscure to do the job intended. By invoking the notion of authority and roles, Davies has a political or organizational structure in mind. In the artworld there are some clear applications of this structure in, say, the authority of a museum curator to confer the status 'member of a collection' on an object. (Art professors, critics, and award committees also have authoritative offices of various sorts.) The problem is that none of these posts accords its occupant the precise authority to confer the status of artwork on an object/event, although the limited authority each role does possess may admittedly contribute causally to the realization of such a status. Thus the example of a minister authorized to confer the status of marriage on a couple (112) is not literally extendable to the reputed authorities of the artworld in the way that Davies needs.

So Davies' notion has to be viewed as, at best, metaphorical: that is, it is as if the members of the artworld conferred art status the way ministers and judges do. Yet Davies offers few supporting reasons for viewing this metaphor as an apt one. There is nothing remotely like a process of election or selection by which members of the artworld assume posts for conferring artwork status. And knowledge of art's history and theory (so central to understanding why Duchamp's Fountain may be an artwork) does not achieve anything like granting the authority to bestow art status; such knowledge may only give its possessor the authority to propose a corrigible hypothesis about the merits of extending art status to an object/event. However, this is the 'authority' of a qualified expert, and an altogether different sense from the one Davies has in mind. Davies' notion of authority thus seems as mysterious, at this stage, as the concepts it is intended to illuminate.

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#### Steven Davis, ed.

Pragmatics: A Reader.
Don Mills, ON and New York:
Oxford University Press 1991. Pp. viii + 595.
Cdn \$39.95: US \$32.50. ISBN 0-19-505898-4.

This is one of those books that covers such an obvious subject you wonder why it hasn't appeared ages ago. Being a collection of classic papers on pragmatics, some not all that easily available elsewhere, the book will be a boon to anyone interested in the philosophy of language. Academic and student alike will now have to hand under one cover a collection of many of the central articles on pragmatics.

Together with an excellent introduction by Davis, the papers are divided up into seven sections. The first two of these deal with problems of meaning and reference. In Speaker's Meaning and Speaker's Reference there are papers on the referential/attributive distinction by Donnellan, Bach, Kripke, and Searle, and papers on the more general distinction between word and sentence meaning and speaker's meaning by Grice, Recanati and Carston. Problems of meaning and reference continue in the next section, Indexicals, with papers by Kaplan, Perry and Wettstein.

The high quality of coverage continues in the following sections which deal with certain more global problems of utterances. There are sections on Speech Acts, Conversational Implicature and Relevance, and Presupposition. Rounding it off are sections on the Non-Literal Uses of Language (in particular metaphor and irony) and a brief but interesting section on Psychology and Pragmatics.

It is a testimony to Steven Davis' editorship that it is at first difficult to see how a better choice of papers could have been made, such a natural and coherent unit does the collection make. This impression of a book falling ready made is curious though, given that there is no general consensus as to what pragmatics is. Maybe this impression is only given to those who share Davis' vision of the field, so an examination of Davis' discussion in the Introduction will be useful to illuminate the basis upon which the selection of papers is made.

In the Introduction Davis begins by discussing certain definitions put forward by Charles W. Morris, the man responsible for the term 'pragmatics'. Modified slightly by Davis, Morris carves up the field as follows:

# Syntax:

The study of the grammatical relations of linguistic units to one another, and the grammatical structures of phrases and sentences that result from these grammatical relations.

#### Semantics:

the study of the relations of linguistic units to the world.

Pragmatics:

the study of the relation of linguistic units to their users ... [the study of] all the psychological, biological and sociological phenomena which occur in the functioning of signs.

The problem with this definition of pragmatics is that it is so broad that it would encompass all our actions which involve language — 'from baseball to the stock market'. How, Davis asks, to restrict the domain?

That this wish to restrict the domain is theory driven may not be immediately obvious. Surely it is ludicrous to hold a position in which pragmatics is nothing less than a study of human life. Some aspects of the context of utterance may be relevant but *all* of them? inextricably so? Yet there are those who would argue most vigorously against this cutting off of language from the world that gives it life. For them language is so irredeemably defined by the conditions in which it occurs, be it in a baseball game or at the stock market, that to hive it off from such conditions is to destroy it.

Such a position not only denies language any unique status in the realm of human activity — it is an activity like any other — but, more importantly, it denies that it can be studied in isolation from any aspect of human action. Such a position is highly contentious and suffers from severe problems which cannot be gone into here. Suffice to say that there are no papers in the collection dealing with this more global view of pragmatics.

But how *should* the domain of pragmatics be limited? Davis takes the stand that a pragmatic theory is part of an overall theory of linguistic competence. One criterion of being a competent speaker is the possession of knowledge of the syntactic rules of the language. Another is to have the necessary semantic knowledge. This, for Davis, consists of two parts, (i) knowledge of the meanings of the words in the language and of meaning combinatorial rules, and (ii) knowledge of satisfaction conditions, which include not only truth conditions but also rules concerning answer conditions (for questions) and compliance conditions (for imperatives). Syntactical and semantic knowledge is conventionally characterized by being independent of context and of the speaker's intentional states. A further criterion of competency is the possession of knowledge of the rules and maxims that govern conversation and of the intentional states necessary in particular contexts. This latter knowledge yields the subject matter of pragmatics.

Notorious problems arise, however, with this common tripartite division of the field. Here we come to the second major limitation of subject matter in the collection. Davis only talks about problems affecting the division between semantics and pragmatics. He is silent about the division between syntax and pragmatics, and this silence is reflected in the choice of papers included. All treat pragmatics as being in opposition to, or inseparable from, traditional semantics. Yet the boundary between pragmatics and syntax is just as problematic. Strong arguments have been put forward that many syntactic functionings are deeply context dependent. (See G. Gazdar, 'Pragmatic Constraints on Linguistic Production', in B. Butterworth, ed., Language

*Production*, vol. 1, *Speech and Talk*, [London: Academic Press 1981], 49-68, for a useful survey of some problematic cases.)

Such a limiting view of pragmatics is a shortcoming of the book. Too often philosophers of language are unaware of what is happening in linguistics. A few articles on that side of the debate would have enhanced the treatment given. It would also have deepened the worry about the conventional way the field is divided up.

Even with the disputed area limited to the semantic/pragmatic division that worry is generated. The overall impression left by the massing of these papers together is of a continued and sustained assault by some against the semantics/pragmatics boundary and a valiant attempt by others to sustain it. So various is the assault, from such differing quarters (as a glance at the section headings above will illustrate), and so telling are some of the arguments, that one is left with the feeling that something is very wrong indeed with the conventional semantic/pragmatic division. But if that division is eliminated, if the truth of an utterance becomes context dependent and at the discretion of the speaker, then not only is the truth-preserving formalization of language lost, but communication itself is threatened. To do justice to the increasing evidence against the conventional semantic/pragmatic division and yet maintain the possibility of truth and communication is the challenge faced by the authors in the collection. All of them address that challenge in a vigorous, exciting and stimulating way.

## Joan Bryans

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**Elaine Draper** 

Risky Business: Genetic Testing and Exclusionary Practices in the Hazardous Workplace.

New York: Cambridge University Press 1991.

Pp. xv + 330.

US \$49.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-37027-2); US \$15.95 (paper: ISBN 0-521-42248-5).

Like canaries used by coal miners for early detection of hazards, genetically susceptible members of high-risk groups also provide warning signals for conditions likely to be dangerous for all workers. If employers react to the warnings by removing the canaries, the high-risk workers, however, instead of reducing hazardous workplace exposures, then deadly consequences follow. Workers lose their signals that warned of danger, and exposures and health hazards increase, ultimately harming even more persons.

Using case studies of two large chemical companies, Dow and Dupont, sociologist Elaine Draper chronicles how contemporary industries are removing the canaries, the high-risk workers. They also deliberately avoid informing more susceptible employees of possible hazards, deny the risks involved, and therefore accelerate the threat to other workers. More importantly, Draper reveals how industry paints a deadly, occupationally induced hazard as a problem of unique, individual susceptibility, rather than as evidence of the social disease that it is. Using 120 interviews, as well as documentary materials and workplace observations, Draper provides an account that is sure to become a classic in the risk literature.

Risky Business includes seven chapters as well as 100 pages of references and notes. The first chapter outlines the emergence of genetic testing and susceptibility explanations, surveying the conflict between labor and management over how to define workers at risk from hazardous chemicals (18). Chapter two explains the way that industry often defines and debates workplace risk, in terms of specific, genetic propensities of individuals, rather than as a societal threat to virtually everyone. In other words, industry typically deals with workplace risk by 'blaming the victim' (37) and by projecting social ills onto individuals (39) whom industry then defines as unusual or atypical (44, 49). Chapter three shows how managers and scientists who accept the individual-susceptibility approach make it appear that all workers and exposure conditions not considered 'high risk' are safe (59). In chapter four, Draper analyzes the stratification of the work force. She argues that, contrary to its proponents, the new genetic technology for screening workers is neither ethically nor politically neutral. Instead the process often singles out women and minorities (75-83). Hence, she argues, the search for workers most at risk often results in the identification of inappropriate biological categories.

Chapter five surveys the use of genetic susceptibility tests, showing that the results are typically denied to workers, even after they ask (100), and that the results are rarely used to monitor and improve worker health. Instead, the chapter argues that the results are used largely to 'remove the canary' and to deny that any health threat exists. Such denial is possible, Draper argues, because workers in dangerous industries typically are not unionized (114). Chapter six uncovers the legal and regulatory environment that is conducive to removing particular workers, rather than to reducing workplace exposures to hazardous substances. Such an environment encourages initial screening, not continual surveillance, and secrecy, not honesty, about hazards (157). Hence, Draper argues that there is virtually no sense in which genetic screening has helped workers in any way. In chapter seven, Draper summarizes the arguments and suggests the policy implications of her findings. With the rapid growth of genetic knowledge and the increasing influence of economic, legal, and regulatory factors, Draper predicts that exclusionary testing will become even more prevalent in the future.

Draper's book deserves high praise, not only because of the wealth of information about chemical risks, genetics, occupational medicine, and cor-

porate policies and politics that it includes, but also because of her compelling sociological thesis. This thesis is that industry assimilates scientific and technological developments — like genetic testing — in ways that both reflect and serve its social biases and power relationships. Because her volume attempts to tell a story of causes and motives, and not merely actions and consequences, Draper is likely to be both praised for her insights but attacked by those who are uncomfortable with her case-study methodology. Indeed, in order to deal with some of the issues she confronts, Draper very likely could have used no other methods than interviews, observations, and analysis of documents. Because the complex inferences associated with the sociology of risk are typically not amenable to the precise and quantitative techniques of hypothesis deduction often used in other sciences, some researchers may wish that Draper had done more to build her case with a variety of statistical methods and tests. One book cannot do everything, however, and Draper's volume has accomplished more than most. She has laid the foundation for a compellingly correct thesis about how industry uses advances in science and technology to serve its own economic ends and social biases.

In laying such a foundation for sociological work that is crucial both to life and health and to ethics and political philosophy, Draper has achieved a number of goals that make her work unique and particularly noteworthy. For one thing, the type of sociological analysis that she uses has never before been brought to bear on the question of exclusionary testing of workers in the chemical industry. Second, Draper consistently employs a detailed, analytic treatment of alternative positions on particular issues related to genetic testing in the workplace. She carefully exposes the assumptions and traces the consequences of opposing arguments, revealing social analysis at its best. Third, Draper does a superb job of showing how the shift from emphasis on chemical hazards to emphasis on individual susceptibility is neither a scientific breakthrough nor an objective analysis of recent consequences of genetic developments. Rather, she reveals that the shift is a socially constructed account designed to serve special interests. Fourth, Draper serves policymakers well by outlining specific alternatives to exclusionary genetic testing in the workplace. For all these reasons, her volume is a landmark discussion of the sociological study of workplace risk.

Kristin Shrader-Frechette University of South Florida Ellery Eells and Tomasz Maruszewski, eds. Probability and Rationality: Studies on L. Jonathan Cohen's Philosophy of Science. Atlanta, GA: Editions Rodopi 1991. Pp. 345. US \$75.00. ISBN 90-5183-316-4.

This collection contains an intellectual history by Jonathan Cohen, papers by philosophers and psychologists about Cohen's ideas on inductive reasoning, and a reply by Cohen. I will review Cohen's account of Baconian probability, summarize reactions by two of the contributors, and report Cohen's response.

In addition to standard sorts of probability, Cohen proposes a measure of inductive support in the tradition of Francis Bacon's tables of presence and absence. He calls it Baconian probability. For a recent presentation, see Chapter 5 of *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Induction and Probability* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1989).

Baconian probability registers weight of evidence taken as a combination of favorableness and extensiveness of evidence. If a hypothesis and its negation each have little support, then each has a low Baconian probability. despite their standard probabilities summing to one. Baconian probability is comparative rather than quantitative, and the principal means of making comparisons is Cohen's method of relevant variables. The method orders by importance variables relevant to testing a hypothesis. Take, for instance, the hypothesis that bees can recognize a food source by its color. In this case the relevant variables are features of a food source besides color by which bees may recognize it. Going by importance, location might be listed first and then shape — the list is partly a matter of convention. Next, a series of tests are conducted to see whether bees respond to these variables instead of color. A blue food source to which bees have been returning is moved to new locations. If the bees continue to return, it is given new shapes as well as new locations. When tests include an additional variable, the tests rise a level. For each level a hypothesis survives, it acquires a higher grade of Baconian probability. If the hypothesis is a conjunction, it passes an nth-level test if and only if both conjuncts do. Consequently, in contrast with standard probability, the Baconian probability of a conjunction is equal to the Baconian probability of the less supported conjunct.

Psychologists have investigated ways in which people systematically depart from standard laws of probability. In 'Can Human Irrationality Be Experimentally Demonstrated?' (The Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 4 [1981] 330) Cohen argues that these departures are sometimes justified because people use Baconian probabilities in place of standard probabilities. He has in mind cases where people are asked to give the probability that a man is an engineer given a description that mentions, for instance, that he owns a programmable calculator. In these cases people assign probabilities according to how well the description represents the stereotype of an engineer. As a result, in conflict with Bayes' Theorem, they assign the same

probability no matter whether they are told that the man comes from a population that is 70% engineers and 30% lawyers, or from a population where the percentages are reversed. Cohen holds that their assignments of probabilities have a Baconian justification since the percentages are not weighty evidence; weight of evidence goes by the representativeness of the description. In general, he contends that Baconian probabilities follow representativeness.

James Logue's contribution argues that Baconian probabilities are superfluous since weight of evidence can be analyzed in terms of second-order subjective probabilities. His analysis addresses the weight of evidence for a probability assignment (163). The main idea is that this weight varies with the probability that the probability assignment will be stable as new evidence arrives. In order to obtain the weight of evidence for a hypothesis, this analysis must be supplemented with instructions for combining the probability of the hypothesis with the weight of the evidence for its probability.

Cohen rejects Logue's analysis, claiming that it attributes high weight in cases where weight is low because relevant variables are overlooked (329). Cohen's point seems to be that weight of evidence depends on the method of relevant variables, and so is partly objective, whereas Logue's analysis makes it entirely a matter of subjective probability assignments.

Cohen's objection is not decisive. Constraints can be imposed on subjective probabilities in order to ensure that weight of evidence as analyzed conforms with the method of relevant variables. The constraints may require, for instance, that the higher the level of test a hypothesis passes, the higher the probability of its probability's being stable. Cohen's argument for Baconian probability can then be regarded as an argument for imposing such constraints on subjective probability. It need not be regarded as an argument for an independent type of probability.

Jonathan Adler's contribution suggests that rules of conversation, rather than rules of Baconian probability, explain certain assessments of probability that appear to go by representativeness. In the case he considers, people are given a description of a woman, Linda. Among other things, she is said to be a political activist. Then they are asked to compare the probabilities of statements about Linda, including that she is a bank teller (T), and that she is a bank teller and a feminist (T & F). Most put P(T & F) higher than P(T), in violation of standard laws of probability. The common view is that statements better represented by the description are assigned higher probabilities. Adler offers two alternatives. The first is that conversational rules lead people to read 'T' as 'T &  $\sim$ F' (255 ff.). The second is that they lead people to take questions about probability to be questions about the attractiveness of possible expansions of the description (258 ff.).

Cohen's response suggests an alternative that bypasses rules of conversation—the possibility that people assess increases in standard probabilities (339-40). Perhaps they put P(T & F) higher than P(T) because the description boosts P(T & F) more than P(T). Whatever explanation is correct, the case refutes Cohen's claim that probabilities agreeing with representativeness

are Baconian. Following representativeness generates the inequality P(T & F) > P(T). But this inequality violates the Baconian rule for conjunctions. Since T has less support than F, the Baconian rule requires that P(T & F) = P(T).

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## Simon Evnine

Donald Davidson.

Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 1991.

Pp. viii + 198.

US \$32.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-8047-1852-0); US \$10.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8047-1853-9).

## Bjorn T. Ramberg

Donald Davidson's Philosophy of Language. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell 1989. Pp. 153. US \$32.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-631-16458-8); US \$10.95 (paper: ISBN 0-631-16786-2).

Each of these books provides an excellent introduction to the work of Donald Davidson, although Ramberg limits his scope to Davidson's philosophical semantics while Evnine's account is systematic and comprehensive. Read in tandem (perhaps Evnine first), they offer the best overall, critical examination of Davidson's views presently available.

Can reasons cause actions without thereby making actions nomologically determined? Is it true that the logical form of a sentence like 'Ferdinand and Christine were married' is that of quantification over events? Is a scientific psychology impossible in principle? Are we justified in ascribing beliefs only if they are essentially rational and true? Can we understand a sentence only by understanding its whole language? These and other Davidsonian counterintuitive claims are systematically clarified and plausibly reinforced by Evnine. His book divides into three majors parts: the first four chapters (5-71) primarily deal with what Evnine calls Davidson's 'causal-explanatory project' encompassing his views on the anomalism of the mental, causality and causal explanation, events, human actions, anomalous monism, and supervenience; the next three chapters (72-133), arguably the core and most rewarding part, concern the 'interpretative, hermeneutic project' consisting of a remarkably systematic account of Davidson's truth-conditional theory of meaning and methodology of radical interpretation which yield an overall

theory of propositional content; and the final two chapters (134-73) draw metaphysical and epistemological consequences with respect to such issues as truth, knowledge, relativism, scepticism, the ontological status of mind, first person authority, and the problem of irrationality. There is the added bonus of a brief appendix devoted to Davidson's use of the 'Frege argument' (otherwise known as the 'slingshot') to show that if truth is construed as correspondence with fact, then all true sentences must correspond to the very same fact. Thus, for Davidson, referential relations between language and the world are theoretic constructs posited on the basis of successful interpretation, not independent notions which can explain truth.

But all is not well, according to Evnine. The problem is this: Evnine sees Davidson as a 'rationalist idealist' with respect to propositional content, but also finds internally generated tensions within Davidson's work arising from apparent conflicts between this idealism which motivates his interpretative project on the one hand, and the realist implications of his causal-explanatory project, on the other. Davidsonian interpretation is grounded in his semantic holism, the anomalism of the mental, and the normative constraints of rationality as reflected in his Principle of Charity; and these require that the contents of mental states (beliefs, desires, etc.) be ascribed exclusively on the basis of rationality considerations which are both constitutive of intentionality and free from nomological characterization. But Davidson's account of how reasons can cause and explain actions requires both the existence of mental states whose contents are derived independently of considerations of rationality, and the existence of general links between types of mental states (psychological laws). Evnine also finds this conflict in Davidson's treatment of supervenience, first person authority, and irrational action. The upshot for Evnine is that Davidson, by invoking mental properties as causally relevant properties, thereby compromises the anomalism of the mental and contravenes charity. Evnine makes a plausible, if not decisive, case for this tension in Davidson's thought. However, Evnine's analysis (149-50) suggests that a possible conflation of realism qua content and externalism qua content may be a contributing cause for the appearance of tension. Davidson's idealism qua content (mental states are ascribed on the basis of a priori norms of rationality) is compatible with his externalism (the content of belief cannot be identified independently of the cause of belief). The latter, after all, is part and parcel of what is required by the Principle of Charity, viz., the need in interpretation to construe the conditions under which speakers hold sentences true as the truth conditions of those sentences. Such externalism does not entail realism with respect to propositional content.

Ramberg sees Davidson's central goal in terms of an ongoing effort to purge semantics of reifications of such traditional concepts as 'meaning', 'reference', and even 'language' in favor of construing these concepts as theoretic constructs parasitic on a model of linguistic communication that derives its explanatory force exclusively from the primitive concept of truth. Thus, in contrast to what Ramberg views as current orthodoxy, he argues that in the Davidsonian interpretation of speakers, we maximize the empiri-

cal content of our truth-theories solely by interpreting speakers as speakers of truth - no need to bring in other constraints (psychological, conventional, intentional, etc.) on interpretation. Once the ghosts of reification are duly exorcised, we can appreciate the fact that the notion of a language cannot be given independently of a constructed truth-theory which gives a language its structure - another inversion of the received view which explicates linguistic competence in terms of conformity with a pre-established, convention-governed language. Thus, Ramberg's discussion is especially valuable for the understanding of Davidson's recent view to the effect that linguistic competence consists in an ongoing, dynamic, one-on-one process of interpretation of actual occasions of utterance involving the continuous construction and replacement of truth-theories in relation to particular speakers, not a static conformity to general conventions which antecedently regulate linguistic activity for a community of language-users. If so, then convention has no essential role to play in interpretation and the notion of 'language' has no theoretic content.

The first eight chapters of Ramberg's book (1-113) are devoted to establishing these theses and providing a penetrating, in-depth analysis of Davidson's philosophical semantics, and the third chapter (Reference) is a superb critique of reference-based semantics (the classical Fregean theory, causal theories, and recent intensional theories) in which Ramberg persuasively argues that all of these fall prey to Davidson's holistic theory (which explains reference in terms of truth, not vice versa) because they all lack a non-linguistic, independent source of evidence. They share the fatal defect that their respective hypotheses about reference cannot be verified without presupposing prior knowledge of the truth-conditions of the sentences in the language being interpreted. The upshot, for Ramberg, is that Davidson provides a picture of linguistic communication that is extensional, empirical, holistic, and dynamic (138). However, Ramberg's final two chapters (114-41) are less successful. Ramberg argues that Davidson obscures the 'dialectical relation' between the synchronic process of interpretation which yields meaning and the diachronic evolution of languages as generalizations of social practices governed by conventions which yields the production of meaning (110). Ramberg's point is that there may be paradigmatic incommensurabilities resulting in communication breakdowns between diachronically diverse conventional systems of language, and it is radical interpretation that provides the methodology to recover communication after such radical change in the production of meaning (139). What is wanted in this interpretative context is something like Aristotle's notion of phronesis and Ramberg likens this semantic incommensurability to Hans-Georg Gadamer's notion of conflicting traditions, which require a 'fusion of horizons' via cross-paradigmatic discussion, etc., thereby linking Davidson's analytic semantics with Habermas' hermeneutics. The connection here is somewhat dubious and not particularly helpful for understanding Davidson's semantics.

Finally, it should be said that both of these books suffer from the disadvantage of being completed prior to the appearance of Davidson's Dewey

Lectures ('The Structure and Content of Truth', *Journal of Philosophy* 87 [1989] 279-328) which would have done much to steer the authors through the philosophical thicket associated with Davidson's prior vacillations with respect to the precise status of his concept of truth.

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> James H. Fetzer, David Shatz, and George N. Schlesinger, eds. Definition and Definability: Philosophical Perspectives. Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers 1991. Pp. ix + 323. US \$110.00. ISBN 0-7923-1046-2.

Each essay in this collection of thirteen original essays was produced in response to an invitation from two of the editors (Schlesinger and Shatz, who apparently invited each other), and a fourteenth essay was written by the contributor and third editor (Fetzer) to provide a useful introduction and overview of the other contributions. Owing to this origin, many of the essays reflect the significance of the concept of definition to that author's philosophical methodology or outlook rather than being principally a continuation of and contribution to a contemporary dispute or discussion in the philosophical journals concerning definitions. One positive effect of this is that most of the essays are easy to read — one does not need to be particularly well informed about the literature in order to benefit from what they have to offer. Another effect of the essays taken as a whole is to provide an interesting perspective on the role and significance of definitions and related matters to a number of contemporary philosophers working within the analytic tradition broadly understood.

There are two clear exceptions to this general characterization of the tone of the essays, both rather narrowly concerned with formal developments. The first is an impressive survey article by Veikko Rantala ('Definitions and Definability') in which he discusses recent developments in the treatment of definability in formal languages. Readers interested in tracing developments in the theory of definability in formal languages arising out of the work of Tarski and Beth will almost certainly find Rantala's survey and bibliography very helpful.

A second technical paper, by Jaako Hintikka ('Towards a General Theory of Identifiability'), develops and proves a number of theorems concerning

identifiability, a generalization of definability which involves the introduction of empirical information. Hintikka brings to bear his characteristic technique of game-theoretic formal semantics. Despite its technical content, Hintikka's paper has been written to be intelligible to the general reader.

In a remarkably lucid essay ('Definition in a Quinean World'), William G. Lycan focuses upon stipulative definitions as a source of counterexamples to Quine's doctrine that there are no analytic truths, where by an analytic truth is meant one which is true solely in virtue of its meaning. Lycan offers to support Quine's strictures against analyticity without appealing to indeterminacy of meaning (which Lycan rejects).

Lycan notes that Quine appears to concede too much concerning stipulative definitions. In his second section IV (a rare editorial glitch), Lycan usefully distinguishes between a stipulative definition proper (e.g., 'Let "veline" mean vegetarian cat') and corresponding putative analytic truths (e.g., 'Velines are vegetarian cats'). He then persuasively shows that such truths have the same status as logical truths. Lycan's essay constitutes a significant contribution toward our understanding of Quine's doctrines against analyticity.

Another essay especially deserving comment is by Michael Levin ('Philosophical Analysis: an Explanation and Defense'). Levin offers a robust defense of a *behaviorist* account of philosophical analysis by construing the philosopher as being essentially concerned with the *behavioral cues* underlying our use of philosophically significant terms such as 'know' and 'mean'.

Levin offers as his 'principal lemma' that 'conditioning, verbal or otherwise, does not require the subject to know what cue is controlling his response.' This lemma is to enable us to overcome the unsettling observation that post-Gettier accounts of 'A knows that p' could not possibly be correct, owing to their complexity, if construed as *criteria* for our use of the term 'know'. The discomfort simply fades away with reflection upon the epistemologist's task as uncovering behavioral cues and not criteria. Levin's behaviorist approach to the language/world relation clearly deserves to be taken seriously as an alternative to reference-based theories. Philosophers who have thought of behaviorism as something they have simply outgrown are sure to be stimulated by Levin's reflections.

James Cargile ('Real and Nominal Definitions') treats of some traditional questions concerning definitions within the perspective of an unabashedly platonistic realm of propositions and properties.

James H. Fetzer ('Primitive Concepts: Habits, Conventions, and Laws') deals with the problem of accounting for the meaning of *undefined* terms. He describes his approach as based on Peirce's theory of signs.

Roy Sorensen ('Vagueness and the Desiderata for Definitions') explains a number of interesting alternatives regarding definitions when confronted by borderline cases.

David Shatz ('Epistemic Terms and the Aims of Epistemology') argues for the thesis that accounts of knowledge and justified belief do not have anything interesting to do with *skepticism*. Steven Luper-Foy ('Rational Definitions and Defining Rationality') adapts the concept of reflective equilibrium to justify the claim that evaluative definitions of key epistemological terms can support regulative principles for adopting beliefs.

Alan Berger ('Idealized Definitions in Physics and Idealized Dispositions') raises a sustained objection to Quine's concept of speakers' dispositions to assent or dissent to sentences under suitable prompting conditions. He explores and finds wanting an analogy with idealized definitions in physics.

George Schlesinger ('Inverted Definitions and Their Uses') applies a familiar traditional principle of good definitions, that the definiens should be conceptually prior to the definiendum, to a number of putative cases of its violation.

Michael D. Bayles ('Definitions in Law') explores the uses of definitions in the law. Perhaps most unsettling is his observation that under some circumstances a definition need not be correct (e.g., one which regards tomatoes as vegetables) in order to be a good one.

Thomas V. Morris ('Defining the Divine') discloses the existence of a substantial body of recent literature in what might be called analytic theology, of which his essay is a rather impressive example. He offers some extremely interesting reflections on two alternative current approaches to defining God, resulting in what he calls Perfect Being Theology and Causation Theology.

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#### Carl Ginet

On Action.

Cambridge University Press 1991.

Pp. xii + 159.

US \$34.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-38124-X);

US \$11.95 (paper: ISBN 0-521-38818-X).

This book poses and ventures to answer some key questions of analytical philosophy of action.

What is an action? Willing, basically. Ginet argues that all action begins with a causally simple mental occurrence, a mental act of volition (or trying) that we can distinguish by its 'actish phenomenal quality', the 'intrinsic mark' of an action. Yet 'the relevant intrinsic features mark an event as an action only if that event occurs in the right surroundings' (4), which sounds to my ear as if the actual mark of an action is not really intrinsic or the

intrinsic quality is not really a mark. Bodily exertion is voluntary (and hence an action) only if it is caused by the agent's volition, although to act, as such, is not always to cause something, and not only for the obvious reason that a mental act of trying might fail to have its effect. Ginet defines action inductively, using acts of volition as his basis and capturing the rest with Goldmanesque generation relations (including compound generation) specified over canonical action-designators.

How do we individuate action? More like multipliers than unifiers, for the most part. (Or more like maximizers than minimizers, to use Ginet's less familiar labels.) Here the familiar worries about identity claims are trotted out — how can actions designated by different designators be identical if what is designated by the one designator is said to be done by or to causally explain what is designated by the other, or if the designators seem to indicate different times of act-completion? Ginet adds some interesting new wrinkles to the counterunifying arguments. The positive case for multiplying, however, rests on a presumption that an action includes what its designator entails, to the extent that an action's circumstances and consequences are also its parts (49-52). Many would not buy this; it's too much like claiming that a husband has a wife as part.

Ginet ends this discussion on a wishywashy note, claiming that the dispute over act-individuation is ultimately not much more than a verbal one: none of the competing accounts is ontologically more parsimonious than the others and all can find some support in ordinary language. Well, we've heard that one before. Goldman (A Theory of Human Action, 8-9) once denied that he was increasing the furniture of the world, claiming that rival methods of act-individuation are committed alike to the actions whose individuation is at issue. Unfortunately he overlooked the fact that his method, unlike Davidson's, also quantifies over act-properties. Ginet too smuggles in a further ontological category; where Davidson just has bodily exertions and various nonactions (circumstances, consequences) as their relata, Ginet has each of these plus ontologically distinct hybrids composed of these. What is properly called an action is not so easily dismissed as a merely verbal issue!

What makes action intentional? Not necessarily intention. Ginet maintains that an action can be 'intentional' or can be done 'intentionally', even if it is not 'intended' or even if one does not have the 'intention' to do it (75ff). It is enough that I believe that starting my noisy car will wake the neighbor to make my waking him intentional; I don't have to intend it as well. He can still justly complain that I intentionally woke him. I doubt, however, that these cognate terms are quite so well behaved as Ginet presumes. Would it really be wrong to tell the neighbor that my waking him, inasmuch as I didn't specifically intend to do that, was unintentional? (My antennae aren't bristling.) Ginet seems to think that if we agree that the waking was not intended, we need to say the waking was intentional in order to attach moral responsibility to it. But that isn't selfevident either. Why not say instead that the neighbor has a case against me in that I intended not (not: 'did not intend') to let its waking him prevent me from starting my car?

Ginet's other argument involves intending a disjunction. Knowing certain double doors open only one way but not knowing which, I simultaneously push one and pull the other. I intend to open either door #1 or door #2; succeeding in opening door #2 fulfills my intention, even though I didn't intend to open that door specifically. But, maintains Ginet, I did open it intentionally. Well, I'll agree I didn't open it unintentionally. But to say simply that I opened it intentionally seems somehow misleading or incomplete. Compare: I am faced with two fill-in-the-blank questions and I know that the correct answer to one of them is A, but I don't know which it is, so I fill in A for both. Did I correctly answer question #2 intentionally?

Ginet also discusses the role of wayward causal chains and luck in performing actions. Here again belief is made to carry the explanatory burden for an action's being intentional, namely suitably justified belief that isn't too far from the truth as to how one actually manages to perform one's action. The upshot of the 'too far' is that the boundaries of intentional action will be vague, which sounds vaguely right.

Is free will compatible with determinism? Hardly. Talk of free actions as alternatives open to one is soon transmogrified by Ginet into talk of it being 'open to one to make it the case that p' (98). S makes it the case that p if and only if S contributes the last thing needed to make up a minimally sufficient condition for the truth of p (100). Hence if it is open to S to make it the case that a then it is open to S to make it the case that b & a, for some truth b (and if a is open, so are not-a and b & not-a). The argument for incompatibilism now runs: 'Determinism entails that for any truth a as to what will be the case, there is a truth b entirely about the past such that it follows from the laws of nature that if b then a; thus, by the inescapability of the laws, it follows that it was never open to anyone to make it the case that b & not-a; from this last plus the principle of the fixity of the given past, it follows that it was never open to anyone to make it the case that not-a' (106). Those who would resist the conclusion by denying either inescapability or fixity are anticipated. Ginet shows both these moves, which are based on contrary views about truth conditions for counterfactual conditionals, to be implausible.

But aren't reasons causes? Not in a way that presupposes determinism or helps compatibilism. A free action can typically be explained in terms of the agent's reasons (which are a function of his intentions, beliefs, and desires) for doing it. So a compatibilist might take another tack, arguing that only determined events can have such an explanation. This is roughly Davidson's position, which also has it that reasons-explanations indicate causal relations but aren't full-fledged causal explanations because they don't instantiate causal laws or reduce to physical phenomena which do. Recently Kathleen Lennon (Explaining Human Action; reviewed in C.P.R./R.C.C.P. 11 [1991] 263-5) has argued to the contrary that there can be 'intentional laws' sans reduction, and since reasons-explanations support suitable counterfactuals, such explanations are causally explanatory. Ginet goes up the middle, arguing that there are anomic (i.e., not entailing the existence of a covering

law) conditions sufficient for the truth of reasons-explanations. His case rests on the idea that an action may have 'concurrent intentions', which cannot be nomically or causally related to the action because they don't precede it.

This book is not a quick read: it is detailed, precise, and occasionally more convoluted than seems called for. Nevertheless it not only demands, but also deserves close reading. A definite must for men and women of action!

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## Mark Heller

The Ontology of Physical Objects: Four-Dimensional Hunks of Matter. New York: Cambridge University Press 1991. Pp. xiv + 162. US \$34.50. ISBN 0-521-38544-X.

## J.K. Swindler

Weaving: An Analysis of the Constitution of Objects. Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 1991. Pp. xv + 197. US \$39.50. ISBN 0-8476-7667-6.

Each of these excellent new works in ontology challenges, though in radically different ways and with radically different results, the reality of ordinary objects. Many ontologists have, by adopting a criterion of simplicity for what exists, denied that there are chairs and people; but Heller's and Swindler's objections have to do more with matters of the 'vagueness' (Heller) and the 'impurity' (Swindler) of such things. Each would 'replace' ordinary objects by something else; in Heller's case by 'four-dimensional hunks of matter' and in Swindler's by 'pure particulars'. Each ranges far in his arguments: both philosophers deeply into the realm of the modal and so-called possible worlds, conventionality and context, reference, and the nature of consciousness; Swindler yet farther into the universal and the particular, intentionality and non-existent objects of awareness, and much more.

Heller's concern is not to prove the existence of physical objects but only to argue that whatever physical objects there are cannot be ordinary objects.

Instead they can only be four-dimensional 'hunks' of matter; and he speaks accordingly of the 'hunk ontology' and the 'standard ontology'. Because he believes, what is doubtful, that the 'standard' view — by which he means both commonsense and the received philosophical theory — maintains that an ordinary object is only 'three-dimensional', that is, does not have temporal parts and is wholly present at each moment of its existence, Heller devotes the first of the four chapters of his book to the notion of temporal parts.

Correctly pointing out that the four-dimensional view does not entail that time is just another spatial relation but worrying unnecessarily about what ordinary names refer to if no enduring object is wholly present at a moment, in that first chapter Heller nicely refutes Chisholm's contention that the 'unity of consciousness' shows that at least people do not have temporal parts (20-6) by demonstrating that if Chisholm's explanation of the unity is correct within an ontology without temporal parts, then this explanation also must be correct in an ontology with temporal parts. It is in this context that Heller introduces his crucial thesis that people, like all ordinary objects, are *conventional* objects along with a fundamental set of considerations that remain throughout the essay having to do with the *modal* properties of objects.

In his second chapter, Heller turns at length to the notion of conventionality, arguing that it is conventions that distinguish objects that are said to differ otherwise only in their modal properties; for example, a certain island on the one hand and the borough of Manhattan on the other. The size of the second but not the first can be changed by legislation alone; indeed the second just is a 'legislative' object, an extreme kind of conventional object. Because of this fact, Heller chooses, from among different ways, to characterize the situation by saying that Manhattan does not exist, that 'There really is no such thing' (38). The essential characteristic of conventionality is, Heller notes, arbitrariness (43), and he goes on to argue that because the persistence conditions and essential properties of all ordinary objects depend on our conventions and because these conventions are vague, such objects are only conventional objects and so do not exist. Hence, 'If there are any nonconventional objects, then they must not be vague objects' (51). Four-dimensional hunks of matter that possess their spatiotemporal properties essentially are said to satisfy the condition of not being vague objects, and this notion of essential properties naturally leads Heller back to further consideration of modality and the alleged distinction between essential and nonessential properties of things.

Heller's fundamental argument against the reality of ordinary objects comes in the third chapter in consideration of the so-called Sorites paradox. The paradox comes about, says Heller, 'because it seems impossible for the objects of our [standard] ontology to have precise boundaries, but it also seems impossible for them to have imprecise ones' (70). The latter seems impossible in itself, so to speak, but the former is said to be demonstrated by considering the difficulty in saying exactly when a given table would cease being a table were we to remove its constituent molecules one at a time. This is said to show that the table, like all ordinary objects, is a vague object, and

so does not exist. One may seriously wonder why comparison of the actual table and its actual configuration of molecules with any non-actual configuration of molecules is relevant to the status of the actual table (presumably it has something to do with the 'concept' of what it is to be a table), but Heller expresses no doubt about the validity of the Sorites paradox (if paradoxes can be valid); and so, from among other possible responses that accept the paradox, defends the thesis that 'none of the purported objects that are susceptible to the Sorites paradox really exist — there are no tables, mountains, trees, or people' (75). This response, whatever its adequacy, is developed in the context of some valuable discussion of multi-valued logics, supervaluationism, natural kinds, and epistemically reliable mechanisms.

In his final chapter, Heller worries, reasonably enough, about the consequence of his theory that all or nearly all statements we make about ordinary objects are false, including of course all existence claims. He is also concerned, again reasonably, with the objection that because his book and his arguments are all ordinary objects, his theory is self-refuting. To handle these problems, he introduces the notion of appropriateness as a substitute for truth, and after lengthy discussion of this notion concludes that 'The appropriateness of our utterances is enough. We do not need truth' (133). And following further interesting discussions of reference, vagueness, and conventions, he tries yet more to soften the impact of his claims by agreeing that 'When I deny that there are tables, I do not deny that we are basically right about the structure of the world. ... It is only our way of dividing that reality into objects that I have doubts about' (149). Still, such truths as we may utter about physical objects can never be about ordinary objects but only about the other kind; and so, Heller concludes on his last page of text that 'we should adopt an ontology of four-dimensional hunks of matter' (160).

If Heller just might be said to have stretched his material a bit to make a book-length study, Swindler can be said to have compressed three or four books into one. No major issue of metaphysics appears to have escaped his attention, and his book is a demonstration of both the interrelatedness of the issues of first philosophy and the necessity of judicious disregard of that fact for the most effective philosophical discourse. All the same, Swindler has outlined a fascinating ontology and applied it interestingly to many of the most difficult issues in metaphysics.

In an Introduction, Swindler contrasts philosophy to both science and literary criticism, attacking the 'non-intentional realism' of the former and the 'anti-realism' of the latter as models for philosophy. Using the *cogito* and the moral law as his unfortunate examples, Swindler's main purpose appears to be making clear that he believes in 'objective truth' and that what he says in the sequence is so intended.

In the first of three Parts (each broken into two or three chapters), Swindler sets out and defends his ontology of particulars, properties, and universals. Rejecting what he calls the 'lone' particular (29) as well as bare particulars (30), ordinary particulars (35), and bundles (33), he eventually opts for what he calls 'pure particulars' (37) which, unlike the others, satisfy

the law of excluded middle, presumably because they cannot change. (This is precisely what others have meant by bare particulars, which Swindler seems to suppose to mean 'unpropertied' instead of merely 'unnatured'; like the defenders of bare particulars, he rejects the distinction of essential and nonessential properties.) He further defends the paradoxical thesis of Ryle and others that to exist is to have properties, so rightly rejecting the theory of non-existent particulars but leaving one wondering about the status of properties and universals themselves. Indeed, Swindler's most interesting ontological thesis is his distinction between properties and universals; the property is said to instantiate the universal which in turn is 'nothing other than the possibility of there being more than one thing of a certain kind or with a certain kind of property' (78). As possibilities, universals can exist (!) uninstantiated but only universals are possibilities as such; thus 'If so-called possible worlds ... are supposed to be collections of merely possible particulars, then there are no other possible worlds. There is just the actual world' (86, his emphasis). This Part also contains some valuable discussion of the identity of indiscernibles, relative identity, and metaphor along with substantial historical excursions.

Part Two is devoted to Frege's paradox of the failure of substitutivity in intentional and modal contexts. Rejecting on the one hand the solutions of Frege himself, Russell, and Quine and on the other those of Kripke and his followers, Swindler eventually defends an account by which contexts are explicitly brought into the reconstructions through 'context operators' (126). These operators are said to allow us to avoid the confusion between properties and universals which confusion Swindler believes to be at the root of the paradox. This Part, more historical than the first and third, has extremely useful critical accounts of the views of the philosophers mentioned above and others, and again allows Swindler to defend his rejection of possible worlds, transworld identity, and individual essences.

The final Part, Parmenides' Paradox, deals with the problem of thinking about things that do not exist. Again, Swindler has enlightening analytic and historical discussions of the 'descriptivists' Russell and Quine, the 'Meinongians' Parsons and Butchvarov, and the 'mediators' Strawson and Searle. While he emphatically rejects the linguistic theories of Kripke and Donnellan on direct reference to particulars and so-called 'rigid' designation as well as the more ontological theories of the Meinongians that 'there are objects that do not exist' as involving an 'incoherent notion of reference' (168), Swindler's own solution remains somewhat obscure. He refers favorably to the way in which Plato wrestled with the issue of being and non-being and seems to approve of his notion that existence involves power (indeed, Swindler ends his essay quite abruptly with a quote from Plato to that effect [170]), but one gathers that his solution has to do with his crucial distinction between properties and universals, a distinction uninvoked by all of the other philosophers under scrutiny.

If many philosophers will find neither author entirely convincing in the arguments for his ontology, one can nevertheless agree that each has written

a creditable essay in first philosophy. One welcomes the new attention to the fundamental issues and the clear primacy assigned to ontology as the best way to get at the solutions.

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## **David Holdcroft**

Saussure: Signs, System, Arbitrariness. New York: Cambridge University Press 1991. Pp. x + 180.

US \$39.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-32618-4); US \$11.95 (paper: ISBN 0-521-33918-9).

Fair and thorough, Holdcroft's *Saussure* offers a highly critical, though not unsympathetic, analysis of the *Course in General Linguistics*. Possessing the kind of conciseness that comes only from intense meditation, the book is nonetheless stylistically clear and readable, even to nonspecialists in either linguistics or philosophy. Perhaps this is because in its initial form it was directed to students, being based on lectures given at Warwick, Leeds and Stony Brook.

Holdcroft's exposition covers the full if predictable range of topics. Beginning with a brief attempt to situate the *Course* in its historical context, Holdcroft proceeds to discuss the now-familiar dichotomies of *langue* and *parole*, diachronic and synchronic, associative and syntagmatic relations, as well as the principles of arbitrariness and linearity, the pure systematicity of language, and the notion of value. He closes with a chapter on Saussure's 'Successes and Failures'.

The emphasis in this last chapter and in the book as a whole lies on the 'failures.' Saussure's *Course*, Holdcroft contends, is riddled with 'gaps and problems,' its terms are frequently 'not well defined,' its arguments 'unclear,' incomplete,' and 'inadequate.' More specifically, 'Saussure never establishes that signs are radically arbitrary,' fails to show that 'language acquisition is wholly passive,' cannot derive the principle of associative relations from the principle of linearity; and confuses relative with absolute arbitrariness (159-60). Moreover, Saussure 'has clearly failed to achieve his fundamental aim of identifying the object of linguistics' (143).

Without rehearsing here the particular arguments that lead Holdcroft to these conclusions, I can say that I find them generally persuasive, and yet strangely pointless. A critical exposition such as this book represents can have at least two kinds of rationale. The first is stated in its opening sentence:

The Course in General Linguistics is not an easy book to read' (1). Holdcroft's exposition aims to make it easier, and so it does. It highlights, casting this aspect of Saussure into light and that into darkness. This expository function, however, has already been performed again and again by Culler and a half-dozen others. If Saussure's influence peaked in the fifties and sixties, during the next two decades the Course itself attracted a plethora of expositors. Now, one feels, the ground has been quite sufficiently tilled, and might best remain fallow for a time.

None of the general expositions I am aware of, however, seems so relent-lessly critical as Holdcroft's. For this fact there is a very good reason: an exposition must presume that its object is not only difficult to understand but well worth the effort, and the latter — in this case, the value of understanding the *Course* itself — becomes more dubious as the expositor's criticism becomes more general. Holdcroft admits that Saussure's work was 'epoch-making' (160), to be sure, but though he indicates how the *Course* broke with the past, he says virtually nothing about how it created a future. No doubt Holdcroft assumes his audience is acquainted with the impact of structural linguistics on anthropology and literary criticism, to name but two disciplines. Yet if readers are familiar with this influence, would they not be already familiar with Saussure's postulates as well, and hence less in need of an exposition?

The interest of the *Course*, I think, lies not so much in what is obscure and inadequate about it — and there is a good deal of muddiness — but what is illuminating, suggestive, fruitful. Especially now, when its once vast authority has waned considerably, the deficiencies of the *Course* have become less interesting. They might be more so if they could be shown to be systematic — motivated by special interests, say, or concealing some crucial blind spot. Holdcroft discovers no covert systematicity, however. Neither does he expose Saussure's faults in preparation for rectifying or superseding them. Rather, Saussure's arguments are simply shown, without arrogance or rancor, to be underdeveloped in this respect, fallacious in that, all the while assuming that their logical deficiencies are of intrinsic interest.

It is worth emphasizing in conclusion that Holdcroft's *Saussure* is a work of laudable rigor of thought, clarity of expression, and thoroughness of research. I hope not to be taken as implying that it is a poor book. It is emphatically not. My question is only whether it is a necessary one.

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### Isaac Levi

The Fixation of Belief and Its Undoing: Changing Beliefs Through Inquiry. New York: Cambridge University Press 1992. Pp. x + 192. US \$34.50. ISBN 0-521-41266-8.

C.S. Peirce, the founder of pragmatism, wrote a famous paper titled 'The Fixation of Belief', in which he proposed that inquiry begins with doubt and ends once belief is fixed or settled. Isaac Levi has for years been engaged in working out the details of this Peircean and Deweyan project. In *The Enterprise of Knowledge*, Levi focussed on the expansion of one's corpus of belief — when and how one is justified in adding beliefs to one's already settled beliefs. An account was offered in which an agent comes to believe a potential answer to a question either by responding to testimony (of the senses or of witnesses) or to a rule or program which she takes to be reliable. This account drew heavily on probability and decision theory, for Levi's model of rational belief change is decision-theoretic and the space of potential states of belief is taken to be a boolean algebra.

In *The Fixation of Belief and Its Undoing*, Levi quickly goes over much of the ground covered in the first book and then takes on the other part of the project — the account of when and how one is justified in contracting one's corpus of belief. Again, the detail is technical. But the general position is of interest to even those without the requisite skills to manage the symbols and it is that general position that I shall outline and comment upon here.

Levi's opponent is the philosopher who argues that nothing (except perhaps the truths of mathematics and logic) should be taken to be certain; one is never justified in completely eliminating doubt. Like Peirce, Levi argues that we cannot engage in such widespread doubt. For one thing, we would find ourselves without premisses for subsequent inquiry. The path of inquiry would thus be blocked, and blocking the path of inquiry, Peirce insisted, is the cardinal sin for the philosopher. Levi agrees, arguing that we need a standard for serious possibility in inquiry. We need a body of settled belief against which to decide which logical possibilities are serious possibilities and which are not. We must 'turn our backs on anxieties concerning malevolent demons' (5). We must see that when we accept a hypothesis we assign it a probability of one, relative to the rest of our background knowledge.

Levi offers an interesting and new argument for the position that the aim of inquiry is to settle belief. He asks: 'If inquiry cannot be motivated by a concern to remove doubt, what is its rationale?' (2) His opponent thinks that inquiry never settles anything, that 'the truth of a well-established conjecture remains an open question and a legitimate issue for future investigation.' But it follows from this that 'inquiry — even inquiry into a specific problem — never legitimately terminates because the matter is settled but only, so it seems, because the investigators are tired or bored or have run out of funds. No matter how minute a question might be, if inquiry into that

question is free of costs, it should go on forever' (2). On this view there is no real motive to start or to continue a particular inquiry, for there is always some benefit to pursuing *any* question (3).

The pragmatic account of inquiry is gaining popularity. But Levi is one of the few philosophers who has addressed the question which it immediately raises: if accepted beliefs are assigned a probability of one, how is it ever rational to revise them? That is, the pragmatist wants to make the commonsense claim that we are sometimes justified in revising our settled beliefs. One can cease to be certain; the fixation of belief can be undone. The problem which Levi has seen clearly is to show how the model can accommodate this thought. Contraction of one's corpus of belief seems to be problematic on the doubt-belief view of inquiry, for the inquirer will always be giving up something that she regards as true at the time. Levi takes on the project of characterizing the conditions under which ceasing to be certain or undoing the fixation of belief is legitimate.

One such condition is a retreat from an existing inconsistency in one's corpus of belief — contraction is *coerced* in order to remove an inconsistency into which one has inadvertently expanded. But there is *uncoerced* contraction as well, where the inquirer deliberately chooses to drop a belief in order to realize her cognitive goals. One can, for instance, seek an explanation for an anomaly and find that the only explanation is one which is inconsistent with one's current body of belief. Contraction is then justified.

Levi spells out the details of these and other strategies of contraction. And it is in this detail that his pragmatist stripe comes out most clearly. Followers of Peirce and Dewey must be committed to connecting their philosophy to the practice of inquiry. That is what pragmatism is all about. *The Fixation of Belief and Its Undoing* is a paradigm of pragmatic philosophy, for it is a sustained and serious attempt at working out a theory of how inquiry is and should be conducted.

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## **Peter Lipton**

Inference to the Best Explanation. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall 1991. Pp. x + 194. US \$49.95. ISBN 0-415-05886-4.

Inference to the best explanation' (hereinafter IBE) is a fine old motto which, according to some, captures the common thread in our inductive practice. The idea is remarkably simple: if you want to find out what is going on, take the evidence available and reckon what would, if sound, be the best explanation for the matter at hand. That is where you ought to place your bet. The process is immediately familiar to anyone who has ever debugged a computer program or figured out why the car won't start. 19th-century forebears of the idea include Mill's methods, and Charles Sanders Peirce's method of abduction or hypothesis.

The trouble with IBE is that while it makes a fine rallying cry, it is notoriously unclear, both in itself (what is a 'best' explanation; is it just curve-fitting to the evidence, or is it something more?), and in where it fits in science (how can something so interest relative as explanation play any significant role in science?). Indeed, the inherent unclarity surrounding IBE may be the reason why, for all his early enthusiasm for it, the idea fades away in Peirce's later writing.

Peter Lipton's book takes on the full range of issues concerning IBE, partly in the role of honest broker (by providing a neutral description of IBE, and by pointing out its strengths and weaknesses), and partly as champion (Lipton thinks that his version of IBE captures actual inferential process). He succeeds well in the former, but not so well in the latter.

In Lipton's version inference is to the *best* explanation in the sense it is both the likeliest, i.e., one which fits the evidence, and the loveliest, i.e., the one which provides the most understanding, is the simplest, most elegant, etc. Rather than trying to find a model which could accommodate any instance in which explanation guides inference (likely an impossible task), Lipton develops a partial model which he claims captures the core of IBE. The model involves as its central component a kind of contrastive causal explanation, i.e., the process of finding an unknown cause by pursuing a series of why-this-rather-than-that questions. Navigating fact on the one side and foil on the other in this manner leads to a kind of 'causal triangulation' which permits us to arrive at otherwise hidden causes.

In his honest broker role, Lipton faces the model with a series of challenges. There is, for instance, the suggestion that his version of IBE is nothing more than a made-over version of Mill's method of difference, and another that we really need nothing more than the hypothetico-deductive model of confirmation as a characterization of scientific inference. Finally, there is the suggestion that by insisting that the best explanation also be the loveliest, Lipton's model is thereby cast into the pits of subjectivity, for what ultimately counts as loveliness lies in the eye of the beholder.

The effectiveness of Lipton's response to the challenges is uneven. His argument that (in certain cases at least) IBE leads to the recognition of existence is made particularly effective by the way he includes the criterion of predictive success within it. On the other hand, the argument against the H-D model is pointless, for the H-D model was not devised to provide a characterization of actual inferential practice, but was instead meant only to capture certain structural features of scientific inference. Finally, his argument that the interest relativity of loveliness is not a threat to ultimate objectivity is not very convincing, for it relies on nothing more than compatibility of differing explanations for the conclusion that the causal structure of the world exerts control on loveliness.

While Lipton's model seems reasonable enough when left free standing, when he defends it by applying it in a concrete case, odd things happen. As an instance of his version of IBE, Lipton provides a third hand account (namely, his version of Carl Hempel's rendering of a 1909 biography) of Ignaz Semmelweis' mid-19th-century discovery of the cause of childbed fever. On the face of it, it is a marriage made in heaven, for the example seems to have been created just to fit Lipton's model. Everything is perfect; there is a completely unknown cause, the facts are plainly present, foils abound, and we are left to watch Semmelweis work systematically from start to finish. In fact, the example is not at all compelling. Just as our present day descriptions of discoveries reflect our current understanding of science, so a 1909 description of the dynamics of Semmelweis' discovery would be expected to reflect an earlier conception of science, one which is naturally more congenial to Lipton's model. His account would have been much stronger had he used a more recent example, but more recent examples of the same sort of inference don't fit the model very well. What makes the Semmelweis example so compelling is the purely hypothetical quality of the unknown which it involves. More recent examples of demands for answers to why-questions (based on a random search of issues of Nature) are met with answers so constrained to theory that causal triangulation has little room to produce anything very interesting. It is theory which now occupies the position held by hypothetical leaps in the 19th century, and any leap now made is fettered by theory.

To the very end of the book, however, Lipton's claims for his model of IBE are tempered with the caution that what he has offered is not the last word on the subject, but something to be considered in future discussions of inductive practice. In that he has succeeded very well.

James Van Evra University of Waterloo Hugo A. Meynell

An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan, second edition.

Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1991.

Pp. x + 224.

Cdn \$35.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8020-5869-8); Cdn \$16.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8020-6792-1).

This book is the updated version of a work first published in 1976. Meynell, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Calgary and formerly Professor of Philosophy at the University of Leeds, aims to draw attention to Bernard Lonergan, whom he judges 'up to now the most neglected ... of all contemporary philosophers of the very first rank' (1). Insight: A Study of Human Understanding, originally published in 1957 (and just republished by the University of Toronto Press as vol. 3 of the projected twenty-two volume Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan), is 'one of the half-dozen or so most important philosophical books to have appeared in the course of the present century' (1). More broadly, 'Lonergan's philosophy is one of the outstanding achievements of our time, and applicable to a vast range of pressing intellectual, moral, social, political, educational and religious problems' (185).

Meynell's general approach is not unlike that of a medieval commentator. He provides extensive quotations and close paraphrases and interlaces them with his own elucidating comments and examples. His presentation is based mainly on *Insight*, though with some reference to Lonergan's other works, especially *Method in Theology* (1972). His seven chapters treat in turn the elements of insight, the structure of scientific insight, the method of metaphysics, the problem of interpretation, practical reasoning, questions about God, and Lonergan and contemporary philosophy. The present edition supplements the final chapter with a new, chapter-length afterword relating Lonergan to the 'foundationalism' debates of the 1980s.

The central theme of Meynell's book is Lonergan's claim that human knowing is not simply a matter of experiencing particular concrete data, or of elaborating universal explanatory laws, or even of these two activities in combination. Intermediate between them is a further activity, namely, discerning the concrete intelligibility of the experienced data, grasping the universal in the particular, the activity Lonergan labels 'insight.' Insight antecedes and underpins the activity of conceiving, whereby explanatory formulations are abstracted from the concrete data, and it points ahead to the still further activity of judging, whereby explanatory formulations are verified in the concrete data.

Meynell treats the topic of insight in three interrelated ways. First, he reviews Lonergan's detailed characterization of insight's operational features and epistemic primacy, and the consequent distinctions and relations among ordinary description, scientific explanation, metaphysics, hermeneutics, ethics, and theology.

Second, he sketches the systematic philosophical omissions and errors that ultimately are attributable, in Lonergan's view, to diverse forms of the oversight of insight. Reduce knowing to experiencing concrete data, and you will tend toward materialism, empiricism, positivism. Reduce knowing to discovering or inventing explanatory laws, and you will tend toward idealism, rationalism, relativism. View knowing simply as the conjunction of experiencing particular data and elaborating universal explanations and you will tend toward some uneasy dualism. Only by recognizing insight, the activity of grasping the concrete intelligible that is the pivotal link between particular data and universal explanation, can you consistently maintain the correct systematic philosophical stance, namely, critical realism.

Third, Meynell spells out Lonergan's contention that recognition of insight is the key principle not just for discriminating among systematic philosophical stances but also for developing a philosophy of the history of philosophy. From Greek atomism and Platonism to present-day foundationalism and anti-foundationalism, the disputes that mark the history of philosophy may be understood as dialectical contributions to the gradual emergence of a twofold clarification. In one line, there is progressive recognition of the distinction between the concrete sensible and the abstract intelligible, and of the concrete intelligible as the 'middle term' between these two. In a second line, there is progressive recognition that the structure of one's cognitional activities heuristically prefigures the structure of one's cognitional contents - and thus that the structure of insight heuristically prefigures the structure of the 'middle term' that insight grasps. The diverse stances in the disputes through which this twofold clarification emerges oscillate around a central trajectory that runs from Aristotle through Aquinas, a trajectory that Lonergan sees himself extending.

This book leads one to surmise that its author is quite successful as a classroom teacher. It is carefully organized, intelligibly written, and loaded with excellent examples. It provides a fine summary of the features that distinguish Lonergan's philosophical approach, and a compelling argument for their singular value. It shows clearly the place Lonergan occupies in the continuing conversation among philosophers past and present. And it is especially helpful in relating Lonergan to the persons and issues associated with analytic philosophy, a school which Lonergan does not often address explicitly, but with which Meynell himself is acquainted intimately. For these reasons I am pleased to recommend the book as admirably fulfilling the promise of its title.

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## Samuel Pufendorf

On the Duty of Man and Citizen. Ed. James Tully. Trans. Michael Silverthorne. New York: Cambridge University Press 1991. Pp. xliv + 183.

US \$44.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-35195-2); US \$14.95 (paper: ISBN 0-521-35980-5).

In the latter half of the seventeenth century, Samuel Pufendorf (1632-94) was second only to that of Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) among the founders of the modern theory of natural law and the newly emerging field of international jurisprudence. On the Duty of Man and Citizen According to Natural Law (1673) is Pufendorf's summary of his massive study, On the Law of Nature and of Nations (1672). Widely acclaimed in their own day, both works went through numerous Latin editions and were eventually translated into every major European language. This shorter work, hereafter On Duty, was adopted as a university textbook in natural law jurisprudence throughout Protestant Europe and the American colonies. Moreover, Pufendorf's trenchant responses to Grotius and Hobbes helped to establish the intellectual context for the development of modern moral and political philosophy. Despite his virtual disappearance from contemporary discussion, Pufendorf's influence can be detected in the thought of Locke, Hutcheson, Hume, Smith, Rousseau, and even Kant.

Pufendorf's aim in *On Duty* was to instruct beginners in the principal topics of natural law in a short and lucid compendium, so that young minds might be educated in a moral doctrine that all agreed was conducive to an ordered social life (6). More precisely, he sought to explain those duties necessary to make one a good and useful member of society. In Book I, Pufendorf describes each person's moral duties to God, oneself, and others; while in Book II, he articulates those duties that apply to human beings as members of different social groupings, including the state of nature, the family, various economic relations, and the state.

For the reader unfamiliar with the intricacies of Pufendorf's major work, a few comments on his general theory of law may avoid needless confusion. Since On Duty is an abridged version of an extremely long and complex treatise, much of philosophical sophistication had to be left out. Consequently, the condensed text is easily subject to misinterpretation which goes to the heart of Pufendorf's conception of law. Leibniz's criticism of Pufendorf, in his Opinion on the Principles of Pufendorf (1706), is a good case in point. Pufendorf defines law as 'a decree by which a superior obliges one who is subject to him to conform his actions to the superior's prescript' (27). He assumes that the very existence of law and obligation presupposes on the part of a lawgiver the power to issue commands and to enforce compliance with those commands through fear of punishment. Leibniz first criticizes this apparent reduction of law to the will of a superior, because it fails to ground law in an independent principle of justice. But when Pufendorf notes that

one's obligation presupposes a *just cause* or some reason to warrant obedience, Leibniz accuses him of being inconsistent. This appeal to justifying reasons suggests, contrary to the aforementioned definition, that one's obligation to obey the law is ultimately independent of the sovereign's will. In short, Leibniz charges Pufendorf with vacillating between the voluntarist and intellectualist accounts of law and obligation.

Judging from the discussion in On Duty, this criticism is not entirely without merit. As the longer work makes evident, however, Pufendorf advances a moderate voluntarism which attempts to combine both reason and will into a unified conception. Law is a combination of a formal element, the will of a superior, and a material element, reasons for its imposition based on the natural order of things. On the one hand, law is essentially the command of a sovereign, whose will is the source of all obligation. Put differently, law is the imposing of a moral quality upon a world of facts and mechanistic relations, otherwise devoid of intrinsic value or purpose. On the other hand, the material content of law is based on the objective features of human nature and a recognition of those conditions necessary for the establishment of genuine social life. Only the sovereign's will can render this content morally obligatory. Whatever else one might say about this composite theory of law, it is not obviously inconsistent. Pufendorf's conception of natural law represents a concerted effort to create a new science of morals, without reliance on traditional Aristotelian assumptions about nature, let alone special appeals to divine revelation.

In anticipation of Locke's critique of rationalist epistemology, Pufendorf denies that the natural law is innate. Rather, the basic principles of natural law can be discovered by rational reflection on the necessary requirements of human sociability. Like other early modern philosophers, Pufendorf acknowledges the primary character of the individual's desire for self-preservation. But, if human beings are to overcome their natural weakness (imbecillitas), as well as their capacity for aggressive and malicious behavior, they must be sociable. Consequently, the fundamental law of nature is that everyone ought to cultivate and preserve sociality (35). The general duties of humanity are simply the means to this end. In addition to the negative duty not to harm others, these general duties include a duty to recognize the equal dignity of all human beings, and a duty of benevolence, which requires that everyone be as useful to others, as they conveniently can (64). The major role played by law and duty in Pufendorf's social philosophy is a fitting complement to the standard renditions of early modern thought which emphasize individual rights and liberties, typically to the exclusion of social obligations.

Similarly, Pufendorf's analysis of the *state of nature* and the establishment of political authority through a process of two agreements and one decree represents an important, but often overlooked, contribution to the social contact tradition. His modern theory of the state, as Tully remarks, remains one of the best responses to the philosophy of Hobbes (xxxii). Finally, Pufendorf's discussion of private ownership, as a justified departure from the

original (negative) community, provides considerable insight into Locke's more famous defense of private property in the Second Treatise.

The editorial introduction by James Tully summarizes the main arguments and gives some indication of the text's historical significance. A chronology of Pufendorf's life, a list of major works, and notes on further reading supply additional background information. Michael Silverthorne's translation, based on the edition of 1673, is the first modern translation since 1925. On Duty is part of the growing Cambridge series of texts in the history of political philosophy edited by Raymond Guess and Quentin Skinner. This particular volume makes available a readable introduction to an aspect of early modern thought that has been neglected for far too long. It should be an invaluable resource for anyone interested in the origins and development of modern moral and political philosophy, beyond the way that history has been shaped by the now canonical figures and texts.

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## Paul Ricoeur

From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II, trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson.

Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press

1991. Pp. xvi + 346. US \$42.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8101-0978-6);

US \$17.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8101-0992-1).

This collection of essays is a translation of Ricœur's *Du text à l'action: Essais d'hermeneutique, II* from 1986 (Editions du Seuil), a volume that can be seen as a sequel to the much earlier *Conflict of Interpretations*. Almost all of these essays have been published in English before in various journals and collections, but most notably in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (1981, ed./trans. John B. Thompson) which contains 7 of the 16 essays. It is nevertheless good to have all of them in one place at last.

Ricoeur's work is interesting not only for its significant contributions to the development of a philosophical hermeneutics out of both romantic hermeneutics and Husserlian phenomenology, but also for its productive integration of diverse currents of 20th-century thought; from existentialism, historiography, psychoanalysis, linguistics, structuralism and literary criticism, to the theory of action, analytical philosophy, and political thought (especially considerations of ideology and utopia). But such integration is not

at the expense of the integrity of Ricoeur's output, as the current volume testifies.

From Text to Action is divided into three parts and includes a brief preface by Ricœur to the English edition as well as an introductory essay, "On Interpretation", originally written by Ricœur in English and first published in Alan Montefiore, ed., *Philosophy in France Today*. This essay dates from 1983 and offers a useful overview of Ricœur's itinerary from his 1960s and '70s concern with mapping out and justifying his phenomenological hermeneutics, to his '80s concern with the narrative function.

Part 1: For a Hermeneutical Phenomenology, contains four essays laying out the fundamentals of Ricœur's hermeneutics. These include, first, his critique and amendment of Husserlian phenomenology. Second, a critical reading of philosophical hermeneutics from Schleiermacher, through Dilthey and Heidegger, to Hans-Georg Gadamer that serves to set out his own interests in the ontology and linguisticality/textuality of interpretation and understanding. The third essay, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation", is more particular with respect to Ricœur's methods and aims. It focuses on mediating the Gadamerian distinction (or distance) between truth and method; between belonging and objectifying distanciation. It contains one of the most clear and succinct accounts Ricœur has given of textuality and the various productive forms of critical distanciation operative in the appropriation of texts. The final essay is a brief contribution on biblical hermeneutics.

Part 2: From the Hermeneutics of Texts to the Hermeneutics of Action, contains 6 essays and brings us more up to date with Ricoeur's hermeneutical project: 'The gradual reinscription of the theory of texts within the theory of action' (xiv). Readers of the Time and Narrative volumes will recognize this rapprochement in the work of refiguration (of the reader's world) manifest at the level of mimesis3. Central to Part 2 is the early essay "The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text", where Ricoeur pursues various parallels between the structure of the text (and discourse) and the structure of human action in order to further legitimate hermeneutics as a general method for the human sciences (whose subject matter is action as well as written and other records). This, and two earlier essays in Part 2, also deal with mediating the explanation/understanding dichotomy (taken as the methods of the natural and human sciences respectively); a mediation that is crucial to Ricoeur's method of the long detour through cultural signs, where a more objective scientific/structural explanation precedes, leads into, and enriches our final understanding. Explanation and understanding are shown to be, for Ricceur, moments in the interpretive enterprise of hermeneutics.

Part 2 concludes with 3 essays that move further towards action: 'allowing the concern with practice to reconquer the preeminence that a limited conception of textuality began to obliterate' (xiv). "Imagination in Discourse and in Action" carries over Ricœur's early interest in imagination and metaphor to a more practical dimension (fitting into his project of a poetics of the will). The bridge here is fiction in its ability to refigure our experiences

and project possibilities for acting. In the social world, claims Ricoeur, this imaginative element is manifest as ideology and utopia — themes for Part 3 of the present volume. In "Practical Reason" Ricoeur outlines, through considerations of Kant and Hegel, his own account of the role and critical dimension of practical reason. The final essay, "Initiative", 'contribute(s) to the philosophical reflection on the place and the meaning of the *present* — the personal present and the historical present — in the architecture of time' (208). The stress here is again on action and more particularly on the sources of initiative for action in the present.

Part 3: Ideology, Utopia, and Politics, contains 5 essays on social reality in which the theme of ideology predominates. The first deals with Husserl and Hegel on intersubjectivity. The next three center more specifically on Marxist themes. The first on science and ideology. The second on ideology critique, which considers the possibility of a critical hermeneutics through an examination of the respective merits and shortcomings of both Gadamerian hermeneutics and *Ideologiekritik* as practiced by Habermas. The fourth, "Ideology and Utopia", reworks the notions of ideology and utopia as two interdependent formations of the cultural imagination: It is as though we have to call upon the "healthy" function of ideology to cure the madness of utopia and as though the critique of ideologies can only be carried out by a conscience capable of regarding itself from the point of view of "nowhere" (324). The final essay examines briefly the intersection of ethics and politics.

The richness, clarity, and generosity of Ricœur's thought is in evidence throughout *From Text to Action*. This work is undoubtedly a valuable addition to his English language oeuvre.

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George N. Schlesinger
The Sweep of Probability.
Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame
Press 1991. Pp. viii + 228.
US \$28.95. ISBN 0-268-01738-7.

This is both an introduction to elementary probability theory and an attempt to show how probability theory may yield philosophical rewards in various problem areas, ranging from confirmation theory over metaphysics to deontic logic. These weightier applications are saved for part two of the book. A first part is devoted to illustrating a few basic principles of the formalism of probability, but here, too, Schlesinger engages in lively polemic against a

number of authors. I shall focus only on a few of the many interesting issues touched upon in this work.

In a discussion of indicative conditionals, Schlesinger concludes that 'in general ... , if  $P(C/\neg A)=0$ , the probability of the indicative conditional  $A\to C$  is equal to the conditional probability P(C/A)' (31). He backs this claim by arguing that David Lewis' triviality result — whereby such an identification of  $P(A\to C)$  with P(C/A) leads to the unwelcome result that P(C/A)=P(C) — rests on an invalid inference. However, Schlesinger rests his case on imputing to Lewis the assumption that  $P(C/A)=P(C/A \& B) \times P(B)+P(C/A \& \neg B) \times P(\neg B)$ , and it seems clear that Lewis need not invoke this invalid schema in his derivation. Obviously, since often  $P(C/A)\neq P(C)$ , something must be wrong, but Schlesinger fails to show why we should not simply blame the premise that  $P(A\to C)=P(C/A)$ , as Lewis wants us to. Also, not many conditionals satisfy the condition that  $P(C/\neg A)=0$ . Schlesinger's own example, 'If Fred is a smoker, his insurance premium will increase next year', certainly doesn't: pace Schlesinger, this may well be true even if the premium will rise also for non-smoking mountaineers.

Schlesinger also discusses Lehrer's attempt at providing a justification of total skepticism and gives it an interesting probabilistic twist. Lehrer based his argument on the possibility that we might be tricked by extraterrestrials into believing falsehoods. This hypothesis he calls s. At a crucial juncture, Schlesinger asserts that 'By definition P(h/s) = 0' (70), for any sentence h. But this seems not a happy suggestion, as it yields that  $P(A/s) = P(\neg A/s) = 0$  and thus that  $P(A \lor \neg A/s) = 0$ . Whatever talents one wishes to grant the extraterrestrial pranksters, a power to annul the law of excluded middle should not be one of them.

In a chapter on probability and induction, Schlesinger exhibits the role of Bayes' theorem and discusses various positions concerning the problem of arriving at prior probabilities for hypotheses. Goodman's 'new riddle of induction' is dismissed as a pseudo-problem, but Schlesinger's treatment is vitiated by a misapprehension of Goodman's views. Schlesinger seems to attribute to Goodman the tenet that hypotheses projecting 'grue' have the same prior probability as hypotheses projecting 'green'. But Goodman has always been alert to the fact that they do not; the point of his paradox is just that this cannot be explained by differences in syntactic or semantic simplicity and that, therefore, the principles for ranking hypotheses recommended by Jeffreys and Carnap will be of no help.

Incidentally, the problem of induction illustrates the philosophical impotence, rather than fertility, of probabilistic methods. For example, Rosen-krantz's application of probability theory to Goodman's paradox (*Journal of Philosophy*, 1982) brings it no nearer solution, as Schlesinger rightly points out (87-91).

Other issues broached in part one include the importance of considering base rates when evaluating probabilities; combined evidence; the Reichenbach-C.I. Lewis debate over the need for certainty in epistemology; and criteria for the degree of confirmation.

In part two, Schlesinger addresses the question of what distinguishes merely improbable phenomena from extraordinary ones, in need of explanation. His answer is that scientific explananda consist of events that are not merely improbable in themselves, but belong to improbable kinds of events. This seems important and correct, as far as it goes, but just which kinds are improbable? Schlesinger thinks that they are those whose members 'resemble each other, in that the same two positive terms apply to each of them' (113); a positive predicate is one not applicable to a true vacuum (111). But this approach just brings us back to the question which predicates are allowable and the demand for a principled reason to rule out terms like 'grue' - in the absence of this, any set of events will be extraordinary on Schlesinger's criterion, since its members are bound to exemplify any number of positive properties. Even waiving this objection, the proposal seems inadequate: surely it takes more to make an event extraordinary. Consider two cases: (i) you observe a series of gulls, each having a different colour; (ii) you observe a series of black ravens. Schlesinger suggests that (i) is unsurprising but (ii) is extraordinary (111). This seems strange. Also, Schlesinger's proposal to revise one of Nicod's criteria and demand that generalizations be confirmed only by extraordinary instances (112) seems misguided. Notwithstanding their drab inevitability, new observations of black ravens keep confirming the hypothesis 'All ravens are black'.

Chapter VI convincingly argues that a hypothesis need not actually be used to make predictions to receive confirmation; it suffices that it could have been so used, i.e., that the hypothesis best accounting for the first items in a series of data remains the best for increasingly larger segments of the series. This notion of 'sustained maximum adequacy' is also employed to define randomness and ad hoc-ness. It should be observed, however, that the results of applying it will depend crucially on what we take to be a maximally adequate hypothesis. For instance, which hypothesis is the simplest in accounting for an initial segment of a series will hinge on how its items may be described.

Part two further comprises elaborate discussions of combined evidence (in forensic and medical contexts) and the definition of relevance; an interesting, if inconclusive, defence of the principle of indifference; the wielding of probability theory as an algorithm to judge the validity of theorems in deontic logic; and a brief discussion of the anthropic principle.

The scope and argumentative fervour of this book are truly impressive, and make it highly stimulating and engaging reading to the trained philosopher already familiar with enough of the many problems it addresses. But Schlesinger's tendency to cover too much in rather elliptical fashion may be frustrating to the expert and confusing to the beginning student. Both may also wonder whether the book's many seemingly disparate discussions are really united by any common theme, and whether Schlesinger succeeds in his aim to illustrate the fertility of probability theory in philosophy — at times (e.g., in the case of deontic logic) its application looks suspiciously like an impatient and quick fix to tangled problems deserving greater care.

The book should have benefitted from a more thorough proof-reading. It contains a number of misprints and errors in the text, in formulae and equations (27, 33, 53, 54, 55, 56, 64, 66, 80, 97) and in diagrams (154). There is an index, but no bibliography.

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John Evan Seery

Political Returns: Irony in Politics and Theory from Plato to the Antinuclear Movement.

Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1990. Pp. 384.
US \$39.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8133-7936-9);
US \$14.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8133-7964-4).

Seery offers us a post-modern study of irony as interpreted in the texts of numerous theorists from Plato to Nietzsche, and more. He canvasses the usual meanings of irony: the gap between theory and practice, ideals and reality, different levels of meaning, etc., and offers his own dialectical notion of situational reversal (308). His scholarship is exhaustive — academic references take up one third of the text. But Seery's post-modern academicism conflicts with his Nietzschean talk of the return of theory to the 'underworld of death and destruction' (346).

It is the threat of nuclear annihilation which returns theory to reality. But Seery merely offers us his 'highly interpretive' view of irony, as the only coherent way to affirm life in the face of nuclear annihilation, because he sees no way of avoiding skepticism (329, 319). But he then talks of dichotomizing ironic-skeptical and logical-rational theory, and Power and Justice (330, 341). Yet very little reflection is required to reject such simplistic dyads. Worse, to go on to present a metaphysics of difference is incompatible with skepticism. And while a critique of utopian and abstract ideas of political community is in order (41f, 320f, 344f), it in no way supports Seery's antithetical ideological belief in the 'radical separateness' of the individual (342). On the contrary the evidence for the sociality of the human species is overwhelming.

Finally, instead of examining the extensive theoretical implications of the antinuclear movement for real world politics and real alternatives thereto Seery offers us an 'unstable interpretation' of the 'text' of irony in the antinuclear movement (305, ch. 6). This 'politics of the page' focuses on the arrest of a handicapped woman holding a balloon at a California protest (161,

321f). It is like an academic deconstruction of an anti-establishment photo opportunity.

Only irony suffices to counter the nuclear threat, Seery concludes, lamely. He associates irony with falsehood as well as freedom (320f). While the bomb threatens morality, polity and community (318), he can find no rational or moral 'foundation' for affirming life in response to the nuclear skeptic or nihilist (320). But surely this is not the time for confusing a critique of foundationalism with a proof of total skepticism.

Seery's conclusion is starkly nihilist: "The real question of the nuclear age is ... whether we can find any moral reason at all ... to work to find ways of staving off the next holocaust: Why should we care?" (346). While the threat of nuclear annihilation requires humans to pose this question, this is not to say there is no answering it. Any response moreover does not, as Seery asserts, move one back into the separate self and his free, ironic choices. Rather it raises the question whether life has any value, not merely human, but the whole planetary ecosystem. Ecological reflection moreover reinforces the affirmation of life; and it rests on far solider empirical and scientific evidence than Seery's post-modern politics of the page. Nuclear war is not merely a text for interpretation. To believe that the affirmation of life is problematic in the face of such devastation is to betray a literary superficiality and scholastic academicism that is breathtaking.

In utter contrast to Seery's obsession with texts the east European philosopher George Konrad confronted the substantive reality of the issue in his *Antipolitics*. It is, he wrote, 'impossible in principle that any historical misfortune could be worse than the death of one to two billion people' (92, 95). In sum, this reviewer cannot regard Seery's text with critical equanimity. It displays a disturbing moral irony unintended by the author; but caught in Konrad's warning to academics: 'If they are not careful ... history will walk into their studies one day and grab them by the throat ... and burn them to dust' (37).

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## Stephen K. White

Political Theory and Postmodernism. New York: Cambridge University Press 1991. Pp. xvi + 153.

US \$39.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-40122-4); US \$12.95 (paper: ISBN 0-521-40948-9).

The book is a critical reflection upon major issues involved in the modern/postmodern debate, as well as an attempt to advance the debate beyond its present limitations. Given the modest length of the text, White discusses a surprisingly wide range of sources, including Heidegger, Habermas, Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, Rorty, Gilligan and Waltzer. His thesis is that traditional ethical-political reflection must be displaced in response to Heideggerian and postmodern critiques, but that these critiques are themselves inadequate to the demands of political discourse and its problematic of normative standards for social action.

White suggests that we must account for two types of responsibility and two corresponding functions of language if the current discussion is to be advanced. On the one hand, he proposes to develop a fruitful tension between the 'responsibility to otherness' and the 'responsibility to act'. On the other hand, he emphasizes the importance of reflecting upon the 'world disclosing' and the 'action co-ordinating' functions of language. The main source for his treatment of the responsibility to otherness and the world-disclosing function of language is Heidegger, while the responsibility to act and the action co-ordinating function of language are taken, of course, from Habermas. White appropriates both of these sources critically, with a fair evaluation of the limits and the merits of each position.

Although White himself acknowledges that the book tends to favor the responsibility to act and the action co-ordinating function of language over the responsibility to otherness and language's world disclosing function, the theoretical core of the text is articulated in two chapters on Heidegger (chapters 3 and 4). Here, White critically reviews the political significance of the work of the early and later Heidegger, and develops his own interpretation of the later Heidegger's conception of 'nearness' (Nähe). This serves as a basis for his own notion of care as a reflective concern for our ...n mortality, which opens us to an otherness that marks the finitude of our everyday willing and doing. Unlike Heidegger, however, White insists that this appreciation for otherness should not be ontologized beyond the human sphere, but should open us to an otherness that is still bound to the realm of social-political responsibility.

Postmodernists like Derrida and Lyotard, he argues, are guilty of a similar 'withholding' gesture when it comes to concrete political action. Where Heidegger dismisses the political realm as just another moment of the technological *Gestell*, and hence as inadequate to the otherness of being, the postmodern theorists aestheticize otherness as something 'sublime', whose appreciation can only be marked by gestures of impertinence and spontane-

ous play. They too ultimately opt out of any normative discourse that would guide collective action toward common goals.

White also rejects attempts, such as those by Karsten Harries and Reiner Schürmann, to rehabilitate Heidegger as a political thinker. In response to Harries, who tries to develop a line of interpretation that would find Heidegger's thinking compatible with democratic ideals, White insists that such an attempt must fail in light of Heidegger's relegation of politics to 'the clamor and chatter of everyday contests of opinion and will' (37). He finds Reiner Schürmann's attempt to render an 'anarchic' interpretation of the later Heidegger to be equally unconvincing. Schürmann's interpretation of Gelassenheit as anarchic praxis falls short, he argues, because Gelassenheit 'will not by itself yield up the interactional, normative dimension of politics' (49).

Despite the shortcomings of Heidegger's thought in relation to politics, White finds in the later Heidegger a conception of otherness that he tries to balance against the shortsightedness of Habermas. As he points out, for Habermas 'we are creatures who seek to manipulate things in the world, to understand one another, and to get out from under domination, but we are not creatures who die' (57). Moreover, the fact of our mortality cannot be subsumed under any of the 'interests' that are the basis for Habermas' discourse. There is in Habermas no sense of otherness that would limit our tendency toward 'infinite mastery' that prevails when we are caught up by the responsibility to act.

According to White, the later Heidegger's 'Nähe' (as a 'face-to-faceness' answering to the responsibility to otherness) is just the type of 'care' that would balance Habermas' position without succumbing to postmodern impertinence. He defends Heidegger against Derrida, who sees in Nähe only a reiteration of 'the metaphysics of proximity'. As White points out, Nähe also includes a sense of distance and letting-go, a sense of letting the other be in its difference. Furthermore, as a concrete 'face-to-faceness', Heideggerian nearness can be taken as a reorientation of everyday life. This reorientation entails a sense of moral seriousness that is lacking in the strategies of impertinence and disruption favored by the postmoderns.

White goes on to review the positions of Derrida, Lyotard and Rorty in light of this new sense of care. He notes that Derrida attempts to acknowledge the responsibility to act in his work on friendship, but also that any normative orientation for action is still lacking. Here, he argues, Lyotard has been more successful. White reads Lyotard's theory of the differend as a transference of the sublime from the realm of the monstrous and shocking to the everyday 'happening' of phrases. However, Lyotard's sublime is a face to face confrontation with an abyss that separates heterogeneous genres of discourse. Such an abyss, characterized as a 'nothingness', would render co-ordination of discourses and actions impossible. Rorty also fails to meet the responsibility to act with his suggestion that, in a liberal society, suffering and injustice have only to be noticed to be alleviated. The aesthetic curiosity of the novelist is no substitute for co-ordinated action based upon normative standards. White's new sense of care is based upon concern for our own mortality,

collectively as well as individually. The other ought not be reduced to an 'abyss of nothingness', nor is liberal curiosity about the other's suffering adequate to the sense of finitude that we must experience within ourselves.

In the last two chapters, White applies his interpretation of Heidegger to a discussion of difference feminism and questions of justice. He finds that difference feminism, represented by Carol Gilligan, has affinities with the ambiguity of mood in Heidegger and the sublime in Derrida and Lyotard. The ethic of care in difference feminism, with its injunction to listen to the other, to appreciate the difference of the other, is an appropriate foil for liberal justice, where all cases are supposed to be treated as 'the same'. However, he finds that this ethic cannot completely escape the criticism that it is too closely bound to the sphere of intimate relations, and thus cannot serve as the basis for genuine social interaction.

On the other hand, the affective affinity between care in difference feminism and in Heideggerian nearness leads to the possibility of a step beyond liberal justice. Where liberalism merely tolerates difference, White's expanded ethic of care would foster and delight in difference, while at the same time mourning the fragility and transitoriness of everything we affirm. Such delight in otherness, combined with the sense of our own finitude, would avoid the paternalism of the liberal tradition and its ethic of tolerance. This cultivation of difference would then have to be balanced by normative constraints, for not all forms of otherness ought to be fostered. How this balance between caring for and constraining otherness is to be achieved presents a problematic that is yet to be worked out.

Although White's attempt to formulate a new ethic of care and constraint remains sketchy, it nevertheless suggests a step forward in the current debate. The book is highly recommended for anyone interested in postmodernism and its impact on philosophy, political theory, and literary criticism.

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## Palle Yourgrau

The Disappearance of Time.

New York: Cambridge University Press 1991.

Pp. x + 182.

US \$44.50. ISBN 0-521-41012-6.

P.A. Schilpp's Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist (Open Court Press 1949) contains an article by Kurt Gödel entitled 'A Remark About the Relationship Between Relativity Theory and Idealistic Philosophy'. Gödel is usually construed as arguing in this terse essay that certain novel exact solutions that he discovered to the field equations of the General Theory of Relativity (GTR) show the physical possibility of time travel. In the first half of The Disappearance of Time (DT) Yourgrau makes a convincing case, based on Gödel's unpublished notes, that he was actually arguing for the view that (intuitive, commonsense, A-theoretic, or 'folk') time does not exist. If he held that time does not exist, notes Yourgrau, he would hardly be arguing for the possibility of time travel. 'There is a sense in which Gödel was not suggesting the possibility of genuine time travel in the Gödel universe. His dialectical use of his nonstandard model of the GTR was intended, rather, to deliver the coup de grâce to the notion that relativity theory is in the end compatible with the intuitive conception of the temporal — according to which there exists an objective passing of time' (49).

Here's the argument. A distinctive feature of Gödel universes is that they contain closed timelike loops. Translation: a material body could, subject only to technological limitations, begin a journey at a spacetime point p, move into the future at each point in its journey, and yet return to p. If q is any spacetime point earlier than p, the body can in principle pass through q on its journey back to p. In Gödel universes, then, the two-place relation 'earlier than' is symmetric.

Intuitive time lapses or passes, and in passing it brings into existence one of the many merely possible futures. These are essential features of folk time, but they clearly have no place in a Gödel universe with a symmetric 'earlier than' relation. It is doubtful that our universe is a Gödel universe. If our universe is a model of GTR but is not a Gödel universe, however, then it differs from a Gödel universe, as Gödel noted, in the distribution of matter and its motion. Why should this variation in initial conditions amount to a difference so dramatic that in our world but not in the Gödel universes the parameter t could be given 'the intuitive, contentful interpretation of denoting that successive, unfolding time that issues in objective temporal becoming' (15)? End of argument.

In roughly the first half of *DT* Yourgrau explains how Gödel's secretiveness about his philosophical beliefs led to the standard mis-interpretation of this argument (chapter 1); places Gödel's argument in a larger philosophical context including Parmenides, Kant, and McTaggart (chapter 2); presents the argument sketched above, especially the last modal step, in detail (chapter 3); and finally (chapter 4) confronts the objection that the mere

appearance that intuitive time exists entails that it does exist and contrasts Gödel's views with those (Capek and Stein; he neglects Storrs McCall) who argue that becoming can be incorporated in Minkowski spacetime, the spacetime of the Special Theory of Relativity. Any philosopher interested in time and ontology will find much to chew on in these four chapters.

It is important to emphasize that DT is an essay in metaphysics rather than philosophy of physics. Discussion of GTR is confined to the first three paragraphs of chapter 2. Those wishing a more detailed picture of Gödel universes should consult '"Time Travel" in the Gödel Universe' by David Malament in  $PSA\ 1984$  (East Lansing, MI 1985), which influenced the way I put Gödel's argument.

I will confine myself to one general remark about Yourgrau's reconstruction of Gödel's argument before turning to the latter part of DT. He insists that Gödel's conclusion is that time is 'an illusion'. But should it not really be, rather, that whatever it is that replaces commonsense time in models of GTR lacks certain salient features of commonsense time? If these features are thought of as essential features of time, then Gödel's conclusion might be put dramatically as the claim that (folk) time does not exist. In this light GTR delivers for the temporal what eliminative materialists claim is in principle possible for the mental. Gödel's conclusion could also be put irenically as the claim that time has both globally and locally some features quite different from those which folk theory takes it to have. The less dramatic claim is metaphysically more perspicuous — just as in the case of eliminative materialism, casting its thesis in terms of the replacement of commonsense mental concepts by scientific successor concepts is more illuminating than talk of the 'elimination' or 'disappearance' of the mental.

The second half of *DT* seems markedly less successful than the first. By the end of chapter 4 the reader might conjecture that Yourgrau, following Gödel, takes himself to have successfully demonstrated the illusory nature of (intuitive) time. The point of the last two chapters, however, seems to be that Gödel's conclusion emerges because the Platonistic mathematics used in GTR has a built-in anti-temporal bias. A physics built on Brouwerian intuitionistic mathematics might not prove so hostile to genuine becoming. Perhaps, then,' writes Yourgrau, 'the two perspectives, the intuitionistic and the Platonistic, can be seen to be, in some sense, complementary' (166). Unfortunately these suggestive remarks are entirely programmatic, and some of the arguments that set the stage for them are unsatisfactory.

Chapter 5, for example, is designed to show that two other 'challenges to the objectivity of A-theoretic time' (127) fail. While there are interesting discussions throughout the chapter, the over-all logic of the arguments is defective. First, Yourgrau finds attempts to model the open future in tense logic (inspired by Aristotle's attempt to avoid logical fatalism) inadequate. He discusses in detail a system of tense logic proposed by Richmond Thomason, but concludes that even 'if the world were entirely static —reflecting no A-theoretic temporal becoming at all — it could still satisfy the formal requirements of Thomason's structure' (92).

By Yourgrau's own lights, however, no argument of the kind he considers *could* constitute a challenge to the objectivity of A-theoretic time. He views formalization as an attempt to capture in axioms an intended model. He writes: 'Whereas Hilbert and the formal School view such axioms as implicit definitions that hold by mere stipulation within the system, and that apply to any system of elements that satisfy them, Gödel, with Frege, rejects this approach ... and regards axioms as having a real, extrasystematic content, which, if the axioms are true, correctly describes a genuine (extrasystematic) reality' (80). Yourgrau's sympathies seem to lie with the Gödel/Frege view, from which it follows that even if *every* attempt to formalize an A-theoretic view of time should fail (and Yourgrau considers only one), nothing could be concluded about the coherence of the intended model.

The second challenge is supposed to arise from Hugh Mellor's discussion of demonstratives (or token reflexives) in *Real Time* (Cambridge University Press 1981). Mellor's thesis that tenseless facts constitute the truth conditions of tensed discourse is supposed to rest (in a way not adequately spelled out) on John Perry's criticism of Frege's treatment of demonstratives, and this latter is held to be inadequate because Perry's notion of the role of a demonstrative is somehow confused (125-6). The semantics of demonstratives is not considered in enough detail here for Yourgrau's criticism of Perry to be convincing; and even if it were, it is clear that Mellor did not view his treatment of demonstratives *in itself* as an argument against the A-series. Mellor wrote that 'the existence of tenses if not disproved by showing how to save the phenomena of tense without them' (*Real Time*, p. 33).

In chapter 6 Yourgrau discusses the relation of (intuitive) time to the potential infinite, Kant's Antinomies, and the iterative conception of set. There is also a section on ontology and death. Existence is a property that some beings have for a time, according to Yourgrau, and death, for instance, consists of losing that nice property but not ceasing to be. Gödel is quoted by Wang (in his *Reflections on Kurt Gödel*) as writing that 'Without a next life, the potential of each person and the preparations of this life *make no sense*.' Yourgrau develops but does not defend his Meinongian ontology in order to make metaphysical room for this twist in Gödel's thought, but he is rightly puzzled as to how to reconcile it with Gödel's argument for the ideality of time (157). Grand themes from Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and Wittgenstein are brought into play here, but none of it is as convincing (to a naturalist like me) as a poignant epigram of Pascal's quoted by Yourgrau: 'We never keep to the present … Thus we never actually live, but hope to live' (155).

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