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9 - 3151 Lakeshore Road, Suite 403
Kelowna, BC, Canada V1W 3S9
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E-mail: academicpublishing@shaw.ca
Website: <http://www.academicprintingandpublishing.com>

Publications Mail Registration No. 08491 - ISSN 1206-5269
Agreement number 40032920
© 2008 Academic Printing and Publishing

Published six times a year

Volume XXVIII, No. 6
December • décembre 2008

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James Bohman

Democracy Across Borders:

From Demos to Demoi.

Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2007.

Pp. 227.

US\$35.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-262-02612-3).

This is a stunning contribution to the current discussion on global justice and democracy from an imaginative and brilliant theorist of critical democratic theory. The book is published at a time when even liberal internationalists, such as Thomas Nagel, who broadly follows the Rawlsian tradition, express their puzzlement with the vast and pervading effects of global cooperation, economic and political institutions and the significant fact that state sovereignty and political authority have been radically challenged and transformed. This comes as no surprise when one realizes that, for critics and defenders of the possibility of global justice and democracy alike, the problem and its solution is one of *scale* or *size*. Either we form a conception of cosmopolitan democracy based on a global state institution and universal human rights, or we stay at the level of small, self-governed, communities, that is, states, and abandon any such ambition. This is a very rough description of the dilemma, and one can identify cosmopolitan liberals and libertarians at the first horn, and communitarians and liberal internationalists at the second horn. Bohman's thesis in this book manages to go beyond this dilemma. As Dewey, who Bohman cites extensively with much approval, argues, we do not need more of the same democracy but a whole new conception of it.

Accordingly, the task of the book is clearly to redefine democracy so as to make it suitable for a transnational society, which is quite different from the modern nation-state, and construct at the same time a feasible conception of global justice. The new conceptual term he wants to defend is called *transnational democracy*. Bohman then uses two levels of argument, one descriptive and the other normative, in order to justify the need for such a different kind of democracy. At the descriptive level Bohman tries to characterize the new circumstances of politics: extensive global cooperation, economic interaction, powerful financial markets and financial institutions, denationalization of new international legal regimes. In summary, the new circumstances of politics boil down to (a) intensive interdependence, and (b) transformation of traditional political authority. Intensive interdependence and transformed political authority create weak states and rightless persons.

At the normative level Bohman argues convincingly that the most promising path to respond to the *fact* of globalization, which seems to enjoy the same epistemic status as the Rawlsian 'fact of pluralism', is a republican cosmopolitanism or transnationalism. The republican component of this concept can be found in a conception of political freedom conceived as non-domination, a term distinct from the Berlinian distinction between negative and positive liberty. Bohman draws significantly on Immanuel Kant's cosmopolitanism and Philip Pettit's modern republicanism and, at the same time, makes

a step forward. He defends a conception of political freedom that modifies Pettit's magisterial work and argues that non-domination does not have to be taken only as non-arbitrary interference, something that places it closer to negative freedom, but as a distinct set of normative *powers* established and distributed within a framework of institutions (25-8), a form of substantive freedom which requires not only a redistribution of resources or a contestation of existing rules but the power to *initiate deliberation* (52). Bohman calls this the 'democratic minimum', that is, the normative power of citizens to assign and modify rights themselves and other terms of cooperation. This kind of political freedom is necessary for a *reflexive* democracy.

One last clarification is needed here. As mentioned above the connection between the descriptive and the normative level is not so straightforward. Contemporary cosmopolitans, such as Beitz and Pogge, argue that global interdependence at the empirical level grounds the need for cosmopolitan governance at the normative level. Yet, this move is vulnerable to the naturalistic fallacy. Bohman admits we cannot derive a normative premise about obligations of justice and transnational democracy (23-5) from empirical interdependence. I take it that the middle term in such a syllogism is supplied by an account of *normative interdependence*, whose essential feature is exactly a conception of liberty as non-domination.

The book is comprised of four chapters, an introduction and a conclusion. Briefly, in Chapter 1 Bohman describes the conceptual foundations of transnational democracy by classifying and distinguishing himself from four theoretical alternatives (37-45): Allen Buchanan's minimal cosmopolitanism, Jürgen Habermas' ideal of a self-determining people (that is, a single *demos*, that governs itself by self-legislation), David Held's cosmopolitan self-legislation, and Dryzek's transnational network contestation. In the end, Bohman argues that a conception of global democracy is unattainable and undesirable. Instead, he is going to talk not about democracy, but about *democratization* as a process of political inclusion. Therefore, in Chapter 2 he elaborates a novel account not of a global public sphere, but of a distributive public sphere across borders, currently represented by computer-mediated networks (77). Publics are more essential to achieving the conditions of the possibility of democracy across borders, because they cause the emergence of communicative freedom (79-97). Such a conception of a distributive public sphere is, however, a direct consequence of the fact that global financial regimes and global power itself is being exercised not in a centralized, unified form, but in a decentralized, complex manner. Political authority is radically transformed (64-73). In a transnational polity the assumption of single universal domain is abandoned for a distributive approach that takes the powers of citizenship as distributed across many domains and institutions.

Chapter 3 provides a novel philosophical interpretation of the idea of humanity as a republican-in-spirit political community. This is indeed the most plausible way to argue that only republicanism can provide the best justification of the basic claim that there is an obligation to form a political community *beyond the nation-state* (102). According to Bohman, the right to

membership in a political community is the right to have rights, something he takes from Hannah Arendt, but which he claims to be also a Kantian insight (105-6). To defend such a thesis he establishes a connection between democracy and rights, a connection that shows that democracy is not just instrumental, but intrinsic to rights. It does not simply protect, but *instantiates* them. Thus, humanity, according to Bohman, functions as a *standpoint* of justification by which constitutional orders can be judged as just or unjust, to the extent that they permit or deny the right to appeal to universal principles of freedom and equality. This particular standpoint does not form a first-personal 'we' of popular sovereignty, but a second-personal 'you', which is the addressee of claims that ask for a response and is named in the end the standpoint of the generalized other (118-27). This is the core of Bohman's contribution to democratic theory and the connection between that theory and human rights. Human rights are not just immunities from interference, but are also political rights of membership in the political community of humanity. The argument developed here is perhaps difficult to digest, but worthy of further consideration.

What, then, is transnational democracy, and do we currently have an example of that? Bohman uses the constitutional theory and practice of the emerging European Union polity. The alleged problem of EU's democratic deficit is for Bohman the wrong thing on which to focus. The real question has to address the democratic criterion itself. Chapter 4 argues that the EU suffers from a deliberative rather than a democratic deficit. In the EU the traditional republican principle of the separation of powers has to be understood in terms of a plurality of overlapping processes of distributed will formation (146-7). Accordingly, the European Parliament and the European Court of Human Rights need to have a transnational and not a supranational role. In other words, they should foster deliberation across various sites.

In conclusion, the difference between a nation-state and a system of states that wants to be just is not one of *size*, but of *kind*. This is an extremely rich book, and therefore highly recommendable to both students and scholars of philosophy, political theory, and global studies. It is a product of Bohman's persistent effort to argue that we need some new conceptual machinery and imaginative thought. It also shows that modern republican theory is alive, and it manages to contribute much even to the current debate over global justice and democracy.

Kostas Koukouvelis
University of Crete

Paul Bowman and Richard Stamp, eds.

The Truth of Žižek.

New York: Continuum 2007.

Pp. 276.

US\$120.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-9060-5);

US\$29.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-9061-2).

From Simon Critchley's gratuitous reference to 'fist-fucking' in the first sentence of his Foreword on, this is a depressing, dispiriting volume. As Critchley's reference indicates, the entire aim of the collection seems to be to vulgarise, desubliminate, in the old parlance demystify, the work, and indeed the person, of Slavoj Žižek. The 'truth' of Žižek is understood to correspond with some dark secret, vice or even intellectual fraud he has managed to pull off. Essay after essay accuses him not merely of the usual misreading of others' texts or misunderstanding of their arguments, but of a kind of deceit or deception in using his celebrity status to get books published that do not demonstrate 'even a minimal degree of authority on the subjects they pronounce upon' (62).

Of course, this accusation rings hollow when it is just as certain — this book being the proof of it — that virtually anything written *on* Žižek can also get published. The book misrepresents itself (or is misrepresented) on its back cover as the 'first sustained assessment of the significant impact of Žižek's work.' Disregarding the work of Sarah Kay, Tony Myers, Glyn Daly, Matthew Sharpe and others, who are disqualified on the *ad hominem* grounds of having received some input from Žižek — in that case, what about this book, which features as well a response from him? — what about the work of Ian Parker, one of the very contributors to this volume?

There is a plea by one of the contributors here for the resistance of the academic practice of citation against the leveling forces of neo-liberalism (69), but this back cover reference is exactly a symptom of this book's capitulation to these same forces. In a single moment, all the previous history of the reception and evaluation of Žižek is dismissed by the demands of making each new product appear unique within the intellectual market. The editors show what can only be called bad faith in allowing this claim to stand. Needless to say, most of us who write textbooks or put together compilations based on the work of major thinkers would do the same, but the stakes are higher in this collection than in most books. For one of the criticisms made throughout is that it is Žižek who is not reflexive enough concerning his own practice. To give just two examples, the editors in their introduction speak of the way that Žižek is caught up in a 'complex set of apparatuses, which are not merely disciplinary and institutional but bound up with commercial and market-driven imperatives' (6), and Leigh Clare Le Berge claims that Žižek's 'prolific, repetitive, regularised oeuvre should be understood as a [necessarily unconscious to him] writing cure' (11).

At the end of the book Žižek ends his long defence of himself, rather good-humouredly in the circumstances entitled 'With Defenders Like These, Who

Needs Attackers?', with the question: 'At this point, when I would have to enquire into where and what my critics' hamsters are, I prefer to stop' (254). By 'hamster' there, he means that fetish object that allows us to accept the knowledge of how things are, but without really accepting it. And, undoubtedly, the hamster Žižek is referring to with regard to his critics is Žižek himself. It is his critics' displacement of criticism on to Žižek, the accusations they make of his cynical publishing strategy, that allows them to forget (even when they appear to acknowledge) their own cynicism, their own entanglement in the capitalist machinery of academic publishing (indeed, because they are less empowered than Žižek, their own deeper subjection to it).

Again, the contributors' lack of self-reflection is especially telling insofar as this is one of the constant criticisms they make of Žižek. Le Berge accuses him of maintaining a transferential relationship to a Big Other he would otherwise deny (21). Jeremy Valentine disparages him for wishing to attribute to capitalism a 'stability' and 'certainty' (181) it does not have. And Bowman contends that throughout his work Žižek draws upon a 'supplement' (35) of deconstruction he seeks to distinguish himself from. All of these criticisms of Žižek — taking the form that Žižek falsely disavows that with which he is in secret complicity — make a revealing contrast with what Parker sees as a strategy of 'over-identification' in Žižek, which takes the system 'more seriously than the system takes itself' (148), but which Parker nevertheless also finds insufficient.

There are perhaps three essays in *The Truth of Žižek* that *do* deserve serious response (though they are not the same as those Žižek chooses to respond to in the 'Afterword'). Both Mark Devenney and Oliver Marchant accuse Žižek of a flawed conception of the act. Devenney sees Žižek falling into a certain 'passion for the real' (46), the fantasy of an act that could strip the body politic of all 'infirmities' in an effectively depoliticised notion of economy (54). Marchant accuses Žižek of eliding the distinction between the ontic (politics, acting) and the ontological (the political, the act) in thinking the act as a pure decision that takes place outside of all strategic considerations. In this, Marchant argues, Žižek misreads his stated inspiration in Lenin, who in fact was always aware of the real-world dimensions of the act. Richard Stamp, for his part, takes up one of the most discussed aspects of Žižek's writing practice: his prodigious use of examples, from both high and low culture, to 'illustrate' his ideas. Commentators on Žižek — and even Žižek himself — have tended to understand Žižek's use of examples in either one of two ways: as essentially distracting from an otherwise unchanging argument, or as suggesting that Žižek's argument is nothing more than a distracted stringing together of examples. Stamp ingeniously proposes that, insofar as what Žižek's examples are meant to illustrate is their failure adequately to express their notion, there is ultimately no need for examples in Žižek's work: the same Hegelian 'lesson' is repeated no matter what Žižek writes about (170).

Žižek in his 'Afterword' does not always reply well to the criticisms made of him. In response to Marchant's objections, he argues that he does bring

together the levels of the ontic and the ontological: 'This synthesis [of Event and Being] is already the Event itself' (222). This responds to Marchant's claim that all acting presumes the act, but it does not respond to his other argument, which is that there must remain a certain distinction between the ontic and the ontological, that there are actings that take place outside of the act (109). It is also fair to say that, in response to Berge's argument concerning Žižek's apparent approval of sexual harassment, it is not enough to say that the real harassment consists in becoming the 'focus of the other's desire' (208), for Žižek does indeed speak of the necessity of having to make a potentially unwanted pass if any sexual transaction is to occur. Žižek, however, is excellent in response to Stamp, arguing — as he has done elsewhere, for example with regard to the relationship between the Particular and the Universal in the chapter 'Quantum Physics with Lacan' of *The Indivisible Remainder* — that it is a matter of a number of universal notions circulating around a single example (234). And this is consistent with a whole line of argumentation in Žižek's 'Afterword', asserting against his critics that the Real (whether understood as capitalism, class or even philosophy) is not some overarching conceptual category that is in common to all of the various attempts to symbolise it, but is only these attempts themselves: just as they can only be explained as the successive attempts to respond to some Real, so this Real can only be seen through — and does not lie somewhere behind — these various attempts.

At one point in the 'Afterword' Žižek argues — and this is precisely to make the connection between philosophy and the act — that the 'only thing that really matters is the inherent strength and quality of the line of thought' (216). In other words, against the whole academic exercise (of the better essays here) of criticising Žižek for misreading his sources, or against the insinuations (leveled by the worse essays) of some personal failing on his part, it is in terms of *something else* that we must assess Žižek. 'Significant' thought, like the act, sets its own co-ordinates, determines the criteria according to which it must be judged. Everything else, although necessary, is a fall from the 'truth' of this thought. Sometimes reading this book, one feels there is often nothing more being manifested than a jealousy of or resentment towards Žižek. Like that envy analysed so long ago by Rousseau, if the contributors cannot have 'it', then they do not want others to have 'it' either (230). And in some regards this is the consequence of a kind of formal 'democracy' in academic publishing, when a book like this can stage itself as a dialogue between equals.

Rex Butler

The University of Queensland

Matthew Calarco and Steven DeCaroli, eds.

Giorgio Agamben: Sovereignty and Life.

Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2007.

Pp. 289.

US\$60 (cloth ISBN13: 978-0-804-75049-3);

US\$21.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-804-75050-9).

Doubtless, Giorgio Agamben's work in political philosophy has left its mark in Anglo-American academia. Beginning in the mid-1990s with the publication of his influential *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Agamben has fundamentally contributed to a fundamental rethinking of the nexus between sovereignty and life, in such a way as to reinterpret the very history of both concepts and their applicability. Particularly at a time when contemporary sovereign practices create geographic spaces of legal indeterminacy and strip individuals of juridical status, Agamben's work provides an important conceptual apparatus for addressing these events.

The volume reviewed here, comprising a series of essays by prominent political theorists and philosophers, aims at critically reading Agamben's arguments that touch on the central concepts of sovereignty and life. Part 1, consisting of essays devoted to sovereignty, incisively reads Agamben's assumptions and implications by drawing attention to various conceptual limitations that inhere them. Ernesto Laclau's essay attempts to problematize the three main themes underpinning Agamben's *Homo Sacer*: the constitutive relationship between sovereignty and the ban; the essence of sovereignty as the fabrication of bare life, a life devoid of social or political relations; the camp as the central space for the conjunction between biopolitics and sovereign power. For Laclau, the first thesis fails to take into account the fact that being subject to the ban, or being outside the juridical order, does not imply the total absence of law as such. Following the work of Frantz Fanon, Laclau argues that marginal groups may themselves operate according to their own laws as a means of challenging the dominant juridical regime. Furthermore, Agamben's notion of bare life remains a problematic abstraction, one in which the concrete examples informing Agamben's account reveal a more complicated series of social practices and antagonisms. Laclau also points to the fact that the inclusive/exclusive opposition, as the structuring principle of sovereignty, is much more multifaceted than Agamben makes out. Rather than drawing an extremely constricted understanding of sovereignty as something intrinsically moving towards totalitarian domination, Laclau argues that 'sovereignty should be conceived as hegemony' (21), in that the possibilities of a modern and immanent emancipation remain — something that Agamben cannot accept. Thus, Laclau finishes by flatly stating that 'political nihilism is his [Agamben's] ultimate message' (22).

The charge of nihilism against Agamben is also present in William Rasch's excellent essay. Rasch questions Agamben's own response to the predicament of the (bio)political by arguing that the totalizing and messianic (Benjamin) attempt to expiate the guilt of political action (what Carl Schmitt himself is

ultimately guilty of), the attempt to think community beyond law, is nonetheless itself a kind of nihilism. The imperfections of human community that the messianic seeks to exuviate turns on itself at the very moment when it comes into contact with an outside. And, Rasch asks, if a messenger comes into contact with this community, is the threat so great as to tempt us, in order to save the community, to kill the messenger? 'If so, what kind of killing would this be? Would it be a sacrifice? A homicide? Or would it be a killing that was neither a sacrifice nor a homicide?' (i.e. the *homo sacer*) (108).

William Connolly's critique of Agamben revolves around the possibility, or lack thereof, of transcending the very 'logic' of his structural arguments in which biopolitics, sovereignty and the sacred form an unassailable matrix. While Connolly points to a paradox of sovereignty — the sovereign as the guarantor of law necessarily lies both inside and outside the juridical regime — his main argument stresses that the paradoxes informing Agamben's argument (and the arguments of other social theorists, for that matter) rest on an inadequate attempt to compress the 'biopolitical culture' into 'consummate life' (31). Once one loosens the boundaries of logical constructions then possibilities of resistance emerge, possibilities which are seen in particular in the context of globalization. At the same time, Jenny Edkins points to certain aspects of Agamben's thought which might allow for genuine political praxis. By looking at the form-of-life beyond the bare life created under sovereign power, Edkins detects in Agamben the possibility of a 'whatever' politics, a politics in which it is possible to define political life outside the confines of sovereignty. To read Agamben in such a way, however, is to push his arguments further, to the point 'that any drawing of lines between forms of life has to be refused . . . Such drawing of lines constitutes a sovereign move' (89). Edkins' reading of Agamben opens up a seemingly self-evident distinction between human and animal that remains much less debated in canonical political thought.

Antonio Negri's essay, introducing Part 2 of the volume, attempts to situate Agamben's thought within contemporary philosophical debates about the three H's (Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger) and within the intellectual climate of the 1960s and 70s in Italy. The problem of Being in modernity is the central concern throughout. Agamben, Negri asserts, should be read as an interlocutor of Derrida, Deleuze and Foucault, particularly the latter when Agamben's *Homo Sacer* ontologizes biopolitics into metaphysics. The reason for Agamben's need to incorporate the biopolitical is 'Agamben's decision to test himself . . . stem[ming] from contradictions within his thought . . . from his irresoluteness in considering the dimensions and (positive) powers of being' (120). What Negri ultimately sees as the 'neutralization' of biopolitics because of its separation from the productive potentialities of being, gives way to an incompatibility between the biopolitical and biopower. This results in the fact that 'innovation, progressive development, and the productive excesses of life become useless and irksome' which is not dissimilar from the critiques of other contributors (123). When it comes to the concepts of biopolitics and biopower, Paul Patton's essay is instrumental in probing the ways

and implications of Agamben's attempt to move beyond Michel Foucault's original formulations. Patton argues convincingly that Agamben conflates bare life with the life of the *homo sacer*, where the *homo sacer* is bare life 'but . . . caught up in a particular "status"' (210). It then becomes a question as to how that status operates throughout the history of political theory and practice. Patton discusses the intricate arguments present in Foucault, to determine whether Agamben's 'correction' is ultimately necessary, in order to understand where in historical praxis or thought the transformation from sovereign power to biopower occurred, and when biopolitics potentially took hold. Between Foucault's 'fine-grained, contextual, and historical analysis', and Agamben's 'conceptual fundamentalism according to which the meaning of concepts is irrevocably determined by their origin,' Patton detects not so much a necessary correction to Foucault on Agamben's part as Agamben's own need to revolutionize and transcend Western politics (218).

Even so, this volume's paper by Agamben entitled 'The Work of Man' perhaps answers in part some of the criticisms present in these essays. Departing from Aristotle's notion of work and potentiality, Agamben argues that the Aristotelian legacy has understood politics as necessarily a kind of activity, namely, the excellent manner of doing politics — the being-at-work, which itself defines the nature of life in the polis and inexorably leads to the biopolitical terrors of modern life. Following Averroes and especially Dante's *Monarchy*, Agamben argues for a different interpretation of Aristotle, one that 'defines human rationality [in terms of] its potential — that is, its contingent and discontinuous character' (9). By looking at the potentiality for the multitude in Dante, the universality of mankind, not simply through a traditional conception of work towards a particular end, but rather through a kind of inactivity, Agamben argues that this reconceptualization gives at least the potentiality of an authentic universal politics. However, Agamben cautions that, 'what other consequences thought can draw from the awareness of its own essential inactivity . . . [such that action] will not fall back into the assumption of the biopolitical task — this must for now remain in suspense.' Nonetheless, he continues, 'What is certain . . . is that it will be necessary to put aside the emphasis on labor and production and to attempt to think the multitude as a figure, if not of inaction, at least of a working that in every act realizes its own *Shabbat* and in every work is capable of exposing its own inactivity and its own potentiality' (10).

The great merit of this collection of essays is the analytical rigor and depth that each author brings to the table. In light of the continuing popularity of Agamben's work, in light of a certain emulation or a co-opting of method that refracts discussions of contemporary political practices, this volume is doubtless a necessary complement to anyone who utilizes Agamben's writings. Notwithstanding the force of their criticisms of Agamben, the present essays pay the highest respect for his importance in political theory and philosophy.

Alex Barder

Johns Hopkins University

François Cusset

French Theory: How Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States.

Trans. Jeff Fort. Minneapolis:

University of Minnesota Press 2008.

Pp. 408.

US\$75.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8166-4732-3);

US\$24.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-8166-4733-0).

Cusset's important and widely discussed *French Theory: Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Cie et les mutations de la vie intellectuelle aux États-Unis* has now been translated into English. It's a valuable contribution to 'the epidemiology of ideas' — echoing its French subtitle's reference to 'mutations'. Focusing on seven authors (namely, Barthes, Baudrillard, Deleuze, Derrida, Foucault, Guattari, and Lyotard), its central topic is two-fold: 1) in what ways was French Theory taken up in the United States, and 2) why did it have such enormous impact there?

With respect to the first question, Cusset, in a wide-ranging survey, illustrates the American reception of French Theory not just in literature departments, but in identity politics, pop art, punk rock, and much else besides. This part of the book is (mostly) fun and fascinating, sprinkled with anecdotes about how academic stars such as Deleuze, Foucault, Guattari and Lyotard socialized with the likes of William Burroughs, Bob Dylan, and Allen Ginsberg. (Sadly, the candid photographs included in the French version have been omitted from this translation.) Also described in gory detail are fierce battles: over the 'industrialized university', over the Western canon, etc. Eventually, Cusset maintains, despite the occasional 'reaction' and 'backlash', French Theory more or less colonized the human sciences generally: cultural history, film theory, legal studies, museology, theology, women's studies, etc.

The most thought-provoking material addresses the second question. Cusset urges that there was a 'systematic misreading' behind French Theory's success. It genuinely is a *mutation*: despite its French lineage, really it is 'Made in the USA'; and it departs not just accidentally and in details from the original philosophical texts that inspired it, but structurally and deeply. Crucially, it is precisely this misreading which facilitated its extraordinary spread: to oversimplify, Cusset suggests that in order to render it useful (e.g., teachable, readily applicable to art works, and practical as a political 'tool kit'), American academics all too frequently merely quoted from the original philosophical texts, forged a series of 'isms' out of the unstable aporias to be found therein, and ultimately crafted prescriptions not far from 'eight simple rules for postmodern political activism' or 'three easy steps to creating deconstructive art'. The result was not so much *une philosophie française* merely taken up in the U.S., but rather, as per the original's English-language title, French Theory. Cusset sums it up nicely: 'the very logic of French theoretical texts prohibits certain uses of them, uses that were often necessary, however,

to their American readers in order to *put the texts to work*. It is an example of the recognized interplay between betrayal and reappropriation' (278).

Having described the book's main questions and theses, I turn to evaluation. The book's greatest strength, at least for a reader such as myself, is that it explains at least in part the abiding cross-talk between French Theory and Anglo-American philosophy. My fellow analytic philosophers are notorious for complaining that French Theory is unclear, sloppy, and thin on arguments. More fundamentally, one can't help but worry that French Theory has never seriously questioned the empirical soundness of its proto-scientific roots: Freud's psychoanalysis, Marx's economics, and Saussure's linguistics. Equally notoriously, such complaints seem to carry no weight. Indeed, they are heard by those who do French Theory as reactionary, a backlash, a crass attempt to maintain hegemony. (In fact, even Cusset himself, when he addresses criticisms of French Theory, seemingly overlooks the possibility that one could object to its tenets as incorrect, based on faulty preconceptions, or merely badly argued for; instead, he assumes that all opposition to Foucault *et al.* must be politically/culturally motivated.)

Why such profound and long-lasting cross talk? It may be Cusset's most important contribution to have highlighted at least one of its roots. He emphasizes that French Theory had its origins in surrealist avant-garde art and radical political activism. Related to this, it rose to prominence not *in spite of* its erudite/exotic language, its playfulness, its 'freedom-seeking experimentation' (70), but *because of* these. To critique French Theory by means of 'clear, careful, empirically-grounded arguments' is, then, to miss a big part of the point. Put more grandly: as Cusset lays things out, if there is any kind of genuine disagreement between Anglo-American philosophy and French Theory, it's not over claims such-and-such. Rather, any 'disagreement' is more properly a contemporary flare up of the battle between Enlightenment and Romanticism; or maybe even better, of the 'quarrel', familiar since Plato, between the Philosophers and the Poets.

Now for the negatives. For analytically-inclined readers like myself, it's a disadvantage of the book that it isn't merely about French Theory, but is itself, stylistically, very much in its same vein. The troubles with style appear at both the level of vocabulary and of sentence structure. Cusset's word choice is often esoteric to the point of being exclusionary: e.g., rather than saying that American college life is more fun than hard work, he writes that it is 'more ludic than Stakhanovite' (35). Equally, his prose is often unnecessarily tangled and opaque, as in 'the double, convergent ambition of politicizing certain Lacanian theses and examining the psychic implications of Foucauldian politics creates, between these two remote poles — the psyche and polis, the process of subjectification and the modes of power's circulation — a zone of indistinction, neglected and incompletely covered . . .' (197). This gets in the way of understanding not just Cusset's answers to the two central questions of his book, but even, for those who aren't antecedently familiar with it, what French Theory *consists in*: unfortunately, one who doesn't already know what Foucault *et al.* have to say won't learn it here.

Turning from matters of style to substance, the fundamental weakness is a lack of reliability. Cusset's epidemiological study purports to describe the specific ways in which French theory was received; and he urges that its dominance was nearly absolute. There are two features of the book which render his claims less credible than they might otherwise have been. First, there are small lapses. I mention two of dozens. Cusset refers to the 'generational grammar' of Zellig Harris and Noam Chomsky ('grammaire générationnelle' in the French original, p. 110). That should of course be *generative* grammar. And he recounts a 1985 visit by Hillis Miller and Geoffrey Hartman to 'the University of Montevideo'. But there was no such place in 1985. Knowing something about linguistics and about Uruguay, I happened to catch these and other specific slips. Not a serious problem, to be sure — except that, induction tells me, there must be many such errors, unnoticed by me because in domains where I lack expertise. These are errors of detail; the sort of thing that a competent fact-checker would have caught. (French Theorists in the U.S. might abjure the very idea of a 'competent fact-checker'; but Cusset, aligning himself instead with Philosophers from France, presumably would not.) The second worry about reliability, however, runs deeper. Cusset ultimately suggests that French Theory came to dominate the American Academy in general. Yet he seems to me to be drawing upon a biased sample. It's plausible that those domains Cusset really knows well were heavily influenced by French Theory; but that's arguably because he knows a domain well only if it was heavily influenced by French Theory. One example: he suggests that those who early on co-opted the Derridean program were 'the most brilliant professors of their generation' (114). Only someone with a very literature-centric point of view could make such a claim: what of Francis Crick, Gerald Edelman, Murray Gell-Mann, Jane Goodall, Donald Hebb, Linus Pauling or Edward O. Wilson, just to name a few? Or again, in Chapter 4 Cusset dismisses Anglo-American philosophy as having two branches: the cult of ordinary language, and neo-conservative logical positivism. Fifty years ago, such an oversimplification would have been uncharitable but forgivable. Nowadays, anyone who truly believes this is, *ipso facto*, not in a position to draw conclusions about the intellectual life of the American academy.

Though not always clear and reliable, Cusset's book is well worth reading nonetheless. It describes the remarkable trajectory of French Theory not only in certain sectors of the Academy, but also in pop culture and politics. At the same time, it highlights its (to me) unfamiliar artistic and political roots. More importantly, in doing so it plausibly suggests that 'French Theory' was neither French nor, ultimately, a philosophical theory narrowly construed. Finally, it provides a novel and intriguing account of why, precisely because of its 'mestizo pedigree', it was able to proliferate so widely and so rapidly in the United States.

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**Hubert L. Dreyfus and
Mark A. Wrathall, eds.**

*A Companion to Phenomenology and
Existentialism.*

Malden, MA: Blackwell 2006.

Pp. 622.

US\$175.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-1077-8);

US\$49.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-9113-5).

‘Phenomenology is alive’, writes François-David Sebbah in this new addition to the Blackwell Companions to Philosophy series (41). And indeed, to judge from the great diversity of applications of phenomenology showcased in the third and strongest part of this book — in entries on neuroscience (Ratcliffe), cognitive science (Andler), medicine (Svenaeus), ecology (Thomson), and feminism (Heinämaa) — phenomenology has never been more relevant. From the perspective of this substantial volume, we are entering a new age of phenomenology, the age of interdisciplinary phenomenology. A pragmatic spirit that is strange to much of historical phenomenology animates many of the contributions to this book. Dreyfus and Wrathall want to convince us that phenomenology can get things done. ‘It no longer seems pressing to decide to what extent existentialism can be phenomenological, or whether phenomenology leads one inevitably to existentialist views on the self and the world . . . the ultimate compatibility of the movements is resolved in practice’ (5).

That analysts, sociologists and scientists read phenomenology (or at least do something like phenomenology) is a sign of health. The sterile continental-analytic impasse survives only as an institutional ideology, no longer as a legitimate philosophical distinction. (Was it *ever* a philosophical distinction?) But there is so much more to phenomenology than that which finds application in the other sciences. The original impulse of phenomenology was to reclaim the word ‘science’ for a much wider range of phenomena than those which are studied in the positive or ontic sciences. To give an account of lived experience in non-distortive language — that was Husserl’s program and the early Heidegger’s guiding star. The impossibility of this seemingly reasonable task led to the twentieth-century existentialist movement. But it also generated hermeneutics and deconstruction, vast areas of phenomenologically-based theory that are under-represented in this volume.

The book is composed of thirty-nine solid contributions by well-known academics. As a guide to the current literature, the book is invaluable. It is divided into three parts: Phenomenology, Existentialism, and Contemporary Issues in Phenomenology and Existentialism. There are some noteworthy entries. For instance, Lohmar’s piece on categorical intuition is a must-read for anyone who has ever puzzled over why Heidegger made such a fuss about the concept (he regarded it as Husserl’s great breakthrough). Wertz’ excellent summary of the history of the relationship between psychology and phenomenology makes sense of the little known Brentano-Freud-Husserl triangle. Freud and Husserl agreed that the psychic cannot be reduced to the physical

(but on almost nothing else). They both learned this from their mutually beloved teacher, Brentano. Thomson's entry on environmental philosophy sums up nicely why phenomenology is so relevant to ecology: environmentalists are in broad agreement that the root of environmental degradation lies in the mind-world and fact-value dichotomies, metaphysical positions that have been problematized by phenomenology for over a century. It is fascinating to learn in the chapter by Andler that cognitive science is now turning to phenomenology because phenomenology's early objections to AI have come true: a disembodied, de-contextualized information processor, i.e., a computer, is not intelligent.

Dreyfus' pioneer work on phenomenology and artificial intelligence has inspired this volume. His is a particular approach to phenomenology, one that highlights the applicability of phenomenology in the other sciences. The divide between phenomenology and science, and the related divide between continental and analytical philosophy, is underplayed. In contemporary French phenomenology, the trend goes in quite the opposite direction. It is not that French phenomenology is not scientific; it is that it is written in such a way that no scientist could possibly understand it. To be sure some of this literature is included here. Sebbah's competent survey of the terrain in his article 'French Phenomenology' tracks the history of how the French took the torch of phenomenology from the Germans, and have kept it burning brightly ever since.

Existentialism has an ambiguous relationship to phenomenology. Is it a reaction to phenomenology, a rejection of its effort to give a scientific account of immediate experience? Or is it a development of themes intrinsic to phenomenology? This ambiguity is reflected in the peculiarly functional nature of the contributions on existentialist themes in this volume. Rather than a literary movement, which it largely was, existentialism is treated here as a theoretical position. Certainly it became a theory in Sartre's oft-quoted formulas. But it seems unfair to reduce Kierkegaard's and Dostoevsky's many-sided reflections on psychological life to theories of the self, as Dreyfus does in his piece, 'The Roots of Existentialism'.

Why in the mid-twentieth century did phenomenology turn to the language of literature rather than to science in order to elaborate its themes? Dreyfus and Wrathall are clearly interested in rethinking this move. But is something in danger of being forgotten in this rush to realize Husserl's dream of collaborative scientific work? The early Heidegger turned to Kierkegaard and mystical literature to elaborate a method of speaking of phenomena without prescribing in advance the meanings of his terms. He called his method 'formal indication.' It uses indirectly communicative language, under-determined terms which depend upon performative application to be understood. This movement, which seems to make collaborative scientific work impossible, is deliberately underplayed in most of the entries in this book.

The volume is certainly long enough. There is much on Heidegger in here, a fair bit on Husserl, a nod at the big French figures (Merleau-Ponty, Sartre), but few others are dealt with in any detail: What about Scheler, Ar-

end, Henry and Marion? Surely they deserve more than passing reference? Also conspicuous by their absence are the voices of postmodernity: Gadamer, Ricoeur, Derrida, Foucault, etc. To be sure these figures made their contributions outside of institutionalized phenomenology. Yet their work would not have been possible without phenomenology; they therefore legitimately belong to a survey of its history and reception.

This book should be titled 'A Companion to Applied Phenomenology'. It could then take its place beside Moran's two companion volumes, *The Phenomenology Reader* and *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Routledge, 2000). The last in particular, which comes out in a new edition this year, is the definitive historical reference work.

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Dan Egonsson

Preference and Information.

Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2007.

Pp. 163.

US\$99.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-7546-5725-5).

Discussions of well-being often tread on well-worn tracks: they present the main alternative theories, reject all but one of them by appealing to well-known problems, and then sketch the author's favorite version of the one remaining theory. There tends to be little critical analysis of the rejected alternatives. These alternatives usually include the *full information account*, on which, roughly, well-being consists in the satisfaction of informed and rational preferences, which are specified by an information requirement.

Egonsson's book is a welcome exception to this trend. It is an in-depth study of the information requirement, showing not only that a full information account has more going for it than it might seem, but also that its problems are much more interesting than they are often presented as being.

The book begins with one of the standard problems. Suppose that after careful consideration you choose to become a philosopher. Your life goes well and your career turns out to be as you expected. Nevertheless, as the years pass, you become more and more dissatisfied. This example poses a problem for preference satisfaction theories, since even though your preference is satisfied, your life does not go as well as it could.

A careful formulation of the information requirement should be able to avoid this problem. Egonsson offers a number of useful distinctions and discusses at length different ways the requirement can be developed. For

instance, any adequate formulation must specify both *quantitative* and *qualitative* elements of the requirement. Quantitatively, the body of beliefs on which a preference is based must contain all relevant true beliefs — you must have knowledge of all the relevant facts. Qualitatively, the information must be represented in a manner that is sufficiently vivid. But sometimes too much or too vivid information can cause problems: you may rationally prefer not to have all the information when you attempt an achievement in the face of great adversity, since an accurate knowledge of all the difficulties may put you off. If you imagine the workings of human metabolism all too vividly, it may produce a neurosis such that you find yourself unable to attend and enjoy dinner parties.

The first few chapters of the book proceed by presenting such examples and refining the information requirement in their light. Soon, however, Egonsson is led to broader issues. There are short discussions of value incommensurability, the moral relevance of future desires and discounting future preferences, different conceptions of rationality and practical reasoning, as well as many other topics.

Indeed, therein lies the greatest difficulty with the book. Egonsson covers a lot of ground at a very fast pace that often leaves the reader lost and disoriented. It is sometimes difficult to see the direction in which the discussion is heading. Some threads in the argument are dropped and picked up later without reminder to the reader of the details. As a matter of fact, it might be worth beginning the book by reading the first section of Chapter 11, which provides a summary of the main arguments. Even though it assumes familiarity with the ideas of the previous chapters, it may give some sense of where the book is going.

In later chapters, the discussion is broadened even more, and these problems are exacerbated. For instance, Egonsson makes the well-known distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic value, and argues that there is a further distinction between weak and strong intrinsic value. If something is strongly intrinsically valuable, then it's valuable for its intrinsic properties; if something is weakly intrinsically valuable, then, in Egonsson's definition, 'we value them *for* their intrinsic properties, but only in certain contexts and under certain circumstances' (150; also 86-90). But this seems to overlook the distinction between the questions of what it is in virtue of which something is valuable, and what it is for which we value something. Something can be intrinsically or extrinsically valuable on the one hand, and it can be valued for its intrinsic or extrinsic properties, on the other. These are different. The aim of Egonsson's distinction is to show that intrinsic preferences can also be irrational, but the distinction between weak and strong intrinsic value does not provide a stable foundation for this.

Worse yet, some of the examples Egonsson uses to illustrate the distinction are puzzling. For instance, he suggests that human beings who are not persons have intrinsic value in virtue of being human — and that value depends on these humans' *lack* of personhood. Humans who are also persons, in contrast, lack this value (although they have value as persons). Thus, hu-

mans who are not persons have weak intrinsic value (82-4). But it is entirely unclear why being human confers this sort of value on those who are not persons, but not on those who are also persons. Why don't persons also have value as human beings, in addition to the value they have in virtue of being persons? And why is the lack of personhood supposed to be an *extrinsic* property? The lack of a property is not an extrinsic property.

The final chapters consider what Egonsson calls the problem of hypothetical approval, which concerns the normative role of informed preferences. For instance, should we take into account the preferences that a terminally ill and incompetent patient actually has, or the preferences that she would have if she could form preferences, or the preferences that she would have if she was informed and rational? Egonsson argues that there is a conflict between the information requirement and autonomy, that we have to distinguish between preference and consent, and that we should give precedence to rational consent, rather than informed preference. But it is already widely accepted that there can be conflicts between what a patient autonomously wants and what would best promote her well-being. Why is hypothetical approval supposed to pose a special problem for the full information account?

Nevertheless, there is a lot to recommend in Egonsson's book for the reader interested in well-being and rationality, despite its breakneck speed and often careless argumentation. Perhaps it is best to see it as a starting point for further development of the information requirement, rather than a polished account of it.

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Rocco J. Gennaro, ed.

The Interplay of Consciousness and Concepts.

Exeter: Imprint Academic 2007.

Pp. 253.

US\$34.90 (paper ISBN-13: 978-1-84540-087-3).

Faithful to its title, this book comprises a collection of papers dedicated to elucidating the connection between concepts and consciousness. Noting the recent emergence of a vast literature on these topics, editor Gennaro acknowledges the purpose of this collection as filling the gap in explicitly relating the two areas of research. With topics ranging from conceptualism and representationalism to animal cognition, concept acquisition, and issues in psychopathology, this collection of papers promotes an interdisciplinary approach in furnishing answers to these and other related problems.

In an exciting paper, 'The Object Properties Model of Object Perception', Jose Luis Bermudez proposes to understand object perception in terms of perceptual sensitivity to higher-order object properties. Arguing that understanding an object as a co-instantiated cluster of features is not sufficient to explain perception, Bermudez suggests that a complete account requires perceptual sensitivity to such higher-order object properties as object permanence, impenetrability, or mass. Drawing on motor skills and connectionist models to explain the implicit knowledge of some such properties in the early stages of child development, Bermudez argues that his solution explains perceptual development without crediting the child with complex theoretical knowledge. Such implicit knowledge, stored in graded patterns of neural connections, is a function of early experience and must be understood as practical expectations about the behavior of objects rather than explicit, inferred theoretical knowledge developed at a later stage.

The only drawback of the paper by David H. Rakinson is its noncommittal title, 'Is Consciousness in Its Infancy in Infancy?' Somewhat concordant with the discussion of Bermudez, Rakinson argues that, prior to the commencement of linguistic labeling (the naming spurt), infants' early concepts are grounded in perceptual association of surface features, reflecting inaccessible procedural rather than accessible declarative knowledge. Drawing on recent empirical tests conducted with 14-, 18-, and 22-month-old infants, Rakinson contradicts some research conclusions, arguing that infants' early level of competence with mathematics, categorization, and induction is better explained as imitation driven by perceptual cues, rather than as meaningful decisions resulting from perceptual analysis.

'Using Regulatory Focus to Explore Implicit and Explicit Processing in Concept Learning', a paper by Arthur B. Markman et al., presents conclusions of their research into the influence of task reward structure and subjects' motivational regulatory focus on concept learning. Drawing on experimental results, the authors argue that the fit or mismatch between a subject's motivational focus (either avoidance or promotion) and the task reward structure (either losses/non-losses or gains/non-gains) determines which cognitive systems are brought to bear on the task of conceptualization. Under regulatory misfit, e.g., when a subject with motivational focus to avoid losses performs a classification task that rewards gains, the concept learning is a largely unconscious, procedure-based process; under regulatory fit, it is a largely conscious and flexible hypothesis-testing process. While regulatory mismatch improves subject's performance in information-integration categorization tasks, regulatory fit does so in rule-based categorization. The approach used allows us to tease apart conscious and unconscious processes involved in cognitive tasks and, in conjunction with fMRI, promises to illuminate the brain regions involved in explicit processing.

In 'The Riches of Experience', Philippe Chuard argues that the informational richness of perceptual experience evident from introspection remains a serious challenge to conceptualism, which is the thesis that the representational content of experience is determined by the subject's conceptual capaci-

ties. The author argues that three strategies of using informational richness to undermine conceptualism fail: Dretske's distinction between digital and analog encoding of informational content fails to show that analog encoding of perceptual information is necessarily non-conceptual. The argument suggesting that the failures to memorize longer data strings reflect failures to conceptualize the data is a non sequitur. The argument that the subject's recollection of elements of the scene unnoticed during experience shows that these elements were perceived but not conceptualized is rebuked as begging the question: if elements are recollected, they had been noticed. Chuard argues that the conceptualist position nevertheless faces an explanatory challenge: it must plausibly and coherently explain how a subject can deploy a vast range of distinct spatial concepts in perceiving a highly complex scene.

John Beeckman's paper, 'Can Higher-Order Representation Theories Pass Scientific Muster?', evaluates HOR (Higher-Order Representation) theories, which explain conscious brain states as first-order states monitored by higher-order states. Indirectly addressing Chuard's concerns, Beeckman argues that experimental evidence for parallel processing and the existence of conceptual short-term memory (CSTM) linked to a semantic engine allow Rosenthal's Higher-Order Thought (HOT) theory to explain the mechanism and speed of processing the sensory contents of information-rich first order states into conceptual, semantic form. Arguing that higher-order perception theory (HOP) is not significantly different from HOT and its various forms, Beeckman maintains that most HOR theorists face the challenge of cognitive overload exemplified in representing and binding detailed chromatic information. He argues that this challenge can be met with ensemble concepts, concepts signaling a chromatic clustering of shades within a segmented region of the visual field.

In 'Concept Empiricism and the Vehicles of Thought' Daniel Weiskopf criticizes the view that all thoughts (Strong Global Empiricism) or some thoughts (Strong Local Empiricism) are internally reactivated traces of perceptions. Drawing on neurobiological evidence, Weiskopf argues that percepts cannot serve as vehicles of thought because some endogenously deployed cell assemblies implicated in categorization, e.g., convergence zones, are not perceptual representations. These complex mechanisms, as well as other multimodal and bimodal cell assemblies, might be both explicitly and implicitly representational without being a part of any single dedicated input system. To say they are working with copies of perceptions does not help: apart from content, either such copies must match the original vehicles, which is ruled out by the fact that the systems in question are responsive to different sensory information; or they must not match them, which makes the empiricist thesis potentially compatible with language of thought. After arguing the failure of consigning such systems to neural states that are causally relevant but not constitutive of thought, Weiskopf suggests that neurobiological evidence might be compatible with weaker versions of empiricism.

In 'Phenomenal Content and the Richness and Determinacy of Colour Experience', Georges Rey defends his view of qualia as fictitious projection

with narrow content against Joseph Levin's criticism. Having dismissed the semantic argument against the non-existence of qualia as grounded in a rush theory of content which explains intentional identities in terms of modes of presentation and external properties, Rey promotes functional roles in place of physical properties. He acknowledges the strength of Levin's argument that the richness and determinacy of some modes of presentations, e.g., colour, demands explanation in terms of properties rather than functions. Determinate, striking, unrelated, and passive, colour presentations evade functional specifications. Rey's answer is that a qualia property can do no better unless its explanation is also accompanied by an account of phenomenal concepts. Since such explanation is lacking, to insist that a qualia property is better suited for the job is premature.

In 'Mental Pointing: Phenomenal Knowledge Without Concepts' Jesse Prinz proposes that phenomenal knowledge is non-conceptual. After arguing that consciousness arises when we are paying attention — a process whereby information from perceptual system becomes available to working memory — he suggests that the source of phenomenal knowledge is in mental pointing, in control structure employing space and sketchy high-level object representations to direct focal attention. Prinz rejects phenomenal concepts and argues that conceptualization is neither necessary nor sufficient for phenomenal knowledge. Pointing to occurrent phenomenal states, he claims that phenomenal demonstratives are non-conceptual, causally individuated attention control structures. Prinz concludes by showing that his argument for non-conceptual phenomenal knowledge avoids proliferation of properties and, therefore, is more successful at blocking the knowledge argument for dualism.

Defending the phenomenal concept response to anti-physicalist arguments, Peter Carruthers and Benedicte Veillet argue in 'Phenomenal Concept Strategy' against Chalmers' objections. Chalmers argues that phenomenal concepts either fail to be physically explicable or fail to close the explanatory gap. The authors' response turns on the distinction between first-person and third-person characterization of phenomenal concepts, roughly corresponding to qualia and functional descriptions. While lacking first-person phenomenal concepts available to Chalmers, zombie Chalmers might be said to possess the third person phenomenal concepts, allowing zombie Chalmers to share the epistemic situation of Chalmers, albeit with different belief content. Carruthers and Veillet argue that the real source of the problems is not qualia but the isolated nature of phenomenal concepts, which will generate a similar explanatory gap between Zombie Chalmers and Zombie-Zombie Chalmers. After considering objections, these two authors suggest that perhaps there is nothing more to phenomenal concepts than is contained in the third-person description.

In 'Savant Memory in a Man with Colour Form-Number Synaesthesia and Asperger Syndrome' Simon Baron-Cohen et al. propose that the co-occurrence of synaesthesia and Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) increases the likelihood of savant memory, while the presence of savantism and synaesthesia might be an indicator of ASC. Reporting their study of a single but rare case in which three conditions co-occur, the authors suggest that savant memory might be

a result of obsessive hyper-systematizing characteristic of autism (ASC) and superior mnemonic strategies provided by excessive neural connectivity in synaesthesia. Suggesting future directions of research, the authors propose that minds might feel and think differently if they are wired differently.

Overall, this excellent volume is a well-focused collection of current, empirically informed, and argument-driven papers incorporating recent philosophical, psychological, and neurobiological research. It fully lives up to its promise of illuminating the interplay of consciousness and concepts, suggesting direction of future interdisciplinary research.

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Nick Hewlett

Badiou, Balibar, Rancière:

Re-thinking Emancipation.

New York: Continuum 2007.

Pp. 208.

US\$120.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-9861-8).

This book provides a critical introduction to the recent political thought of three French philosophers of the *soixante-huitard* generation: Alain Badiou, Jacques Rancière, and Étienne Balibar. All of these thinkers have their roots in the Marxist tradition, and all of them were closely connected to Louis Althusser in the 1960s — in fact, both Balibar and Rancière contributed to *Lire le Capital* (1965), a classic text of structuralist Marxism. What interests Hewlett about this ageing triumvirate is that amidst the ‘increasing . . . conservatism’ (13) and consequent ‘de-politicization’ (16) of contemporary French intellectual life, they all retain a praxiological commitment to the ‘emancipatory paradigm’ of modern revolutionary thought. Focusing on their work since the mid-1980s, Hewlett investigates whether it can help us understand and change the neo-liberal world, but also the extent to which it is merely a product of its time.

The work is divided into six chapters: the first puts the three figures in context, while the last compares them and assesses their contributions to the emancipatory tradition. The four chapters forming the core of the book deal, respectively, with the work of Badiou (two chapters), Rancière, and Balibar. Given the prolificacy of all three writers, however, Hewlett’s condensed treatment of them is inevitably somewhat cursory.

With regard to Badiou, Hewlett first gives a brief overview of his general conception of philosophy, emphasizing his notions of ‘truth’ and ‘event’. He

draws an accurate picture of Badiou's conception of the event as an 'undecidable' interruption of the status quo, through subjective 'fidelity' to which truth — along with the event's 'eventality' and the subjecthood of the subject — emerge. Hewlett also suggests a number of basic criticisms (concerning, for example, Badiou's set-theoretic ontology) which, while not necessarily invalid, are poorly supported by the exposition. This preliminary discussion thus preemptively skews as much as it prepares the ground for Hewlett's consideration of Badiou's political theory.

This consideration attempts to assess the theory's relevance and transformative potential. Hewlett examines it from various angles — including its relation to the Marxist tradition, what it has to say about democracy and parliamentary politics, and Badiou's own political activism — and acknowledges certain productive insights. But the fundamental issue concerns the very notion of politics in Badiou's thought as an eventual 'truth procedure'. Of this Hewlett is quite critical, contending that it rests on an 'incoherent' dualism of ideality and materiality that renders political intervention aleatory, thus precluding any sound conception of praxis. While this objection is well-taken, it is developed on an expository basis that is, again, too thin to support conviction. This ambivalence is reinforced by Hewlett's own repeated assertions to the effect that Badiou's work does offer a 'praxis-driven' alternative to other philosophical approaches (82).

Hewlett pays roughly equal attention to Rancière and Balibar combined as to Badiou alone, but the pattern of inquiry is the same: fair summaries of the views in question are developed through specific thematic discussions that highlight common ideals (e.g., equality, democracy, universality); some perceptive points are made, and certain insights are commended; but the overall position is rebuked for ultimately failing to provide a coherent account of praxis — although radical intentions are fawningly applauded.

Thus Rancière is credited with articulating a 'sound and useful' theory, especially concerning revolutionary motivation, 'a rare and forceful antidote to the prevailing views on democracy and politics.' Yet this same theory is censured for containing 'no hint at how a democratic society would be organized', and lacking any 'empirically defined agent' (110-13). The assessment of Balibar is similar: despite 'highly stimulating and useful' contributions with regard to citizenship and political violence, for example, his work as a whole reflects an undue faith in the progressiveness of liberal democracy, and thus 'fails to deliver a convincing emancipatory political theory' (141).

What Hewlett shows is that none of the philosophers in question has successfully renegotiated the Althusserian problematic of 'the subject', and that they all consequently fail to provide a convincing account of emancipatory praxis. Most interestingly, he shows that each manifests this failure differently. Whereas Badiou obscures the genesis of praxis, Rancière mystifies its sustainability — the underlying problem in both cases being a revolutionary purism that keeps subjectivity detached from the lived reality of politics. Hewlett argues that Balibar tries to correct for this marginalization by mainstreaming revolutionary subjectivity — but this sell-out of emancipation to

the statist politics of reformism just leads to another mode of disconnection from 'the dialectics of change' (145).

The upshot of the analysis is, however, equivocal. For while Hewlett contends that Badiou, Rancière, and Balibar all wind up in so many forms of praxiological impasse, by the end of the book he collectively praises their work — without a hint of irony — as being 'the most engaged philosophy since Sartre and Althusser' (154).

This equivocation reflects a fundamental problem. Although Hewlett avows the dialectical insight that one cannot evaluate the emancipatory potential of a philosophical position without also asking how it has been shaped by the material world — he thus notes how each position under consideration 'bears the scars' of the neo-liberal context — this awareness does not sufficiently inform his inquiry. Consequently, other than in the form of estimable intentions, Hewlett's subjects fail to provide what his general contextualization had already ruled out: revolutionary praxis in a reactionary world.

In effect, then, Hewlett's discussion merely corroborates the thesis of Perry Anderson's *Considerations on Western Marxism* (1976): that revolutionary theory stagnates in the absence of mass revolutionary activity. But surely what we want to know is whether — beyond clinging to revolutionary hopes — Badiou, Rancière, or Balibar offer any clues concerning how to do emancipatory philosophy precisely when actual praxis is off the agenda. Hewlett poses the right question: 'how can the powers of reflection be put to use for transforming and egalitarian ends at the beginning of the twenty-first century?' (3) But to shed critical light here would require a much more dialectically subtle interrogation of the problem of revolutionary subjectivity than he undertakes. As it is, the book offers a clear and accessible guide to certain features of contemporary French intellectual life, but it immediately raises political-philosophical questions that go far beyond its scope.

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Becoming God.

The Doctrine of Theosis in Nicholas of Cusa.

Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press 2007. Pp. 229.

US\$59.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8132-1472-6).

Hudson's monograph promises to tackle the philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa from a unique perspective. She contends that many seemingly paradoxical features in Cusanus' thought become understandable when viewed in light

of the Greek notion of *theosis*. In her estimation, Cusanus' commitment to human deification and deformity produces much of what is distinctive in ontological, psychological, and epistemological views. At the same time, the fact that *theosis* to Cusanus is a theological doctrine of a distinctively Christian stamp signifies for Hudson that his philosophical results will likely also carry Christological overtones, whether this has to do with God's relationship to the world or the way humanity relates to either.

Hudson's principal findings are exciting and uncontestable. First, she is surely right to emphasize the significance for Cusanus of the Greek Church Fathers: the book serves as a model for similar philosophically minded readings of other scholastic authors in conjunction with Patristic materials. Second, Hudson offers several interesting observations on the reflective relation which for Cusanus holds between soul, the world, and the divine archetype in which both participate. Third, though hardly finally, Hudson's notes on the limits of negative theology in Cusanus are judicious and provide a welcome corrective to the often exaggerated pronouncements one encounters. Because Hudson's prose is attractive and clear the monograph, despite its tight scholarly focus, can usefully double as a short introduction to the thought-world of Nicholas of Cusa. The chapter structure (theophany — transcendence — *theosis*) lends itself well to this.

Unfortunately, Hudson's book suffers from a blind spot that threatens to undercut the results she achieves: the Neoplatonic strand in Cusanus is given altogether insufficient attention. Granted, Hudson considers it a mistake on a principled level to rate Cusanus as either a Platonist or a Neoplatonist (76). Even so — or indeed precisely because of this — a genuine engagement with actual Neoplatonic materials would constitute not only a desideratum, but a necessity. The bibliography's single related entry, McKenna's translation of the *Enneads*, is inadequate in this regard, and is matched by a lack of primary sources cited in the main text. At a minimum, Cusanus' readings in Proclus would have provided an illuminating counterpoint to Hudson's Patristic investigations.

The reason this matters is that Hudson uses Neoplatonism as a foil, defining Cusanus' thought against what she thinks it is not. In the process — admittedly, as in much of the literature — Neoplatonic cosmology gets painted with the broadest of brushes, in borderline Gnostic shades, in the same way the intellectualist ideal in psychology and ethics gets caricatured. These are tempting tools for professional theologians, who often have to answer accusations about their subjects being Christian Platonists rather than Platonizing Christians (15). But in assessing actual historical and philosophical currents such oppositions are unhelpful, serving mainly to obscure more intricate developments. (In fairness it should be said that Origenism gets similarly short shrift.)

As an example, Hudson tries to show how Maximus the Confessor, and by extension Cusanus, 'avoids the pitfalls of Neoplatonic idealism' (34). Whose Neoplatonism is meant hereby? Plotinus'? Porphyry's? Iamblichus'? Proclus'? The differences are not insignificant. Furthermore, out of the Neopla-

tonists Cusanus knew quite well, Proclus in his *Timaeus* commentary takes pains to demonstrate the goodness of the created world as a whole, all the way down to its final and most diffuse elements. The question of Cusanus' Neoplatonism thus re-emerges, this time as a question of what brand of Platonism he subscribed to and how he worked with his sources. Hudson's way of setting up the story precludes her from acknowledging such nuances.

Similarly, after laboriously arguing how Cusanus did not subscribe to any Neoplatonic or 'ordinary Thomistic hierarchical system' (72), Hudson later depicts Cusanus as accepting an entirely conventional ranking scheme (146). Now, this need not signal an inconsistency: there may be an interesting story here insofar as Cusanus' hierarchy originates in the differing ways that created things participate in the Son (as opposed to the equal way in which they emanate from the Father), having to do with how efficient and final causality operate. Such an analysis is not offered, however, for that would be a discussion internal to the history of Neoplatonism. The contrast between Neoplatonic intellectual salvation and how in 'sonship the mind meets God face to face as he is *participable*, not in his *supereminence*' (159), which connects both with the Christian understanding of the Platonic Forms in the divine mind (37ff.) and the *ousia/energeiai* distinction introduced by the Greek fathers, also needs much further explication before a meaningful philosophical distinction can be teased out. Worst of all, the notion that the 'dynamic relationship between Creator and creation . . . infuses at once creation's origin, its existence as itself, and its ultimate return to God' (12) is repeatedly evoked (cf. 31, 52, 86-7, 178) without ever once hinting that this might have something to do with the Neoplatonic triad *prohodos*, *monê*, *epistrophê* (procession, remaining, return). This borders on the disingenuous.

A final example. In a very interesting section, Hudson describes the sensory and cognitive processes that enter into the recognition of objects in the world as essences and again as particulars (125ff.). But she fails to compare these to late ancient interpretations of Platonic *anamnêsis*, surely a more pertinent point of comparison than Ernst Cassirer's Kantian 'transcendental unity of apperception' (162). Cassirer talks of Cusanus' 'new' Neoplatonism in this connection; recent scholarship on the schools of Athens and Alexandria would suggest that the old variety may be a better starting point.

Hudson's thesis, to recapitulate, is that Cusanus 'developed a genuine synthesis of Christian theology and Neoplatonic philosophy . . . that was in line with the tradition of the Eastern Christian Church, rather than a capitulation to Neoplatonism' (36). While the first part of the statement is surely right, and the first addendum constitutes a much-needed reminder, the final qualification in my mind introduces a dichotomy that Cusanus would have regarded as both false and foreign. We need only note how in a passage quoted on the same page Nicholas seemingly unselfconsciously conjoins 'the great Dionysius' to 'the divine Plato'. The latter designation was standard in late antiquity; it is unlikely that it would have been picked up by a Catholic cardinal with no heed as to its implications. Hudson's book does too little

to acknowledge this, and because of it an otherwise engaging study ends up missing a dimension.

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Philip Johnson-Laird

How We Reason.

Toronto and New York: Oxford University Press 2006.

Pp. 573.

Cdn\$74.50/US\$75.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-856976-3):

Cdn\$43.95/US\$39.95

(paper: ISBN 978-0-19-955133-0).

Though simple, the title is breathtakingly audacious. Yet this book is no overly sanguine young gun's effort, but the magnum opus of quite possibly the world's foremost authority on the subject. In it Johnson-Laird has put together the accumulated fruit of a life-time's research into human reasoning. The results do justice to the title.

Mental models are the central concepts that tie together the whole book. Individual models are maximally iconic representations of what would be true in one possible scenario: a possible dinner party seating arrangement, for example. The strengths and weaknesses of human reasoning are explained in terms of the interplay between these models and human cognitive limitations, in particular the 'bottleneck' our very small working memories create. One important weakness is that models represent only what is true in the possibility, and not what is false (112). This is necessary to lower the computational load, but it leads to predictable biases in reasoning. Another weakness is that, even given this simplification, we can hold only a few models in memory at once, making reasoning about disjunctive possibilities particularly difficult.

While this central idea may seem to be almost simplistic, chapter by chapter Johnson-Laird pursues its many implications and applications. One vital implication is that human reasoning cannot be accounted for merely in terms of syntactic relations. Instead, it relies upon content, as our knowledge is used to construct mental models and to modulate interpretations of logical connectives in ways that could not be handled by meaning postulates. This becomes particularly significant for inductive reasoning, which always relies upon knowledge. As a result, Johnson-Laird comes to draw a clear distinction between logical calculus and reasoning: the first captures the implication re-

lations between sentences, while the second is the process of drawing conclusions from premises (171). In effect, the reasoning strategies we pursue are the result of bottom up learning rather than the application of top down principles (272). Another vital implication that mental models have is that counterexamples come to play a crucial role in reasoning. It is by searching for counterexamples among models that we evaluate a line of reasoning. Indeed, Johnson-Laird claims that the ability to grasp the significance of counterexamples is the 'cornerstone' of rationality (214).

True to its comprehensive conception, the book's many chapters go into a plethora of topics that are seen as relevant to reasoning: the cognitive role of emotions, individual and social differences in reasoning, unconscious thought processes, and reasoning about causal and deontic connections, to name just a few. In its thoroughness, it is inevitable that the book has its stronger and weaker parts. One uncharacteristically insubstantial chapter is that on development of reasoning abilities. As Johnson-Laird states, this process is something of a mystery (261), yet the weakness reaches deeper into his account and can perhaps be traced to his reliance upon representation as something of a primitive notion. While this allows him to work at the level of mental models, it makes it impossible to see how this level is built up from more basic elements — particularly in the context of development — as well as why the models represent the very things they do. Johnson-Laird is left stating that development is the result of the interaction of genes and environment, a vague conception that very few would be likely to disagree with these days. It feels somewhat uncharitable to point out this shortcoming, given how much the book does achieve. Yet, the issue is of great significance for him, given that he does not wish to accept the nativist approaches popularised by evolutionary psychology.

It is clear that Johnson-Laird has made every effort to make this book as accessible as possible (even if it does unavoidably overload the short-term memory). All the concepts are, therefore, carefully introduced, making the material relatively easy to understand regardless what kind of background the reader brings to it — a point that is most valuable given the very interdisciplinary nature of current research into cognition. For similar reasons, the book is full of examples that clarify the peculiarities of human thinking at the same time as they allow us a chance to chuckle to ourselves when we realise we share in these foibles. Indeed, the dry humour within the book works very well with its main purpose: the best example perhaps being Johnson-Laird's proof that, despite his best efforts, the book must necessarily include inconsistent statements (339). The one tactic chosen by Johnson-Laird to make the reading easier for non-experts that perhaps detracted from the value of the book was the decision to avoid footnotes. There actually are many pages of highly informative endnotes after the main text, but there is nothing in the text to indicate their presence, so that, in a way, 'the wires' have been hidden. While these might be distracting to some, to the scientific reader they provide a way to map Johnson-Laird's approach onto what they already know as well as directions for where to look next. Indeed, partly due

to an apparent desire not to overburden with references, and partly due to its coherence and comprehensiveness, the book at times feels somewhat insular. This is a pity, as the endnotes do make clear the numerous influences upon Johnson-Laird as well as the relevance of his work for others.

While the relevance of Johnson-Laird's research for any philosophical account of mind is discernible throughout the book, the most striking realisation that reading the endnotes leads to is just how significant philosophical thought — C. S. Peirce's pragmatism, in particular — has been for his own approach. Of course, Johnson-Laird's work can be seen as a continuation of Peirce's project to understand logic (in the broad sense that predates formalisation). However, the connection is much deeper, Johnson-Laird's whole approach being profoundly Peircean both in the way it rejects the purely syntactic attempts to understand reason that were popular throughout most of the previous century and in the way it returns to a focus upon the significance of the content of beliefs as well as a bottom up approach to rational strategies. In this context, Johnson-Laird's identification of recognising the force of counterexamples as the cornerstone of rationality can be seen as the descendant of Peirce's point that thought results from doubt. In addition, the connection to Peirce provides a possible solution to Johnson-Laird's difficulty with representation, as Peirce's semiotics should afford him an account that is highly compatible with mental models.

Pragmatism has a history of thinkers who combine psychological and philosophical thought, of course. One contemporary of Johnson-Laird's who cannot help but come to mind is Herbert Simon, whose work was also profoundly shaped by Peirce. Clues to his relevance are sprinkled throughout Johnson-Laird's book, the central idea taken from Simon being that human rationality must be understood in terms of its boundedness. Given the closeness of these two scientists in terms of their intellectual underpinnings as well as some of their methodologies, however, it is surprising how little Johnson-Laird says about Simon. In particular, a discussion of Simon's heuristics — even if it appeared only in the endnotes — would cast significant light on Johnson-Laird's own talk of reasoning strategies and mental processes.

Johnson-Laird ends the book with the very Peircean fallibilist conclusion that chances are that many of his claims are false. Yet, it is clear that for some time to come those who would understand how we reason would do well to start by considering the claims he makes. This book is the best introduction to these ideas. It is sure to become a classic.

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Michael Krausz

Interpretation and Transformation.

Kenilworth, NJ: Rodopi 2007.

Pp. 154.

US\$46.00 (paper ISBN-13: 978-90-420-2180-8).

Advancing the idea that self-realization, an ultimate aspiration, is beyond interpretation, Krausz addresses the aim of interpretation and illustrates his methodology with examples from the world of art as well as the realm of thought, emotions and self-knowledge. In his preface (xi-xii), he succinctly summarizes his argument by setting out the questions he intends to answer, for example: 'What bearing has the aim of interpretation on the range of ideally admissible interpretations? What is the relation between the aim of elucidation and edification? Is edification a legitimate aim of interpretive activity? What peculiarities about interpretive activity arise when we turn our attention to the interpretation of the interpreting self?' He then affirms that 'elucidation is the core aim of interpretation' and that, though distinct, elucidation and edification are both essential components of self-transformation or self-realization.

Leading the reader through a series of definitions directed at isolating and clarifying the salient points relating to each distinctive component part of the interpretive task, while at the same time responding to the illustrations and propositions articulated by other scholars, Krausz holds that *discovery* is key to identifying 'properties of objects of interpretation in the context of the reference frame(s) in which the objects of interpretations reside' (49).

His underlying creative interests in art and music thread through his critical exploration as he exposes his vulnerability in what I perceive as an extremely personal reflective evaluation of his life experience. It is in this willingness to expose his vulnerability that he succeeds in questioning every facet of his quest for self-knowledge. Krausz is precise in his choice of words, drawing out from them multiple meanings, and scrutinizing each for their application. Leaving no definition unexamined he acknowledges the value and the limitations of a given stance. With clarity of perception Krausz addresses not only the words on a page, or brush strokes on a canvas, he traverses into the arena of epiphanic experience — not only his own but that of other creative minds — as he attempts to discover and uncover that which can be known. For example, in discussing the journey from the 'narratizing individual self' to the Sankara Vedantic idea of the 'Supreme self' and the associated mantra *Thou Art That*, Krausz identifies eight situations which appear to limit interpretability. He frames his discussion around paradoxes which he labels Self-Reference, Motivation, Interpretability, Framing, Intentionality, Self-Recognition, Rationality, as well as Truth and Oneness, explicating each in detail, and concluding that any interpretation is limited expressly because individual attributes and qualities of the Supreme self are unknowable. Though the journey may be interpreted and the narrative framework of an individual self adjusted the ultimate goal of enlightenment evoked by the concept of the Supreme self remains beyond attainment, i.e. beyond

description and interpretation. Self-knowledge is limited to that which can be known, such knowledge being absorbed into and redefining the experienced framework of the individual self.

Krausz acknowledges the possibility of moments of awareness of elevated consciousness yet concludes that these instances are both relevatory and daunting, in that, in seeking to apprehend and understand these moments of revelation the act of interpreting itself reduces the experience to that which can be known. Self-realization, an ultimate aspiration, is beyond interpretation. He concludes that the quest for self-realization in the form of an awareness of the essence of self beyond the immediate individual self is not possible. Certainly, Krausz is able to bring to life the realization that such epiphanic episodes may become integrated into the journey towards self-fulfilment. For him, art, philosophy and music are the mediums through which he experiences revelation and to which he brings his increased self-awareness and self-transformation.

The single most important feature of this volume is Krausz' ability to relate the complex questions raised in his preface to his experience, offering to all his readers the opportunity to think about the issues of interpretability as they pertain to ordinary lives and to the aspiration to self-realization. Does Krausz lead his readers to epiphanic experience in this complex work? Certainly he leads towards deeper enquiry, and most definitely readers are encouraged to think through his arguments in light of their own experiential framework and life goals. As an advanced tool for critical thinking, perhaps this evocative book might find value in integrated knowledge studies.

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Dominic Murphy

Psychiatry in the Scientific Image.

Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2006. Pp. 410.

US\$36.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-262-134355-2).

There are many approaches to understanding mental illness; contemporary psychiatry builds on a medical approach. Murphy defends a particular version of scientific psychiatry, with a focus on how it theorizes mental illness, rather than on how it tries to help people. So his book is about the reality of mental disorders, their explanation, and classification. He explores the definition of mental illness, and discusses what a scientific psychiatric theory should and should not aim to achieve. Murphy ends with an extensive discussion of the objectivity of psychiatric classification. For most topics, he illus-

trates his points by discussing how they apply to one or more kinds of mental illness. Throughout he gives the reader helpful signposts as to what he has argued so far, what he is about to argue, and how that fits in with the overall structure of the book. This will be especially useful for those readers who are not planning to read the whole work, or who will read different parts at different times. This is a dense, scholarly work of over 400 pages that refers to current work in both psychiatry and philosophy, including philosophy of medicine, philosophy of mind, general philosophy of science, and philosophy of biology. There is a short, very incomplete index.

Murphy argues for a revised view of the medical model of psychiatry, which is not tied strongly to existing mental concepts. Especially since Murphy has been a student of, and co-author with, Stephen Stich, it is illuminating to see traces of eliminativism here. Murphy is quite ready to move on from old concepts when necessary, and does not take the primary task of philosophy to be conceptual analysis. He is thoroughly wedded to a scientific approach to understanding mental illness, and he is especially impressed with the success of the cognitive neurosciences. When our ordinary language or standard practice is in conflict with scientific knowledge, he argues for revising our concepts and practices. Thus, for example, he argues that our standard ways of demarcating mental illness from other illnesses and disorders cannot be rationally justified, and so we should embrace a new, initially counterintuitive understanding of mental illness that would, among other disorders, include at least some forms of blindness. In a related vein, he argues that we should abolish the distinction between psychiatry and clinical neuroscience, because cognitive neuroscience is the best science we have to understand mental illness. However, Murphy is not arguing for an extremely reductionist approach to the mind; rather, he embraces a version of the biopsychosocial model that allows different levels of explanation. At the end of the book, he argues for classification of mental disorders based on causal explanation, as found in much of the rest of medicine, but rejected by the widely used manuals of psychiatric classification. He argues that such an approach is both scientifically preferable and pragmatically more useful.

The book's ambitious and occasionally perplexing middle section attempts to provide a theory of psychiatric explanation. It draws on philosophical discussion of explanation in cognitive psychology and in biomedicine. In Chapter 5, Murphy explores to what extent factual elements can be isolated to ground psychiatric explanation, and to what extent the explanation of mental disorder requires evaluative assumptions about what is normal or rational. He concludes that in much of psychiatry norms will run through the whole explanatory process, so that the prospects for a mechanistic program of the cognitive neuroscience of mental illness are dim. This causes considerable trouble for the scientific project since there is little prospect of getting intersubjective agreement on epistemic or moral norms. He considers in some detail the cases of delusion, addiction, and psychopathy, and in each case, finds that it is impossible to eliminate norms from the explanation of the phenomenon.

These conclusions seem to entail that Murphy's earlier confidence in the medical model should be rather diminished. Yet he goes on, in a manner reminiscent of Hume in the case of the missing shade of blue, as if these problems are minor and do not create a problem for the whole project. His attitude seems to be that psychiatric explanation will sometimes be slightly incomplete or patchy, with no possibility of a full account of the mechanisms involved in the production of the phenomena of psychopathology, but that the scientific/medical approach is still the best one available. In Chapter 6, Murphy gives an account of causal psychiatric explanation. He coins the notion of an exemplar, which he describes as the idealized theoretical representation of a disorder — its typical course and symptoms. The explanation works by 'displaying the causal relations among pathogenic processes that produce the symptoms' (212). He proceeds to sketch how psychiatric explanation can proceed in some fairly simple cases and then in schizophrenia. In the next chapter, he sets out how social factors can enter into the explanation. In Chapter 8, Murphy addresses the role of evolutionary theory in psychiatric explanation, arguing that many recent attempts at evolutionary explanation of psychopathology are unsuccessful. His analysis of the failures points to what a successful approach to evolutionary explanation should look like.

Together, the chapters in this middle section give a reasonably detailed picture of how Murphy envisions psychiatric explanation. He carries out a difficult project well: his aim is not to make strong empirical claims about which explanations are more successful, but rather to make a philosophical point about the feasible forms of psychiatric explanation. In the setting out of his ideas, he addresses many particular controversies and debates in theoretical psychiatry and cognitive science. Owing to the nature of the subject of philosophy of psychiatry, which defies neat categorization and exceptionless generalizations, it is very difficult to arrive at one comprehensive theory or to make straightforward, unequivocal claims. Murphy's discussion is a case study of how many qualifications and diversions are required by an even moderately thorough approach.

The final two chapters are relatively simple by comparison, because their task is simpler. Murphy covers familiar ground in his criticisms of the classification scheme used by most recent edition of the DSM (the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*). His advocacy for the merits of a causal taxonomy is powerful. He acknowledges that the lack of corroborated theories about the causes of mental disorders will place major limits on to what extent a causal taxonomy can be carried out, but urges that it is still possible to make some progress even in the absence of a fully worked out theory. He gives some indication of how the classification would go using exemplars, and he argues that this would be useful not just for research purposes but also clinically.

Murphy's book is a landmark achievement in the philosophy of psychiatry. Its claims are often plausible and interesting, and the arguments for them are carefully made. It is certainly the most philosophically sophisticated defense of the medical model of psychiatry that has been made to date. It is a

challenging book to grasp as a whole, and there are many places where the argument could be clearer or is vulnerable to criticism, yet it deserves attention from philosophers of science and philosophers of psychology.

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Joseph Pilsner

*The Specification of Human Actions
in St. Thomas Aquinas.*

Toronto and New York: Oxford University
Press 2006.

Pp. 288.

Cdn\$160.05/US\$99.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-928605-8).

Undergraduates coming to the philosophical methodology utilized by Thomas Aquinas often are told that Aquinas never met a distinction he didn't like! Pilsner's magisterial study on the nature of the human act — *actio humana* — in Aquinas certainly meets that principle. This study is an impressive account of Aquinas on the nature of action theory and the underlying structures central to that theory as developed in Aquinas' moral and political theory. Pilsner is to be congratulated for tending to this tedious task with alacrity and sophistication. This is not a run of the mill book in narrow neo-Thomism but a sophisticated analysis of the philosophical moves Aquinas undertook throughout his philosophical writings trying to come to terms with the human act. That Aquinas has certain teleological leanings is not to be denied. Nonetheless, he is far from a simple-minded consequentialist; hence, what is necessary is to determine the nature of the human act that is central to Aquinas' moral theory.

The thrust of this successful study is to determine what constitutes the 'species' or '*ratio*' of the human action. All classical Aristotelians know that it is by the specifying or substantial form that an individual is rendered into a natural kind. Since an action, of its very nature, is not reducible to an individual of a natural kind in the ordinary ontological sense, the query arises: how is an action that comes about by a human agent rendered into a 'kind' or a 'grouping' that is not arbitrary? Aquinas does this rendering in terms of determining the '*ratio*' of the action — and this functions analogously to the structure of a substantial form with a chunk of matter in determining an individual of a natural kind.

Pilsner's study discusses with aplomb the five concepts that Aquinas articulated throughout his philosophical career in unpacking the *ratio* of hu-

man action. Pilsner notes that from the early *Commentary on the Sentences* to the later *Prima Secundae* of the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas consistently used the same five concepts, although at times within different contexts: (a) The *end* of the action is what 'specifies' or 'gives form to an act'. Pilsner distinguishes between a remote and a proximate end of an action, both of which influence Aquinas' discussions. (b) The *object* of the action is often used with 'end', but with a different twist in meaning. To understand the object is to understand how Aquinas defines a human 'power' or 'potency'; each human power or capacity has a distinct action, which in turn has a distinctive defining object. (c) The *matter* of the action is the 'matter about which' (*materia circa quam*) that can determine how apparently similar objects are rendered into different actions; e.g., the person with whom one is intimate sexually determines whether an action is adulterous. (d) The *circumstances* of the action also count, as Aquinas admits that a circumstance, while an 'attendant property of an action', nonetheless might determine necessarily the species of an action. Aquinas' example is the theft of a sacred article — a gold chalice, for instance — which would become a sacrilege in addition to a theft. (e) The *motive* behind the action quickly reveals to the reader that Aquinas and Kant part company. While motives are important, Pilsner notes that Aquinas is strangely silent on this concept. Pilsner suggests that the motive appears to be the specifying factor for an action only when Aquinas treats those actions 'involving disorders relevant to the concupiscible appetite' (215). Pilsner's point throughout is that while there are *prima facie* appearances of incongruent positions in the texts of Aquinas considering these five concepts, nonetheless Aquinas' structured analysis of the specification of a human action illustrates a fundamental coherence.

Two ancillary analyses will appeal to Aristotelian philosophers. The first is Pilsner's astute analysis of the role of the sensible object in Aquinas' discussion of sight, based on the *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*. Pilsner's discussion of the three general classes of sensible object — the proper sensible, the common sensible and that notoriously complex conundrum, the incidental object of sense — is must reading for philosophers interested in Aquinas' theory of perception. The second intriguing inquiry concerns the role matter might play in determining the specification of an action. Aristotelian metaphysicians often reach a quandary in attempting to determine how matter and form are related to one another; in *De Ente et Essentia* Aquinas refers to this as what one translator has called 'marked-off matter' and 'non marked-off matter'. Aquinas suggests his non-Cartesian thrust by arguing that the definition of a human person is related necessarily to some piece of matter or other. Hence, the *res cogitans* of the Cartesian *Meditations* is foreign conceptually to Aquinas. Aquinas separates the Cartesian analysis of self from his own with a succinct sentence: '*Anima mea non est ego*'. Pilsner offers a fine unpacking of the concepts necessary to explain the relations of matter to form, all the while remaining a consistent Aristotelian metaphysician.

Pilsner's original foray into this philosophical hornet's nest of issues in Aquinas began as a doctoral dissertation at the University of Oxford. Work-

ing with noted Aquinas scholars Herbert McCabe and John Finnis, Pilsner plowed his way through the deluge of texts authored by Aquinas. Pilsner's work is dependent upon Roberto Busa's *Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia (cum hypertextibus in CD-Rom)*. All Aquinas scholars share an immense debt to the careful work undertaken by Father Busa. In addition to the *Commentary on the Sentences* and the *Prima Secundae* of the *Summa Theologiae*, Pilsner appeals often to Aquinas' treatise, *De Malo*. The substantive textual references supplied by Pilsner are a scholarly delight.

Pilsner provides illuminating tables illustrating several of the concepts articulated in his analysis. There is a much too brief reference to natural law in Aquinas; while a student of Finnis, Pilsner does not appear to inculcate Finnis' 'new natural law' theory into his discussion. What appears to drive Pilsner is the proportionalist discussions in moral theology, where Pilsner might claim that the proportionalist conceptual muddles on act and object render Aquinas' account misleading at best and incomprehensible at worst.

While appearing in the 'Oxford Theological Monographs' series, nonetheless this is a carefully written philosophical analysis from which philosophers interested in Aquinas' action theory may profit immensely. Highly recommended.

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Dean Rickles

Symmetry, Structure and Spacetime.

Amsterdam: Elsevier 2007.

Pp. 242.

US\$136.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-444-53116-2).

Rickles' book has two main aims. The first is negative: it seeks to argue, contra many contemporary philosophers of physics, that certain issues in physics are orthogonal to certain metaphysical issues. The second is positive: it proposes a new version of structuralism ('minimal structuralism'), which Rickles takes to be motivated by the preceding discussion and to be immune to the objections commonly raised against extant forms of structuralism.

This review examines both aspects of the book. I will argue that the orthogonality claim is overstated, and that Rickles' 'minimal structuralism' reduces to a program-sketch with the problems that (i) the prospects for completion of the program seem dim, and (ii) its claims are anyway too weak to fulfill the original aims of structuralism.

Possibility spaces and ontological commitments. Physicists theorize about spaces of physical possibilities, and face some delicate choices: reduced ver-

sus unreduced phase spaces, spaces of electromagnetic fields versus spaces of gauge connections, and so forth.

Philosophers often want to know *what there is* according to some theory — what objects there are, what properties they have and what relations hold among them. Some philosophers of physics often suspect that such questions are pseudo-questions or, at any rate, that they are irrelevant to science. But other philosophers of physics dissent, claiming that the answers are correlated with resolutions of the uncontroversially physical issues concerning choice of possibility space. Rickles' main claim is that *this claim of correlation between the physical and metaphysical issues is false*.

For example, in general relativity, one may or may not think that diffeomorphically-related models represent one and the same physical possibility (i.e. that 'Leibniz equivalence' holds). On the metaphysical side, one may or may not think that spacetime points are objects (i.e. that substantivalism is true, relationism false). According to the conventional wisdom that Rickles is attacking, metaphysical commitments go hand in hand with choice of possibility space: relationists will affirm, and substantivalists will deny, Leibniz Equivalence. Rickles disagrees: observing that substantivalists may be 'sophisticated', and relationists may be haecceitists with respect to their material particles, he argues that both the substantivalist and relationist have available to them both reduced and unreduced spaces. Rickles concludes that 'possibility counting simply isn't relevant to spacetime ontology' (39).

The truth, it seems, lies somewhere between the two extremes. Though advocates of the alignment have sometimes claimed otherwise, e.g., it has been claimed that substantivalists are committed to haecceitism with respect to spacetime points, i.e., they cannot consistently affirm Leibniz Equivalence, it is true that a specification of the ontology and ideology (objects, properties and relations) does not *determine* the choice of possibility space: for each type of object that one posits, one may or may not further posit that objects of that type possess haecceities, and hence one may or may not be led to an inflation of the possibility space corresponding to permutations of objects of that type. On the other hand, it is also true (contra Rickles' conclusion) that different choices of ontology and ideology lead to different *lists of options* regarding the choice of possibility space: one can be a haecceitist about spacetime points, and hence adopt a possibility space that counts as distinct possible worlds that differ only by permutation of spacetime points, if and only if one thinks that spacetime points exist. So physics does not always *uniquely determine* metaphysics, but it does *constrain* it.

Minimal structuralism. Let us turn now to Rickles' positive proposal. Structuralism, broadly conceived, has two main motivations: to provide a 'third way' between standard scientific realism and antirealism, and to dissolve overly 'metaphysical' pseudo-disputes. Extant versions of structuralism include ontic structural realism (OSR) and epistemic structural realism (ESR); Rickles proposes a weaker thesis, *minimal structuralism* (MS).

MS is a demarcation claim. The thesis is that certain ('structural') information about the world can be 'read off' from our best physical theories,

while any further beliefs (e.g. that there is [as in ESR], or that there is not [as in OSR], more to the world than this structure), while they may be equally rational, are 'metaphysical' rather than 'scientific'. (The demarcation is not intended to have normative significance.)

What, then, can be 'read off'? According to Rickles, it is what the theory says about the 'qualitative' properties; equivalently, it is what is invariant under the 'symmetries' of the theory. These terms are placeholders, since we have no general account of what it is for a property to be qualitative, or for a given transformation to be a symmetry. We do, however, agree on their extensions: for existing theories, the 'qualitative properties' are those called 'observable' by physicists. (Rickles *defines* 'qualitative' as 'observable' [8], but this merely shifts the question; in particular, 'observable' does not here mean 'able to be observed'. The latter point distinguishes MS from constructive empiricism [213].)

It follows that the claims that can be 'read off the physics' are claims that are agreed on by all parties in characteristically 'interpretive' disputes: *substantivalists and relationists, E-and-B-field, connection and holonomy realists*, and so forth.

The two most troubling aspects of these suggestions are (a) the obscurity of just what it is that the minimal structuralist *does* commit to, and (b) the lack of any account of what constitutes 'reading off'. The next two sections elaborate on these concerns in turn.

MS and anti-haecceitism contrasted. First, then, what does the minimal structuralist commit to? MS is *not* the statement that physics does not deal with haecceities (in the usual sense of the term 'haecceity'). This is worth emphasizing, since several of Rickles' informal glosses on his position are potentially misleading. For example: 'The constraint surface itself is partitioned into gauge orbits containing points that differ by a gauge transformation — (with our philosophical hats on) we can view them as representing physically indistinguishable states, *worlds differing haecceitistically*' (56, emphasis added). And Rickles' point is that haecceities, whether they exist or not, lie outside the remit of physics. MS, then, *seems* (perhaps?) to be the logical conclusion that one is led to if one learns the lesson of the hole argument in the context of general relativity, and applies it systematically to all of physics. This conclusion appears nontrivial, but eminently reasonable, and eminently comprehensible.

But this appearance is based on an illicit slide from the introduction of a technical term (Rickles' 'qualitative') to the assumption that that term has its usual meaning. In particular, the idea that MS amounts (only) to the assertion that haecceitistic differences between worlds are non-physical is very hard to make sense of in the case of classical electromagnetism. (The lessons of the hole argument in general relativity do *not* generalize straightforwardly to arbitrary gauge theories.) Worlds that differ merely haecceitistically are related to one another by a *permutation of individuals*. But, in the case of electromagnetism, not only does minimal structuralism eschew any verdict on which elements of the formalism represent individuals; there (further)

seems to be no plausible candidate for the status of 'individual' that would vindicate the structuralist's claims. The things that are permuted by gauge transformations are not, for example, spacetime points, but elements of the fibre over each spacetime point; *these* elements do not represent 'individuals' according to any extant (or any plausible) metaphysical interpretation.

So minimal structuralism cannot accurately be glossed in terms of anti-haecceitism. With her philosophical hat on, the minimal structuralist can view gauge-related states as not differing observably-in-the-physicist's-sense-of-'observable' — but all parties have been doing that for decades.

Whence the demarcation? MS, as we have seen, proposes a demarcation based on methodology. It is odd, then, that Rickles' book contains precisely no discussion of the methodologies by which one might (i) arrive at a scientific theory, (ii) 'read off' propositions from a given scientific theory, or (iii) otherwise rationally arrive at beliefs about the world. This raises the urgent question of why Rickles thinks that there is any such methodology-based demarcation to be made. Absent some argument, the suggestion seems somewhat implausible. It is, for example, widely (if not universally) recognized that — on pain of inability to select reasonable theories from among a morass of empirically equivalent, but arbitrarily gerrymandered, theories — some sort of principle of simplicity must play a key epistemic role. Yet, appeals to simplicity are precisely the sort of considerations that Rickles wants to ban from the 'reading off' process, and it is only by insisting on this ban that one arrives at the judgment that 'interpretive' discussions go beyond 'reading off'.

Conclusion. MS is an extremely weak thesis. It makes no epistemological or ontological claims, seeking only to demarcate the 'scientific' from the 'metaphysical'. Thus, it does not fulfill either of the original motivations for structuralism. It does not supply a general, precise demarcation criterion, or any reasons for thinking that such a criterion must exist in the vicinity of the particular demarcation judgments it makes. We also lack any tolerably clear account of what the minimal structuralist, qua scientist, does commit to: it is not the 'qualitative' or 'non-haecceitistic' in the usual sense; it is supposed to go beyond the observable-in-the-constructive-empiricist's-sense, the physicists' notion of symmetry playing a key role; but where this takes us remains obscure.

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Paul Russell

The Riddle of Hume's Treatise:

Scepticism, Naturalism, and Irreligion.

Toronto and New York: Oxford University Press 2007.

Pp. 464.

Cdn\$118.95/US\$99.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-511033-3).

For the past twenty years Russell has been conducting a vigorous one-man campaign to persuade the learned world that irreligion is at least as important a theme in Hume's work as scepticism and naturalism. Without proper attention to Hume's irreligious motives, he argues, we shall never get the balance right between the scepticism and the naturalism, and will see deep underlying tensions where they do not exist. Russell also insists — contrary to a long-established orthodoxy — that irreligion is the key to the *Treatise*, not just to Hume's later works. The old story that Hume 'castrated' the *Treatise* (i.e., omitted all the anti-religious elements he had intended to include in it) is simply a myth, as amply revealed by the reports of his contemporaries, who never doubted for a moment that the work was a powerful salvo from the battery of the freethinkers against the orthodox defenders of the Christian religion.

This important and admirably learned book articulates and defends two distinct theses. There is a *historical* claim about Hume's context and motivations, about where we should locate Hume in the history of philosophy. Russell tells us that Hume belongs among the *libertins érudits*, and is best read in a context provided by Hobbes, Spinoza, Bayle, and Anthony Collins (rather than, say, Locke and Berkeley). And there is a *philosophical* claim, to the effect that the 'riddle' of the *Treatise* — how to reconcile its sceptical and naturalistic elements — can be solved only by means of the 'irreligious' interpretation. In my opinion, the historical thesis is clearly true, and convincingly established by the arguments of the book. The philosophical thesis will prove more controversial, and may not be so readily accepted.

The evidence provided by Russell in support of his historical claim has completely persuaded this reader. The suggestion that Hume had a 'Hobbiest plan' might initially appear implausible, but the cumulative evidence provided for it is strong. Hume's links to Pierre Desmaizeaux and the London-based group of freethinkers are well made out. The section on 'Esoteric Communication' (drawing of course on Russell's earlier work) is excellent, and utterly persuasive. I wonder how many later readers have skipped the Latin mottoes in the *Treatise*, dismissing them as harmless but insignificant flourishes of erudition? But Hume's contemporaries, both among the freethinkers and the defenders of orthodoxy, were perfectly able to read the coded messages, and did not miss the allusions to Spinoza and Collins. The section on the idea of God, aptly entitled 'Blind Men before a Fire', provides instructive links back to Hobbes and forward to the *Dialogues*. In the Boyle Lectures

for 1698, John Harris accused the sceptic Sextus Empiricus of inconsistency for asserting both that we have no idea of God and that the idea of God is just the idea of man writ large. It is easy to imagine how the great sceptic would have responded. The word 'God' he could have replied, either gets its meaning by analogy and extrapolation from experience of humans, or it lacks meaning altogether. In the *Dialogues*, the sceptical Philo exploits just this division when he plays Demea off against Cleanthes.

Russell has no difficulty in showing that the *Treatise* is best read as a full-frontal attack on the dogmatic metaphysics and rationalist ethics of Samuel Clarke and followers such as Andrew Baxter. But does theism in general, or Christianity in particular, need dogmatic metaphysics and rationalist ethics? At least on the face of it, there might be good theists and devout Christians who could welcome Hume's attacks on Clarke. One might, for example, try to develop an entirely empiricist Natural Theology, based on the argument to design and independent of metaphysics. Or one could retreat to fideism, arguing that faith is not a matter of philosophical argument, and that it is unwise to rest religion on speculative metaphysics. Theists of either stripe could have read the *Treatise* without seeing it as posing a fundamental threat to *their* religious convictions.

At this point we must ask how much of Hume's later 'divide and rule' strategy, so prominent in the *Dialogues*, is already implicit in the *Treatise*. He might well have thought that, without the foundations provided by Clarke's rationalist metaphysics, theism would ultimately prove unsustainable. The arguments of Part 5 of the *Dialogues*, to the effect that the argument to design can't prove God's infinity, unity, perfection and providence are in no way difficult or technical — they are the obvious implications of taking the analogy between God and human craftsmen seriously. So Hume could have been slyly holding out to contemporary theists the enticing prospect of an empirical Natural Theology, while knowing in his heart of hearts that he was offering them a road to ruin. As for fideism, one wonders if the fideist can provide any grounds for claims to political authority (e.g., in matters of censorship), or any answers to obvious worries drawn from the competing claims of different sects and religions? If the fideist's position sometimes seems unassailable, that may be simply because they have retreated from the field of battle, as Demea departs at the end of Part 11 of the *Dialogues*.

Returning to Russell, it is striking that the loud chorus of disapproval for Hume and the *Treatise* that he cites is largely drawn from the school of Clarke and Baxter. It would be of significant historical interest to hear more from theists of different views, e.g., from Christians who followed Henry Dodwell in arguing (against Clarke) that the human soul is naturally mortal and made immortal only by the supernatural act of baptism, or from Locke, who thought that the human soul might (for all we know) be material, or from Joseph Priestley, who defended both materialism and determinism while remaining a devout Christian. The 'fit' between Clarke-style metaphysics and Christian belief was significantly looser than Russell sometimes represents it. This looseness of fit was of course important for Hume, as it

gave him room for manoeuvre and for replies — not always perfectly sincere — to his accusers.

There are odd occasions in this generally excellent book where one feels that Russell is exaggerating his case, or stretching the evidence to make his point. I shall cite two prominent examples. He quotes Bayle on the dangers Pyrrhonism poses to religion, while omitting to mention that, elsewhere in the very same entry ('Pyrrho') Bayle cites La Mothe le Vayer on the advantages of scepticism for religion. If religion relies on metaphysical demonstrations, Pyrrhonism poses a threat; if religion is purely a matter of faith, Pyrrhonism is harmless and possibly benign — it can at least show that there is no reason to think that religious claims can't be true. And Russell thinks that Hume's discussion of the external world in the *Treatise* is an attempt to show that God is a deceiver, because He gives us all a natural belief in something false. But if Berkeley is right, our natural belief is just in the stability and orderliness of the world of *experience*; anything else (a domain of things entirely independent of experience) is a mere fiction of the philosophers. And as Berkeley shows in *Alciphron*, the argument to design is unaffected by the shift to idealism; it's an argument drawn from patterns within experience, and doesn't require the existence of material substance.

Turning finally to the philosophical thesis that only the 'irreligious' interpretation can resolve the tension between Hume's scepticism and his naturalism, one has to conclude that this has not been securely established. Russell's argument here turns on his 'dynamic' interpretation of Hume's scepticism. Extreme Pyrrhonian scepticism turns out to be psychologically unsustainable for us, but a dose of extreme scepticism has two effects on the human mind, both benign. We find ourselves less dogmatic in all our opinions, and we tend to retreat from speculative disciplines such as metaphysics and theology into fields closer to everyday life and experience. We are thus led to develop an empirical, secular, this-worldly account of human beings, their natural thoughts and sentiments, and the more artificial systems of rules they come to adopt when they join together to form societies. The problem for Russell is that his dynamic interpretation of Hume's scepticism can be motivated independently of any irreligious motives. And the naturalistic project of a science of man could be endorsed by religious thinkers such as Priestley and Reid. Such men will have no objection to a science of man based entirely on observations of human nature, one that could be shared by theists and atheists. They will argue that the results of such a science will ultimately provide evidence of intelligent and benign design, and hence of God and His Providence. At this point they will part company, of course, with Hume. But there is no deep reason of principle why a theist should not be motivated to write a *Treatise of Human Nature*.

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John H. Sceski

Popper, Objectivity and the Growth of Knowledge.

New York: Continuum 2007.

Pp. 192.

US\$120.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-8904-3).

Objectivity as a philosophical issue has both metaphysical and epistemological dimensions. Metaphysically it involves the question of what is real independent of cognition. Epistemologically it concerns the question of what can be known about what is independently real. Sceski argues that Karl Popper's philosophy offers unique and compelling answers to both questions. Accordingly, the aim of his book is a critical exposition of Popper's philosophy that gives special emphasis to his treatment of objectivity. Chapter 1 provides a general description of Popper's solution to the problem of objectivity and the growth of knowledge. Chapter 2 considers his account of objectivity in science, and Chapter 3 his treatment of objective propensities in natural philosophy. Chapter 4 addresses Popper's arguments for an objective social order and then extends his treatment of objectivity to morality to provide a sketch of a Popperian ethics. Sceski claims that Popper's philosophy 'provides the best framework to answer all questions concerning objectivity: epistemological, metaphysical, political, linguistic, and ethical' (xi, 5).

This is a bold claim — one that Popper would no doubt like, both for its boldness and for its conclusion. But does it hold up to scrutiny? That's hard to say. One problem is that Sceski's essay is, by its nature, a wide ranging one, and although quite familiar with Popper's writings, Sceski never provides a very clear picture of how they are supposed to fit together coherently. Another problem is that Sceski's writing style is not friendly. The text is a doctoral dissertation (largely unrevised, it seems) that would have benefited from some editorial assistance.

Let me begin with a summary of Popper's overall understanding of progress in science and the growth of knowledge generally (6-7, 18). In science, as in politics, social planning, and everyday affairs, one begins with problems, problems associated with the explanation of something that is problematic in the light of background knowledge and expectations (14). Falsifiable hypotheses are proposed as solutions to the problem, and the conjectured hypotheses are then criticized and tested. Some will be quickly eliminated; others may prove to be more successful in the sense that they survive tests intended to refute them. They are corroborated, but not confirmed (44, 66, 76-8). These conjectures must then be subject to even more stringent criticism and testing. When a highly corroborated hypothesis is eventually falsified, a new problem situation has emerged. This situation calls for the invention of new hypotheses, followed by renewed criticism and testing. And so the process continues indefinitely. It can never be said of a theory that it is true or even probably true. Solutions are always tentative, never final (8). But it can hopefully be said that a current theory or proposal is superior to its predecessors in the sense that it is able to withstand tests that falsified them. Knowledge

grows through the elimination of error insofar as it is achieved through a process that is public and ruthlessly critical.

Criticism is thus at the heart of Popper's account of rationality in all its various uses, and rationality construed as criticism is the basis of objectivity and the growth of knowledge (5, 16, 33). In epistemology this means that to be objective is to make precisely formulated, publicly expressed claims that are falsifiable and amenable to inter-subjective testing and criticism (39, 41, 54). It is also to be a fallibilist, that is, to admit — indeed, to insist — that one's current beliefs could be in error (15). Skepticism as a methodological tool, though not as an epistemic stance, is praiseworthy (12). In politics, social planning, and ethics, as well as in science, Popper's guiding attitude is ardently (even aggressively) anti-justificationist, anti-foundational and anti-authoritarian (8, 64). He is opposed to politicians who seek to justify their policies by means of economic or social 'laws' (Popper's idiosyncratic meaning of 'historicism' [26-29]) as much as he is to scientists who seek to justify their theories through conformity to facts. Both try to *defend* themselves, rather than being open to the *criticism* that rationality and objectivity require (8, 20-21, 60). A defensive posture encourages dogmatic thinking instead of the critical thinking essential to the growth of knowledge (20, 34).

According to Sceski, the central question in metaphysics for Popper is, therefore, 'What must reality be like if criticism is to be all possible?' (21) The answer is that it must be indeterministic with an open future, since otherwise 'rationality and the growth of knowledge would be authoritarian and dogmatic' (76). The requisite openness is spelled out in Popper's propensity theory of causality (90-93). Propensities, of which the probabilistic dispositions of quantum mechanics and natural selection in biology are examples (16, 18), are the effects of structured, relationally defined real situations 'in which particular possibilities are realized in a way that renders them testable' (92). They provide an objective link between metaphysics and empiricism, which ensures that theories and proposals are subject to criticism. 'For Popper, propensities are the fundamental structure by which the world shows itself to be recalcitrant to the theories we impose on it,' so he concluded that 'a world fully amenable to critical inquiry is a world of propensities' (103; also 16, 18). Popper's propensity theory also underlies his account of human evolution, his evolutionary epistemology, and his evolutionary ontology. Indeed, the entities of his odd World Three are best construed, Sceski thinks, as 'objective' or 'objectively indeterminate' propensities (117, 121).

Much more could be said by way of describing Popper's wide-ranging thought, but the above summary will have to suffice. What of Sceski's bold claim that it provides the 'best framework' for answering 'all questions' concerning objectivity? Here I confine myself to a few skeptical remarks. First, a philosophy concerned to describe how knowledge grows — or prescribe how it should grow? — ought to tell us of what knowledge consists. Popper, who rejected induction and confirmation as myths, rejected justificationist epistemologies and, in particular, the idea that knowledge is justified true

belief. Sceski quotes approvingly a commentator who writes that, for Popper, knowledge is 'unjustified, untrue, unbelief' (7). For obvious reasons, this is not very helpful.

Second, Popper subscribed to a correspondence definition of truth (41, 78-81); but this was for him at best a regulative ideal, since he did not think that we can ever know, in the sense of being certain, that a theory is true or that a policy is correct. Indeed, he thought that while honest inquirers seek the truth, the quest for certainty only encourages authoritarianism and dogmatism (6).

Third, Popper tried to provide an objective account of the intuitive idea scientists have of 'getting nearer to the truth', or verisimilitude, but did not succeed. Clearly, verisimilitude is not confirmation, but it's not corroboration either (82). Highly corroborated theories are no more likely to be true than untested ones. So it looks as if 'getting closer to the truth', and thus objectivity, reduce to the elimination of error. But this is never conclusive, since falsifications are never conclusive (40). Sceski concludes his discussion of Popperian verisimilitude by conceding, lamely, that it's 'incoherent' (83).

Is there any good reason to prefer corroborated theories or programs to untested ones? Sceski claims that there is (63). But Popper should say that there isn't, since if there is, that must be because it is reasonable to think that a corroborated theory will survive further tests. But he famously denied that.

Popper thought that milestones in the growth of knowledge are marked by the refutation of bold conjectures. That is surely wrong — even setting aside the inconclusiveness of refutations. Rather, it seems more correct to say that growth comes from the refutation of *timid* conjectures and the *confirmation* of bold ones. An example is the dramatic confirmation of the predictions of Einstein's general theory of relativity. Contrary to what Sceski writes, twice quoting Popper, Einstein did not seek to 'kill' his theories (17, 109), but sought to confirm them.

Finally, unless one insists on a narrow-minded empiricism, there should be no problem with propensities construed as objective probabilistic dispositions, since they can be manipulated and measured. But Sceski (Popper?) tries to get propensities to do far more than seems plausible. In his last chapter, for example, he describes, without defending, an objective social order in terms of them, as well as an objective, 'Popperian' basis for morality, which he does seem to defend. Are propensities in politics and ethics the same as, or at least relevantly similar to, those in quantum mechanics? Sceski doesn't say.

This book is not well suited to introduce readers to Popper's philosophy, since it presupposes a basic knowledge that Sceski nowhere clearly and concisely provides. It does contain good, often insightful discussions of, e.g., Popper's propensity interpretations of probability and causality (the alleged link between epistemological and ontological objectivity), the relation between corroboration and verisimilitude (81-4), and the development of Popper's evolutionary epistemology. But the novice will find them difficult going, and

readers familiar with Popper's thought will likely be frustrated by Sceski's disorganized presentation and turgid writing style.

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Tad M. Schmaltz
Descartes on Causation.
Toronto and New York:
Oxford University Press 2008.
Pp. 256.
Cdn\$78.00/US\$65.00
(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-532794-6).

In this book Schmaltz examines Descartes' claims concerning causal relations, arguing, against alternative readings, that they systematically portray a theory of causation that attributes efficient causality to God as well as to the things God creates and conserves. Given the number, scope, and variety of Descartes' claims, and given no full and definitive treatise on causation in Descartes' canon, Schmaltz' project demands an expansive knowledge of Descartes' writings, which he ably demonstrates along with his extensive familiarity of Cartesian scholarship. He integrates this material into a focused and organized thread of argumentation concerning Descartes on causation — specifically, his theory of efficient causation. Although the book includes insightful comments on formal and final causation in Descartes' philosophy, it is principally guided by his tendency away from the four Aristotelian causes and towards an emphasis on efficient causation (4, 217). With regard to this shift and its historical context, Schmaltz targets characterizations of Descartes as an occasionalist and argues instead for a 'mere conservationist' reading of Descartes on causation, a theory Schmaltz takes from a scholastic causality debate that pitted anti-occasionalists against occasionalists. While systematically working through Descartes on the causal axioms of Meditation Three, body-body interaction, mind-body interaction, and human freedom, Schmaltz draws upon this scholastic context both to help establish his case for mere conservationism as well as to illuminate Descartes' somewhat puzzling and sometimes problematic claims about causation.

Chapter 1 establishes the scholastic debate that informs Schmaltz' analysis of Descartes on causation. Thomas Aquinas and Durandus of Saint Pourçain stand on one side, with their respective rejections of medieval Islamic occasionalism. However, between them is a disagreement as to how God and secondary causes operate as causes. Whereas Aquinas' causal compatibilism has

secondary causes producing effects — on analogy to instrumental causality — through God's 'power of operating' (17), Durandus' mere conservationism maintains that God contributes to effects in nature only by the creation and conservation of secondary causes, which have their own power to elicit effects (20-1). Schmaltz connects Descartes to this debate through Suárez, and, indeed, most of his scholastic contextualizing refers to Suárez, who criticizes Durandus' mere conservationism and adopts a kind of Thomistic compatibilism with his 'simultaneous concurrence' theory of causation, in which God, as primary cause, concurs in distinct acts with secondary causes (42-3). Where these positions diverge with respect to, first, the causal efficacy of created things to produce changes in nature, and, second, God's contribution to the production of changes in nature, Schmaltz plots a defense of his thesis concerning Descartes (23). If he can show that created things contribute to causation, then he forestalls the occasionalist reading that Descartes' God is the sole efficient cause (23). Furthermore, if he demonstrates that Descartes' God is the source of being for created things, which themselves have the complete power to effect change, then he secures his position that Descartes maintains an anti-occasionalist and, specifically, mere conservationist theory of causation (23).

The case for this kind of creature causality in Descartes begins in Chapter 2 with a detailed examination of the 'containment axiom' and 'conservation axiom' of Meditation Three that evaluates what sorts of things can be causes of what sorts of effects under the constraints of these two axioms of efficient causation. Descartes' claim that God is the 'universal and total cause' (76) looms large. Nevertheless, Schmaltz contends that it does not preclude other causes: '(T)here still seems to be room in (Descartes') system for a derivative sort of causation of the modifications of substance. This causation of modes must be subordinated to God's causation of the substances the modes modify, since the existence of the modes themselves depends on the existence of these substances. In this sense, God can be said to be the total causes of the effects produced by derivative causes. Even so, it seems that these causes could produce effects that do not derive immediately from God' (76). This is neither occasionalism nor concurrentism (76-7, 85-6); rather, Schmaltz is recommending mere conservationism.

In the third, fourth and fifth chapters Schmaltz argues that this is indeed the theory of causation at work in Descartes' accounts of body-body interaction, mind-body interaction, and human freedom. In the first case, he proposes that the bodily forces referenced in Descartes' physics are genuine causes of change in motion when they are attributed to the nature of actually — as opposed to abstractly — existing bodies. Similarly, mere conservationism explains interaction between soul and body in their union. In the case of body-to-mind action, brain motions affect the soul, which has 'an innate mental faculty that is sensitive to these forces' (161), and cause the formation of sensory ideas. What of God's role? 'God connects motions and sensations by creating human souls and their bodies with particular natures that themselves carry the causal load' (160). In brief: '*Deus ex machina*? No' (160). In the direction of mind-to-body action, Schmaltz explains: 'To act on a body,

mind must have a power that is somehow present to that body' (169). His conception of this power is based on Descartes' analogy to the scholastic real quality of heaviness and on his comment in a letter to Henry More that mind has an 'extension of power' (169). The fifth and final chapter reinforces the mere conservationist reading with an account of God's determination of the truths concerning our free action. According to this account, God determines what actions follow from what inclinations of the will, but those inclinations are free insofar as the will, not God, 'freely determines' its volitions (219). As Schmaltz puts it: '(God's) determination can result in truths concerning something that is itself undetermined through the mediation of (freely chosen) inclinations' (214). In these three cases of causation, God is the efficient cause that creates and conserves body, mind, and human agents. Nonetheless, these things are real causes of their effects. They are the efficient causes of changes in nature, distinguishable from God's efficient causation of the world.

Schmaltz incorporates a remarkable amount of primary and secondary literature into the five chapters of this book. The depth and detail of the exhaustively-documented research impress and are among the chief values of the book. In particular, the clear, detailed, and sustained attention to scholastic theories of causation makes it an important addition to literature on Descartes and scholasticism.

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Nancy Sherman

*Stoic Warriors: The Ancient Philosophy
Behind the Military Mind.*

Toronto and New York:

Oxford University Press 2005. Pp. 179.

Cdn\$17.95/US\$15.95

(paper ISBN-13: 978-0-19-531591-2).

This is the first book in a great while that has deeply surprised me. Its title appears so strongly suggestive of its content — the fit between military worldview and Stoic doctrine so obvious — that I was not prepared for the subtle analysis that would emerge, or the challenge that Sherman would launch against my assumptions about the 'military worldview.' This book is a fine and highly nuanced study of the complexities and ambiguities of military life, attitudes, and rituals.

Sherman works her way through a series of questions pertaining to the military life, considering each in turn from the perspective of Stoic doctrine.

Discipline of mind, the importance of body, endurance under physical and mental duress, the susceptibility that attends the emotional life, the connection of the passions to mental and psychic health and human happiness, how best to deal with loss, the anxieties of battle, the value and significance of military decorum, camaraderie and the vulnerability that it entails, and the question of an appropriate attitude toward the enemy — each of these difficulties Sherman takes up in turn with great sensitivity to the complexities of each.

Sherman does not simply apply Stoic doctrines blindly to each question to derive the obvious answers that a less subtle Stoicism suggests, e.g., be strong, curb the passions, don't waste emotional energy on fear of battle or grief over the loss of mortal beings, forget the body, and focus on moral character. Instead, Sherman carefully weighs the traditional Stoic wisdom against the most recent psychological and therapeutic theories, to test the appropriateness and robustness of each doctrine for dealing with the very special challenges of military life.

Sherman's treatment of the body offers a fine opportunity to witness her analytical method. The military places great emphasis on the body; indeed the body is perhaps the focal target of military training, since physical strength builds the self-confidence, resilience, and fortitude so crucial to the military image and to sound preparation for battle. Basic Stoic doctrines, promoting self-discipline and serene endurance of labor and pain, would seem a ready fit for military life, the duress of field exercises, and the rigors of war. The Stoic focus on moral character would prepare a soldier well to bear up under harsh POW conditions and enemy interrogations, even helping her to accept her moments of weakness as opportunities for self-improvement.

However, the obvious applicability of Stoicism to the military life oversimplifies both; Sherman appreciates the irony of military applications of Stoicism. She recognizes that the Stoics, placing almost no importance on physical well-being, would not recommend long hours of physical training. The body, the Stoic would argue, is a mere material and external good, inconsequential to virtue and thus true happiness. Sherman takes seriously this criticism and considers how it might be accommodated without sacrificing the physical training that is crucial to military preparedness. Her conclusions on the question of the body include: a stern warning against the vanities of an Adonis complex, a recommendation that physical contests take the form of self-rivalry rather than rivalry against comrades, and a sound appreciation for the 'selective value' of strength, health, and fitness in the human life.

Another judicious application and adjustment of Stoic doctrines results from Sherman's analysis of the 'aesthetics of character' as it is practiced in the military context. Sherman approaches the question of military decorum through the rigorous social critique of the convention-rebuffing Cynics, the philosophical predecessors of the Stoics. The cynics, she notes, would be disgusted by the endless rules and regulations, the prohibitions against 'conduct unbecoming' (military personnel), the mindless drill and mandatory compliance to seemingly meaningless rituals, and the convoluted codes

of appropriate comportment, manners, and bearing. On the other hand, the Cynics refusal to bathe, wear shoes, and sometimes even clothe themselves (for which they were named *kunos*, 'dogs' or *kunikos*, 'dog-like') hardly won them the respect of their fellow citizens. Cicero and Seneca were not so extreme. Both these thinkers appreciated decorum, as inextricably woven into the fabric of virtuous character.

Sherman argues further that comportment and demeanor are crucial aspects of human interaction; they compose the vehicles through which we routinely express our concern and respect for others. Codes and rituals of good behavior govern many of our core moral obligations, e.g., respect for the dead, honor for the dignity of persons, respect for our neighbors. Sherman appreciates the cynical attitude; its critical imperative teaches us to question ourselves and our frivolous practices. But she demonstrates that there is more to military decorum than simple meaningless convention. Rituals of decorum may begin as accidents of history, artifice, and stipulation, but they serve crucial moral functions in societies, marking the borders between public and private, decency and barbarism, politeness and contempt.

Sherman's book is a first class analytical work, applying moral philosophy to the context of military life. The book is a worthy contribution to the field of military ethics, broadening previous investigations in that field. Philosophy students and military trainees alike will be well served by their study of this fine book. I recommend it most highly.

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R. Clifton Spargo

*Vigilant Memory: Emmanuel Levinas,
the Holocaust, and the Unjust Death.*

Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University
Press 2006.

Pp. 328.

US\$60.00 (cloth 978-0-8018-8311-8).

This book has already had significant critical reception and is fast becoming one of the most respected new studies of Emmanuel Levinas. Claire Katz, writing in *Shofar* earlier this year, calls Spargo's book, 'perhaps the most erudite reading of Levinas I have encountered to date,' and Michael Bernard-Donals in 'Ethics after Auschwitz' from *Contemporary Literature* claims '*Vigilant Memory* is one of the very best books on Levinas — let alone on the ethical consequences of the Holocaust — that I've read in the last five years,

if not the single best, and it's one that I will undoubtedly return to time and again.' These endorsements have come especially in response to Spargo's abilities to re-imagine the Holocaust in Levinas, expand the connections between politics and ethics in light of the obligating status of injustice, and read Levinas against Levinas in terms of the true scope of his ethics of responsibility.

The expanding assessment of Spargo's book is not unanimous — Michael Maidan in *Other Voices* asserts, 'While ingenious and insightful, the attempt to reformulate Levinas' philosophy in terms of mourning falls short in my view both in terms of providing an overall reading that does justice to Levinas' intentions while creating the hoped for reconciliation between progressive politics and ethics.' Nevertheless, it is garnering much praise for its rich intertextual and interdisciplinary methodology. Key to this procedure is Spargo's close reading of Levinas' central figurative language, the uneasy history the figures evoke, and how they point toward a literal politics. Spargo's main discovery is how mourning, obsession, bad conscience, sacrifice, hostage, host, persecution, trauma, and the Holocaust bind the expressions 'Never forget' and 'You have to care'.

Figurative language is language shifted from its normal, accepted, or traditional order, construction, usage, or meaning. It radicalizes the standard significance or sequence of words, to achieve a specific meaning or effect — such as associating or comparing distinct things. Common figures of speech that radically alter the meaning of words (otherwise called 'tropes' from the Greek *tropos* for 'turn') include metaphor, simile, metonymy, and synecdoche, which depart from their literal meaning by turning toward another word or concept. Through his historical, etymological, literary, and grammatological analysis of Levinas' figures, Spargo attends to one of the most difficult questions in studying Levinas — whether and when to read his examples for their literal or tropic meanings. It is precisely through his reconstruction of the turn in Levinas' figures (a turn Levinas often argued against) that Spargo rediscovers the practical in Levinas' ethics. Hence, Spargo is repeating and expanding Jill Robbins' question in *Altered Reading: Levinas and Literature* (University of Chicago Press, 1999) when she asks, 'What would be the relationship between figure and what Levinas calls "ethics"' (41)? And, in this careful close analysis of Levinas' figures, especially in the third and fourth chapters, Spargo excels, reading the literary and the philosophical together in Levinas to sketch a critical ethics that turns toward the explicitly political: ethics as critique turned away from affirmation or norm.

Spargo begins by reminding us of the contemporary origins of the turn toward ethics — following the Paul de Man controversy of the late 1980s and the wax and wane of various critical schools attached to difference and otherness. Then, he outlines the criticisms of such thinkers as Badiou and Žižek, who argue that an ethics of difference can only ask the other to be more like me or that the ethics of responsibility always maintains a valuing of violence at its core. His goal throughout the book is to challenge these accusations, 'to wrest Levinasian ethics free of the charge that it depoliticizes the causes of injustice and our perception of the reasons for injustice' (249) and to show

why we should care about those who are not like us. With the table set thus, Spargo begins his exegesis of Levinas' figures and how they change over the span of his career.

First, he looks closely at the interdependence between memory, history, and ethics, admitting the suspicions Levinas maintained about this relation but reminding us that 'ethics arises within, if not quite from, a determinative context; it comes to us through the filter of historically realized conditions by which we would take account of it, even if none of these finally exhausts ethical meaning' (31). Next, he develops a fuller understanding of the trope of mourning — as the memory in me of those who have perished — of the way in which the death of the other comes to take priority over the death of the self as the essential preoccupation of the subject. Then, he examines 'the configuration of victim and perpetrator' (135) and the ambiguity that persists within this antinomy where perpetrators create victims (especially in the light of the Holocaust), to explore Levinas' analysis of useful and useless suffering. Ethics begins with the victims, argues Levinas, not with a wish that the victimization had never happened, that the victims had never been. In this way, we are responsible for the victims, who critique knowledge, intentionality, and agency. Finally, Spargo turns toward Levinas' figures of the stranger and the neighbor and eventually questions of the enemy and the friend to discuss 'an ethics of hospitality' (180) or 'genuine politics of welcome' (181) in the light of current debates about identity.

Here Spargo makes his most important breakthroughs in the book, marking the deep links between 'the stranger' (the one set apart, the one who turns aside) and 'metaphor' (as turning or altering of the custom) and the stranger *as* metaphor (one who always remains at the limit of language and relationship). Levinas' ethics (sometimes referred to as a 'metaethics', 'ethics of ethics', or more recently, 'ethics of responsibility') is always already figurative. Ethics as a non-allergic relation to the other or ethics invoked by the face of the other that calls to me is already a turning away from the traditional ways we have of talking about ethics according to deontology, utilitarianism, or virtue ethics. Describing the ethical relationship in terms of proximity, as a severe closeness to the other, shifts ethics from its reliance upon identity and agency. Yet, despite Levinas' repeated claims that figuration and rhetoric oppose ethics, these very metaphors are what turn us toward a politics focusing on 'that privilege a subject always yields to the other' (227). Like Adorno, who in 'Skoteinos, or How to Read Hegel' cautions us on the need to read every sentence of Hegel dialectically, Spargo points out how this compression of the literal and the metaphorical in these figures, demonstrates 'a remarkable consistency between the style and the content of Levinasian ethics' (210). He highlights how Levinas' 'highly compressed syntax and metaphoric literalism' (210) perform the ethics and the politics they point toward.

Here, too, Spargo takes up the most vexing metaphor in Levinas, 'the enemy'. This metaphor appears most prominently in a 1982 radio discussion of the massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, when Levinas says that sometimes the other may be my enemy. Coming from 'the

philosopher of the other', this is as difficult a figure as any in Levinas, for it challenges the entire ethics of responsibility to its core, and yet it receives much less space in the book than the others. Although 'friend' appears repeatedly throughout the study, this discussion of 'enemy' lasts only a few pages near the end of Chapter 4 and lacks the rigour of many other sections. Despite his superb efforts, then, it seems Spargo has left us some close reading yet to do.

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Robert Stainton

Words and Thoughts:

*Subsentences, Ellipsis and the Philosophy
of Language.*

Toronto and New York:

Oxford University Press 2006.

Cdn\$86.50/US\$65.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-925038-7).

This book is only marginally about words and thoughts; it is principally about subsentences and ellipsis, and they are all connected by the central argument (schema):

Premise 1 (P1): Speakers genuinely can utter ordinary words and phrases in isolation, and thereby perform full-fledged speech acts (e.g., 'On the floor').

Premise 2 (P2): If P1 is true, then such-and-such implications follow. (For example: not all thoughts require sentential vehicles, thoughts can have logical form, some forms of the 'context principle' can't be right, some conceptions of assertion can't be right).

Conclusion: Such-and-such implications follow.

Part I (Chapters 1, 2) is devoted to a preliminary survey of what P1 and P2 amount to, some examples, and some background notions from contemporary linguistic theory. Part II (Chapters 3-8) takes up the task of 'defending the appearances' summarized in P1. For philosophers of language this is the heart of the book. As Stainton notes, P1 can be challenged in two general ways: (i) deny the acts are genuine, or (ii) deny that what is uttered are just words or phrases. It is Part II that takes these up in turn. Part III (Chapters 9-11) is devoted to defending P2 and the Conclusion.

There is too much data and (good) argumentation to discuss in detail, and furthermore I think anyone without an agenda will have to agree that onus is on the skeptic to refute this argument. Rather, I would like to focus not on the arguments against alternatives, but on the positive theory of subsentences that must replace the 'sententialist' program if the argument is ultimately to succeed.

According to Stainton (Chapters 1-3) the expressions he is interested in are words and phrases, not sentences, and they have the same syntax and semantics standing alone as they have embedded in a matrix sentence. As such, e.g., 'on the floor' is a prepositional phrase — not an elliptical sentence, argued convincingly in Chapters 5 and 6 — expressing a relation to the floor, but not exhibiting any illocutionary force. However, in the right circumstances it can be used to perform a 'full fledged speech act', by which he means an illocutionary act with propositional content. Words and phrases have no mood, unlike sentences, and so carry no illocutionary information. It is not clear why it is important that subsentences have no mood. For him, an expression has the force of K-ing if it has the 'job', as a matter or 'convention' (18) of being used to perform acts of kind K (even though the utterance of that expression is neither necessary nor sufficient for that performance). He does not say what being governed by such a 'convention' might amount to, but clearly there are not enough moods to go around to all the forces. So we are still left with a huge underdetermination of force by sentences. He does not mention the most popular connector of form and force — performatives. Such speech acts are not only illocutionary and propositional, they are what he calls 'literal': they are not used metaphorically, ironically, or indirectly to 'implicate' their content. The main evidence for this is the intuitive difference between an utterance being a lie and being misleading. If Jones sees Smith looking for the hammer and says to him 'on the floor', knowing that it is on the table, we judge him to have lied. If Paul says of a candidate's writing sample just 'Nice typing' — implying incompetence at philosophy but in fact believing her to be excellent — we judge him not to be lying (as the typing *was* nice), but to have been misleading. In sum, we can use subsentences to perform literal illocutionary acts with propositional content. How so?

Stainton's proposal (Chapter 8) is a 'representational-pragmatic' position. He first formulates a general statement of it, then a specific version of it. The 'guiding idea' behind his position is that fragment interpretation involves (a) grasping a content from language, (b) grasping a content from somewhere else but language, and (c) combining the two by function-argument application (156). What drives functional application is (d) the recognition by the hearer that the speaker wants to communicate something, which requires something propositional to be meant, even though nothing propositional has been uttered (158). We can agree with (a), (b) and (d), but for a 'general' position (c) is rather parochial. Why assume that the format for content, linguistic or otherwise, is function-argument? Why not standard quantification theory? And what happened to force; is that also gotten by function application? And

how? The 'specific' version spells out these 'general' ideas: (a) grasping contents means having faculties provide Central systems with representations of them, but (b) finding them is up to pragmatics (160). That's it; for a 'representational-pragmatic' theory, that's a bit skimpy on the pragmatics. And (c) the various representations of content are combined in Central systems. Stainton returns to the issue of how to decide if a content is asserted or merely conveyed, which is pressing in the case of fragments because of the need to flesh them out to be propositional. His idea is to extend Sperber and Wilson's analysis of assertion to fragments, by adding the thought that the proposition communicated is the minimal one obtained by 'developing' the linguistic content (163). This means straight off that one can't assert anything nonliterally or indirectly. Indeed, it looks like Stainton has in mind 'saying', not 'asserting'. Additionally, Stainton does not tell us much about what a proposition has to be to qualify as 'minimal' with respect to a fragment (and a context?). So on some speech act intuitions, this proposal does not draw the assertion-conveying line correctly. It is a striking feature of this 'representational-pragmatic' theory that there is no pragmatics, as normally understood.

Finally (Chapter 11), Stainton turns to the analysis of assertion and the semantics-pragmatics boundary. The relevance of fragments to assertion is via the claim of Dummett et al. that assertion be characterized in terms of uttering a declarative sentence in conventionally specified conditions. Clearly, if P1 is true, non-sentences can be used to assert. The relevance of fragments to the semantics-pragmatics boundary is that if P1 is true, then so is 'contextualism' — the view that pragmatic enrichment, beyond disambiguation and reference fixing, can help determine asserted content (225). The first seems clearly right, the second is still controversial given the unknown limits of 'hidden' variables in natural language sentences. In the course of these arguments Stainton touches on a number of other issues. One is the question of whether one can assert using a non-declarative (e.g., imperative or interrogative) sentence. Davidson thinks one can, Dummett not, and Stainton seems to come down on Dummett's side, but for no convincing reason. The fact that one can distinguish between 'what someone says' and 'the point of saying it' (213) does nothing to support Dummett's claim if the point is perlocutionary, such as 'inducing the belief that *p*' (217). But if the point is illocutionary, such as commitment to truth (with evidence) or to doing A (in the hearer's interest), then according to many speech act theories (Searle, Vanderveken, Alston) one cannot achieve the point without performing the act. In short, Stainton just begs the question against Davidson. Another question turns on the nature of 'determining' the content of an utterance. Bach has frequently complained that authors conflate an epistemic construal (how to find out) with a metaphysical construal (what constitutes the nature of) the content. Stainton's take is that these are not really separate questions, because the intentions that contribute metaphysically to fixing the content, must pass an epistemic test of being 'reasonable expectations about what the hearer can figure out' (224). Thus the two are 'inextricably linked' (224). But besides requiring assertions to be audience directed, it fails to ask to what a 'reasonable

expectation' is relative. It would seem to be relative to the speaker's beliefs about the hearer. But if the speaker has strange enough beliefs (that sofas are religious artifacts) one can imagine systematic communicative reference failure that does not affect asserted content.

It takes perseverance to single-handedly force a field to pay attention to something it should not be ignoring, and it is to Stainton's credit that he has done this for subsentential expressions — and not by concocting clever short-lived arguments for outrageous positions (no names, thank you) but by following solid philosophical intuitions with good arguments against alternate positions. Of course, in the end, it is 'an empirical question', but he has put the burden of proof on the other side. This is a closely argued and still wide-ranging survey of a subject many philosophers, even of language, think they know their way around. They will be surprised.

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**Mark Timmons, John Greco, and
Alfred R. Mele, eds.**

*Rationality and the Good: Critical Essays on
the Ethics and Epistemology of Robert Audi.*

Toronto and New York:

Oxford University Press 2007.

Pp. 288.

US\$99.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-531195-2);

Cdn\$42.00/US\$35.00

(paper ISBN-13: 978-0-19-532602-4).

Emerging from a 2005 Notre Dame symposium on Robert Audi's work, this book pays homage to Audi's impact on the fields of ethics, epistemology, and philosophy of mind, and it showcases both critical analyses of Audian themes by some of the brightest minds in philosophy, as well as three new essays by Audi himself.

The anthology is organized thematically. Part 1 is devoted to 'Problems and Prospects for Intuitionist Ethics', Part 2 to commentary on 'Knowledge, Justification, and Acceptance', Part 3 to 'Intention, Self-Deception, and Reasons for Action', and Part 4 finishes the book with a compilation of responses from Audi.

In 'Reflections on Reflection in Robert Audi's Intuitionism' Sinnott-Armstrong contends that the structure of inference must ground the agent's transition from beliefs of reflection to conclusions of reflection. The result, as he

sees it, is that even if conclusions of reflection were justified independently of any actual inference, they still would not be justified independently of an ability to infer them. Hence, Audi's conclusions of reflection cannot provide an adequate solution to the skeptical regress problem (29).

Crisp's 'Intuitionism and Disagreement' examines Audi's adoption of a Rossian metaethical theme, that each moral principle is in some sense intuitively knowable by those who appropriately understand it (31). Crisp argues that this element of intuitionism can result in a sort of normative solipsism, in which each agent draws her own moral intuitions. If this result is possible, the permissibility of actions can be assessed consequentially, rather than from any particular duty.

In 'Metaethical Reflections on Robert Audi's Intuitionism' McCann springboards from Audi's notion that judgments of duty are self-evident into an argument that the demands of morality present themselves as 'felt' obligation or the sense of duty agents feel when deliberating over what is morally required (46). McCann uses felt moral obligations to defend conative intuitionism, in which an act's moral permissibility is indirectly intuited by agents, rather than directly apprehended by some cognitive faculty.

Gert, in 'Two Conceptions of Morality', demonstrates that Audi's *prima facie* duties and Gert's moral rules really are not at all similar. Audi is faulted for not distinguishing between moral rules and moral ideals (56), since the latter cannot be followed impartially with regard to all moral agents, and whose failure therefore may not elicit moral blame. Gert contrasts 'narrow' conceptions of morality (like his own) which reflect 'an inclusive way of life that includes morality but goes way beyond it' (63) against the way of life offered by 'wide' conceptions of morality (like Audi's), which elevates the role rationality plays in morality in such a way that not all rational persons would want to follow it.

Hurka's 'Audi's Marriage of Ross and Kant' argues that Audi's main contribution to ethics, self-evident moral truths accessible to a knower, is undermined by his commitment to some Kantian ideals. The benefits Audi seeks from his Kantian platform (mostly, normative completeness and an ability to explain comparative judgments about competing duties) are mitigated by the categorical imperative's inability to derive duties which concern a plurality of intrinsic goods and to generate duties founded upon agent-relative value (70). Hurka suggests Audi can avoid these difficulties by basing his intuitionism on Thomism rather than Kantianism.

Vogler's 'Accounting for Duties' contends that Audi's ethics can be successfully integrated neither with Ross' view, nor with Kant's. For Ross, conduct is informed by habituation and character, rather than by general principles, which are Audi's starting point for morality (79). Further, Vogler believes that Kantian imperatives fundamentally determine the nature of the rational being, since they articulate the moral law (77). It then seems Audi engages in a wholly different metaethical project than Kant, since imperatives for Audi are guides for reflection and are on par with Audi's other principles. Neither Kant nor Ross provide comprehensive moral guidance and so, Vogler

laments, 'Audi's project is launched miles above the kind of ethical grounding that [Kant and Ross] sought' (80).

Part 2 opens with BonJour's 'Are Perceptual Beliefs Properly Foundational?', which expounds on the disagreement between Audi and BonJour over foundational perceptual beliefs. Although the two agree that some *a priori* and some introspective beliefs are foundational (85), they disagree over whether visual experiences (especially) require a material explanation (94). BonJour concludes that an explanatory view of the justificatory relevance of non-conceptual experiences to certain perceptions cannot yield foundationally justified beliefs (95-7).

In 'Audi on Testimony' Fricker identifies problems for Audi's treatment of the justificatory status of testimony. She criticizes Audi's reliabilist framework for his view that testimony is justified only if the attester actually knows that *p*, since it falsely assumes that an agent cannot reliably testify about some subject without knowing (and so, reliably believing) it. Audi is further condemned for denying that belief about a speaker's credibility has any role in grounding testimony-based belief (103), since it leads to a confusion about why it is at all necessary for an attester to speak from knowledge for knowledge to be acquired. Fricker offers her view as one that avoids the difficulties Audi faces.

Audi is unique for his internalism concerning justification and his externalism concerning knowledge. Williamson, in 'On Being Justified in One's Head', uses 'normative identity' about beliefs to argue that Audi's internalism suffers insurmountable difficulties. Against Audi's principle of normative tolerance, i.e., that indiscriminable situations are normatively identical, he shows that there are normative differences between indiscriminable situations (119). Since normative tolerance is false, he concludes, 'it is quite illegitimate to argue for internalism from the premise that there is no normative difference between the skeptical and non-skeptical scenarios' (120).

Alston's 'Audi on Nondoxastic Faith' addresses an application of Audi's epistemology to faith. Alston agrees that there is something akin to Audi's 'nondoxastic faith', the fiduciary attitude with less stringent rationality conditions than typical propositional faith, but that there are no beliefs that can meet all of Audi's criteria for nondoxastic faith. Alston introduces the notion of 'acceptance' as doing for Audi what 'nondoxastic faith' cannot (129-30).

Part 3 begins with Adams' 'Trying for Hope', an exegetical look at the most popular accounts of the relationship between 'trying' and 'intending'. Adams puts forward his own view that the functional role of the cognitive state in intending is the exact same as that in trying, and suggests that Audi's view of trying is not entailed by intending.

In 'Self-Deception and Three Psychiatric Delusions', Mele turns to cases of delusional belief found in the psychiatric handbook DSM-IV to explore the soundness of Audi's theory of delusion and self-deception. Audi distinguishes self-deception from delusion such that no one who is self-deceived holds a delusional belief that *p* (173). Mele argues instead that whether self-decep-

tion incorporates delusional beliefs depends in part on what role motivation or emotion plays in the production of such beliefs.

The overarching function of Tuomela's 'Motivating Reasons for Action' is to develop a conceptual account of reasons that is largely compatible with Audi's, though with some theoretical differences. Tuomela contends that Audi's view of reasons only explains single-agent reasons, and so is inadequate to extend to shared reasons for joint action (188-9).

The final three essays in this anthology comprise Audi's elucidation of the differences between his views and those offered as his views by the contributors to this collection. In 'Intuition, Reflection, and Justification' Audi's responses focus only on issues of empirical intuitions and 'quasi-perceptual intuitive moral judgments' to expound and expand his version of ethical intuitionism (201). His replies in 'Justifying Grounds, Justified Beliefs, and Rational Acceptance' concentrate on noninferentially justified beliefs, the internal grounds of justification, and the range of rational, justified attitudes (222). Finally, in 'Belief, Intentions, and Reasons for Action', Audi underscores the importance of belief in relation to action, especially from the viewpoint of moral psychology and intention (248). His goal in these final comments is to make explicit standards for rationality in intention.

Without doubt, the philosophical importance of this book is that it makes possible continued progress in the areas of ethics, epistemology, and philosophy of action. Rather than merely extolling Audi's significant past contributions, most of the authors here push forward the implications of Audi's work, and flesh out nuances of Audian themes that will have an immediate philosophical impact. McCann's article, for example, begins with a mere reference Audi makes to the noninferential ground of cognitive moral judgment (i.e., what Audi calls 'moral sensitivity'), and develops this into an argument for a brand of conative moral intuitionism. Such a bold move resonates at least superficially with Audi's intuitionism, and more, propels Audi's ethics into the limelight of contemporary moral phenomenology. Fricker's piece underscores the relevance of long-discussed aspects of Audi's epistemology to the en-vogue field of epistemology of testimony. In addition, Tuomela's article brings Audi's view of reasons for action into dialogue with philosophers in ethics and philosophy of mind alike over the possibility of collective reasoning and responsibility.

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Richard Velkley, ed.

Freedom and the Human Person.

Washington, DC: The Catholic University
of America Press 2007.

Pp. 287.

US\$59.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8132-1508-2).

Velkley brings together experts in the history of philosophy to explore freedom, agency and personhood in the Western tradition. The result is a collection that is invaluable for anyone interested in studying these notions from the historical perspective. The dozen essays gathered here are divided into four groups. The first three deal with classical and biblical conceptions of freedom and personhood, the second three with Christian, the third group with early modern, and the final set with late modern. The collection does not form a particularly coherent unit, but this testifies to the richness and complexity of the issues discussed.

Seth Benardete opens the selection with his dense, multi-layered essay 'Freedom: Grace and Necessity'. This is one of the last things Benardete wrote and it goes to the heart of his concerns with ancient thought. He calls upon and connects Homeric myth, Sophoclean tragedy, Platonic philosophy and Roman history in suggesting that the ancient conception of freedom can be understood only against the backdrop of the various treatments of necessity or restraint expressed in all of these forms of writing.

In 'The Follies of Reason and Freedom', Leon Kass treats the first Genesis story as a 'mythical yet realistic portrayal of permanent truths' (14). Kass draws out these truths (and warnings) concerning sociality, speech, reason and freedom, arguing that it is not the inherently corrupt nature of human desire that leads Eve to disobey God, but rather the early burgeoning of her speech, imagination and, ultimately, freedom. The very act of reaching for the forbidden fruit points to an independent reliance on her own powers of evaluating good and bad (and all the imaginative and rational capacities packed into such an evaluation).

In a less historical treatment of language and freedom Robert Sokolowski argues, in 'Freedom, Responsibility and Truth', that an analysis of the basic rational building blocks of language points us to a deep notion of freedom. He contends that syntax is at the heart of rational judgment, and that judgment is perfected in declarations such as: 'I think that x is y.' For Sokolowski, the capacity to judge in this way emerges not so much from brain-changes, or from the exercise of Kantian categories of understanding, but rather from the need to identify a referent and predicate something of it *for* someone else. In declaring possession of such a predication, Sokolowski argues, we open up a host of connected freedoms (e.g., the freedom to learn from others, the freedom to accept the truth, etc.).

John Rist's 'Freedom and Would-be Persons' problematizes the grounding of the modern notions of 'freedom' and 'person'. Rist favors the classic concept of freedom as the capacity to pursue the good without restraint over

the modern 'free choice' notion. But he insists that the Christian use of 'person' (as in the 'Divine Person') is the foundational use of that notion, and that without this kind of conception the freedom that each individual has to pursue the good is not protected. So, although he defends the pre-Christian notion of freedom he sees the lack of worth placed on individuals *as such* as a problem with the classic models. Rist's paper raises more fascinating questions than it attempts to answer, but its insistence on the historical centrality of theistic notions in Western thought is both intriguing and well founded.

The next two papers deal with Aquinas. In 'Beyond Libertarianism and Compatibilism', Brian Shanley outlines a Thomistic conception of freedom that is neither libertarian nor compatibilist. Shanley shows us that this notion of freedom relies on a robust account of the will as disposed toward the highest end of beatific vision. Given that *only* this end necessitates the will, all other particular willings are free. This view is not libertarian because the will does not have causal independence from God, and not compatibilist because the action of God upon the will is not like physical causation. Eleonore Stump's 'Justifying Faith, Free Will, and the Atonement' attempts to resolve some of the thorny issues surrounding Aquinas' treatment of freedom. For example, she asks how it is possible to argue both that we are free to choose our actions and that God's grace is responsible for our meritorious deeds. She resolves this issue and others by arguing for complex dialectic relationships between our will and God's intervention within the Thomistic system.

The series of six papers on freedom in modernity begins with Michael Allen Gillespie's 'Sovereign States and Sovereign Individuals'. This daring essay sketches the development of the modern notions of the sovereign *individual* and the sovereign *state* from the nominalist debates of the Medieval period, and argues that what these notions share is the prioritization of naked power and freedom in view of the loss of previously conceived 'natural ends'. Gillespie criticizes the viability of both of these notions in light of the ubiquity of 'interdependence', concluding that sovereignty is not an adequate solution to the abiding political questions of the individual and the state.

In 'Freedom, Republics, and Peoples in Machiavelli's *Prince*', Nathan Tarcov contends that the freedom of republics hovers in the background of the *Prince* as a kind of political ideal. Tarcov goes through Machiavelli's book, both establishing the presence of allusions to peoples and republics, and working out an account of how these allusions form a coherent position that can be reconciled with the ostensibly princely aims of the work. One conclusion he draws is that for Machiavelli the stability and strength of a quasi-republic might be in the prince's best interest. Tarcov does a nice job of prodding us to think more deeply about how precisely the arguments of Machiavelli's *Prince* are influenced by lingering allusions to republics.

Michael Zuckert, Jesse Covington and James Thompson collaborate on 'John Locke: Towards a Politics of Liberty', a paper that explores Locke's use of biblical texts as support for his argument for natural liberty and consensual government. More specifically, the authors take us through Locke's criticisms of Filmer in the *First Treatise* and carefully separate the actual biblical

position, Filmer's interpretation of the biblical position, and Locke's rational or natural religion. Though they think that Locke's attacks on Filmer are often powerful, the broad conclusion they draw is that Filmer's religious defense of absolute monarchy as God's intention (exercised through Adam) is more in line with the Bible than Locke's rational apology for freedom.

The next two papers discuss perhaps *the* major figure in the modern debate on freedom: Immanuel Kant. Susan Meld Shell promises to sketch the central argument of Kant's *Religion within the Boundaries of Bare Reason* in 'Freedom and Faith within the Boundaries of Bare Reason'. She argues that for Kant religion is a response to a basic human limitation. This limitation is the need to have some external end for every action that we perform. On the Kantian system, the moral incentive to action is *not* associated with any end or consequence produced, and thus as a result of our natural limitations we are left casting about for some other incentive to support a moral course of action. Religious promises of eternal happiness and rewards are thus a kind of supplement to the moral, but a dangerous supplement that can weaken our moral autonomy. Robert Pippin challenges Kant's account of the role of reflective endorsement in the justification of action in 'On Giving Oneself the Law'. Focusing on Christine Korsgaard's reading of Kant, Pippin takes us through several related problems with the idea that we can be bound by laws to which we subject ourselves on the basis of the rationality of these laws (i.e., rational endorsement). The deepest problem, perhaps, is that for Korsgaard we *must* be so bound in order to constitute our identity as rational agents. Pippin is rightly puzzled about what a failure to bind ourselves by endorsed reasons would actually mean, since this failure could not be *mine* (as a rational agent). Pippin urges a revival of a more contextualized understanding of the role of reason in justifying action (à la Hegel).

The final selection is Robert Rethy's 'Slaves, Masters, Tyrants: Nietzsche's Concept of Freedom'. The current debate on Nietzsche and freedom expresses a division between those who argue that he is a determinist of sorts and those who maintain (without too much specific or convincing elaboration) that he has some notion of freedom. Rethy contributes to this debate by tracing a developing account of freedom in Nietzsche from some early essays through to his final works. He takes seriously the need to understand how Nietzsche formulates a conception of freedom while maintaining a fatalistic understanding of the necessity of all things. He claims that Nietzsche's affirmative account of freedom begins with his notion of the free spirit, and develops as this notion develops. Eventually, the freedom Nietzsche posits is manifest in those *moments* where a passion overcomes an obstacle; thus, freedom and power are strongly identified. Rethy's paper only *begins* the difficult task of pointing to a Nietzschean understanding of freedom that can be reconciled with his brand of determinism. In a way, this is a fitting end to a book that raises more of the abiding questions of philosophy than it proposes to answer.

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Robert Young

Medically Assisted Death.

New York: Cambridge University Press 2007.

Pp. 260.

CDN\$94.95/US\$90.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-88024-4);

CDN\$30.95/US\$29.99

(paper ISBN-13: 978-0-521-70616-2).

This is a book about euthanasia and what is usually called physician assisted suicide. It is divided into twelve chapters and contains an extensive bibliography. There are curious lacunae — but more of that later. It is written in an accessible, persuasive style and makes for easy reading. Its main point is that there are circumstances under which it is ethically appropriate for physicians either to kill their patients directly or to help them commit suicide. Standard issues such as the distinction between active and passive euthanasia, the notion of medical futility, the doctrine of double effect, non-voluntary as opposed to voluntary euthanasia, competence, advance directives, and the sanctity of human life are all considered. In short, Young appears to cover the waterfront.

At the same time, Young overlooks certain important issues. For example, while he deals with the role that integrity (personal as well as professional) plays in medical decision-making about deliberate death — something that most books on physician-assisted death don't do — he never looks at different models of the physician-patient relationship, and therefore never considers how these different models can structure medical decision-making in general and end-of-life decisions in particular. That leaves a gap in the discussion and tends to detract from the overall cogency of his reasoning. Similarly, while he deals with competence and its importance for patient decision-making, and acknowledges the cognitive, emotional and volitional components of the notion, he never considers the issue of valuational competence. He therefore ignores the important work that has been done in this regard by, *inter alia*, Insoo Hyun and Onora O'Neill. As is increasingly being realised, valuational competence assumes central importance when it comes to deciding whether a patient's decision to die is based on authentic and ethically defensible values. It may be a politically dangerous to tackle the issue of valuational competence, but that is no reason to sweep it under the rug.

There are other infelicities. Young sometimes glosses over issues. For example, when considering the claim that it is ethically unacceptable to refuse to 'sacrifice the life of one human . . . to save many others' (65), he simply says that 'the doctrine lacks moral credibility'. While this issue may not be front-and-centre when discussing physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, once the matter is raised one expects more incisive reasoning. Or, instead of citing evidence to support his claim that the concept of a soul really plays no real role in deliberations about purposely bringing about a human death — an issue which surely *is* germane to the book — he merely asserts that 'there is

little support (including theological support) for the existence of souls' (73). One wonders what Plato, Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Kant, Pope Benedict XVI, etc. — to say nothing of the majority of Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and other religions — would say about that? Or, when dealing with the question whether a medical practitioner, facing a geographically isolated patient in an emergency situation, has a duty to provide that treatment even though providing treatment would 'subvert' her professional integrity, Young shrugs the issue aside by saying that 'only rarely would doctors be faced with such a dilemma' (129). Physicians practicing in isolated rural settings will find scant comfort in this answer. And even though he has a whole chapter on the sanctity of life doctrine, he makes sweeping claims like, 'There can be little doubt that the idea of the sanctity of human life originated in the Judaeo-Christian tradition.' He dismisses in a footnote (62) the Buddhist and Jain rejection of killing as irrelevant to the discussion. As he says, it is not focused on *human* life. I, for one, would have been curious to see what reasons Young has for saying that the Jain and Buddhist belief in the sanctity of human life 'originated in the Judaeo-Christian tradition'. (After all, logically, their belief in the sanctity of *all* life includes human life as well.) I also would have liked to see how trenchant his arguments on deliberate (human) death would have been when confronted with Buddhist medical ethics. (Yes, there is such a thing!)

Then there is the matter of logic. For instance, one of Young's more important claims (142) is that while a person may be competent to *accept* a particular medical decision, that same person, in the same situation, may be incompetent to *challenge* the medical decision, simply because that person lacks medical insight and training. Surely, if the reason for the person's incapacity to challenge the medical decision is lack of medical training/insight, that very lack of medical training/insight will also be present when the patient agrees with the medical decision. Therefore if competence is a function of training/insight, then the same level of competence obtains in either case. Or, to take another example, Young says that '[t]he best evidence that assessments [about the value of life] *can* be made is that they *are* made' (206). This is a logical argument? The fact that things are done does not show that they are reasonable or logically defensible. People do unreasonable and illogical things all the time. In fact, one could even turn the tables on Young and say that if he really means what he says on this point, then he must be wrong about souls because people make assessments about the state of their souls all the time. Ask anyone who goes to confession.

Still, when all is said and done, the topic of the book is important and, so far at least, the issue of medically assisted death has not found a consistent and universally accepted (or acceptable) answer. In fact, so much has been written on the subject of deliberate death (assisted suicide and euthanasia, medical or otherwise) that one could fill a small library. For that very reason, however, it becomes important to ask, Why this book?

The usual reason for writing a book on a subject that has already been well canvassed is that the author presents something insightful, trenchant

and above all new. Does this book do that? Not really. It would be grossly unfair to say that Young approaches the subject as though nothing had been written on it. He has a host of references, but there is really very little new in his reasoning. He merely presents what has been argued before, couched in different language. At the same time, he fails to reference authors who have previously argued what he presents as important considerations. Thus, Veatch's 1976 *Death, Dying and the Biological Revolution*, one of the best early works on deliberate death and the role of physicians, is not mentioned. Neither is Pope Pius XII's famous 1957 'Prolongation of Life: Allocution to an International Congress of Anaesthesiologists', which introduced the distinction between ordinary and extra-ordinary means. It opened the door for terminal sedation as medically appropriate from a Catholic perspective. Young argues that Catholicism is logically compatible with terminal sedation and the withdrawal/withholding of futile measures from dying patients. Why not cite Pope Pius XII who first raised and settled the matter? Likewise, Walton presented an incisive discussion of the active/passive euthanasia distinction and dealt with many of the attendant considerations in his 1979 book *On Defining Death: An Analytic Study of the Concept of Death in Philosophy and Medical Ethics*. Young does not mention it (but does reference Walton's book on the slippery slope argument). Similarly, Young argues (as though it was something new) that there may be situations in which it would be ethically more appropriate to actively terminate the life of a severely disabled, incurable and irremediably suffering neonate rather than simply to allow death to occur. This had already been argued in 1973 by Duff and Campbell (not mentioned), by Engelhardt (one of the more prominent bioethicists, also not mentioned) and was the focus Magnet and Kluge's *Withholding Treatment from Defective Newborn Children* (a controversial book that almost got Kluge fired as the Director of Ethics and Legal Affairs of the Canadian Medical Association). Then there is the work of people like St. John-Stevas, Ruth Macklin and Bernard Dickens, who introduced many of the arguments that are canvassed and presented in the book. In other words, a lot of the older, foundational works are missing.

For the reader who is not familiar with the literature and who is unwilling to do a little bit of research, this may be a useful source-in-a-bag. As for anyone who is looking for more than that — for new and incisive arguments perhaps — I would regretfully say that the book 'does not live up to expectations'.

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