Philosophy in Review/Comptes rendus philosophiques

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En général, C.R.P. ne publie que les comptes rendus qui sont explicitement invitées. Néanmoins, nous prendrions en considération la publication de comptes rendus soumis, si les auteurs traitent de livres philosophiques (ou de livres sur un sujet apparenté) qui viennent de paraître. Les comptes rendus devraient être de 1000 mots au maximum, et le manuscrit rédigé en français ou en anglais.

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At first sight, Baggini's choice of key texts (*The Nicomachean Ethics, Medita-tions on First Philosophy, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, The Problems of Philosophy* and *Existentialism and Humanism*) and themes (Theory of Knowledge, Moral Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Religion and Political Philosophy) for his pair of brief introductions to phi-losophy seems uninspired and arbitrary. As it turns out, these topics form the bulk of the current GCE UK Philosophy Specification for AS/ A2 examina-tions in schools (which Baggini taught for some years), and, although the books make no mention of the course, it is difficult to resist viewing them as guides for it.

Each volume begins with a useful introduction packed with tools and distinctions specifically designed to enable the first-time philosopher to engage with the rest of the text. Baggini then devotes one chapter to each chosen text/topic. These are presented to us in chronological/thematic order, though, should the reader chose to skip over a chapter (or return to it later), she can do so without fear of losing any narrative thread. Moreover, each chapter also includes useful summaries, conclusions and glossaries that help the reader keep track of what is happening.

Baggini does a good job of covering a considerable load of material (from Aristotle's doctrine of the mean and Hume's missing shade of blue to Gettier counter-examples and Searle's Chinese room argument) in a relatively small amount of space, which he mostly uses to describe why certain things are considered to be philosophically puzzling, rather than to suggest any answers of his own. While this makes for a refreshing change from those introductions — and their number is legion — which only serve as vehicles for developing

the authors' own views, Baggini is at his best those few times when he adds his own personal touch (e.g., when discussing Hume on 'necessary connexion', *Key Texts* 72). When he neglects to do this, the books become dry; sets of parallel debates are rarely highlighted, and Baggini never contests any of the standard philosophical positions, leaving the reader with the false impression that there is near-universal agreement among modern-day philosophers on both themes and texts. A mere reference to the radically different responses to Descartes to be found in, say, Bernard Williams, Anthony Kenny and John Cottingham would have been sufficient to show that this is not the case with either. But such tensions are not even reflected in the brief bibliographies which end the chapters. As a result, although Baggini's *style* is lively, the actual *arguments* rarely come alive. Constraints by the syllabus do not help here either. For example, Wittgenstein is only included under Philosophy of Religion (which is arguably the area his work is weakest in), and Aristotle is to be read in J.A.K. Thomson's translation. The least Baggini could do would be to note that some of these opinions and translations are highly contested.

On the whole Baggini's writing is clear. *Key Themes*, however, suffers from a number of careless slips and a few minor mistakes. For example, in the chapter on Moral Philosophy, Baggini writes: 'If a utilitarian says, "You ought not to hit people unprovoked," what they really mean is "If you want to increase happiness and reduce suffering, you ought not to hit people unprovoked." ' (36). But utilitarianism is a theory about what people *ought* to do (increase happiness) regardless of whether or not they *want* to do this. The same chapter finds Baggini misdescribing the distinction between cognitivism and non-cognitivism in such a way that it leaves no room for anti-realist positions such as error-theory: 'Those who think that there are facts about right and wrong are known as moral realists. If, in addition, they believe that such facts can be known by us, they are known as cognitivists. Those who think that there are no such facts about right and wrong are called anti-realists, and since this means they do not think there is anything one can know about such facts (since they don't exist) they are also known as non-cognitivists.' (38; cf. glossary, 60) But cognitivism and non-cognitivism are views about whether or not our moral judgements are beliefs capable of being true or false. The whole point of error theory is that it is anti-realist yet cognitivist (after all, we wouldn't be in moral error if all our moral judgements were mere expressions of our desires).

In the chapter on the Theory of Knowledge, Pragmatism (with a capital P) is defined as the view that 'truth is what works'. This is then distinguished from various pragmatisms (with lower case p's) such as Instrumentalism which 'define truth in terms of what works' (17), leaving the reader wondering just what the distinction Baggini has in mind actually is. Finally, the chapter on the Philosophy of Mind hosts a number of incomprehensible statements such as: 'in some sense minds do seem to be in time and space. I think mine's somewhere behind my eyes right now! Where's yours?' (66), and, 'almost everyone now agrees that mind is somehow made possible in humans by the functioning of our brains' (82). The thought behind this latter state-

ment leads Baggini to conclude — without argument — that 'we should perhaps accept that the solutions to the big problems will only come when we understand better how the brain works.' But quite how scientific knowledge is meant to help answer a philosophical question is something he doesn't address either here or in the introduction.

What Philosophers Think is a collection of twenty-two interviews originally published in *The Philosopher's Magazine* between 1998 and 2002. These have since been revised and extended (complete with introductions and selected bibliographies) by both the editors and the interviewees. The latter include an impressive number of philosophical giants such as Simon Blackburn, Michael Dummet, Ted Honderich, Stuart Hampshire, Hilary Putnam, John Searle, Roger Scruton, Peter Singer, Richard Swinburne, and Mary Warnock, as well as famous non-philosophers such as Richard Dawkins and Alan Sokal who have been known to occasionally dabble in philosophy. The revamped interviews have been sorted under the following topics: Evolutionary Psychology, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Religion, Philosophy and Society (whose sub-topics include political philosophy, aesthetics, feminism, and philosophical biography), Metaphysics, and Philosophy of Language. One cannot help noticing that Philosophy of Religion is the only one of these to have been included in *Key Themes*.

The interviews themselves are fun, informative, and easy to read. More importantly they prove that philosophical questions that may sometimes seem too abstract and distant from everyday life to matter can have a large impact on how one chooses to live one's life. In this respect, they will primarily be of interest to people who are unsure about what the aims of philosophy are. To this end the interviewers have taken special care to ensure that no seemingly obscure remark is left unexplained. This is not to say, however, that the interviewer and interviewee always find themselves in agreement. On the contrary, opinions are approached with exactly the kind of intellectual independence missing from the *Key Texts* and *Key Themes*. The discussions consequently bring new life to important issues relating to free will, the value of art, the relation between science and ethics, and much more besides.

In addition to this, we also get a taste of what kind of person each philosopher is — something that rarely happens through the reading of their books and articles. This informal set-up makes the book just as interesting for philosophers despite the fact that (unlike its predecessor *New British Philosophy — The Interviews*) the level is clearly geared at beginners. On occasion some remarks remain baffling (e.g., Don Cupitt is introduced as a non-realist theologian whose God remains real), but on the whole the writing is very clear, and the end result is a volume that is both relaxing and stimulating. It's a shame that Baggini and Stangroom decided not to include photographs of the interviewees this time around.

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Wendy Brown
Politics Out of History.
Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
2001. Pp. x + 193.
US$47.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-691-07084-9);
US$15.95 (paper: ISBN 0-691-07085-7).

This is a collection of essays on how we think about politics. Three of the chapters have been partly published elsewhere, while three appear here for the first time. The 'we' in question is generally those with left-leaning, 'progressivist' sympathies, but varies between the rather insular confines of academic political theory, and a wider circle of those engaged in political discourse.

Brown expresses her central concern as follows: 'I ask how we might conceive and chart power in terms other than progress, articulate our political investments without notions of teleology and naturalized desire, and affirm political judgment in terms that depart from moralism and conviction' (4). This is about politics 'out of history' in that Brown asks us to confront the 'emancipation of history (and the present) from a progressive narrative'; likewise, we must acknowledge 'the dispossession of political principles and truths from solid epistemological and ontological grounds' (5).

The collection is largely directed to and against certain currents in academic political theory. For instance, Brown repeatedly contests the notion that theorising consists (or should consist) in a sort of political action; she wants to insist (reasonably enough) that political thought can and should occupy a space apart from politics. Slightly differently, four of the essays are extended reflections on political thinkers; not coincidently, to my mind, these are the least interesting and provocative pieces in the book. One essay revisits the familiar idea that Marx did not appreciate the real force of administrative and organisational factors, albeit recast in the Foucauldian jargon of power's multiple, shifting modalities. An essay on genealogy in Nietzsche and Foucault raises the interesting idea that 'conviction [may] resist action's historically contingent and morally unpredictable nature' (92), but stays with the old point that genealogies can unsettle present convictions in unpredictable ways. Another essay on Nietzsche and democracy suggests that democracy, with its anti-theoretical tendencies, needs the 'challenge' of anti-democratic critique such as Nietzsche's. And the last piece, on Benjamin and Derrida, again raises an interesting phenomenon, the tendency to conceive 'historical trauma in terms of guilt, victimization … reparation and apology' (140). Its focus, however, is on how Derrida and Benjamin suggest 'novel touchstones for a political consciousness that would mobilize and activate history rather than submitting to, fulfilling, taming, or jettisoning it' (173).

Brown's own voice really comes through, to my mind, in the two essays that open the collection. These recall themes already explored in her *States of Injury* — not least that collection's striking and Nietzschean essay,

'Wounded attachments'. There Brown savagely critiqued the habits of thought that figure the oppressed groups of the modern liberation movements — women, gays, blacks, etc. — as *victims*. Thus people feel themselves attached to their wounds, understand themselves in terms that attach them to those (whoever they may be) who oppress them. Victims become perversely disabled from conceiving their emancipation.

In 'Moralism as anti-politics', Brown dissects a widespread habit of contemporary thought whereby political problems are traced back to individual agency in ways that encourage moralising and blame. Finding ourselves 'out of history' — both leftists and liberals find discourses of progress untenable, while no alternatives to liberal democracy remain — we feel ourselves impotent, disorientated. We moralise *against* history, as Brown puts it, 'condemning particular events or utterances, personifying history in individuals, and disavowing history as a productive or transformative force' (30). We thus attach too much significance to individuals' conduct, even as we feel ourselves powerless. 'Having lost our faith in history, we reify and prosecute its *effects* in one another' (30). This leads, in turn, to 'a politics of rhetoric and gesture that itself symptomizes despair at effecting change at more significant levels' (36). While 'Wounded attachments' theorised such tendencies at a broader political level, however, here Brown stays within the academy: 'to the extent that critical thinkers in the academy are caught in the dehistoricizing, depoliticizing, and intellectually stifling political moralism spurred by the political disorientations of our times, we will be not be available for this work [of revitalizing left politics]' (44).

In 'The desire to be punished: Freud's "A child is being beaten" ', Brown begins by remarking on a corresponding tendency in the wider world, or the U.S.A. at least, a massive public demand for penalty and punishment. This (extremely interesting) phenomenon is not, however, her focus — rather, a desire to be punished which she discerns amid those guilty of the ' "social crimes" of being female, colored, or queer in a sexist, racist, and homophobic social order' (46). (Freud's essay concerns the neurotic imagining, which he takes to be rather widespread, of a punishment where one is neither victim nor agent — some-unspecified-where, 'a child is being beaten', where punishment constitutes a make-do for love.) But a wider issue is nonetheless at stake: 'If desire is not inherently emancipatory — that is, if contemporary understandings of subject formation no longer allow us to view desiring subjects as desiring their freedom and well-being ... — from what sources might an emancipatory future be drawn?' (46) Though Brown offers no account of what those sources may be, she once more proves an acute critic, moralistic in her own way, of how victims, still more those who identify with victims, can become attached to victimhood, moralising rather than seeking real remedy.

Throughout the essays, Brown argues for a space of reflection that is not itself politics, so that political thought can take its distance from the most immediate struggles. It is not unfair to say, I think, that Brown uses this distance to look upon her own kind — left-leaning academics who identify

with one or another social liberation movement. Certainly, her thought is at its freshest and sharpest when she does this. On balance, though, I found myself wishing that this analysis would turn outwards rather more — not least, because the moralism and other substitutes for political thinking she so ably dissects pervade public discourse way beyond the confines of the liberation movements and of the academy.

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Douglas Cannon
Deductive Logic in Natural Language.
Peterborough, ON and Lewiston, NY:
Broadview Press 2003. Pp. xvii + 284.
Cdn$44.95/US$29.95. ISBN 1-55111-445-3.

Some individuals think that logic has little relevance to everyday activities and discourse. Yet others are convinced that logic is a necessary prerequisite to our day-to-day actions and language. The former category, no doubt, understates the value of logic, whereas the latter category apparently places too much value on logic. The appropriate stand is the middle ground between the two positions. Though it is axiomatic that logic should play a cardinal role in our relations and discourse, it is also true that some of our activities and aspects of discourse do not start with (or in) logic; life, we are often told, is not all logic. *Deductive Logic in Natural Language* locates very well in this middle ground. The text is an exploration of the connection between logic and grammar. 'Its focus throughout is on natural language ... and on grammatical structures that determine logical force' (ix). The text, therefore, has one of its feet in logic and the other in linguistics. And herein lies the novelty of the text: It is a resource material for students of logic, and linguistics alike.

The text consists of nine chapters and an appendix. Each chapter is divided in sections; there are forty-five sections in all. Following recent convention by authors of logic textbooks, at the end of each chapter are exercises. The exercises are relevant and fitting in that they capture the subject explicated in the chapters. The exercises go a long way in assisting the reader test his/her understanding of the readings. However, the reader would have been served better had answers to some of the questions been offered. This has become another convention in logic texts. Interestingly, Cannon acknowledges the assistance he got from generations of teaching

assistants who, among other things, formulated answers to the questions (xvi). In fact, on p. 66 Cannon indicates that the text has some answers.

Chapters I and II revolve round definition and explication of concepts and terms. These include terms such as propositions, sentences, and arguments together with their cognate concepts of inconsistency, premise, conclusion, inference, validity, indexical and ambiguity. Noteworthy however, is that whereas Chapter I is logic based, Chapter II focuses more on language.

Besides the dual-functionality of *Deductive Logic in Natural Language*, another distinctive feature of the text is its exclusive employment of the semantic tableaux method, otherwise referred to as the truth tree technique. The other two methods that logicians employ are the truth table method and the propositional calculus technique (or the mathematical method). Though the three methods are not mutually exclusive, logicians seem to have a preference for the truth table and propositional calculus. One can however, understand why Cannon has opted for the semantic tableaux method. This method is the ideal one, given Cannon's objective of exploring the link between logic and language. The method, unlike the other two, is quite semantic and therefore has a prima facie affinity to language.

From Chapters III to IX (perhaps with the possible exception of Chapter V), Cannon, in a detail lacking in other logic texts, shows the various functions that the semantic tableaux technique can perform within logic. In Chapter III, Cannon enunciates how the technique can be used to determine whether a set of sentences is consistent or not. Chapter IV is an explication of how one can determine whether an argument is valid or not using tableaux. Chapter V is more linguistic than logical; it is concerned with 'Generative Grammar'. However, worth noting is that the underlying principle in construction of the graphical structures (phrase-markers) belongs to the tableaux technique. The same technique is used to explicate the rules for sentence connectives (Chapter VI) and the rules for identity (Chapter VII). In addition, Chapter VII discusses in detail the concepts of 'designators' and 'predicates', and other types of relation (besides that of identity). These are concepts and relations that texts on propositional logic do not discuss. In fact, even texts on quantificational logic discuss them only briefly. Chapters VIII and IX consist of an application of tableau rules in the domain of quantificational logic. Texts on quantificational logic hardly do this.

Much of what is contained in the first half of the 'Appendix' involves repetitions of some items that are already discussed earlier in the text. In some cases the repetitions are verbatim. However, the second half of the 'Appendix' introduces and discusses something new though related to the tableaux technique, the truth tables. This, perhaps, explains why the 'Appendix' has the most sections compared to the other chapters. A perusal of the text gives one the impression that the 'Appendix' was written as an afterthought, after Cannon had written the nine chapters with an intention that the manuscript was complete. In the second half of the 'Appendix', Cannon explains how truth tables can be applied to show that the five sentence connectives are truth-functional. He also shows their relevance in

determining the truth-values of complex sentences; here one wishes that Cannon included a section showing how truth tables can be used to determine validity or invalidity of arguments.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of the text, Cannon uses the word 'conjunction' in two senses; what one may call linguistic and logical senses. In the linguistic (English) sense, 'conjunction' means a word that conjoins two or more sentences. Therefore, words such as 'or' (130), 'and' (124), and the phrase 'if ... then ... ' (127) are conjunctions. However, from the point of view of logic only 'and' is referred to as a conjunction. In the 'Appendix' the five (linguistic) conjunctions are referred to as sentence connectives, and the usage of conjunction is limited to 'and'. Cannon however does not bring this shift in meaning to the attention of the reader, and this could therefore be quite confusing to an initiate. This feature adds more credence to the belief that the 'Appendix' was added to the manuscript at a very late stage.

Deductive Logic in Natural Language is reminiscent of the so-called linguistic turn in philosophy in the twentieth century, where philosophical errors were construed to result from misuse of language. This gave rise to two broad divisions, Analytic Philosophy and Ordinary Language Philosophy. The text is an extension of Analytic Philosophy.

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It is difficult to know how to approach Derrida's 1953-54 dissertation, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Phenomenology*. In the preface provided in 1990 for its French publication, Derrida distances himself from the text. And not without justification: it is immeasurably different from those works gathered under his name from 1967 onwards, and sometimes gives the impression one has after discovering a collection of love letters from a long-forgotten high-school romance: 'if someone approached this old book, I ought now to leave him alone ... I ought not even to mention the thing which

has seemed to me in the end the most *curious* in this document ... what confers on this work today some *documentary* significance' (xiv).

For Derrida, so it would seem, the dissertation is of merely historical significance. It is nothing more than a document of the French philosophical scene of the '50s (xvi). Yet the refusal to mention that which makes the text 'curious' points toward a secret, a yet to be uncovered gem waiting for the arrival of a sufficiently diligent and perspicuous historian. But one soon finds that the text cannot simply be an historical document. And for two reasons: as the 1953-54 preface points out, its subject matter is concerned precisely with an interrogation of the relationship between history of philosophy and philosophy of history. Derrida labours this point. Neither philosophy nor history can be conceived without the other, but neither can be reduced to the other. The relation between philosophy and history is driven by an 'originary dialectic' uncovered in a reflection upon genesis. It is directed towards 'the originarily dialectical identity of being and time' (159).

The other reason: there is too much in this text that can be gathered under the proper name 'Derrida'. Without mentioning the continually developing scrutiny of the opposition between genesis and structure, and regardless of Derrida's warning that the primacy of the dialectic was later given over to *différance* (xv; Hobson translates this term as 'difference'), there are numerous insights into the philosophical 'origins' of deconstruction. In a section entitled 'Freedom and the Clear Evidence of Retention', for example, Derrida makes two revealing claims: 'the freedom of the reduction seems ... limited *a priori* by the temporal necessity of retention. I cannot make a temporal act out of an act of my freedom. To the degree that this act lasts, it must negotiate with the determinate temporality that it "retains", with the history that it assumes, in order to know itself as a free act' (64-5). However, as asserted a little further on, 'freedom must not be a simple product of time and a moment that is constituted in it' (65). Can there not be uncovered in these remarks, which ultimately concern the question of a 'transcendental freedom' (73), the deconstruction of responsibility? The only thing standing in the way of such a suggestion is the unabated insistence within the dissertation on dialectical resolutions to phenomenological difficulties.

Hobson's translation of the text is admirable (including the addition of an index not provided in the French). Only two gripes come to mind. Hobson translates *angoisse* as 'anguish'. The term only appears in reference to Heidegger, so why obscure the reference to the German *Angst*, known in English either as angst or anxiety? Additionally, although references to the English translations of Husserl's work are provided, no reference is made to extant translations of other key texts, especially Eugen Fink's 'The Phenomenological Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Contemporary Criticism', and Trân Duc Thao's *Phenomenology and Dialectical Materialism*.

Qualified by the historical situation of the text, and despite the insistence on the dialectic, the reading of Husserl provided by Derrida is clear and insightful. He begins from the presumption that Husserl's thought cannot be divided according to discrete periods, for example, the overcoming of psy-

chologism, the discovery of the reduction, genetic analysis, phenomenology of history: 'by arbitrarily choosing one or other Husserlian theme, by enlarging it in every direction to define the totality of Husserl's "system," there is not an essence facing us, but a concept ... a logical or psychological construction' (xxxvi). Governed by the decision, itself haunted by arbitrariness, to totalise Husserl's thought, Derrida is forced to read the early works of Husserl in terms of notions that are 'not yet discovered' (23). The first part begins with an examination of the psychologistic *The Philosophy of Arithmetic* and proceeds via the debate with Frege to the logicistic *Logical Investigations*. The second part starts with the *Lectures on Internal Time Consciousness*, through the development of the reduction and up to the *Ideas* where, due to 'phenomenological necessity', the problem of genesis is relegated to a field of primordial synthesis that is hidden (99-100). The third part follows the attempts in *Experience and Judgment* and the *Cartesian Meditations* to reveal this hidden field.

The fourth part will be recognisable to those familiar with Derrida's 'Introduction' to Husserl's 'Origin of Geometry'. Derrida takes Husserl's image of the European idea of philosophy as one of his starting points that will later become of importance for his 1962 'Introduction'. But even in the period during which the dissertation was written, the dialectical transformations outlined earlier begin to take on a more deconstructive appearance. It becomes apparent that an originary dialectic of being and time will not resolve the problem of genesis. 'The paradox is that, by wanting to discriminate absolutely between the empirical sense of the idea and its transcendental sense, the teleological finality which one hopes to keep absolutely pure is transformed into an empirical finality. For in both cases the European genesis of the idea takes on the figure of an accident' (158). In discussing the problem of the reactivation of past historical geneses, including the European idea of philosophy, Derrida writes, 'it is here that the *a priori* possibility or the possibility in principle of reactivation is converted into an *a priori* impossibility or impossibility in principle' (164). Nevertheless, immediately proceeding this statement and confirming the pervasion of the dialectic in his earliest published work, Derrida adds the following qualification: 'or at least negotiates dialectically with it' (164). Once again the possibility of deconstruction in this curious text is left hidden.

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It may seem natural to attribute a deflationary account of truth to the later Wittgenstein, given what he writes, e.g., in *Philosophical Investigations* §136, where he seems to admit that '*p*' is true = *p* and '*p*' is false = not-*p*. In Sara Ellenbogen's thought provoking book, *Wittgenstein's Account of Truth*, she argues for a more robust reading of Wittgenstein. She sets the discussion in terms of realist and semantic anti-realist accounts of truth, arguing that Wittgenstein's rejects both. According to Ellenbogen, this is because both rely on some form of truth as correspondence. Further, because of what she sees as the implications of the dictum 'meaning is use', which she attributes to Wittgenstein, a correspondence conception of truth should be revised in favor of a criterial conception of truth.

The book is divided into three parts, each part containing several chapters. The Preface and first twenty pages of her book lay out the main points of her reading. The rest of the book defends the controversial aspects of what she takes to be Wittgenstein's account of truth.

Part I draws out the implications of the dictum 'meaning is use' for the idea that truth is transcendent, and lays out what Ellenbogen takes to be Wittgenstein's positive account of truth. Words have meaning insofar as there is a linguistic community in which there are rules for their correct use. As a result, 'is true' has meaning insofar as there are conventional rules, i.e., criteria, for applying the truth predicate. Hence, a statement is true or false when there is some criterion for determining its truth-value. These criteria provide truth conditions by determining the conditions in which it is correct to call our statements true. We predicate 'is true' of a statement correctly when, based on what we know, we judge the criteria for its truth to be met. This is fleshed out in Part III where she argues that these criteria are non-defeasible. If they are met, it is not logically possible that a statement is false. However, certain background conditions must be in place before a criterion is actually met. Thus when some background condition is absent, we can judge that certain criteria have been met and still be wrong. Truth-conditional criteria are non-defeasible, but they are revisable, since the criteria are internally connected to our knowledge. As we expand and revise our knowledge claims, the related truth conditions are also revised.

Ellenbogen argues that truth as correspondence has the problem that, if we are to learn how to correctly use 'is true', then we must be able, in principle, to judge a statement's truth. However, a state of affairs may transcend our ability to recognize it. Therefore, if it is the way the world is that determines the correctness of our truth attributions, there will be a problem with learning how to use 'is true'. The account of truth that she

attributes to Wittgenstein avoids this problem. For if truth consists just in our deciding to attribute 'is true' to a statement on the basis of conventional criteria, then there will be no mystery as to how we learn to predicate 'is true' of statements.

In Part II, Ellenbogen examines the reasons one might think 'meaning is use' implies semantic anti-realism, ultimately arguing that it does not. Here she engages in a discussion of Michael Dummett's work on truth and meaning — particularly the issues of molecular versus holistic views of meaning, and bivalence in relation to undecidable sentences.

In Part III, she discusses and defends the details of what she takes to be Wittgenstein's account of truth by addressing several important issues concerning criteria — namely, whether criteria should be viewed as justification conditions or truth conditions, and whether criteria are defeasible or revisable. If criteria are to provide truth conditions, they cannot be defeasible, otherwise the criteria might be met and the statement still be false. This is something her reading of Wittgenstein cannot countenance, for it would mean that something other than the truth-conditional criteria determines when it is correct to attribute 'is true' to a statement. These issues are addressed by looking at Crispin Wright's account of criteria and his argument against the viability of using criteria as an alternative to realist truth conditions. John McDowell's conclusions on the defeasibility of criteria are also examined and in the end rejected as 'un-Wittgensteinian and of dubious coherence' (78). Relevant work of other philosophers, such as Malcolm, Putnam, and Canfield, is also examined as she argues that while criteria are not defeasible, they are revisable.

Wittgenstein's Account of Truth admirably engages many difficult issues concerning truth and the philosophy of language. However, there are at least two issues that should be considered. The first is the attribution of the dictum 'meaning is use' to Wittgenstein. If Ellenbogen were merely taking ideas from the later Wittgenstein and developing them on her own, this would not be such an issue. However, she does plainly say that the dictum is Wittgenstein's, e.g., pp. xii-xiv, and she attributes the account of truth she develops out of to Wittgenstein. But nowhere does Wittgenstein explicitly and non-controversially endorse the dictum 'meaning is use'. Further, to say he suggests such a dictum in the many places where he recommends we look at the use of language, e.g., to help clarify the concept of meaning, is controversial. Some interpreters understand Wittgenstein to be stressing the complexity of language use and meaning — others seize on the suggestions and attempt to construct a theory of meaning. It is not easy to make a definitive case for either reading. Ellenbogen ignores this issue.

The second issue concerns the account of truth that Ellenbogen advocates. She writes that, for the later Wittgenstein, the grounds for judging a statement to be true vary by language-game, and that the kind of *certainty* required for applying 'is true' to a statement also varies by language-game (1). But to say that certainty is involved in correctly applying the truth predicate means that it must be *certainly true* that the criteria, i.e., the truth

conditions, for the statement are met. Now, since she says that truth is strictly a matter of criteria being met, we should say it is certainly true that they are met because conventional criteria for their certainly being met are met. If this is so, her account suffers a regress problem. That is, the statement's truth-conditional criteria would require further criteria to be met for it to be true that they are certainly met, and then those criteria for the certainty of their being met would need criteria to be met, and so on. Thus, truth could never be established. If, on the other hand, it is certainly true that a statement's truth-conditional criteria are met because of how the world is, her account presupposes some form of realism, which she rejects.

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Emmanuel Eze
Achieving Our Humanity —
The Idea of the Postracial Future.
New York: Routledge 2001. Pp. xviii + 250.
Cdn$135.00: US$90.00
(cloth: ISBN 0-415-92940-7);
Cdn$37.95: US$24.95
(paper: ISBN 0-415-92941-5).

Emmanuel Eze's *Achieving Our Humanity — The Idea of the Postracial Future* is an intellectual text in the history and sociology of ideas relating to the negative portrayal of persons of African origin by eminent European philosophers from the seventeenth century to recent times. The text also discusses the responses from intellectuals of African descent from the early twentieth century onwards. More specifically, the period in question encompasses that of the mid-European Renaissance up to and through the Enlightenment in Western Europe and continuing to contemporary times. The early Enlightenment witnessed the modern invention of race by proto-zoologists (then called natural philosophers) such as Linnaeus, an idea that was embraced and embellished by philosophers (both moral and natural) such as Hume, Kant, and Hegel. The general explanatory paradigm adopted was that there was a causative relation between the phenotypes of geographically diverse human groups and their moral characters and cognitive abilities. This was almost exclusively an European research enterprise given the growing military, economical, and technological ascendancy of Western Europe over the lands its explorers and military adventurers held sway. In this connection the European was seen as representing the ideal in terms of ethics, aesthetics, and cognitive abilities.

According to Eze the theoretical problematic to be tackled in his text is how to come to terms with the idea that some of the most prominent European philosophers at the time also engaged in the evidently non-critical thinking on the issue of race, especially in the case of persons of African origin. Eze cites critical passages from the writings of Hume, Kant, Hegel, and more recently Husserl, in which supposedly reflective thinkers casually engaged in evaluations of a racial nature against whole groups. Quite obviously such thinkers were simply intellectually embedded in the ideological *Zeitgeist* of their period, and were not just the pure thinkers of Western intellectual history, reflecting on the key questions of epistemology, ontology, and ethics, that we are led to believe they are. Eze, no doubt, has embarked on an appraisal of Europe's most prominent philosophers in their intellectual totality as products and shapers of particular cultural environments and the cognitive inconsistencies engendered in the process.

In this regard Eze takes issue with those who 'deny that the very idea of philosophy has something to do with race, whether in the constitution of the idea or its social applications. Philosophy, for the practitioners of this first form of denial, concerns itself only with pure and universal questions about whether humans — any humans anywhere — have souls, the nature of the mind, the relationship between mind and body, the *a priori* conditions of knowledge, the nature of beauty, justice and other sublime topics' (xvi). Eze wants to argue that modern philosophy in its development and evolution has been influenced by the very ideas that determined the modern concept of race that was formulated during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

But we are faced with an interesting problematic here. If, for example, some illustrious mathematician or theoretical physicist wrote on matters of race but without the logical solicitousness required of his work in mathematics or physics, would his published views on race be viewed as part of his research in mathematics or physics? I would imagine not. A similar situation applies, I think, to some of the modern European philosophers. Hume did write about race (he also wrote on history and economics), especially about persons of African origin. But his observations were so careless and empirically false that one wonders whether they should be taken seriously at all. Hume is noted for his evident Pyrrhonism on matters relating to cause and effect, inductive inference, and the stability of empirical evidence. He also argued that custom and habit were essential elements in how individuals think. Yet Hume's writings on race were almost in direct contravention with his general epistemology. Hume was in gross empirical error to argue that 'there never was a civilized nation than any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation' (22). Just to name one: the civilization of China should certainly have been known to Hume at the time, together with the known eminence of the philosopher-sage Confucius. I am also curious to know what he might have read about the geographically much closer to civilizations of Ancient Egypt — Nubia. After all Herodotus and Aristotle wrote about the Ancient Egyptians and Nubians as if they were Africans in the phenotypical sense. But then the question is

whether Hume perused the relevant passages in the works of these two Greek writers.

The same applies to Kant. Kant's celebrated moral philosophy is founded on the notion of 'the good will' and the logical basis of the Categorical Imperative. Yet he completely forgot these crucial theoretical premises when he wrote that non-Europeans (still humans) could be abused without moral cause (79). Kant even offers advice on how to discipline African servants with special kinds of whips (79). Should these writings be considered part of Kant's philosophical writings or otherwise? Eze informs us that Kant wrote and lectured not only on theoretical philosophy but also on geography and anthropology, and that his writings on anthropology were quite germane to what he wrote on ethics and epistemology (83).

The cases of Hegel and Husserl are much less debatable because, in the former's *Philosophy of History*, the calumnies hurled against Africa and its inhabitants constituted an integral part of his theory of history. The same principle applies to Husserl, who argued for an exceptionalism in the case of the achievements and *telos* of European civilization (187). But Eze is correct when he makes the general claim that, within a context of assumptions about race, European philosophers either directly or indirectly wove these assumptions into their writings. Thus ever since the Renaissance the idea was cultivated that European civilization was synonymous with rationality, the most developed and most human characteristic of all of humankind.

The painful rigours of the Atlantic trade followed by a debilitating colonialism with all their ideological justifications were bound to produce responses from thinkers of African descent and others. Dubois in the United States was one of the pioneers in this regard, and was quite active in his intellectual vindication of the African race and the racial discrimination it faced locally and internationally. The response to Europe later took the form of the intellectual movement known as *Negritude*, formulated fully by the poets and *hommes de lettres* Cesaire and Senghor while they were students in Paris during the colonial era. Negritude's vindicationist thesis constituted 'on the one hand ... an emergence of embodied and institutionalized critique of colonial Reason; on the other hand, it was a philosophical affirmation of Africanity. Cesaire's and Senghor's works best represent this dual aspects of Negritude ... ' (118). But in seeking to vindicate Africa Negritude did not reject Europe's model of itself and Africa; it sought only to evaluate these two cultural paradigms differently. Africa was seen to represent a humanistic emotivity, while Europe, the inheritor of Greek rationality, was seen to embody a cold mechanistic reason (128). Eze writes that Senghor sought to defend this African epistemology with a reference to Albert Einstein, who wrote that 'mystical emotion' was a necessary condition for 'all great knowledge and art' (128). Thus in the light of the above there is obvious justification for Eze's text to have been titled *Regaining Our Humanity* rather than otherwise — after all, Africans have always been human.

Though Eze does not fully support Negritude, he sees it as having played its historical role in its spirited responses to Europe's valuation of Africa's

cultures and historical profile. His main concern is that Negritude, by its own self-definition, was not epistemologically equipped to transcend Africa and its foundations in 'blackness' (140). But there was another school of thought eventually competing with Negritude with the claim, in response to Europe, that European rationality had its roots in Africa in the form of the technical civilizations of Africa that antedated Greece. C.A. Diop argued that the pre-Greek technical civilizations of Ancient Egypt and Nubia were the ones that introduced *epistēmē* and *logos* to the Greeks. It would have been useful had Eze discussed this provocative counter-thesis to Europe's arguments about Africa.

But given his focus on Negritude as an intellectual response to Europe, this brings us to Eze's intellectual programme for African (or Africana) philosophy: one of its goals should be to unpack philosophically implicit or explicit assumptions founded on race that may be embedded in modern philosophy, with the hope of ultimately attaining a postracial future of humanity where no one 'must automatically bear the privileges or costs of a racial tag' (223). In this regard, Eze's text is useful if only because he has offered a more comprehensive history and analysis of some of the important though neglected ideas of some of Europe's most important modern philosophers. Above all, he has shown that a better understanding of the ideas developed by philosophers (as Kuhn did for science) is achieved when the content and logic of their discourses are placed in the sociological (and historical) contexts that helped engender their respective ideas.

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Trudy Govier
Forgiveness and Revenge.
New York: Routledge 2002. Pp. 224.
Cdn$120.00; US$80.00
(cloth: ISBN 0-415-27855-4);
Cdn$34.95; US$22.95
(paper: ISBN 0-415-27856-2).

Trudy Govier's *Forgiveness and Revenge* is a rare work of superb scholarship indeed. So often rigorous analytic accounts that strive to elucidate features of the human lifeworld lose touch with the empirical realities of that world — a failure that, in analyses of moral concepts and problems, is self-defeating to the greater project of ethics as a philosophical inquiry, a project dedicated to clarifying the domain of moral choice and guiding us toward what Socrates

names 'the right conduct of life'. Govier manages a remarkable thoroughness in her treatment of the concepts of forgiveness and revenge, without falling into that analytic trap.

Responding to Archbishop Desmond Tutu's call for national healing in the wake of histories of radical violence through the application of the notion of forgiveness in the realm of the political, Govier explores, in this work, the very possibility of something so deeply personal and emotionally problematic as forgiveness having a plausible application in the realm of political thought and action. The human world is undeniably torn to ethnic and religious shreds by the rebounding strife of peoples working through the abjection and pain that has been bequeathed them by their violent histories. From South Africa to Colombia, from Palestine to Iraq, the planet is soaked with the blood of generations caught in spiralling cycles of revenge killings. But can we realistically expect people who have suffered radical abuse at the hands of their ethnic and religious enemies to forgive and move forward into healthy futures in company with their neighboring others? Is it possible, and if so to what extent, that a policy of *group* forgiveness can help the many factions of historical conflicts to develop sympathetic and benign attitudes toward their historical enemies and to respond in healing ways to the wrongs they have suffered in their pasts?

With unremitting sensitivity to the difficulties of the proposed project, Govier examines the fundamental assumptions underpinning the human lifeworld to delineate the attitudes and values that have come to ground our ethical responses and our political views. Employing forgiveness and revenge as the extreme poles of the possibilities for human response to suffering, Govier attempts to chart a sympathetic yet realistic course for politics in the wake of histories of abuse. Utterly pragmatic, the navigator recognizes that injustices demand redress, but she also sees that redress, when driven by an agenda of revenge, obliterates the hope for a peaceful future for everybody's children, often leading to cycles of revenge killings that escalate to terrifying levels of slaughter. Witness the horrors of the genocide in Rwanda or the current amputation atrocities practiced by the rebels of Sierra Leone. Furthermore, in seeking policies of revenge through retributive atrocities, victim parties relinquish the moral high ground that initially grounded their right to redress. Witness the dilemma of Palestinians.

The brilliance of this work lies in its pragmatic implications. Govier demonstrates beyond any doubt that revenge is practically self-defeating; its utilization in the realm of politics (as, one may assume, in the realm of individual action, as well) cannot be justified on account of revenge's being universally objectionable for both moral and practical reasons. Thus, *Forgiveness and Revenge* illustrates the utter necessity that victimized peoples find more salubrious ways of moving on from their brutalizing pasts, and chart out effective and practical methods of transforming their rage and resentment, redressing their sense of humiliation and victimization, vindicating their sense of worth where the latter has been thrown into question, and re-empowering their group sense of identity.

This necessity demands that victim populations collapse the simplistic conceptual framework under which much historical violence has been structured, deconstructing the stark polarization of the lifeworld that has radicalized its human elements into an 'us versus them' dichotomy. Govier illustrates that this oversimplified worldview grants license to, and often demands, responses of retributive violence, from either faction in turn, by framing a people's understandings of themselves as simple victims and their enemies as simple perpetrators, and their understandings of their historical abuse in simplistic terms of pure good and pure evil. This framing grants a position of moral superiority to the avenging agent — often essentialized into their self-identity — acting over against the enemy peoples, seen as a 'demonic' other.

Trudy Govier's rigorous treatment of the essential moral categories that structure a people's responses to suffering demonstrates that, ultimately, the polarizing and demonizing mechanism that is at work giving rise to violent responses is simultaneously foundational to our moral judgments regarding those violences. It is the astuteness of this philosophical insight that permits Govier to avoid the performative contradiction with which I have opened this review — the trap that rigorously analytic moral categorizations often lose touch with the lifeworld that, for moral reasons, demands their elucidation. Govier's careful analyses of the concepts that frame our moral thinking and determine our political responses is ultimately brought home to the realities of suffering, fleshy bodies and war-torn psyches in the earthy world of real human beings. Thus is the scholar thrown from the ivory tower of her philosophical reflections into the cave of suffering humanity and required to address our universal obligations to the suffering of our human fellows. Bravo, Trudy Govier, for this important work!

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Barry Hallen
A Short History of African Philosophy.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2002.
Pp. vii + 133.
US$14.95. ISBN 0-253-21531-5.

With this small book, Barry Hallen has opened up the field of African philosophy to the general public, without turning the professionals off. It is such an accessible material that I predict it will make its way into the general education and area studies curriculum of many institutions in a short time.

Hallen approaches his subject matter with an enthusiasm that is infectious. For a philosophy text, it is such a remarkably pleasant read that I compare it with Thomas Nagel's *What Does it All Mean? A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy*. While the book does not break any new ground, it succeeds in summarizing what is already available in disparate forms, and in making the subject matter more accessible to the public.

Hallen covers all the major issues in and approaches to African philosophy in nine chapters plus a short conclusion. The chapter on The Historical Perspective emphasizes the historical continuity and development that the reintegration of Egyptian and Abyssinian thought into Africa's intellectual history provides. Thus Ptah-hotep's moral teachings are discussed in the light of the similarity they share with Yoruba moral epistemology. The emphasis is on 'good speech', 'truth', 'precision', 'self-control' and 'knowledge'. Both cultures emphasize 'good speech', which is verifiable. Hallen suggests that this could be because, for a culture that respects its orality, the spoken word has a higher moral status, since its truth-value reflects a person's character.

Hallen further makes reference to the work of the Abyssinian Zar'a Ya'qob who gave primacy to 'human reason as the arbiter or agency responsible for what a person decides to accept as true' (8). For Zar'a Ya'qob, 'hatata' is the methodological approach to seeking the truth through the power of reason or intellect. Reason is the light that sheds clarity on the object of its focus. Ya'qob, together with Anton Wilhelm Amo of Ghana, who studied and taught in German universities in the 1730s, became the direct progenitors of the movement or group that Hallen brings under the general category of 'rationality as culturally universal'. The meaning here is that the philosophers who belong to this category do not accept the idea of the relativity of rationality. For them, rationality is universal, and it requires some effort, philosophically, to expose its universal nature.

Hallen discusses the works of Kwasi Wiredu, an unapologetic rationalist and Universalist with respect to the universality of philosophy and the rational canons that it presupposes. But Wiredu is not fanatical about universal rationality. He understands the situatedness of perspectives, and how specific cultural formations may be explored for their philosophical significance. What is universal and rational about philosophy is its method. On this, there is an agreement between him and Gyekye, his fellow Akan.

Gyekye does recognize the cultural foundation of philosophy. Every philosophical thought arises from within the context of particular cultures. The tools for philosophical analysis also arise from within the context of particular cultures. I am sure that Wiredu does not deny this. For no philosophy is culture-free.

Against the rationalist and universalist school of African philosophy, Hallen identifies the Relativist school, which includes himself and the late Olubi Sodipo. Their approach, which he refers to as ordinary language analysis, is used to identify key concepts in Yoruba language. They then compare their meanings with their English versions. In every case, e.g. Knowledge (mo) and Believe (gbagbo), they determine that the Yoruba have different criteria than the English language. It is on this ground that the Hallen-Sodipo approach concludes there is a relativism of philosophical meaning between Yoruba-language and English-language philosophies. Here the difference is not in the method of approach (ordinary language analysis — which is apparently common to both), but in the outcome — the product — of the analysis. The product shows that what the Yoruba philosopher understands as knowledge (truth based on direct acquaintance) is stronger than what the English understands as knowledge (truth based on both direct acquaintance and indirect or reported accounts). This is what makes rationality relative, according to the Hallen-Sodipo approach.

Of course, a critic might question if this is enough to support the conclusion that is drawn. If, for instance, there is an agreement on the rationality of the method of approach, is it not possible for there to be a disagreement about the interpretation of the outcome or product? Is it possible for instance for philosophers in the English language tradition to disagree about the characterization of knowledge and belief, even when they agree on the method of approach. As Hallen also notes, this is the basis of the controversy over the nature of knowledge as 'justified true belief'. But we do not thereby suggest that the controversy arises from a relativism between cultures, since the difference in interpretation arises from within the single (Western) culture and among the philosophers of that culture.

One is curious as to why Mudimbe and Appiah are included in the chapter on 'Rationality as Culturally Relative'. It is not obvious, at least, that both of these scholars fit in that category, even given Hallen's characterization of their views. Mudimbe expresses concern about the Western scholar's approach to African culture and African studies, an approach which presents Africa 'as a product of Western cultural priorities and prejudices' (45). This is a genuine complaint. But it does not appear to me to place Mudimbe as a relativist with respect to rationality. For it is quite appropriate to see him as suggesting that universal rationality frowns against the approach. In other words, a truly rational approach would not prioritize one culture over another, as the Western approach to Africa does.

I am equally unsure about the inclusion of Appiah in this category, even with Hallen's account of his position. Appiah insists that philosophy privileges 'truth', which is not a product of mere catalogue of beliefs, concepts and

meanings. In the matter of the reality of 'race', he argues that the evidence of reason and science is that it is an unreal category, even if it has some political force. Hallen also observes, rightly, that Appiah maintains that 'there is a substantive evidence of critical thinking on the part of members of "traditional" societies' (47). And in a passage from Appiah, which Hallen reproduces, Appiah agrees with Wiredu's position that we 'will only solve our problems if we see them as human problems arising out of a special situation, and we shall not solve them if we see them as African problems, generated by our being somehow unlike others' (48). This appears to me to put Appiah in the center of universal rationality.

Other approaches to African philosophy that Hallen discusses extensively in this text include ethno-philosophy and philosophic sagacity, phenomenology and hermeneutics, socialism and Marxism, and philosophy and culture. He also includes a brief reference to histories and anthologies. One issue that he does not go into is whether there is a slight possibility that there could be an underlying rallying point in the substructure of these approaches. Obviously, they are all approaches in and to African philosophy, and a unifying point is just that: the ultimate goal of understanding and appreciating African philosophical scholarship in both its traditional and contemporary aspects. For the hermeneutic approach, this understanding and this appreciation must be for a purpose, to liberate Africa from the shackles of poverty and imperialism and neo-colonialism. Is there an appreciation of this purpose on the part of other approaches? Or would the analytic universal rationality approach limit philosophy's role as satisfying the curiosity of the privileged? To me this is where the real issue lies. African philosophy cannot afford the luxury of just being a curious pastime of the privileged. It has to be approached as a means of furthering the liberation of the continent, as a partner with other forms of the struggle in the hope that when all is said and done, philosophy can change the world.

Barry Hallen deserves our appreciation for bringing African philosophy to the public marketplace of ideas with this little book.

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Ross Harrison
Confusion's Masterpiece: An Examination of
Seventeenth-Century Political Philosophy.
New York: Cambridge University Press 2003.
Pp. vi + 281.
US$65.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-81700-5);
US$23.00 (paper: ISBN 0-521-01719-X).

When if ever is it justifiable to rebel against kings and other governors? When if ever is it permissible for a state to intervene in another state to bring about regime change? These are contemporary questions but they have long roots which although older are significantly anchored in the seventeenth century. Then as now there was a great deal of confusion, in both a metaphysical and an epistemological sense. People did not know how to respond to political chaos. Harrison starts by (mis)quoting Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: 'Confusion now have [hath] made his masterpiece!' exclaims Macduff when the murder of King Duncan is discovered. This was fiction, but only a few years later the Gunpowder Plot was hatched and foiled, while half a century later an actual king, Charles I, had his head cut off, and then after another forty years his son, James II, was chased off the throne. Harrison's argument is that such masterpieces of confusion demanded a response from masterpieces of political philosophy, and he finds these responses in the political thought of the seventeenth century, but especially in the works of Hobbes and Locke.

Harrison's book is a bit like a novel. There are absolutely no notes, except an annotated bibliography. There are no references to modern commentators or theorists except a few swipes at Nozick. The style is informal. Often with short sentences. Sometimes without a verb. The plot concerns the adventures of Hobbes and Locke as they responded to the chaotic events of their times. There are quite a few sub-plots, involving other characters such as John Ponet and Hooker in the sixteenth century, Grotius, Pufendorf and Filmer in the seventeenth, and Smith, Hume and Bentham in the eighteenth. But I emphasise that this point about the book's novelistic nature is not a criticism, for Harrison's chosen approach allows him to carry out exactly the task outlined in the subtitle.

So the book really is a close, densely-textured examination of seventeenth-century political philosophy. The style allows Harrison to develop, not exactly a dialogue, but a dialectical analysis of God, nature, law, reason, agreement, contract, obedience, power, sovereignty, punishment, rebellion, rights, the general good and all the other threads out of which the political philosophies were woven. The result is a book that is not easy to summarise, but it does admirably illuminate in detail the intricacies and manoeuvres of the philosophers as they laboured with issues that could be, literally at the time, matters of life and death. Given that political solutions needed to appeal to reason, Hobbes probably fares better under Harrison's analysis than Locke. For Hobbes, God was an optional extra in his rational system of politics, but Locke, by remaining devoted to God, found the task of providing a rational

justification more difficult. But by emphasising the role of God, Harrison's analysis of Locke's idea of property is one of the most interesting results of the book. Harrison shows that for Locke property was not a right but a duty, a conclusion very different from that drawn by Locke's modern followers.

Harrison concludes with some well-made though undeveloped thoughts about the need to rethink the relations between rights-based and consequentialist approaches to morals and politics, and between moral and political philosophy. Overall this is a highly stimulating, even exciting addition to Hobbes and Locke studies. But is Harrison too generous to his main protagonists in calling their works masterpieces? They did not, after all, succeed in regulating confusion. Perhaps they helped to stabilize it, in the short term, at least. But consider how issues such as consent, disobedience, war, property and gender still dominate politics today, and not just locally but globally. Unfortunately there is just as much confusion in the world, and in our responses to it, as there ever was in the seventeenth century.

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Should political philosophers try to understand Wittgenstein's notoriously difficult (later) philosophy? Presumably only if Wittgenstein is worth paying attention to. So the attitude expressed by Cressida Heyes at the end of her introduction to this volume is surprising. Having noted that Wittgenstein would probably have opposed attempts to apply his ideas to politics, Heyes responds, 'Too bad for him', and points out that there is nothing he can do about it now (13). It is too bad for Heyes that the attempt to mix Wittgensteinian grammar with politics appears to fail. It would not be too unfair to say that her collection of essays falls into three parts: those about Wittgenstein's philosophy but not politics, those about politics but not Wittgenstein's philosophy, and those that are about neither.

The key essay in the first category is David Cerbone's, which tackles Wittgenstein's alleged conservatism and deserves to become required reading on the subject. Cerbone addresses the view of David Bloor, Ernest

Gellner, and J.C. Nyíri that, according to Wittgenstein, our language is limited by a culture, tradition, or form of life. If this were the case then Wittgenstein would indeed seem to be committed to some form of conservatism (and indeed relativism), albeit perhaps a conceptual rather than directly political one. Cerbone shows though that Wittgenstein, aware of such potential misreadings of his work, explicitly argued against them. Facts about our lives, in Wittgenstein's view, cannot intelligibly be said to constrain our concepts, because we cannot understand 'the facts' independently of our concepts (nor 'our concepts' independently of the facts). As Cerbone notes, this is not a particularly conservative idea. It does not mean that change in either our lives or our concepts is either impossible or bad. What it means is that, for good or ill, change in one implies change in the other.

Indeed this seems to be why Wittgenstein was so interested in concepts (rather than, for instance, politics) in the first place. He wanted to help people (including himself) live their lives in greater clarity. It would then be up to them whether they tried to make changes in the world. Unfortunately Cerbone tries at the end of his essay to present conceptual clarity as itself a form of political liberation. He rightly observes that seeing clearly can be a useful preliminary to overcoming oppression, but surely goes beyond Wittgenstein in claiming that *the* aim of his philosophy 'is to secure the possibility of liberation' (62) for our humanity (by which he means, roughly, our minds). At least it is misleading to express Wittgenstein's clarificatory goal in these terms in the midst of a discussion of slavery, as Cerbone does. Wittgenstein regarded conceptual clarification as having intrinsic value, not as a preliminary to political action, nor as a more spiritual alternative to such action (although it *could* be treated as either of those things). This is why Wittgenstein's philosophy has no political implications.

The other authors who focus on Wittgenstein struggle to read political implications into his work. David Owen does so by calling clear thinking 'our capacity for self-government' (82) and by limiting himself to the (not very Wittgensteinian) thesis that political philosophy should be 'oriented to particular cases' and 'characterized by a historical or comparative sensibility' (96). Allan Janik, despite noting that 'Wittgenstein was profoundly apolitical both as a person and as a philosopher' (104), tries to present various aspects of logic as constraints, which Cerbone has shown to be mistaken (at least as a reading of Wittgenstein). Startlingly, Richard Eldridge, after arguing that different kinds of thinking about politics are best regarded as complementing each other, argues that 'a kind of substantive or weak perfectionist liberalism in the style of Joseph Raz follows from the condition of the human person that is enacted in *Philosophical Investigations*' (127). Perhaps this is true, but what is enacted in the *Investigations* is not *meant* to have any such implication, surely, and is neither meant as nor generally taken to be an accurate presentation of *the* human condition. So we should not infer that Wittgenstein's work implies Raz's in any important way.

Most of the other essays, like Eldridge's, are more about politics and political philosophy than they are about Wittgenstein, whom they of course

mention from time to time nonetheless. The best of these is James Tully's, which consists for the most part of a careful critique of the work of Jürgen Habermas. This critique occasionally has a Wittgensteinian flavor or spirit, but, as Tully notes, it owes its substance more to Foucault and to Habermas himself (along with other members of the Frankfurt School). Similarly, Denis McManus' attempt to show 'how something that one might call a "political imagination" might be necessary' (77), which he offers along with an exploration of the fetishism of certain expressions and modes of thought, relies at least as much on Marx, Weber, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche as it does on Wittgenstein. Linda Zerilli's feminist critique of 'the category of women' is based more on her own common sense and on ideas from Luce Irigaray than on any of the material she quotes from Wittgenstein. Jonathan Havercroft could have explored five 'aspects' (we might call them concepts) of liberty and decided that none of them is *the* 'true' one without Wittgenstein, who would have regarded publicizing any such decision as a kind of un-philosophical preaching. And, finally, there is nothing particularly Wittgensteinian about Wendy Lynne Lee's analysis of works by Toni Morrison, bell hooks, and a Ricky Martin video, or her description of Daniel Dennett's thinking as belonging to 'the logic of domination' (172). The link that she makes between racism and the acknowledgement of others' humanity is interesting, but has already been made by Stanley Cavell in *The Claim of Reason*. Even there the connection is discerned more by sensitive attention to reality than by careful reading of Wittgenstein.

The last two papers in the collection are two of the most interesting, but fall into neither of the categories described so far. Carl Elliott argues that psychological disorders such as depression are not simply discovered and then treated by doctors and pharmaceutical companies, but are in a sense invented by these people, who are partly motivated by the desire to sell more drugs. Elliott's claim is more about the metaphysics of psychopathology than the economics or ethics involved though. It is thus neither very political nor very Wittgensteinian. After this comes Richard Shusterman's piece on 'somaesthetics', a discipline concerned with the ethics and aesthetics of the body. Shusterman notes that 'Wittgenstein's discussion of somatic feelings with respect to politics is rather limited' (213), and that he 'provides no real analysis of programmatic somaesthetic disciplines' (218). Nevertheless, Wittgenstein was interested, philosophically and aesthetically, in bodily feelings, so Shusterman's interest in Wittgenstein in this connection is eccentric but not mad. Whether Wittgenstein would have agreed with Shusterman's implication that somaesthetics could effectively combat racism is another matter.

All in all, then, this is a mixed bag, but the book is probably worth buying if only for the philosophical strength of the first two essays (by Tully and Cerbone) and the food for thought provided by the last two.

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Engaging Humor, Oring tells us, is intended as a discussion of three questions. What constitutes humour? What motivates humour? And, what message does it convey? Oring approaches these questions through a series of reflections about jokes and the contexts in which they occur. The book contains, for instance, a discussion of the Bill Clinton jokes posted on the Internet during the Monica Lewinsky scandal. Two chapters are devoted to Freud's views on humour, and another to the role that jokes play in our social interactions. Oring also examines racist cartoons, dumb blonde jokes, colonial humour and the humour of the absurd.

Oring's view of the nature of humour is clearly stated in the first chapter of the book: all humour depends upon the perception of an appropriate incongruity. Consider the following joke, which Oring offers as an example of absurd humour (13). Question: Why is there only one Eiffel Tower? Answer: Because it eats its young. This joke, claims Oring, is funny because the answer to the question is both appropriate and entirely spurious (20). It is appropriate because if the Eiffel Tower really did eat its young, this would explain why it is unique; it is spurious because an enormous metallic object cannot bear young, yet alone eat it. All humour, Oring insists, can be explained in a similar fashion (x, 29, 87).

The idea that humour arises from incongruity is familiar. The notion of *appropriate* incongruity, however, is novel and deserves philosophical discussion. Unfortunately, there are a number of difficulties with Oring's proposal. Appropriate incongruity does not seem to be sufficient for humour. Suppose that I enter my office and find a large watermelon on my desk. Mysteriously, the watermelon is inscribed with the number fourteen. This is certainly incongruous. And since today is the fourteenth day of the month, it is also appropriate. Yet there need not be anything amusing (rather than just bizarre) about the situation. Neither is appropriate incongruity necessary for humour. People slipping on banana skins can be funny, especially if no injury is incurred. Such a mishap might be incongruous — but what is appropriate about it? These counterexamples arise, of course, because Oring takes himself to be explaining what constitutes humour. It would be much more plausible to hold that appropriate incongruity is something that we often find funny. With this downgrading, however, Oring's proposal loses much of its philosophical interest.

What motivates humour, and what message does it convey? Here is a sample of some of the suggestions offered in the remaining chapters of *Engaging Humor*. The racist humour that appears in a neo-Nazi magazine is not motivated by suppressed aggression (57). Dumb blonde jokes are not really about blondes, but about stupidity and promiscuity (64). The suppres-

sion of sentiment must be seriously entertained as an explanation of the pervasiveness and aggressiveness of modern humour (84). The posting of Bill Clinton jokes on the Internet cannot be attributed to people of a single political persuasion (139). A joke is sometimes told as a 'gloss' — that is, as a comment on an ongoing social situation (85). Since the colonial humour of Australia, Israel and the United States has much in common, the humour of a nation does not express its unique character (115). It is unfortunate, however, that Oring does nothing to unify or generalise from these rather disparate claims. Humour, we are left to conclude, arises from various motives and conveys various messages.

Engaging Humor is intended primarily as a work of anthropology, so perhaps it is unfair to subject it to philosophical criticism. Better to say: whatever the anthropological merit of the book, the philosopher who reads it may be disappointed. The notion of appropriate incongruity is intriguing — but much more needs to be said if it is to play a role in characterising humour. Oring offers some interesting suggestions about the motives and messages associated with humour — but no effort is made to unite these proposals in a way that would be philosophically satisfying. In addition, much of Oring's reasoning would count as hasty by philosophical standards. (See, for instance, his discussion of sentiment in Chapter Six. The mere correlation of suppressed sentiment and humour hardly establishes that the former motivates the latter.) More positively, *Engaging Humor* includes a wealth of examples of humour in context — ranging from the disturbing racist cartoons to some genuinely funny jokes — and would prove a useful source to anyone working on the philosophy of humour. It is also a very good read.

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The title of this book — *Between* Deleuze and Derrida — is a more accurate description of the contents of this long-overdue collection than are the claims on the cover and in the editors' otherwise lucid 'Introduction'. For these essays (with a couple of notable exceptions) do not confront Derrida *with* Deleuze, or vice versa. Despite appearances to the contrary, and the quality

of many of the contributions, there is not much of an attempt to think the troubling sympathies and poorly defined conflicts of the two philosophers. There is, loosely speaking, a mutual exclusivity at work in this text.

A good example is Plotnitsky's detailed chapter on mathematics, which can be neatly broken in half. The first half deals with Deleuze's (and Guattari's) relationship to mathematics, principally with reference to Leibniz. Then, using the common reference to Mallarmé by both Deleuze and Derrida, the second half is a discussion of the figure of the undecidable (here, Plotnitsky perhaps overemphasises the importance of Gödel for Derrida) in the latter's earlier writings. Only in a footnote (no. 9) does Plotnitsky open up the space of a potential disjunction on the topic of the undecidable, which he claims would be understood differently by the two philosophers. Like this, many of the chapters in this book *use* Derrida and Deleuze, but without ever deeply probing the nature of their relationship.

There are, however, exceptions. Daniel Smith's 'Deleuze and Derrida, Immanence and Transcendence' is a very thorough attempt to locate the two thinkers in relation to each other in the space created by the tension of these two terms. While perhaps exaggerating the importance of Heidegger for Deleuze, Smith provides a portrait of the meetings and bifurcations between these two philosophers. More importantly, he broaches the fundamental problem of *how* to explicate the difference between Derrida and Deleuze, a matter of some concern that this book often leaves unaddressed. Smith's suggestion that Derrida ultimately moves in the direction of negative theology and transcendence, whereas Deleuze moves towards univocity and immanence, is perhaps a little too quick, particularly given Derrida's ongoing efforts to delimit the difference between his quasi-transcendentals and transcendental thought more generally. But to give Smith his due, he hints at a close relationship between Derrida and Kant, and this is something that Derrida himself has acknowledged in his recent essay, 'Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides'.

The conclusion of Smith's chapter, which suggests that a philosophy of immanence is the way to go (rather than the 'transcendence in immanence' of Heidegger, Derrida, etc.), also seems a little hasty given the detailed reading of Deleuze and Derrida that precedes it. Smith acknowledges that the arguments brought to bear against immanence are almost always moral arguments regarding the possibility of critical judgment, and, related to this, the position of enunciation in any monist philosophy of immanence. Without really offering an argument against this position, he turns the tables and suggests that it is in the ethico-political realm that we can see the problems with transcendence — basically that it denies life, and is a form of the *ressentiment* diagnosed by Nietzsche. Smith criticizes the ethics of 'transcendence' in Levinas and Derrida, where one has an absolute responsibility for the other that can never be fully assumed, and he suggests these imperatives separate me from my ability to act — it is, in his terms, 'the concept of impotence raised to infinity'. There are, however, obvious ways of defending transcendence, and particularly in relation to Derrida, whose work is more

nuanced than Smith gives him credit for. Derrida seeks to balance these two realms, the moral and the political, rather than conflating the more political question 'What can I do?' into the moral question 'What should I do?' For Derrida, we cannot simply abandon these 'impossible' and transcendental provocations to act justly purely in order to increase our power, and his work also suggests that we would not want to, even if we could. But these questions are open ones, and Smith's essay is eminently valuable for raising them.

Derrida's reluctance to countenance any reduction of ethics to the question 'What can I do?' might be one reason why he doesn't deal with Spinoza at much length. It is also perhaps why Derrida addresses the transcendental aspects of Nietzsche's work — the future, the perhaps — and the relationship between his thought and his writing — his 'styles' — whereas Deleuze focuses more on Nietzsche's revaluation of values, his emphasis on the typology of active versus passive, and the ontology of force that undergirds it. Indeed, to the credit of this book, one thing that does become very clear is the strikingly different philosophical influences that Deleuze and Derrida have had.

There is also a mutual exclusivity at work between particular essays in this volume, and perhaps the best example of this is between Smith's essay and the one that immediately follows it by Len Lawlor, who argues that Derrida is not a philosopher of pure transcendence, but rather of 'contaminated immanence'. In the case of Deleuze, however, Lawlor seems mistaken in describing him as a thinker of 'impure transcendence'. In the register of ontology — a register governing Deleuze's philosophy — the rejection of transcendence and its positive counterpart, the affirmation of univocity, are primary. To any argument wishing to insist the contrary we would recall the infamous line from *Difference and Repetition*: 'There has only ever been one ontological proposition: Being is univocal' (35). Insisting heavily on Deleuze's claim in *The Logic of Sense* that 'the foundation can never resemble what it founds', Lawlor seems to miss the crucial point of the phrase — despite italicizing 'resemble' a number of times — that *representation* is meaningless as an ontological concept. This mistake is what makes it easy for him to insist that Deleuze approaches a certain ontological transcendence — and in doing so Lawlor highlights the perennial difficulty of reading *The Logic of Sense*, which dominates his account, alongside the rest of Deleuze's *oeuvre*.

To briefly consider the rest of the book, Paul Patton's 'Future Politics' brings about a convincing harmony between Derrida and Deleuze on the entwined matters of time, politics and ethics. It would be interesting to see Patton's insights brought more fully to bear on some of Deleuze's major solo philosophical texts — *Difference and Repetition*, etc. — rather than the collaborative works with Guattari, but that is a minor point. Alphonso Lingis writes with customary panache on language and persecution, and Tamsin Lorraine addresses Deleuze and Derrida's shared references to Hamlet's famous statement that 'time is out of joint', although it is notable that for Derrida this refers to an experience of the future, whereas for Deleuze, at least in *Difference and Repetition*, it refers to the time of the past, memorial time.

It is also worth pointing out that the authors of this book are largely 'Deleuzeans', with the exception of Lawlor. A more even spread would have helped to facilitate the project that Patton and Protevi set themselves in this text. Such objections notwithstanding, this is an important book, provoking us to explore what Deleuze calls the zone of indiscernibility — the region lacking simple identity or oppositional difference — between these two important thinkers.

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This is a collection of twelve articles, written by different scholars, on the issue of Socrates' practice of cross-examination in Plato's earlier dialogues. The articles are arranged in four groups of three, each group discussing a particular theme within the bigger question. In addition, the book contains four discussion essays, each one addressing the essays comprising each group. An introduction by the editor offers a useful map of the terrain covered by the articles. The themes covered vary greatly. Still, interpreting the Socratic elenchos and understanding its uses and success is the main concern of most contributors. Vlastos' famous paper from the eighties, though often criticized here, does set the volume's agenda.

Two essays in the first group examine some of the history of the use of the elenchos. Lesher looks into the philosophy of Parmenides and Ausland in forensic oratory. It is not always clear that such surveys contribute to our understanding of Socrates' philosophical practice. However, the present articles do certainly offer some important insights into the history of the use of the term. Tarrant uses counts of occurrences of forms and cognates of the terms *elenchos* and *exetasis* to generate interesting theses. But support for these theses will need to come from elsewhere, since these counts do not, in and of themselves seem well suited to provide it.

The controversy over whether the elenchos in the early dialogues is a method for discovering truths about ethics or whether it is simply a way of refuting people occupies the second group of articles. Benson introduces the interesting idea that Socrates could be arriving at positive claims in other ways than by the elenchos, which, according to him, is a method only for refuting people. Benson also notes that Socrates' insistence that one needs to have knowledge of something in order to recognize an expert in that something might seem to be severely hampering his searches. Though Benson does not say so explicitly, his discussion would seem to suggest the interesting point that Socrates may after all lack the epistemic means for discovering truths. McPherran, on the other hand, uses the distinction between knowing *that* and knowing *how*, introduced into the interpretation of the earlier dialogues long time ago, to claim, via an euporetic interpretation of the *Euthyphro* that he unfortunately does not defend, that the elenchos produces knowledge *that*. In the first article of this group, Carpenter and Polansky note plausibly that Socrates' cross-examinations have many purposes, positive as well as negative, and that Socrates may well be adjusting his style of argument according to requirements posed by different interlocutors. The intuitive appeal of the view Carpenter and Polansky put forward might be signalling that too much focus may have been placed on the elenchos as *a* method designed for reaching a particular result.

By way of an enlightening discussion of the *Clitophon*, Gonzalez offers a defence of the protreptic character of Socrates' conversations, but only through the dubious and little argued claim that attempting to give a non circular definition of wisdom must end in aporia. Smith then brings a novel approach to the study of *Philebus*, though the claim that the real theme of the dialogue is not the issue of the good life but how one might defend arguments against sophistic refutation is not well founded, and is moreover unnecessary for Smith's own interesting approach. Renaud looks at the important and neglected issue of the possible ethical dimension of Socrates' actual implementation of his elenctic practice. This paper does indeed show that a more systematic analysis of the problems surrounding the issue of the role played by Socrates' cross examinations in *psychagogia* is needed.

Even if it were true, as Press complains in the last group of essays, that the *Charmides* has not received much scholarly attention, the essays on this dialogue here do not make a convincing case that it should receive more. Press' dichotomy between the doctrine-oriented interpreters and those who 'take the dramatic form seriously and are less interesting in isolating ... doctrines' seems unhelpful. Many scholars take seriously the dramatic form precisely in order to be more successful in bringing out the dialogues' philosophical content. The problem of whether and how the supposed cathartic function of the elenchos fails to improve the ethical stature of Critias and Charmides motivates Schmid's discussion. Finally, Carvalho claims that it is for the sake of his own character that Socrates targets his interlocutors' beliefs for cross-examination. This, according to Carvalho, is the constructive effect of the elenchos, not the formation of some doctrine. Carvalho does not

explain why Socrates does not also target his interlocutor's beliefs for the sake of their character, which is something he also says he does. Nor does Carvalho explain whether not arriving at a doctrine is a result of Socrates' not being interested in doing so or a result of his procedure's being methodologically inept.

The commenting essays, for the most part, summarize the views in the articles they comment on helpfully, and discreetly provide interesting angles from which to view them.

Not all contributions are all the time as well argued as one might have wished, but they all provide, to a lesser or larger effect, engaging and novel insights. For all those who study Plato, this volume will turn out to be interesting reading.

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Miriam Solomon
Social Empiricism.
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2001. Pp. xi + 196.
US$32.00. ISBN 0-262-19461-9.

In recent years there has been an explosion of work on the role of social values in science. Yet some of the earliest and still most revolutionary work, such as Helen Longino's *Science as Social Knowledge* (1991) and Lynn Hankinson-Nelson's *Who Knows? From Quine to a Feminist Empiricism* (1990) concerns the role of gender in science. Miriam Solomon's book provides a fresh addition to this lineage, an account of values — including gender — in science that no epistemologist, philosopher of science or feminist theorist should overlook. It serves, like Longino's and Nelson's books, to recast and invigorate debates over the role of social values in science.

Solomon's primary concern is to explain epistemological justification in science through an account of the role of social values. In this way, (as Longino does in her 2002 book, *The Fate of Knowledge*) Solomon hopes to steer between traditional empiricism and social constructivism. She extends into the epistemology of science the piecemeal, domain specific, historical approach that many philosophers of science, such as Ian Hacking and Arthur Fine, bring to the ontology of science.

Solomon herself does not bypass ontology, but defends a form of scientific realism: 'whig realism', in which scientific truth depends on what remains significant according to current standards. The theory is realist insofar as it

explains empirical success in science, and it is 'whig' insofar as it assesses 'truth of past theories from the perspective of present knowledge' (33). Despite the retrospective assessment, Solomon avoids imposing from the present onto the past forms of evaluation aside from empirical truth, and thus avoids the problems of a broader 'whig history'. For instance, she suggests there is truth in the phlogiston theory of combustion because it has some implications that are true of our current theory of oxygen. Solomon cautions against judging what exactly is true about the historical theory; not necessarily the central claims, nor some distinct part of the old theory, is the truth in the theory. Nonetheless, she retains a realist commitment to similarity as an explanation of past and current empirical successes. Something about the phlogiston theory plays the same explanatory role as oxygen, and may be considered true, however unable to isolate it we may be.

Whig realism is consistent with a pluralist ontology, even ontologies that are inconsistent. And in this way, Solomon's social empiricism is truly innovative. Most philosophers of science assume that consensus is the ideal and realistically preferable state of science, and Solomon traces this traditional view back to Bacon. However, she contends that dissent is the normal status of science — both typical and desirable, of which consensus is only a limiting case.

To make the case that dissent is the scientific norm, Solomon accounts for scientific decision making in terms of decision vectors. She suggests that scientific rationality emerges out of a range of individual evaluations that cannot be assessed at the individual level. Other epistemologists of science have tried to distinguish cognitive, rational, or 'cold' from non-cognitive, biasing, or 'hot' factors in how scientists decide among theories. This distinction is false, as Solomon demonstrated repeatedly in earlier articles, although her previous papers left unanswered exactly how objectivity could emerge at the social level. Now she suggests a distinction between empirical and non-empirical decision vectors. Empirical decision vectors include salience of data, availability of data, egocentric bias toward one's own data (non-cognitive — but driven by data!) and preference for a theory that generates novel predictions. Non-empirical decision vectors include ideology, pride, conservativeness, radicalism, elegance, competitiveness, peer pressure, and the list goes on.

Solomon argues that dissent is the more general and common state of science, and dissent is appropriately formed as follows:

(1) when all theories under consideration have some empirical success (explain some observations);

(2) empirical vectors are distributed proportionately to the empirical success of each theory (productive scientific methods fall under theories proportional to their empirical success);

(3) the nonempirical vectors are equally distributed.

Consensus would be far more rare than dissent and is justified only by a particular configuration of the terms. When there is consensus, dissent approaches zero, and the conditions (1) - (3) are met as follows:

(1) one theory has all the empirical successes (explains all the different observations);

(2) all the empirical vectors support that theory (productive scientific methods all fall under the theory);

(3) with maintained consensus, nonempirical decision vectors all begin to support the one theory.

Because it is appropriate to form consensus only when all the empirical success supports one theory, it is a limiting case of dissent.

The psychology of decision vectors provides substantial support for Solomon's normative claim that research programs should be supported in a manner appropriate to the relevant decision vectors. She admits that identifying decision vectors requires substantial and various skills, so that epistemology must be multidisciplinary. This is supported also by social empiricism's whig realism, which she argues implies that scientific research should be distributed and explored in various ways. However, that assumes theories have parts that can be extracted and formulated into separate research projects, which requires a more robust realism than provided by her whig account.

Solomon claims denying partiality to be an epistemic vice allows social empiricism to support feminist standpoint theory. However, she uses the name of 'feminist standpoint theory' rather loosely, and she includes among standpoint theorists Longino and Nelson, who identify as feminist empiricists substantially in order to distinguish themselves from standpoint theorists and from the claim that participation in projects for political emancipation provides cognitive advantage. Admittedly, Solomon adds to the reasons provided by standpoint theorists for considering that social neutrality is not desirable. Moreover, social empiricism could be expanded to suggest suspicion of scientific consensus, based on the recognition that the range of social and political values in a society is not being explored by its science. Yet, social empiricism must be expanded that way in order to be adequate for feminist standpoint theory. Solomon attends only to the decision vectors in available scientific theories, and fails to recognize that in order to make the decision vectors truly equitable science must draw in a variety of social and political perspectives that would normally be excluded. Solomon's ideal of epistemic fairness is isolated from larger social and political contexts, such that if the only theories scientists generate are informed by sexism, racism, etc., then social empiricism will provide no means for redress.

Social Empiricism is not only important, but short, clear, lively, and well-supported by case-studies such that it would work well for senior undergraduate and graduate courses in epistemology, philosophy of science and feminist epistemology. It updates the discussions of both social episte-

mology and feminist epistemology of science available in current collections. Perhaps most importantly, as Solomon herself points out, her arguments have long-range implications for science funding, administration and policy. This book will serve well both philosophers and their students.

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Anita M. Superson and **Ann E. Cudd, eds.**
Theorizing Backlash: Philosophical Reflections on the Resistance to Feminism.
Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers
2002. Pp. vii + 269.
US$80.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-7425-1373-4);
US$26.95 (paper: ISBN 0-7425-1374-2).

Theorizing Backlash: Philosophical Reflections on the Resistance to Feminism challenges any complacent view of professional philosophy as a bastion of reason and open-mindedness in the academy. The dozen essays collected here argue to the contrary that a virulent reaction is underway against the perceived advances of women in academic philosophy in the USA. Whether or not one ultimately agrees with the authors' claims that feminists, women and feminist philosophy are currently treated unfairly within the profession, this book should provoke critical reflection on one's assumptions about who can be a good philosopher and what counts as good philosophy.

The book is divided into five parts, beginning with 'Part I: Conceptualizing Backlash', in which Cudd characterizes 'backlash' as a reaction against some progressive social change, which she in turn defines as a change that reduces oppression. The essays in Part II focus on attacks against feminist theory in philosophy and law. Burgess-Jackson indicts three philosophers of failure to live up professional norms of fairness in criticising feminist work. Ironically, two of the three are self-described feminists. Burgess-Jackson's dissections are compelling, but we also need to know whether the three exemplars are anomalies in the profession. Webb describes a variety of illegitimate strategies used to discredit feminist epistemology, ranging from a priori dismissal to overt ridicule. He concedes that 'feminist approaches to epistemology and philosophy of science [may be] wrong' but is concerned by critics' 'tone of dismissal' (61-2). Chamallas identifies three species of critics of feminist legal theory, from within and without the academy: evolutionary sociobiologists, opponents of so-called 'victim feminism' and conservative women's groups. Although feminism has made some inroads into law school, Chamallas finds

little evidence for critics' assertions that feminists have taken over. This article usefully raises the question whether philosophy is peculiar in its reaction to feminism, or typical among other academic disciplines.

Part III comprises three papers examining the intersection of the personal and political in the lives of female and feminist philosophy professors. Superson suggests that male socialization explains the impetus to deny well-qualified female philosophers their due in promotion and tenure decisions, drawing on her own, painful experience. Her analysis does not address the phenomenon of 'queen bees' who commit the same injustice. Superson argues that academic sexism matters because it is unjust and harmful to the individual woman and also deprives society of tenured women who can teach students to identify and oppose oppression, including sexism. Willett identifies three major barriers to women philosophers' progress: inflated standards for advancement that emerged as more women and minorities entered the academy; the public/private split that makes penalizes talk about parenting in professional life; and finally, a philosophical ideal of intellectual detachment. Willett notes that academic women of color suffer also from racist stereotyping, but does not explore the impact of compulsory heterosexuality. She concludes that radical changes are needed to resist the culture of corporate patriarchy in the academy. Drawing on personal experience, Maybee argues that the institutional structures and professional norms of the academy reflect the privileged social position and interests of white heterosexual males, rather than the attributes of a universal subject. Like Willett, Maybee anticipates that the content and practice of philosophy will be enriched by a more diverse professoriate.

Section IV tackles the student backlash against feminism. Moeller reads the unreflective conservatism of her undergraduate students as symptomatic of deeper problems in American society. Democracy depends on a citizenry educated to think critically, and critical thought is blocked where education, both formal (the academy) and informal (the mass media), is dominated by the interests of a homogenous, privileged social group: rich, heterosexual, white males. The backlash against feminist philosophy indicates the threat it poses to hegemonic interests. Like Moeller, Carse and DeBruin urge adoption of a radical pedagogy in the feminist classroom to help students see that what they have taken to be self-evident and complete truths reflect instead the partial perspective of privileged social groups. Superson argues that sexism can distort student evaluations of female professors. Female faculty are damned if they do conform to gender stereotypes, and also if they do not. Since student evaluations form part of promotion and tenure dossiers, women's careers may be unjustly harmed by student bias. University administrators should take steps to neutralize such harm.

The final section of the book opens with Cudd's account of her experiences in confronting sexual harassment at Occidental College. Cudd argues that there is such a thing as hostile environment sexual harassment, and that contrary to conservative critics, it may be prosecuted without detriment to protected free speech. The book concludes with Bell's review of her forty years

in philosophy. The treatment of women and minorities in the academy has changed from overt hostility to more subtle forms of discrimination. Despite the widespread perception that women and minorities have taken over the academy, due to unfair advantages given by affirmative action, the data do not bear this out. Though Bell notes that progress has been made, she regrets that would-be women philosophers are still advised not to rock the boat, and not to have children.

Overall, this anthology offers a fascinating insight into the state of academic philosophy in the contemporary United States. Some essays left me wanting more complete and more fine-grained data (Is the target of backlash women, or feminists, or any member of a group historically excluded from the academy?) Others raised comparative questions: How do women and feminists fare in other disciplines and in other countries? The most telling question the book raises is implicit in Bell's lament: 'I'll never understand why philosophy, the proud discipline of Socrates and the examined life, attracts such a large number of mean-spirited individuals who are so reluctant to examine their own prejudices, so fearful of change, and so determined to narrow the province of philosophy to a point where it cannot touch their own or their students' lives' (256).

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Raimo Tuomela
The Philosophy of Social Practices:
A Collective Acceptance View.
New York: Cambridge University Press 2002.
Pp. xi + 274.
US$60.00. ISBN 0-521-81860-5.

In recent decades, a prominent line of theorists has argued that social phenomena are *instituted* in people's actions and mental conditions. According to these theorists, social phenomena both come to be and continue to exist by virtue of people performing specific actions and possessing specific beliefs, desires, intentions, and the like. Raimo Tuomela's *The Philosophy of Social Practices* is the latest incarnation of this viewpoint. The book's central claim is that collective intentionality constitutes social practices and social institutions, the two central categories of social thing. By collective intentionality, Tuomela means the shared possession of we-attitudes, where having a we-attitude A (goal, intention, belief etc.) is possessing A, believing that

others possess A, and believing that there is a mutual belief among those involved that each has A. The book is the most nuanced, detailed, and precise social analysis of the 'institutional individualist' sort currently available. Any advanced scholar interested in the constitution of social phenomena will profit from it.

The book contains seven chapters. The first offers a summary of its basic theses and contents. The second lays out the conceptual machinery of collective intentionality (e.g., shared we-attitudes, mutual belief) that is employed in the remainder of the work. The third chapter gets down to business, arguing that social practices are central to conceptual activity. In Chapter Four, Tuomela presents his account of social practices. According to this account, a 'proper' social practice is a repeated collective social action performed for a shared we-reason (action is collective when it involves multiple individuals and social when it takes account of what others do and think; a shared we-reason is shared action-causing we-attitudes). Chapter Five offers a 'Collective Acceptance' account of the institution of social notions via mental conditions, according to which social notions are instituted via the shared possession of we-attitudes. In Chapter Six, Tuomela argues that social institutions are norm-governed social practices grounded in the collective acceptance of particular ideas. Chapter Seven concludes his discussion with a formal model of the dynamics of social practices.

Chapters Four through Six, on social practices, the collective institution of social phenomena, and social institutions, offer an excellent analysis of collective social actions, a thoughtful typology of practices and institutions, and a consequential analysis of institution as collective acceptance. Despite their imposing technical armature, they are recommended to seasoned scholars interested in these matters. Chapter Two provides an overview of collective intentionality which will be useful to readers not already familiar with the sorts of distributed or higher-order mental conditions that some individualists invoke. Chapter Three, in contrast, is problematic. It addresses a topic of great philosophical moment — the nature of conceptuality — and builds on Sellarsian and Wittgensteinian intuitions in arguing that social practices are central to this. In the end, however, Tuomela simply appropriates Brandom's argument that (something like) the practice of asking for and giving reasons is central to conceptual activity and rule-following. Moreover, I had great difficulty following Tuomela's discussion of the entities he claims form the 'conceptual *fundamenta* of conceptual activities' (40): the contentful, teleologically meaningful, but nonintentional activities that Sellars calls 'pattern-governed behaviors' (cf. Wittgenstein's 'blind' actions). Tuomela's points are not always evident, the upshot of his discussion of Sellars is unclear, and how pattern-governed behaviors advance the thesis of the conceptual centrality of social practices if not clarified. All this is unfortunate because Tuomela rightly senses that such behaviors are of great significance.

Another deficit of the book is the scant comparison of Tuomela's views with those of other social ontologists, e.g., Gilbert, Bloor, Giddens, von Hayek. The significance and originality of Tuomela's theses would have been more

evident if he had engaged the ideas of more than just three other theorists (Sellars, and Searle and Bourdieu briefly).

Tuomela perpetuates a widespread conception of practices in treating them as a type of regularity (in people's actions). An alternative approach treats practices as normatively-regulated arenas that embrace regular *and* irregular, occasional, or singular actions. Tuomela offers an inviting analysis of a type of action regularity. But business practices, religious practices, political practices and the like not just comprise organized regularities, but are sites where all manner of action interrelatedly take place. Such alternatives can be found in the work of Bourdieu, MacIntyre (*pace* 119), Taylor, and myself. Relatedly, Tuomela's account of practices does not seem to cover the many situations in social life where people primarily perform instrumental and strategic actions (e.g., the stock market). The significance of concrete regularities and shared we-attitudes varies among such situations, and Tuomela remarks (119) that purely instrumental collective activities are not social practices. Furthermore, he does not really indicate how his account of practices would deal with wider social phenomena that weave together intended and unintended consequences of action (e.g., economies, racism). Although Chapter Seven acknowledges the significance of unintended action consequences for how practices change over time, this is a different matter from their role in complex social phenomena. All in all, it seems that Tuomela's account of practices can generate a plausible ontology of, at best, only part — or a particular dimension — of social life.

Tuomela, however, like institutional individualists generally, telescopes the social into the minds of individuals. The above alternative approach treats the social as a *context* for individual actions and mental conditions. Someone buys something by handing over coins. According to Tuomela, she does this, inter alia, not just because she believes coins are money, but also because she believes both that other people believe that coins are money and that a mutual belief reigns among them about this. The social is thereby anchored in a medley of interlocked beliefs. Given, however, that she acts in the context of practices in which people may and do make purchases with coins, all she really needs to believe in order to fork over her coins is that coins are money. The further edifice of beliefs about mutual beliefs and others' beliefs is needless appendage. (The rationality deficit of the person who proceeds without this edifice [177, 185] is closed by the context.) Indeed, far from we-attitudes driving much of social life (1, 99), they are a rarity. So Tuomela's analysis must, ultimately, be inadequate.

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This book contains a collection of important, newly commissioned essays that
is intended to represent the current state of the art in various areas of interest
in the philosophy of the social sciences. Anyone acquainted with the canonical
anthology of the 1990s, M. Martin and L.C. McIntyre's *Readings in the
Philosophy of Social Science* (MIT Press 1994), will immediately sense that
the *Blackwell Guide* is built around a very different list of issues in the field.
Law-based and functional explanations, and the debate over methodological
individualism vs. holism, are out. Critical theory, practice theory, standpoint
theory, mathematical modeling, decision theory and rhetorical analysis are
among the topics afforded individual chapters. Phenomenology and the
analytic tradition share equal billing in the discipline's history.

The book opens with the editors' useful introductory chapter, which lays
out the historical background for their vision of the field. Three sections of
essays follow: 'Pasts', which offers historical overviews of the field, 'Pro-
grams', which deals with the contemporary situation in a number of leading
social sciences research programs, and 'Problematics', whose essays discuss
important critiques of the social sciences.

The 'Pasts' section begins with Stephen Turner's impressive essay on
causality and teleology. No mere catalog of doctrines, this essay charts the
course of its subject starting with Aristotle and mentioning (among others)
Hobbes, the Enlightenment thinkers, Comte's positivist project, Durkheim,
Weber, all the way to G.A. Cohen's functionalist reading of Marx, weaving
them all into a comprehensible intellectual conversation. Next comes Brian
Fay's chapter, which situates Schutz, Heiddeger, Merleau-Ponty, and eth-
nomethodology within the long struggle to overcome the solipsistic and overly
abstract character of Edmund Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. A
final dialectical twist points back to the earlier *Phenomenology* of Hegel and
its demand that forms of consciousness must not only be described, but also
criticized. Thomas Uebel's chapter on the analytic tradition begins with a
useful, if somewhat unenthusiastic, overview of post-war developments on
the Anglo-American scene. The real heart of this chapter is its extensive
discussion of Otto Neurath, whose pre-war work, Uebel convincingly argues,
foreshadowed the latest advances of postpositivist philosophy of the social
sciences.

The book's 'Programs' section opens with James Bohman's chapter on
critical theory. Bohman both describes and champions the development of
the critical program from a search for a liberating and scientifically objective
theoretical critique of society to a free wheeling dialogical inquiry, prepared
to learn from all standpoints and methodologies. This new style of critical

social science is not in the business of establishing eternal sociological truths, but rather in serving as a practical tool for making people 'more aware of the circumstances that restrict their freedom and inhibit their practical knowledge' (107). Peter Rawlings makes a heroic effort to summarize the major results and controversies of philosophical interest in decision theory, including the work of (among others) von Neumann, Morgenstern, Ramsey, and Savage, as well as celebrated topics of discussion such as the 'Prisoner's dilemma', 'Dutch books' and the 'Constant Act Problem'. Quite understandably, Rawling makes use of mathematical nomenclature and concepts that do not appear elsewhere in this book. Lars Udehn's chapter on 'The Methodology of Rational Choice' takes a different tact, eschewing mathematical technicalities and instead concentrating on the fundamental question of whether and to what extent rational choice explanations can really be said to explain social phenomena. He charts the development and deployment of rational choice theories from classical economics through recent work in public choice, and also explains the opinions of Weber, Friedman and Popper on their legitimacy. Udehn argues that the applicability of rational choice explanations is an 'empirical' question that can only be determined on a case by case basis.

Paul Humphrey's accessible chapter discusses the pros and cons of three basic styles of mathematical modeling in the social sciences: theory-based models, which translate social-scientific theories into mathematical systems, data-based models which are created by applying statistical analysis to empirical data, and computational models, which calculate the emergent behavior of a group of individual agents who interact with each other in accordance with a specific set of rules. Well aware of the modest degree of success achieved by mathematical models up to now, Humphrey holds out some hope for future applications of computational models. David G. Stern's balanced essay on practice theory concentrates on Heidegger (especially as interpreted by Hubert Dreyfus) and Wittgenstein (as interpreted by Peter Winch and Saul Kripke) as the two main inspirations of this popular family of strategies for avoiding the traditional conceptual oppositions of subject and object, individual and society, represented and representation, and so on. Stern also gives sympathetic hearings to Ernest Gellner and Stephen Turner's objections to practice theory. Steven Fuller's chapter takes 'Science and Technology Studies' to task for not being sufficiently 'critical and transformative' (207) of the role of science and of the scientific community in contemporary Western societies, especially in the U.S.A. He argues that contemporary Science Studies promote a view of the scientific community which serves state interests in a manner similar to the way Oxford anthropology produced a way of thinking about indigenous societies that served British interests. Touching upon the work of Karl Mannheim, Karl Popper, and Ian Hacking (among others), Fuller develops his theme into a thoroughgoing critique of the state of contemporary sociology of science.

The 'Problematics' section opens with Hans Kellner's chapter on the rhetoric of the social sciences. Kellner first discusses the rise of the social

sciences as defined disciplines concerned with the establishment of *facts*. He then reviews several important examinations of social scientific rhetoric, including the work of Charles Brazerman, Richard Harvey Brown, John Nelson, Deirdre McCloskey, and Hayden White. Kellner believes that such studies do not necessarily function as agents of a corrosive nihilism. Rather, they may serve to gradually transform the self-understanding of the social sciences in the direction of both greater sophistication as well as an appropriate epistemic modesty. Lynn Hankinson Nelson offers a level-headed, accessible, and apolitical critique of the use of evolutionary explanations in the social and behavioral sciences. She reminds the reader that the bare fact that some behavioral trait may increase fitness does not constitute a complete demonstration that its presence results from a process of evolutionary adaptation. She further points out that although some aspects of human behavior across cultures may be *described* in terms of universal rules, that does not prove that human behavior is actually *guided* by genetically programmed version of those rules. Nelson also complains that such evolutionary explanations fail to develop convincing accounts of the historical environments and processes involved in the alleged development of the behavioral traits in question.

Although Sandra Harding's chapter appears in the book's 'Problematics' section, she is no less keen to *defend* the validity of standpoint methodologies than she is to demonstrate how such methodologies may be used to *criticize* traditional social scientific endeavors. In a crucial endnote (306, no. 21) she concedes that we must *avoid* considering view-points of non-dominant groups when these do not reflect a progressive political program. Readers who are not already sympathetic to this school may well find Harding's faith in the inevitably 'progressive' consequences of the conscious mix of science and politics proposed by standpoint methodology naïve, or even dangerous. Paul Roth's chapter largely restates his influential criticisms of 'meaning realism', i.e., the notion that human behaviors and artifacts reflect particular and definable social meanings. In this connection, he criticizes both Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyesekere for assuming that some 'nonnatural meaning' stands behind the Hawaiian behavior whose interpretation was the subject of great controversy between them through the 1990s (317). Roth's chapter concludes with a discussion of the debate surrounding Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's work on the Nazi Holocaust, which, although of intrinsic interest, may not be the best example to illustrate his general thesis.

All-in-all, the *Blackwell Companion* is required reading for anyone working in the philosophy of the social sciences. While all of its chapters are of high quality, their accessibility and comprehensiveness vary widely, so that some care must be exercised when assigning the book to students, especially undergraduates.

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Umphrey's work is a richly analytical, informative, and imaginative work. It is sensitive to the full range of experience. Dissecting the near, Umphrey keeps an eye on the remote. Examining hypotheses, he is mindful of the alternatives. Arguing for definite views, he recognizes their shortcomings. The scope of his learning may deter the historically uninformed. The difficulty of the issues may deter the theoretically timid. For the intellectually venturesome, however, Umphrey's work is of great merit.

Analysis and holism are fundamentally antithetical approaches. In the understanding of complex things, physical/mental, practical/theoretical, individual/social, neither is satisfactory by itself. They are often incompatible, but to accept one to the exclusion of the other is to mistake 'a one-sided view for the whole truth ... ' (9). A fundamental dilemma confronts us. Umphrey explores it in a multi-faced examination of his pervading theme, the whole-part problem. The dilemma appears in different contexts. In its simplest formulation, it is this: 'Analysts seem able to declare the multiplicity of a complex thing, but have trouble with its unity; the very wholeness of things eludes them. Holists seem able to declare the unity of a complex thing, but have trouble with its multiplicity; the very partiteness of things eludes them' (9).

Umphrey notes complexity and the widespread predilection to analysis in modern life. He examines analysis first because that is the way to make the limits of analysis clear. Analysis is integral to our thinking and 'a life without analysis would not be human'. He distinguishes genuine/pseudo, good/bad, methodological/metaphysical, etc., kinds of analysis. The explications are a useful introduction to showing the limits of analysis in mathematics, physics, biology, and the human sciences. Throughout, we discover that reducing a whole, simply and entirely, to its parts is unsatisfactory. Umphrey then turns to analytic philosophy. The classical version, initiated by Frege and expanded prominently by Russell and Moore, tries to undermine the radical holism of the absolute idealists, especially Bradley. However they differed, these analysts 'were robustly pluralistic and atomistic' (31), and they faced the huge problems of the 'alleged simplicity of atoms', the 'Bradleian regress' and the 'paradox of analysis' (31-5). The fundamental dilemma remained unresolved in their work as in that of the 'postclassical analysts' who combined 'the new linguistic turn with a characteristically modern antipathy to metaphysics' (36). These analysts (e.g., Quine) did not dispel, but only ignored, the old problems. Umphrey maintains, however, 'that there are serious problems concerning the complexity of an entity admitting of no ontological analysis' and 'the unity of an entity admitting of ontological analysis ... .' And

he notes approvingly that 'metaphysics persisted' in the works of Bergmann and Butchvarov.

Consideration of Aristotle's attempt at a transanalytic understanding of things concludes Part One. Aristotle recognized that 'straightforward synthesis cannot complete the work of analysis' (75). Umphrey examines Aristotle's attempt in the context of salient issues, including the nature of animals, essence, cause, and matter and form. He credits Aristotle with significant understanding of the problem of analysis but concludes that the transanalytic attempt leaves us with an ultimate failure to separate matter and form, for example, in the analysis of complex wholes.

The above failures lead Umphrey into a 'new beginning'. Part Two considers the question 'what is being?' The discussion is thorough, richly informed, elaborately illustrated by spatial metaphors, and invariably balanced. However we may judge its ultimate adequacy, this is genuine first philosophy. I can only give a sense of its scope and gist here. The central topic is 'the ways of complexity' and the problem is another variation on the fundamental dilemma. If we seek to understand any complex entity, we ' ... cannot be faithful both to the epistemic criteria of adequate understanding and to the ontic conditions of being a complex entity' (76). Umphrey discusses 'syllabic wholes' and 'seamless wholes'; four ways of being: 'plurality, complexity I, complexity II, and simplicity'; different kinds of entity: classes, facts, individuals, space, universals, God, and 'everything' and he makes insightful points about them and their relations. His dominant conclusion persists: given the complexity of an entity, no ontology can be both metaphysically and epistemologically adequate. From this systematic analysis Umphrey turns to three major kinds of possible critique of his conclusion. He gives a full hearing to Butchvarov's use of analogy, Hegel's dialectic, and the 'ways of negation' in Kant and others. His account confirms his major contentions and illuminates the thinking of major philosophers. It is incisively critical and an impressive contribution to the understanding of first philosophy, its nature, problems, and history.

Part Three confronts complexity in practice, in the pursuit of a 'full and happy life'. Umphrey tries to show that the theoretical problems of complexity spill over into our actual lives. A most perceptive and imaginative discussion of 'integrity' and 'character', 'ecstasy', and 'community', shows 'that every one of us is naturally an open whole for whom no sort of transcendence or closure can be completely satisfactory' (248). Whether he is writing about madness, freedom, love, friendship, virtue or citizenship, Umphrey's observations and analyses are discriminating and elegantly stated. The account is a marriage of poetry and mathematics, philosophy as Plato wrote it, and a living exhibition of the wholeness that otherwise eludes our intellects. His reference to the solitude of a garden is a fitting ending to this crucial undertaking.

Concentration on familiar polarities and the dilemmas that they generate leads us to expect an escape from them. But Umphrey seems to hold that there is no ordinary escape from the fundamental dilemma. The subject

matter and the style of Part Three may be an indirect way of showing how we are able to resolve the difficulties involved in the twin drives of dissecting (to understand), and apprehending (to acknowledge) the real character of things. Nevertheless, the pervasive polarity of the epistemological and the metaphysical continues to haunt us; Umphrey's case faces substantive objections here.

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William F. Vallicella
A Paradigm Theory of Existence:
Onto-Theology Vindicated.
Boston: Kluwer 2002. Pp. xii + 291.
US$91.00. ISBN 1-4020-0887-2.

Two issues dominate this book. One is about what existence *is*. Is it a predicate or property, a property of properties, a concept (or conception), the set of all individuals, a world, or a domain? The final answer is that 'existence is not a property but the *unity* of a thing's properties and other constituents' (239). As such it is more fundamental than a thing's properties. Vallicella insists (more darkly): existence itself *exists*. It is a 'paradigm' that is an instance of itself (33). The other main issue — the issue that leads to his subtitle about 'onto-theology' — is about the unity of the world and the conditions for that unity. The two questions fit together because Vallicella says on the first page 'the existence of a contingent individual is the contingent unity or togetherness of its ontological constituents.' This statement is not a tautology. For he insists that 'existence *itself* is existence considered in its difference from existing individuals' (1). And his conclusion is that this unity must come from something external to the cluster of 'facts' that constitute a thing. And it must be a unity: 'Since all facts have facthood in common, the ground of facthood must be common' (249). The 'unifier' is a 'necessarily existent mind' (267-9).

Along the road lies a long negative analysis of the possibilities for theories of 'existence'. Vallicella is clear about what existence is not. He thinks, as many philosophers have, that existence is too basic to be a 'property' (51-3). Existence is also not what he calls a 'concept'. He says 'a concept is a mental entity' (9), and though mental states exist he does not think existence *is* a mental state. But concepts need not be 'mental'. They might be *logical* entities like numbers. They might map out features of the real. Then

existence might be a concept except, though, if this were true, there would have to be something more basic than existence, the reality that such a concepts maps.

One might think that what it is to exist is just to have a place in some system, so that 'Hamlet exists in Shakespeare's play', 'the number two exists in the system of integers', and 'lions exist in the animal kingdom' are all sensible assertions. This seems, though, to imply that existence is what Vallicella calls a 'domain' or a set of 'domains'. If one holds a domain theory then, again, there is some category, more basic to which all these 'domains' belong, and Vallicella says there are 'dubious monistic consequences' to domain theories (127). He thinks such theories would make the ontological argument valid (128), though why this is bad is less clear.

Rejecting domains as the basis of existence has consequences which sound puzzling, though: If existence is most basic, then in some way existence itself exists or nothing exists. And so Vallicella moves to what he calls a 'paradigm theory'. What Vallicella means by a paradigm which is an instance of itself is really, I think, that there must be nothing more basic than existence combined with the property of being an instance. The 'existence' of existence is a model for all other cases.

The concept of instantiation or of being an instance is therefore central and there is a long discussion (15-22) of Quentin Gibson's *The Existence Principle* (Dordrecht: Kluwer 1998). The issue resurfaces in many forms, but Vallicella insists that existence is not *merely* instantiation, though instantiation is central and crucial to it, and there are no degrees of instantiation (19). That is, he would not disagree with Quine that 'to be is to be the value of a bound variable', but this is not enough, for it does not tell us what distinguishes those values that exist from those that don't, and Vallicella insists that there are no non-existent objects.

In its rigour, its systematic development, its constant inventiveness, and its insistence on the primacy of 'existence', the argument reminds us of McTaggart who is, indeed, mentioned (209, 210). Vallicella's conclusions, too, would help sustain a central part of McTaggart's vision. But perhaps, like McTaggart, Vallicella has narrowed his vision more than he needs to. Neither ever wavers from his focus on 'existence'. But in some of our everyday talk and very much of our philosophical discourse there are other important notions constantly in play. There are places where some additional ontological concept or concepts would help us to make better sense of various theories Vallicella rejects.

Things, events, persons, mathematical entities and so forth are sometimes said to 'exist' (or not to exist). But they are also said to be 'real' or 'unreal', to have 'being', or to lack it or just to be subject matters for discourse, or to fail to make it into the groups we recognise in our communities of meaning.

The word 'existence' has its roots in a Latin expression meaning 'to stand out', and 'real' derives from *'res'*, a thing. It is true that what stands out in the sense of being able to be picked out in discourse as a discrete entity has the property that Vallicella talks about — the characteristic being a certain

kind of unity of ontological components. But we also need something like 'thing'. The Anglo-Saxon 'Allthing' was a parliament and 'things' were what could be talked about in the sense of being the objects of laws and rules. A great many strange entities would fit Vallicella's definition of existence. Perhaps we need the word 'entity', even on his view, to do duty for his class of 'existents' together with their ontological components. The mediaeval *'ens'* was just 'being' but the mediaeval hunt was for the *ens realissimus*. And at a deeper level we need to ask what really 'has being' in the sense of possessing whatever it is that explains the rest. This is what Vallicella's 'Onto-Theology Vindicated' seems to suggest.

Nevertheless, most metaphysicians would have been glad to have written this book.

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Bas Van Fraassen
The Empirical Stance.
New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2002.
Pp. xv + 282.
US$30.00. ISBN 0-300-08874-4.

The Empirical Stance consists of five lectures originally delivered at Yale University as part of the Terry Foundation Lectures on Religion in the Light of Science and Philosophy, together with three appendices on Scientific Cosmology, the history of the name 'Empiricism', and Bultmann's Theology. The lectures cover a wide range of topics in epistemology, philosophy of science, and metaphysics. As befits a lecture series, the book displays a light stylistic touch that carries the reader along. At times the reader might wish for more detail and feel unconvinced as a result, but no philosophical reader will fail to be engaged throughout. There is less discussion of religion — fundamentalism in one chapter and secularism and the encounter with the divine in the last chapter — than the title of the lecture series might lead one to expect. The core instead is an extended essay for a voluntarist epistemology of science according to which rationality is a matter of deciding what to value rather than conforming to independent normative constraints, as well as for a novel reconstrual of philosophy itself. Philosophers deceive themselves when they think of philosophical views such as empiricism, rationalism, and materialism as theses or doctrines rather than as stances they decide to adopt.

In the first chapter, van Fraassen rejects the post-positivist revival of ontology and traditional metaphysics in analytic philosophy. Taking the question whether the world exists as an example, he notes that answers always depend on logically contingent postulates such as that if a collection has a certain specified character, then its sum exists. These postulates may be consistent but that only makes the metaphysical views of which they are a part consistent, not true. The post-Quinean may respond that metaphysical views aren't just consistent but part of the most overall explanatory account available, and as such, are continuous with natural science. The demand for explanation thus drives contemporary metaphysics as much as medieval. However, van Fraassen objects that scientific explanation faces harsher criteria than metaphysical, namely natural selection by empirical evidence. The stakes in theory choice in the natural sciences are great — safety, shelter, communication, etc. — but those in metaphysics are just truth or error from the God's eye point of view. In metaphysics merely the form of theory choice is rational, and the answers it provides are simply abstract simulacra of what matters to us in our lives, the God of the philosophers substituting for the God of our forefathers, the 'world' of mereology for worlds which cannot be counted, and for which 'part of' is not transitive. The modern metaphysician, however, may protest that the regimentation of discourse is part of science and that the test of science cannot be separated from the testing of that which makes best sense of it.

The chief targets of empiricist critique over the ages, van Fraassen rightly argues in the second chapter, are the demands for an explanation for everything and satisfaction with explanations postulating entities not evident in experience. However, the rejection of these demands cannot be based on any factual thesis E+ about our cognitive situation, e.g., that our only access to information about the world is ultimately through the senses. No such thesis can itself be immune to empiricist critique or be used as a basis for ruling out rivals. (But why isn't it enough to think them unlikely rather than ruling them out?) So empiricism cannot be understood as a set of theses, a priori or empirical, but as a stance, based in part on something besides factual theses, namely attitudes, commitments, values, goals that may survive any particular beliefs about our cognitive condition. Materialism likewise is best seen as a stance rather than a set of factual claims, one of deference to the content of the empirical sciences, in contrast to empiricism's deference to the methods of the sciences. The new task for philosophy becomes that of identifying the true empiricist stance or the true materialist stance. Why then shouldn't we go for the rationalist metaphysical stance? Van Fraassen's answer seems to be that rationalism unlike empiricism cannot do without false consciousness.

The task for the next two chapters is to construct an empiricism that is adequate to scientific revolution and cognitive conversion. Van Fraassen rejects 'objectifying' epistemologies that focus on the construction of scientific or metaphysical theories of the process of cognition and of the knower. They can't allow that we might come to think of rejecting the theory as rational

since anyone who does so is thereby 'imagining the falsity of that theory and is concurrently classified by that theory as someone whose opinion is either incorrect or incomplete' (81). But all this amounts to is the claim that if the theory were to be true, as we tentatively think it is, then it would be irrational to reject it, not that we cannot rationally think that there might be situations that would lead us to reject it, even if we cannot now rationally envisage any one in particular. Van Fraassen's alternative is a voluntarist epistemology that sees epistemic agents as engaged in an enterprise of making epistemic decisions and evaluating epistemic goals rather than conforming to pre-ordained patterns. He rejects Sellars for having one cognitive goal — explanatory coherence — and praises William James for recognizing that there are multiple cognitive goals the balance among which we must decide for ourselves. (Yet explanatory coherence surely involves weighing explanatory power against economy?) In any case ordinary epistemic decisions for van Fraassen are rationally permitted, never rationally mandated. Scientific revolutions pose a problem because posterior views make no sense from the anterior point of view, no matter how much anomalies and difficulties increase in number and blatancy. Van Fraassen appeals to Sartre's account of emotion as a change in view that transforms our subjective situation to make it bearable to illuminate scientific revolution. The posterior view brings a clear understanding of the prior by unpacking and reinterpreting ambiguities that made the posterior unintelligible to the prior. So scientific revolution becomes royal succession of older successful theories by new rivals that do not only what the older theories did well but what they didn't do, exposing in the former vagueness, ambiguity and incompleteness, interpretative elements and assumptions going beyond experience. The empiricist rule that experience is the ultimate source of information about the world allows normal science to rule out crackpot theories unsupported by new experimental findings and yet also sanctions and supports revolutionary changes that expose unwarranted interpretations that go beyond experience as well as those experience does warrant. What is incompatible with cognitive conversion is only a 'fundamentalist' empiricism that fails to recognize that our understanding of what experience is, the distinction between experience and interpretation, and what we can infer from experience isn't simply given but subject to change.

In the final chapter, van Fraassen argues that science is characteristically an objectifying inquiry in which we not only distance ourselves from and neutralize the objects of inquiry, but delimit the relevant parameters for describing and explaining them. Even scientific revolutions aim at creating objectifying inquiry. The secularizing relegation of religion to subjectivity and illusion, reducing God to a hypothesis, likewise exemplifies this objectifying process, but is neither necessary for science nor a necessary consequence of science. What distinguishes the secular from the religious isn't a set of doctrines or a theory, but again a stance or attitude with which we approach the world and relate to our own experience and others. Encountering the divine like acknowledging persons generally for van Fraassen isn't a

matter of discovering an entity with certain features of personhood but a matter of decision and choice of how to live and interact with them. No objectifying inquiry can decide that and, though religious beliefs may be modified through the development of science and other human activities, the religious stance isn't incompatible with or undermined by science. At the same time, van Fraassen argues that persons aren't created by our decisions since our decisions are subject to revision and so may be in error, and coming to accept someone as a person implies (thinking) that they were persons all along, not just that they just became persons. The argument needs more work to be fully convincing, but like the rest of the book, is certainly thought provoking.

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