

# Philosophy in Review/Comptes rendus philosophiques

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**Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins, eds.**

*Modern Philosophy:*

*An Anthology of Primary Sources.*

Indianapolis: Hackett 1998. Pp. viii + 749.

US\$45.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-87220-441-3);

US\$29.95 (paper: ISBN 0-87220-440-5).

Anthologies can indicate trends about the canon in a field, and this particular collection of modern source materials happily portends some shifts in modern scholarship. Intended as a textbook for advanced undergraduate classes, the editors have compiled appropriate selections from most of the major figures between Descartes and Kant, inclusively. Each of the main figures (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant) has his own chapter. The breadth and length of the text make it suitable for a number of courses including those covering Rationalism, British Empiricism, and general surveys of the history of Modern philosophy.

A pleasing feature of the text is the inclusion of small portions of material from usually less attended figures, such as Malebranche, Bayle, and Galileo, to name a few. The first selection in most of the chapters is a snippet or two from one or more of these less examined figures. Some chapters have more of these 'background' texts than others. The intent, we are told, is to 'assist instructors in teaching the primary sources' (viii), and the goal is well served. Following these generally judicious selections are healthy portions of the major works of each of the major philosophers.

The main selections are traditional, as one might expect from a textbook, and favor epistemological and metaphysical themes to the exclusion of others. For instance, the Descartes chapter has parts of the *Discourse*, the whole of the *Meditations*, and several of the more prominent of Descartes' replies to objections. The Locke chapter only includes the most famous bits of the *Essay*, namely those concerning innate ideas, the primary/secondary quality distinction, his theory of knowledge, and the famous chapter on identity and diversity. Although the entirety of Hume's *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* is reprinted, only a relatively small portion of the first book of the *Treatise* is reproduced; nothing from Books III or IV is provided. As a result, moral and political issues are systematically excluded. This is not necessarily a defect, however, and it certainly represents the current emphasis in the field.

The anthology does suffer for two minor reasons. First, the introductory commentaries vary in usefulness. At times the editors' prefatory remarks are restricted to a few small paragraphs prior to each work, and there the information provided is entirely historical. At other times the remarks are more helpful, as with the preface to the Kant material. There they not only set the historical context, but also provide an introduction and structure to the philosophical issues. Had this been done more rigorously for all the figures, the anthology would have profited. Fortunately some of the works are quality reprints and include substantive notes. For instance, the Leibniz

selections, all reprinted from the Hackett collection of Leibniz translations, retain the nice annotations of this collection which provide a genuine aid even to the novice reader. Unfortunately, not all of the reproduced works have this feature, and the editors make no systematic effort to remedy this defect. Annotations need not be deep or detailed; students of this material often, however, do require some additional textual guidance while they read. Given the difficulties in generating and editing anthologies, this lack is understandable, but nonetheless lamentable.

The absence of a reasonably comprehensive list of current secondary literature constitutes a second minor flaw. One might reasonably expect only a few references to the secondary literature for the lesser known figures, yet the main figures fare no better. References to other works are listed in small footnotes in the brief introductory comments at the start of each chapter. Typically they contain only three or four entries, although the ones listed are generally current and appropriate. Nonetheless, it would not be unreasonable to expect more in the way of even a cursory bibliography.

These few criticisms aside, Ariew and Watkins have put together a collection significantly superior to its contemporary rivals. Its coverage of the main themes in the epistemology and metaphysics of the moderns is thorough and well chosen. Although not a new approach to the subject, many will rejoice at the editors' decision to insert small portions of relevant material from other figures. One would like to have seen more done on this score, however. Some of Malebranche's *Search After Truth* precedes the main works of Berkeley, yet no Malebranche is to be found in the Leibniz section. Unbeknownst to many, the *Discourse of Metaphysics* is largely a reaction to Malebranche. Of course, the contemporary canon does not emphasize this relationship between Leibniz and Malebranche, and so most will not miss his absence in this chapter. Nonetheless, the appearance of *some* Malebranche, Galileo, Bayle, and others heralds better times to come, and hopefully a meaningful shift in the canon for modern scholarship. As an anthology of primary source materials for the modern period, there is none better.

**Marc A. Hight**

Syracuse University

**Martin Bunzl**

*Real History: Reflections on Historical Practice.*

New York: Routledge 1997. Pp. viii + 152.

Cdn\$91.00: US\$65.00

(cloth: ISBN 0-415-15961-X);

Cdn\$27.99: US\$19.99

(paper: ISBN 0-415-15962-8).

**Keith Jenkins ed.**

*The Postmodern History Reader.*

New York: Routledge 1997. Pp. xiii + 443.

Cdn\$105.00: US\$75.00

(cloth: ISBN 0-415-13903-1);

Cdn\$34.99: US\$24.99

(paper: ISBN 0-415-13904-X).

**C. Behan McCullagh**

*The Truth of History.*

New York: Routledge 1998. Pp. viii + 327.

Cdn\$105.00: US\$75.00

(cloth: ISBN 0-415-17110-5);

Cdn\$34.99: US\$24.99

(paper: ISBN 0-415-17111-3).

It is a commonplace of historiography that the word 'history' refers both to the actual events of the past and to accounts of the past written by historians. The philosophy of history is no more than an analysis of the relation between these two historical 'objects', and no less than this either, since the relation turns out to be complex and philosophically fraught. The primary issues are those of truth and objectivity, but especially the latter. Truth is important, for surely we want our accounts of the past to correspond in some sense with the actual past, or what would be the point of writing history at all, for how would history differ from fiction? But objectivity is more important, because all good methodologists are fallibilists these days, and recognize that all conclusions based on evidence are tentative, and revisable in the light of further evidence. So what is vital is that there is a rational, that is, an objective, relation between evidence and conclusion.

These three books are all contributions to the ongoing debate about these and related issues in history and the philosophy of history. To start with the superficial differences, the books by Bunzl and McCullagh are original contributions to the discussion, marshalling arguments to support definite philosophical conclusions. By contrast the book by Jenkins is, as the title tells us, a collection of extracts by many writers (nearly 40), but it is not a mere accumulation of bits but a carefully constructed whole, with a good deal of editorial intervention and guidance for the reader throughout. (The editor's contributions are printed in a different typeface, which is extremely helpful.) Although Bunzl and McCullagh are concerned with the same issues there

are again obvious differences between their books. Bunzl's is short, with only 111 pages of main text in reasonably sized print, whereas McCullagh's is lengthy, with 309 pages of unreasonably small print that is not friendly to the eye.

Neither Bunzl nor McCullagh is particularly impressed by the attacks on truth and objectivity in history that have emerged from a variety of directions, but especially from the postmodern turn in contemporary thought. Both argue that there has been a divorce between the philosophical arguments and the actual practice of historians, and that examination of this practice does not license the descent into various forms of scepticism, relativism and subjectivism about history. But they do not assume that there is an instant or obvious justification of truth and objectivity in history. Rather, both these concepts require careful and (especially in the case of McCullagh) detailed analysis, alongside similar analyses of such concepts as fact, explanation, interpretation, generalization, cause, meaning and the individual.

Both Bunzl and McCullagh proceed by relating their own contributions to other works that have formed the framework of the current debate, especially Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession* (1988), and *Telling the Truth about History* by Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob (1994). These two works represent opposite views on objectivity and truth in history. Novick concluded that objectivity is a myth (though an inspiring one) because of the dependency of written history on the historian's own predilections. Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, on the other hand, argued for the possibility of achieving some sort of truth in history with a position that owes much to the tradition of American pragmatism.

Both Bunzl and McCullagh claim that such strong divergences exists on truth and objectivity because philosophers and historians fail to communicate. 'The practice of history has to contend with philosophies of history that exist in two different worlds. One is inhabited by philosophers, the other by historians. Workers in these different worlds rarely attend to the work of each other, despite overlapping interests' (Bunzl, 1). And McCullagh takes a similar line: 'it is because each side is focused upon one aspect of writing history, and not attending sufficiently to the other' (3). But how true is this? Note that all four authors mentioned above are historians, not philosophers. Many historians are well up with the postmodern debates, and are often all too easily seduced by the gaudy charms of anti-objectivism in one of its guises. And philosophers do not write about history without lavish reference to the work of actual historians, although there is always the danger that they select extracts which illustrate, rather than critically test, their philosophical conclusions. If there is a problem in the philosophy of history, it is not clear that it is produced by mutual ignorance.

Nevertheless, it is this alleged gap between history and philosophy that is addressed, especially by Bunzl. His book is concerned with arguing what he calls his 'rather modest' thesis, that 'it is hard not to be an "objectivist" in practice' (2). This does not mean, of course, going along with all the claims

that have ever been put forward in the name of objectivity. The idea is to see which of these claims can be defended. Bunzl's method is to compare and contrast the philosophical debates in history with related debates elsewhere in philosophy, including the philosophy of language and the philosophy of science, and especially the argument between realism and anti-realism, and then to consider the results in the light of what historians actually do. This leads him to claim that he has demonstrated 'how the commitments of practice serve to undermine the commitments of theory by presuming a realist style of reasoning, given that our historical interests include the experiential and the causal' (84).

There is a lot of philosophical argument before this conclusion is reached. Bunzl considers both historical facts and synthesis (the selection and organization of facts). It is possible to be a realist about facts and anti-realist about synthesis, and there is also the question of whether anti-realism is epistemological or ontological. Interpretation, underdetermination of results by data, the linguistic turn in contemporary philosophy and especially the postmodern denial of any referential ability in language are all considered. Bunzl also tackles the notion of social construction in an interesting way, by understanding it (as he says we must, if we take it seriously) in a realist manner (25). Although Bunzl does not put it like this, what he is drawing attention to is the careless, almost religious, way in which notions of social or cultural construction are used, as if construction is creation out of nothing. Bunzl does quote Jeffrey Weeks using the word 'created', and points out that 'it is a causal word if ever there was one' (59), but this could be put even more strongly. If an 'object' is constructed, there must be not just a process of construction but also something out of which it is constructed.

Bunzl also discusses the relativistic consequences of social construction theory, and quotes Joan Scott as saying that "knowledge" means "the understanding produced by cultures and societies" (45). This sort of relativism causes difficulties for theories of rationality, and especially rational disagreement, but this is because it is possible to go further than Bunzl in his criticism and suggest that relativism is only a temporary resting place on the road to solipsism, isolating everyone in their own subjective 'culture'. There is a further, polemical, point that can be made. The sort of relativism enshrined in the quotation from Scott wishes to reduce knowledge to belief while at the same time trying to preserve the privilege accorded to knowledge in the traditional sense.

Bunzl's arguments are carefully considered (if often somewhat condensed, given the range of issues he covers in a small space), and his conclusions, like his thesis, are fairly modest. He argues that emphasis on the practice of historians produces a compromise between (or perhaps even a dissolution of) competing claims about truth and objectivity, a middle ground between realism and anti-realism. This, he says, is a version of pragmatism, 'not in the sense of a formal doctrine but rather as an attitude towards the role of metatheory that is driven by historical practice' (107). It is practice that is founded on interests in the causal and the experiential that Bunzl is con-

cerned with, and he accepts that not all history has to be or will be like this. (They are, after all, two areas that are highly controversial in both history and philosophy.) Bunzl is aware of the obvious difficulty with his conclusion: can historical practice decide? Just as historical conclusions are underdetermined by historical data, so metahistory will be underdetermined by historical practice. But he suggests that in spite of underdetermination, data can make a difference to conclusions and historical practice can make a difference to the philosophy of history we are prepared to argue for.

Bunzl is aware of the serious challenge posed by anti-realism, but McCullagh has fewer doubts. He is convinced that realism (though not of course naive realism) is correct and defensible. We can still talk about historical truths, whether factual or general, although we must abandon the correspondence theory of truth in favour of a 'correlation' theory. A correlation between experience and the world is sufficient for experience to serve as a check on our theories of the world, even to the point of our calling them 'true'. This, claims McCullagh, is compatible with the recognition of cultural variability in the production of true theories. So this approach to realism does not lead to theoretical monism but to a possible plurality of different but true theories about the same object.

McCullagh certainly has some interesting things to say about not only truth but also the novel idea of fairness in history. Truth, he claims, is not sufficient. To say of his dog that it has an ear, an eye, a leg and a tail is a true but not a fair description, because it is misleading when the dog in fact has two eyes, two ears, four legs and a tail. Even more in the case of historical descriptions is there a requirement that they should not be unfair or misleading, meaning that nothing essential or significant is omitted. The problem, of course, is specifying criteria for fair descriptions. McCullagh talks about descriptions at the appropriate level of generality and degree of detail, and 'omitting no facts which would give a misleading impression of the subject' (61). But there is clearly a danger of circularity here, since a historian accused of leaving out a significant fact and thus giving a misleading impression would argue that it was not misleading because the fact was not significant.

Getting away from naive realism, from any idea that the everything is just as it appears to be, McCullagh argues that inductively-based history will be fallible, perhaps somewhat vague, but nevertheless reliable. (He even uses the word 'faith' in this connection [e.g., 5, 20].) He accepts that concepts, cultures and interests are inescapable in the formation of knowledge, but argues that the correlation theory of truth allows us to accept that 'the truth of a description [also] depends upon the way the world is' (307). This is essential for McCullagh's ultimate project, no doubt old-fashioned in the eyes of some today, which is to give history a moral purpose. Historical truth is enlightening. 'Without a knowledge of our history, we cannot understand our present society, nor plan intelligently for the future' (309). To help us build a better world we must be able to learn from history, and this means from historical truth, not historical fiction.

McCullagh's book is impressive. It is very well informed, beautifully written, with all the philosophical arguments spelt out extremely clearly and in great detail. It is a book that would be very helpful to students in a way that Bunzl's, unfortunately, would not be. McCullagh's discussion of the explanation of individual and collective action, and of the inadequacies of methodological individualism, are particularly lucid, but there is high standard of illumination throughout. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that McCullagh would have any impact on a convinced anti-realist, such as Jenkins, already well known for his advocacy of postmodern history. Jenkins would remain unmoved by even McCullagh's concession that 'History is not entirely objective, but it is much less a product of subjective preferences than philosophers sometimes assume' (10).

Nor would Jenkins have any sympathy with McCullagh's overall project. What, history as enlightenment, when everyone knows it's just ideological construction? How does Jenkins defend this view in his *Reader*? He doesn't really, but rather takes it for granted. Nevertheless, his Introduction is extremely informative and amusing. It sets out the issues and the controversies very well, and provides a helpful classification of the various stances (which is then used to structure the actual selection and organization of the readings). Jenkins claims that postmodernism collapses not only grand narrative History (upper case) but also the daily grind of empiricist (or 'documentarist') history (lower case), thus problematizing the work of even those historians who spend their lives buried in the archives and would never dream of soaring to the heights of grand narrative.

The readings consist of (1) usually brief extracts from writers both for and against postmodernism in upper case History; (2) similar extracts for lower case history; (3) similar extracts from writers who sit on the fence ('nuanced or ambiguous Others'); and (4) longer extracts, or even complete articles, from recent controversies in academic journals. Although Jenkins claims not to be interested in producing a balanced collection, the result is perfectly acceptable given the title of the *Reader*, and as Jenkins hopes, it would be a useful book for students. In spite of his polemical stance, Jenkins is an engaging guide, though he does not always set the right example for students to follow. His own contributions to the book contain far too many examples of slipshod grammar, stylistic infelicity and poor proof-reading. But perhaps to worry about such things is to identify oneself as irredeemably non-postmodern.

Each of these three books makes a useful intervention in the debate. It has to be admitted, though, that it is unlikely that anyone who already adheres to one side or the other will be persuaded by the advocacy of their opponent. Bunzl and McCullagh, for instance, would not accept that anyone who cuts themselves off from the solid materiality of history would still be doing history. And they have a point, considering that some postmodernists deny the distinction between history and fiction. And even Jenkins becomes a bit vague on the question of what postmodern history, as distinct from postmodern philosophy of history, would look like. But the differences run deeper than history. They run into the deep waters of philosophy, ethics,

politics, and until there is reconciliation there, there will be no consensus in the philosophy of history.

**Andrew Belsey**  
Cardiff University

**Jules L. Coleman and  
Christopher W. Morris, eds.**  
*Rational Commitment and Social Justice:  
Essays for Gregory Kavka.*  
New York: Cambridge University Press 1998.  
Pp. viii + 253.  
US\$54.95. ISBN 0-521-63179-3.

Gregory Kavka was a philosopher who died tragically young, but who managed in his brief life to write works influential in a wide variety of fields, including rational choice theory, moral philosophy, and Hobbes studies. *Rational Commitment and Social Justice* presents an impressive collection of philosophers writing on themes connected with Kavka's work. The book starts with a brief introduction by Christopher Morris and a short personal reflection by Tyler Burge. There follow eleven essays, many of which had been presented at a conference in Kavka's honor given in February 1995 at the University of California at Irvine. Though the essays nominally cover a wide range of topics, reflecting Kavka's many areas of influence, there is some sense of common themes, or at least threads that keep appearing in the rope: in particular the relation between self-interest, rationality, and morality; and between moral evaluation and consequences.

Daniel M. Farrell shows (directly and indirectly) the connections between two of Kavka's better known writings: his work on 'paradoxes' in the morality of (nuclear) deterrence and his 'toxin puzzle'. Kavka's toxin puzzle involved a rich man offering you one million dollars if you could form an intention today to drink a toxin tomorrow; the toxin would make you badly ill for a day but would have no long-term effects. Under the terms of the offer, one would either have the million dollars or would not when the time came to drink the toxin, so there would appear to be no reason to drink. Given that one knows that ahead of time, can one (rationally) form the intention to drink the toxin? The nuclear deterrence 'paradoxes' are questions of whether one can (rationally) intend and threaten to retaliate for a first nuclear strike, the intention and threat being sufficient to deter the first strike if sincere, but one would be resolving to do a clearly immoral action, killing millions of innocent civilians for no purpose (as the retaliation would be effected after the first

strike had already occurred). Both the toxin puzzle and the deterrence paradoxes involve the mixed moral, psychological, and analytical problems surrounding whether one can (rationally, logically, morally) form an intention to do something which, at the time of action, it would be clearly irrational or immoral to do.

David Gauthier and Michael Bratman connect the toxin puzzle (as much for contrast as for analogy) with problems of cooperation and reciprocity in rational choice analyses. As in the deterrence situations, the question is whether one can persuade another that one will act in a certain way later, and by that persuasion induce an action (or omission) now. (Also focusing on problems within rational choice theory, Brian Skyrms offers a brief but helpful summary of some recent work on game theory, on the extent to which rational self-interest can support long-term cooperation.) Different aspects of the toxin puzzle are considered, and different ways of responding to the puzzle. Gauthier looks at how we choose 'courses of action', whereby intentions and eventual actions are tied together, and he emphasizes the connections and differences between intentions to act and reasons for action. Bratman investigates the problems of planning and 'plan stability', arguing that Gauthier's analysis does not sufficiently do justice to the extent to which we are always temporally and causally located.

It is curious that there are three articles on the toxin problem and only one on the paradoxes relating to the morality of (nuclear) deterrence. This just may be the happenstance of the interests of those who contributed to the conference and the collection, but it may also say something about the relative attractions of difficult problems of 'applied' moral philosophy as against the potentially more intricate but less relevant questions that can arise in created abstract philosophical puzzles.

Jeff McMahan's article inhabits an interesting space between abstract and applied moral philosophy. It digs deeply into the puzzle of cases where medical negligence before conception or before birth causes a child to have a severe mental or physical handicap. While commonsense intuitions would support the conclusion that the doctor had injured both parents and child and had an obligation to compensate, a close analysis of the situation makes it hard to justify those intuitions. The difficulty is that under many sets of facts the counterfactual alternative for *this* child being born with *this* disability is usually either no child being born or a *different* child being born without the disability. Given that situation, as McMahan shows, it is very hard to show that the disabled child has been harmed. In particular, Parfit's proffered solution, an impersonal approach, is shown to cause as many problems as it solves.

The collection also contains much of interest and importance on the history of ideas. For example, both Edwin Curley and S.A. Lloyd offer relatively unconventional readings of Hobbes. Curley argues against the majority view that Hobbes was at least a theist; looking closely at Hobbes's secondary works and comparing Hobbes' ideas with those of Spinoza and Machiavelli, Curley concludes that Hobbes was attempting to undermine the

dominant religion of his society, was probably an atheist, and that these points are crucial to the understanding of *Leviathan*. Curley also offers an interesting connection between Hobbes's Fool (who will not cooperate, on the occasions where non-cooperation appears to be in his interest) and Pascal's famous wager regarding the existence of God. As Pascal's skeptic risks too much — eternal punishment — by not believing in God, so does Hobbes's Fool: the Fool risks being left out of civil society because of his reputation as a non-cooperator. Curley thus connects Hobbes with Kavka's view (a view one can also find in John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*) that in situations of great uncertainty with much at stake, people will first and foremost act to avoid disaster.

Like Curley, Lloyd argues that the religious parts of *Leviathan* have been badly misunderstood, but Lloyd focuses on a different aspect of Hobbes scholarship. Lloyd's argument is that Hobbes did not have the crudely materialist view of human nature that is often attributed to him, but rather was quite conscious of individuals' actual and perceived transcendent interests. It is exactly because people have such interests that religion is a powerful potential source of disorder, and Hobbes's extensive discussions of religion in *Leviathan* should be seen as an effort to argue that a true understanding of Christian teaching requires submission to the State, even on matters of religious doctrine.

Jean Hampton undermines Hume's account of why we avoid 'knavery' (exploitation of others). Hampton shows that if one begins with the radical individualism and instrumental rationality of Hobbes or Hume, the resources the theory has at hand (e.g., individuals' desire for long-term benefits and their concern for reputation) will not be sufficient to justify consistent morality/cooperation. It is probably necessary, Hampton argues, to include in one's picture of persons (as Kant does) some intrinsic sense of justice.

Gary Watson and Christopher Morris offer contrasting views on contractarian theories. Watson argues that contractarian approach to morality may be the only approach that can accommodate both the teleological (consequentialist) and the deontological parts of our moral intuitions. By contrast, Morris's evaluation of contractarian approaches to justice is far less enthusiastic, even if it is ultimately supportive. Morris concludes (echoing Philippa Foot's view of morality) that we may not always have reasons to follow justice.

This is a wide-ranging and challenging collection that honors Gregory Kavka's memory, and rewards the time given to its reading.

**Brian Bix**

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**Bernard P. Dauenhauer**

*Paul Ricœur: The Promise and Risk of Politics.*

Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield

Publishers, Inc. 1998. Pp. 399.

US\$68.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8476-9236-1);

US\$24.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8476-9237-X).

Paul Ricœur is not a philosopher often associated with contemporary political philosophy except by a small community of scholars. Dauenhauer's book is a substantial contribution to rectifying this lacuna by making Ricœur's political thinking assessable to general readers. D.'s aim, admirably executed, is to set out an articulate and complete account of Ricœur's thinking about politics from his earliest work to the present. D.'s argument is that Ricœur's political thought is integral to his philosophy as a whole and springs from and fills out his philosophical anthropology that is essential to Ricœur's general philosophy. The book, the work of a mature philosopher critically admiring the work of one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century, leaves little doubt that this judgment is correct.

The book is organized in nine chapters. It begins with a short introduction to Ricœur's life and work that is easily accessible to the philosophical generalist but nuanced enough to satisfy the specialist. The book concludes with an assessment of Ricœur's contribution to political thought. Between these 'bookends' D. develops Ricœur's political thinking in the chronological of Ricœur's texts. Chapters two and three concern Ricœur's earliest thinking about politics from 1946 to 1961 before Ricœur's 'hermeneutical turn' in the early 60s. Chapter 4 presents Ricœur's theory of action, agency and identity that are central to Ricœur's mature work. Chapters five and six summarize his 'little ethics' and apply it to his developing political thought. Chapters seven and eight take up Ricœur's thinking on what is required to participate in politics as a basis for eight that explores the meaning and implication of political responsibility.

Readers will appreciate D.'s easy facility with Ricœur's complex and sometimes opaque texts. He not only understands the texts individually but also inter-textually and he can communicate their connections and relationships within Ricœur's work as a whole. His reading of Ricœur is carefully done, often insightful, and usually challenging. Particularly helpful is D.'s ability to locate Ricœur's texts intellectually in the Ricœurian corpus. D. also has an exceptionally good understanding of the intellectual environments that are Ricœur's consistent dialogue partners. Thus, D. is able to easily detail the influences of Aristotle, Kant, and Hegel on Ricœur's thinking, as well as his intellectual dialogue with interlocutors like Habermas, Levinas, Rawls, and Waltzer. D. confirms that one cannot appropriate Ricœur without also being conversant in Ricœur's considerable and extensive philosophical culture. D. has comfortable control of this background and manages to provide a lively survey of the central issues of political philosophy without

being pedantic or tiresome. Particularly helpful are D.'s short digressions on Hegel's influence on Ricœur's development.

D.'s evaluation of Ricœur's contribution to contemporary political philosophy is generally laudatory. Ricœur's political thought is, he says, 'a contribution of the first order' (287) in spite of its limitations because it provides guidance both for how we ought to think about politics and how we ought to take part in it. This is practical guidance rather than a theoretical doctrine. Even so D. affirms 'Ricœur gives us a fresh and sensible way to deal with the issues that are at the center of the liberal-communitarian debate that is of crucial importance for democratic theory' (288), providing a practical third way between liberalism and communitarism (315). D. bases this argument for a 'third way' on Ricœur's fundamental anthropology that holds together the meaning of person as a unique actor to whom moral responsibility is imputable and yet as constitutively related to other persons and institutions, especially as developed in his 'little ethics' which in turn presupposes a link back to origins of Ricœur's anthropology in his earliest work. Thus D. closes the circle of his argument that understanding Ricœur's political thinking requires taking into account his earliest and not just his later work. Some Ricœur specialists will contest this thesis; however, given the evidence that he brings to bear on the thesis, D.'s argument must be taken seriously.

D. makes two important contributions to Ricœur studies that are worthy of attention. First is his strong and instructive argument that there is an essential connection between Ricœur's pre-60s political thought and his more mature work. D. argues that Ricœur never abandons the basic constituents of his philosophical anthropology worked before his linguist turn (99). His turn to language and action in the 60s rests on this foundation and is essential to understanding his later thought on politics. As noted, this thesis will be somewhat controversial to some Ricœur specialists who tend to dismiss the importance of this earlier work, preferring to see the hermeneutical turn as a new departure in his philosophical rather than a new trajectory in it.

D.'s second contribution is his careful exploration of ethical personalism to Ricœur's social and political thought. The first chapter explores Ricœur's association with Emmanuel Mounier and the *l'Esprit* circle in detail noting that from its earliest articulation Ricœur's political thought displays striking affinities with Emmanuel Mounier's concerns and themes that recur in Ricœur's political thought are prominent in Mounier's personalism (13). Moreover, Ricœur carries forward in all his thought the central importance of the meaning of person as unique and yet related to others. As Ricœur affirmed in *Critique and Conviction* politics presupposes persons and 'a reflection on *capable man* constitutes the anthropological preface required by political philosophy.' D. sees philosophical personalism nurtured early in Ricœur's career as the lynchpin linking Ricœur's early and mature political thought. D. makes a substantial case, I think, for including Ricœur among the continental personalists.

However, D.'s assessment of Ricœur is not without weakness. His focus on the American form of the liberal-communitarian debate fails to take into

adequate account the contribution of critical theory, especially Habermas, who has loomed large as one of Ricœur's dialogue partners. I have argued that this debate is actually a debate among four sides, not two and is better described in terms of a proceduralism-contextualist debate that encompasses not just political philosophy but includes, as D. has seen, social philosophical and philosophical anthropology. One wishes that D.'s concluding assessment had been more attentive to the relationship of Ricœur's critical hermeneutics to Habermas' critical proceduralism.

In spite of this obvious weakness, this is an important contribution to Ricœur studies by an able philosopher who has a keen appreciation for and excellent control of his subject. Fortunately, it is not a book just for Ricœur specialists. It will interest anyone doing political philosophy in any of its forms. It is well organized. D. keeps the reader focused on his argument with summaries and projections. Its style and voice make the book easily accessible to a generalist and it serves as a sound introduction to Ricœur's philosophy as a whole. However, its depth provides substantial content for the specialist of Ricœur or political and cultural studies.

**James B. Sauer**

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**Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo, eds.**

*Religion.*

Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 1998.

Pp. x + 211.

US\$49.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-8047-3486-0);

US\$14.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8047-3487-9).

What does it mean for post-religious philosophers to examine the resurgence of religion? Derrida places this collection of essays in its context: a group of male European philosophers of Judeo-Christian heritage gathered at Capri to assess religion in the light of its late modern resurgence. Kant had relegated religion to the reasonable and morally autonomous, and thus God-abandoned. Yet things have not gone quite the way in the culture that they have in philosophy. Hence Derrida inquires into that scrupulousness (*religio*) that seeks to keep the Other pure and unscathed. Modernity's totalizing juggernaut both undermines and is 'the *very source of the religious*' (65). For Derrida religiousness is a 'desert' place, and he highlights two images: messianism that promises and defers justice, and 'chora.' Chora, the pre-existent no-place wherein Plato's demiurge creates, '*does not even announce*

itself as “beyond being” in accordance with a path of negation.... [It] remains absolutely impassible and heterogeneous’ (20). This indeterminateness brings on an indecision that subverts revelation, giving religion a self-undermining character.

As long as the ‘trace’ is viewed as the source of religious sensibility, several articles find important lessons in key Christian doctrines. Gianni Vattimo claims the task of philosophy is to offer a ‘critical radicalization’ of religion’s rise in the popular consciousness. ‘A straight-forward recovery of “metaphysical” religiousness[,]. . . a renewed foundationalism,’ will not satisfy the religious need expressed in a society ‘fleeing the confusions of modernization and the Babel of secularized society’ (82). Rather, the end of metaphysics makes possible a recovery of the ‘event-character of Being’ expressed in the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. Focusing on ‘symbol’, Eugenio Triás holds out the hope that the break created by Marx, Feuerbach, Nietzsche and Freud will foster the birth of the new religiousness prophesied so long ago by Joachim de Fiore: the true religion of the spirit.

However, Aldo Gargani warns us to avoid the theological danger of searching after the objects referred to in religious discourse. Rather, we should understand religious experience as a hermeneutic event: ‘In the end, religion will not be the discourse that discovers and makes manifest an Other Object, an Other Entity, but rather a term of comparison according to which the situation, figures and processes of our life come to be re-interpreted’ (115). In place of philosophical views that marginalize religious perspectives, Gargani offers a deconstructive reading of the commandment not to take the name of God in vain. Vincenzo Vitiello offers a ‘typology of the religious’, exploring the themes of ‘desert’, ‘ethos’, and ‘abandonment’. These themes share an obliqueness characteristic of Jesus’ parables, in which ‘the highest word is the falsehood that says the truth in betraying it, aware of being unable to say otherwise’ (165).

Maurizio Ferraris sums up the potentially positive import of the current religiosity. While modern views have shown the ‘empirical and psychological genesis’ of religion, there is no reason to think that the ‘not’ between being and Being, the finite and the infinite, will be resolved in a decision for one or the other. Furthermore, there is no reason to view this indecision as ‘originary.’ Rather, self-transcendence, whether of the *cogito* or of *Dasein*, is best understood as ‘the physiological activity of the trace.’ The ‘origin of God as much as of man’ lies ‘in precisely this mystery ... the trace’ (195).

Hans-Georg Gadamer’s comments draw the discussion to a practical close. Both a freedom from dogmatism and the impossibility of returning to the doctrines of the Church are starting points that link these discussions to Heidegger’s search for God. Europe has discovered that there are religions and civilizations that do not share Christianity’s puritanism, Gadamer notes. But is there an alternative to the ‘religion’ of the global economy and its technology that is destroying the planet? That remains to be seen.

As with many anthologies, this collection runs the gamut from the intriguing and insightful to the trivial and boring. The contributors discuss what

they know: Heidegger, Derrida, Kant, and the history of philosophy. They share a suspicion of totalizing religious claims and a faith that traditional dogmatics is a dead end, and thus has little to contribute to philosophical conversation. Rather, religion as understood here is at its best in its mystical and self-deconstructing forms. At a number of places *Religion* is marred by the authors' unawareness of religious studies. Their ignorance of that field (in its anthropological, sociological, biblical and theological forms) caused me to wince at the naïveté of, for example, the use of decontextualized and sometimes simplistic appeals to biblical materials. A glaring example is Vattimo's unthinking supersessionist assumption that Judaism is 'confined to the Old Testament' (92) — an egregious statement one would have thought no longer possible. In short, this is a mixed volume. Readers unversed in deconstructionism and Heidegger will find it tough going. But for the reader with an adequate background this collection offers a fairly coherent view of the ways deconstructionists read religion.

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**Antony Duff, ed.**

*Philosophy and the Criminal Law:*

*Principle and Critique.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 1998.

Pp. 261.

US\$54.95. ISBN 0-521-55044-0.

This collection of five essays, with an introduction by the Editor, aspires to foster dialogue between those who have authored, or are receptive to, recent critical work in legal theory (read: critical legal studies) and those who, in the tradition of scholarship reaching back to Blackstone, aim to reconstruct criminal law doctrine upon a foundation of rational principles. The immediate subject of the dialogue is the *general part* of the criminal law, i.e., that collection of doctrines including those of mens rea, actus reus, accessory liability, liability for inchoate offenses, and defenses such as mistake, justification, and excuse, in contrast to the *special part*, which is composed of definitions of specific offenses (theft, rape, murder, etc.). Although, so described, the general part may appear to be a mere congeries, it is typically regarded as expressing, in general form, those principles which are necessary to Anglo-American criminal law's claim to respect individual autonomy, and essential to protecting the individual from subordination to otherwise un-

checked social demands for crime prevention. What Duff terms *the orthodox view* holds that a system of criminal law can aspire to be rational and principled only to the extent that it is organized by an expansive and coherent general part. The volume contains essays that defend, qualify, and elaborate the orthodox view, essays that critically examine the orthodoxy's coherence, and (most interestingly) a neo-Aristotelian attack on the assumption that a principled criminal law is one organized by an extensive general part. All in all, the volume is a rousing success and is essential reading for anyone with a serious interest in criminal law theory or the justification of punishment.

Nicola Lacey's essay, 'Contingency, Coherence, and Conceptualism: Reflections on the Encounter between "Critique" and the "Philosophy of Criminal Law"', clarifies the different types of task that a theorist of criminal law may undertake, then surveys the historical development of the theory of the general part, from Blackstone and Stephen to Jerome Hall and Glanville Williams. She finds that the theoretical importance attached to the general part, though increasing, is an historical contingency, and stands in contrast to its relative stagnation in practical terms. This contrast, she suggests, supports the 'critical hypothesis' that 'doctrinal rationalisations serve to repress aspects of practices which raise intractable problems of legitimation' (37). She concludes by urging theorists to attend more closely to history, politics and sociology, and to rely less exclusively on philosophical and doctrinal analysis.

Douglas Husak asks 'Does Criminal Liability Require an Act?' and concludes, contrary to the received understanding of the general part, that it does not. What the general part does contain is a *control* requirement, which answers to its fundamental concern that criminal liability attach only where the actor has exercised, or has been capable of exercising, choice. This adjustment, Husak notes, is fully in line with the orthodox aspiration to align the conditions of moral and criminal responsibility.

Alan Norrie's essay, "'Simulacra of Morality'? Beyond the Ideal/Actual Antinomies of Criminal Justice', argues that the orthodox alignment of moral and criminal responsibility is infected by an antinomy between the 'ideal' and the 'actual', that is, between the Kantian, retributivist conception of the rational subject who wills his own punishment, and the empirical realities that determine the contextualized will of the (often destitute) offender. He finds that the orthodox view of the general part, even on Antony Duff's revisionist account, is unable to 'defend Western criminal justice against the radical criticism that legitimacy is achieved only by an illicit decontextualization' of the offender' (115). Norrie then explores Rom Harré's social constructionist theory of the individual as a *relation* between 'personal' and 'social' being, and its capability of supporting a defensible system of punishment. He concludes by rejecting Alasdair MacIntyre's call for a return to 'genuine' moral communities, accepting that the 'simulacrum' of morality offered by liberal modernity must be reformed, rather than rejected.

Antony Duff, in 'Principle and Contradiction in the Criminal Law: Motives and Criminal Liability', responds to the critical claim (made by Norrie, inter

alia) that contradictions infect the orthodox view. Duff's focus is the general-part principle that motive (as opposed to intention) is irrelevant to liability. He argues that the apparent doctrinal schizophrenia surrounding this principle does not disclose a rational failing of the general part, but, instead, points to the non-satisfaction of necessary preconditions of systemic moral legitimacy. Duff usefully distinguishes between the conditions that must be satisfied before legal duties may be said to *bind*, from those that must be satisfied before the state may be said to have *moral standing* to enforce those duties. A full justification of the criminal law has to show that it satisfies both types of precondition.

John Gardner's essay, 'On the General Part of the Criminal Law', is perhaps the most ambitious contribution to this volume. It is a challenge not to the coherence of the general part, but to the orthodox view that the general part occupies a privileged place with respect to the special part. Gardner traces this bias to Kant's effort to correct Hume's rendering of moral psychology as an essentially passive matter. Kant affirmed the autonomy of the moral by making it sovereign in a separate, noumenal realm, where it ruled via a categorical imperative applied to actions conceived in high abstraction. The orthodox view of the general part, with its insistence upon generalization and disapproval of the messiness of the special part, reflects this Kantian scheme. In opposition, Gardner advances an Aristotelian account of action and agency that makes it possible to understand that the agreed desiderata of principle and rationality need not be forced into a supposedly exhaustive scheme composed (like the general part) of a set of abstract and uniform principles modified only by instrumental considerations of policy. Rule-of-law values, Gardner points out, are ambiguous between *textual* and *moral* clarity; while many of the colorfully defined offenses in English law lack the former, recasting them in the streamlined terminology beloved of the orthodox codifiers may deprive them of the latter. Definitional diversity, rather than definitional uniformity, Gardner concludes, better satisfies appropriately Aristotelian canons of rationality.

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**M. Gans, M. Paprzyck, and X. Wu, eds.**  
*Mind versus Computer:*  
*Were Dreyfus and Winograd Right?*  
Burke, VA: IOS Press 1998. Pp. 200.  
US\$75.00. ISBN 90-5199-357-9.

This provocatively titled volume consists of a collection of papers previously published in a special issue of the journal *Informatica*. The subtitle refers to a famous debate in the philosophy of Artificial Intelligence (AI) — that between the advocates of ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ AI. Briefly, ‘strong AI’ is a collection of views centered on the idea that computation is explanatory of intelligence (including such concepts as meaning and consciousness), while advocates of ‘weak AI’ deny such explanatory purchase and prefer simply to pursue the production of useful technologies. The (much abused) terminology is originally Searle’s, who famously argued that even if the Turing Test could be passed (i.e., a computer could behave so as to imitate humans) the result would not be ‘strong AI’ because the machine would not exhibit intentionality. The editors of this volume are adamant that similar positions, argued by Dreyfus and Winograd, are correct and that ‘the attacks on them by the strong-AI community and large parts of the formal-sciences community were unjustified’ (ix). Their stated aim is to re-evaluate AI after more than two decades of research, and also to predict future research trends. The first of these mission statements is indeed timely and laudable, were it carried out with precision and rigour, while the second provokes many of the contributors to somewhat hazy speculation that is the worst kind of brainstorming.

The book’s twenty papers are divided, indecisively, into three sections; General, New Approaches, and ‘Computability and Form versus Meaning’. Many of the contributions are mercifully short (some seem to be little more than extended abstracts), and only a handful raise really pertinent issues in any coherent way. Regretfully, the overall impression is one of a confusing and frustrating jumble of opinions and enthusiasms, rather than a lucid selection of well-argued theoretical positions. Not all of the papers deserve this criticism, much of which must be levelled at the editors and publisher, but their number is few. Annoying and glaring mistakes in grammar and spelling have slipped through the editors’ fingers too, even in their own introduction. Even as a balanced collection of varied views the volume fails. If we are truly to critically re-evaluate the progress of AI then we must hear arguments from the advocates of ‘strong AI’ as well as its opponents. This is a deep shortcoming of the book, given its explicit aims. Indeed, do we really need more arguments, or position statements against the strong AI thesis? If they contain some new insight, of course, but a reworking or restatement of standard positions seems superfluous.

Too many of the contributors have a favourite personal view or research programme which they wish to advertise, often without real argument; too many push idiosyncratic perspectives on the field; and virtually none of them agree on definitions of basic concepts in the discussion. One comes away with

the sorry, and mistaken, idea that the philosophy of AI is in severe trouble. Don't mistake me — a couple of the contributions here are truly embarrassing (would that this were more amusing). Many of the popular, and by now hackneyed, ideas in the field are paraded here — standard arguments using Gödel's incompleteness theorem, the debate between connectionism and symbolic approaches, and speculations about quantum mechanics and consciousness. Such papers could be valuable if they were clearly written reviews of the literature, but more often than not they are disappointingly jumbled research agendas.

Of particular interest are papers by Markus Peschl, Robert Stufflebeam, and Paul Schweizer. Peschl wants to point out philosophical issues in Knowledge Representation as employed in Human-Computer Interaction, and focuses on the concept of representation itself. He argues that pictorial and propositional representations in fact agree on a core notion of reference, but states that neural representations 'do not follow this assumption of a referential representational relationship' (100). Unfortunately, he offers no account of what then makes neural representations representations, or indeed any criteria by which to determine whether or not a representation is referential or not. Stufflebeam is also interested in representations, and promotes the use of 'non-symbolic analog' representations in AI. He argues that the 'distributed representations' beloved of connectionists are not really representations at all, and yet considers it 'quixotic' to attempt any philosophical investigation into the nature of representation itself (see Cummins 1996 for a valiant attempt). Schweizer argues convincingly that computation cannot explain representational content, and thus that Cognitive Science and strong AI need look elsewhere for foundational concepts. He employs Brentano's notion of intentionality (the 'aboutness' of mental states) to point out that mental representations are supposed to have a semantical dimension, and then shows that computation, conceived of as syntactic manipulation, lacks any purchase at this level.

Despite a few interesting contributions, then, this volume cannot be recommended. Perhaps the trend of publishing conference proceedings as books has gone too far. Newcomers to AI will justifiably feel bewildered and disappointed by the volume's lack of coherence and quality, while researchers in the field will simply be frustrated. Philosophers, sadly, may take the volume to be representative of poor quality thinking in the philosophy of AI. Such a conclusion would be misguided — for there are original and deep thinkers on these issues, even if few of them are to be found here.

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**Alan Gewirth**

*Self-Fulfillment.*

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

1998. Pp. x + 235.

US\$35.00. ISBN 0-691-05976-4.

Walk into any bookshop and you are confronted with end-of-the-millennium angst — row upon row of self-help books on how to get rich, reduce stress, work more effectively, shed half your body weight in a week, accept yourself and improve your sex life. Publishers have a heyday exploiting our contradictions and insecurities in the elusive quest for Self or Meaningful Life. It is odd that among these outpourings of popular psychology, there seems to be an unquestioned acceptance of the tenet of individualism. One owes it to oneself to develop one's talents (or more dubious goals promoting greed or vanity) — without consideration of how this fits in with the rest of society.

It is therefore a relief to see a serious philosophical treatment examining the concept of self-fulfilment. Alan Gewirth gives an extensive overview of the subject. He defines and discusses various ways in which both philosophers and the hoi polloi have seen self-fulfilment, both in terms of living the good life and also as a socially based ethic. A large part of the book is given over to discussion of self-fulfilment seen either as 'capacity' or 'aspiration' fulfilment, which Gewirth finally places in a context of universalist morality, rights and ultimate values.

Gewirth begins with a discussion of self-fulfilment as an ideal. A major criticism of the idea of self-fulfilment is that it engenders '... egoism, ... self-absorption and self-aggrandizement ... focus[ing] so exclusively on the self that it leaves no space for other values, including the goods and rights of other persons' (4). Furthermore, the ideal is practically unrealisable, as aspirations can be limitless. This does not seem to me to constitute a reasonable objection, as it equally applies to different conceptions of morality — yet this does not render the drive towards moral perfection as futile or meaningless. Any morality has to consider the idea of supererogation — though I suspect this is a pseudo-problem. If something is practically unrealisable, this does not mean it cannot be held as an ideal.

Gewirth explicates the difference between aspiration and capacity-fulfilment as follows: 'the question for aspiration-fulfillment is: What will satisfy my deepest desires? The question for capacity-fulfillment is: How can I make the best of myself?' (14) Gewirth claims that capacity-fulfilment requires achieving goods or values that have an objectively worthwhile status: 'Thus ... persons like Hitler or Stalin might be held to have achieved aspiration-fulfillment at least on the occasions of their greatest triumphs; but they would not have achieved capacity-fulfillment because the objects of their aspirations, far from being genuine goods, were execrable evils' (15). This is a question-begging appeal to commonsense morality, for presumably a Hitler or a Stalin might disagree.

In considering self-fulfilment as aspiration-fulfilment, Gewirth considers the questions of what aspirations (and their objects) are, and how they can be satisfied. He distinguishes the aspiration to be a certain kind of person from aspiring to achieve certain results. At the extreme, this could result in either self-aggrandizement or self-abnegation. He states: 'to have a desire for something, one must not merely like it but must also aim to have or get it ... So desires have ... implicit tendencies to action ...' (21). This does not necessarily follow, as we may like to have achieved something without the work (cost) involved.

Gewirth goes on to consider issues relating to capacity-fulfilment. For example, he suggests our aspirations are delimited by our capacities: 'a youth who feels himself to be deficient in mathematical or literary ability is unlikely to aspire to be a mathematical physicist or a novelist' (31). I disagree with this, as quite the opposite may be the case. A perceived lack of talent may well be the source of determination to succeed in a particular field, and indeed may foster an ability not formerly present.

The issues of self-determination, personal identity and freedom of the will are all touched upon as relevant to an understanding of self-fulfilment: '... aspirations are themselves chosen, not merely undergone. Even if what you aspire to reflects your upbringing, including your cultural milieu, you can take effective cognizance of your aspirations and decide whether to maintain them or to seek others' (35). Inevitably, Gewirth often returns to the problem of the 'higher' versus the 'lower' aspirations; the 'Why, if at all, is poetry better than pushpin?' debate.

Moral philosophy has an unnerving habit of diversifying down metaphysical alleyways, and Gewirth's book is no exception to this. Promising paths metamorphose into labyrinths (complete with monsters) and vicious circles. Gewirth's original question 'What is self-fulfilment?' immediately spawned the questions of whether self-fulfilment is possible, or even desirable. These in turn give rise to increasingly fundamental concerns such as the nature of the self-personal identity, human dignity, differing moral systems. There is a danger of infinite regression where assertions have to be justified in terms of more basic concepts, or alternatively, brazened out with simple dogmatism. Gewirth treads very cautiously, accordingly clarifying and qualifying his discussion. He conscientiously presents multi-faceted arguments, giving full and fair hearings to protagonists and detractors.

So much so, that I often found myself failing to see the wood for the trees. Not only the trees, but every branch, twig, bud, leaf and insect thereupon were laboriously dissected and discussed. I fully appreciate the importance of rigorous philosophical argument — and Gewirth is certainly rigorous — but amongst the minutiae it was easy to lose the main thread of discussion. This led to a turgid style, where the pursuit of clarity ultimately led to the loss of clarity. His arguments could have been presented more simply without any great loss of content.

Gewirth's thesis grounds the idea of self-fulfilment in human dignity and rights set within a greater moral context. Thus he avoids the criticism that

self-fulfilment is necessarily self indulgent, as it is also delimited by duties within society.

One of the paradoxes of self-fulfilment is that since aspirations (if not capacities) are limitless, complete self-fulfilment cannot be achieved. Gewirth takes this on the chin, commenting that self-fulfilment is a process rather than a product. He does not take the pessimistic view that '... as in the myth of Sisyphus [it is] an unending series of fruitless behaviors ...' (226). Rather, he claims that '... there can be sequences of self-improvement that overcome the effects of alienation and achieve cherished values' (227). A typically cautious, yet optimistic outcome. This book is meticulous and demands careful reading as it elucidates an important subject. Sadly, its dryness was more likely to send me into dogmatic slumbers than awaken me from them. On completing this review, I ran it through a style-checker. The computer objected to Gewirth's sentences as 'too long'. Enough said.

**Anne Philbrow**

**Francisco J. Gonzalez**

*Dialectic and Dialogue:*

*Plato's Practice of Philosophical Inquiry.*

Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press

1998. Pp. x + 418.

US\$89.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8101-1529-8);

US\$29.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8101-1530-1).

*Dialectic and Dialogue* takes on a weighty task: to explain the role and use of dialectic in Plato's early and middle dialogues and at the same time to carve out a new interpretation of dialectic from among the voluminous literature on the subject. Gonzalez's method is to examine a sampling of Plato's 'early', 'aporetic' dialogues and 'middle' period works, interpreting each dialogue as a whole whenever possible. His framework follows three basic principles: (1) there are three means dialectic uses in its search for truth: verbal analysis, arguments, and images; (2) dialectic lies in a position between everyday discourse and sophistic discourse; and (3) we need to understand the relation between dialectic in the early dialogues and the hypothetical method in the middle dialogues (13-14).

Using this framework, Gonzalez argues that Platonic dialectic differs from both intuition from ordinary experience and (what he calls) 'the "technical" knowledge' of the sophists, by showing that dialectic, unlike other methods, recognizes the limitations of words, arguments, and images (all of which obscure the truth and an object's true nature), but nevertheless can use these

tools to reveal the true nature of objects. Dialectic awakens a transcendental insight into the true nature of objects which cannot be expressed in propositions, for propositions can only express how an object *is* qualifiedly but cannot express 'the nature of an object is in its unity' (8). According to this conception of Platonic dialectic, two things became clear: (i) many of the dialogues are *required* to end in *aporia* because any proposition Socrates or the interlocutors give cannot be the answer and (ii) dialectic differs from and is superior to the method of hypothesis found in the middle dialogues because the hypothetical method can only examine propositions (i.e., '*a* is *F*').

What then is this non-propositional knowledge and how does dialectic reveal it, if such knowledge cannot be expressed in any proposition? Gonzalez suggests that self-knowledge (which is itself inseparable from knowledge of the good) has this non-propositional character and is revealed by the very practice of dialectic itself: 'Knowledge of virtue and the good is acquired and exhibited in the very practice of inquiry, rather than in any propositional results abstracted from this practice' (273).

Many elements of Gonzalez's method of examining Plato's dialogues are admirable. For example, Gonzalez's attempt to understand Plato's dialogues *as they are written* as well as his desire to interpret dialogues *as a whole* add a unique dimension to the book. In addition, his discussion of the historical dispute over the role of dialectic in the dialogues and the extensive footnotes comparing and contrasting Gonzalez's views with many other commentators are quite useful.

The book, however, seems to contain fair amount of speculation and it ignores some crucial elements of Plato's philosophy, elements which may resolve some of the *aporia* Gonzalez finds in the dialogues. (This omission may be forgivable to an extent; a thorough examination of all the elements which go into Plato's dialectic is hardly a manageable task.) One problematic omission is the lack of discussion concerning the nature of desire and how it fits into the search for knowledge and virtue. Gonzalez argues at length that, for Socrates, virtue is not a *technē* because, among other things, Socrates assumes that in knowing the good one is good, thereby suggesting that the good is the same as knowledge of the good (56). Yet, the nature of desire is crucial to understanding how knowledge of the good makes one good. For, if to know the good is to be good, one must be able to bridge the gap from a belief state (knowledge) to actions (doing good). But in order to produce an action (on most accounts of human action), *motivation* must be combined with belief.

If we were to assume, as is sometimes argued, that in the early dialogues all desire is for one's own good (*Meno* 77bff), then the gap is closed: knowledge of what is good integrates into the desire for the good and produces good actions. But if all desire is for the good, it looks as if knowledge of the good could be a *technē*. Just as carpenters desire to build houses and use their *technē* to build the best house, a person desires the good and uses his/her knowledge of good to build the best possible life.

But to include a discussion of desire in the 'early', 'aporetic' dialogues would, in turn, lead to a whole new set of questions for Gonzalez to answer:

most notably (a) the apparent differences between nature of desire presented in the early dialogues and that presented in the middle dialogues, and (b) how this difference might impact on the dialectic presented in each. Gonzalez himself seems hesitant to enter the fray about philosophical development throughout the Platonic corpus (247).

In essence, the book does well in its discussion of dialectic, though it misses some features by not looking at all of Socrates's principles in combination with each other. This is what makes Socrates so compelling and frustrating at the same time: only by understanding all of Socrates's views, can we truly understand any of them.

Nevertheless, Gonzalez's book is worthwhile because (as sometimes is said of Plato) it causes the reader to examine his/her own positions on a variety of levels — how does the reader interpret Plato's admiration for dialectic; what is the purpose of dialectic and what does it reveal when it is pursued aggressively as Socrates does; how does the reader gain any benefit from examining the early dialogues which often end in *aporia*? People interested in such questions ought to examine *Dialogue and Dialectic*.

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**Susan Haack**

*Manifesto of a Passionate Moderate.*

Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1998.

Pp. x + 223.

US\$22.50. ISBN 0-226-31136-8.

In his book *Dreams of a Final Theory*, the physicist Steven Weinberg remarked that the only thing he ever learned from philosophers was how to avoid mistakes made by other philosophers. Poor fellow, he should have sampled a better class of philosophical critics before delivering that *mal mot*. Had he read Susan Haack's *Manifesto*, for instance, he would have found that, rather than confining us within our own back yard, the best criticism liberates thought by showing more of what the world may be like as it simultaneously urges us from the paths of error.

As anyone trying to do a little honest epistemology these days knows, there are many who, to paraphrase Dorothy Parker, think that there is no subject there. Believing foundationalism to be definitively dead, that is, they see that the only hope for a decent theory of knowledge to lie in the area of text wars or scientism or some other essentially 'post-philosophical' activity (in terms

of Clark Glymour's old disjunction: either you are a logical positivist or an English professor). In a series of essays marked by understanding, style and wit, Haack takes on the variants of this 'all or nothing' mentality (Richard Rorty's neo-pragmatism, 'feminist epistemology', etc.). This she does in two ways. On the one hand, she lays out the failings of each, while including in each case an account of the reasoning that might make the view plausible to the unwary. On the other, she provides an alternative theory which effectively undercuts the need for an 'all or nothing' bifurcation.

At the outset, Haack quickly sets the basic theme which runs through the entire collection. In 'Confessions of an Old Fashioned Prig' (Rorty's phrase for those who still think that it is possible to represent the way the world is), she takes on those (e.g., Stephen Stich, Jane Heal, and Rorty, among others) who for a variety of reasons hold that there is no value in seeking truth. For them, to search for truth is to follow a superstition, or truth is of no intrinsic interest (since it, e.g., is but one function among many from language to propositions). In response, Haack argues that to follow truth as the goal of inquiry (rather than seeking group solidarity) and to exhibit intellectual integrity (as seen, for instance, in inquiry undertaken to find out the truth about the world, rather than for the fame and fortune of the inquirer) has both moral and instrumental value. While Rorty may occasionally seem to agree with this, it can only be apparent, for his non-representational stand-in for truth will not permit him to share Haack's commitments.

"We Pragmatists": Peirce and Rorty in conversation' is a delightful philosophical *pas de deux* originally performed at the 1995 Boston SAAP conference. Here Peirce, via Haack's deft editorial touch, wreaks revenge on Rorty, who seeks to transmute classical pragmatism into an antirepresentational chat room devoted to helping people 'cope'. The interchange leaves no doubt where the disputants stand; thus Rorty: 'Philosophy is best seen as a kind of writing. It is delimited, as is any literary genre, not by form or matter, but by tradition' (39). And Peirce: '[I] desire to rescue the good ship Philosophy for the service of Science from the hands of lawless rovers of the sea of literature' (40). Beyond this bluntness, however, the dialogue develops into a subtle and balanced presentation of the vastly different worlds inhabited by the combatants.

Haack deals with other issues raised in the Peirce/Rorty debate in subsequent articles. In 'As for that phrase "Studying in a literary spirit"', she argues that philosophy should be confused with neither literature nor science. Thus while literature per se is fine, when it is used as an exercise in cleverness to replace genuine inquiry — i.e., when style triumphs over content and no answers to questions are really desired — then it isn't philosophy. In a telling comment on this topic, Haack points out, for instance, that Rorty's attempted transmutation of philosophy into literature ultimately vitiates itself because it cannot even acknowledge the truths that literature itself can teach us.

In a closely related discussion of the proper role for metaphor ('Dry Truth and Real Knowledge'), Haack once again treads between extremes, this time

between Locke's denunciation of metaphor as an abuse of language, and Rorty's cleaving to it as central to philosophy. Her reasoned moderation is in evidence here too when she points out that in itself, metaphor is neither a good nor bad thing. As a feature of pragmatics rather than semantics, however, metaphor can play an important cognitive role, which she then demonstrates with the use of her own crossword metaphor, which in turn is a central feature of her own theory (discussed below). In a fine parting line on this topic, Haack says that metaphors can be the 'training wheels of inquiry.'

On the other side of the literature/science divide, Haack agrees with Peirce that while philosophy should be scientific in the sense of diligently pursuing truth for truth's sake with 'no axes to grind,' that does not mean philosophy should be dissolved into science. Rather, as Peirce says, it should consist of good scientific metaphysics that gets at the truth concerning assumptions underlying science.

Other chapters deal with related issues. 'Knowledge and Propaganda: Reflections of an Old Feminist' and 'Multiculturalism and Objectivity' concern two further results of the antirepresentational turn. Once turned internal, the attempt is made to portray truth and knowledge as relative to distinctly human features, for instance to sex, race or ethnic origin. In the first of these articles, Haack argues against 'any such connection between feminism and epistemology as the rubric "feminist epistemology" requires' (123). Arguing against the idea that there is any distinct 'women's way of seeing things' in a sense relevant to epistemology, she nonetheless recognizes the legitimate interpretation of 'women's point of view' as meaning 'serving the interests of women'. In the second, Haack argues that rather than expressing a genuine concern for broadening educational objectives, the idea of multiculturalism has been turned into a kind of epistemological counter-culturalism in which knowledge is conceived as being inherently political, i.e., as relative to tribe or culture.

Haack calls her alternative to the views discussed (a theory compactly presented here and fully worked out in her 1993 *Evidence and Inquiry*) 'foundherentism' as a way of indicating its origins. Her description of it as intermediate between its extreme forbears, however, holds only metaphorically, for her theory in fact escapes the foundationalist-coherentist axis by avoiding the absolutist assumptions required to make sense of either. It is better seen as a further development of the Quine-Scheffler style of empiricism in terms of which one avoids basements of unvarnished news without thereby falling into some form of pernicious relativism (its closest relative can be found in last chapter of Scheffler's *Science and Subjectivity*, in which Scheffler navigates the strait between Schlick the foundationalist and Neurath the coherentist). A large part of her addition to this lineage is a representation of cognitive knowledge comes in the form of a commanding metaphor, i.e., that of a crossword puzzle, and how our beliefs support one another in a manner similar to the intersecting entries in a puzzle, while the distinction between (non-foundational) experiential evidence and reasons for

belief is analogous to the relation between clues and the already completed portion of the intersecting entries.

There will always be those who, weary of the struggle (both conceptual and empirical) to find truth, no longer see the point of attempting to 'hook up' (as Ian Hacking put it) to a world completely independent from us. For them the remedy is to change the subject. But so long as there are those like Weinberg who strive to find truth, and Haack, who provides a conceptual footing for the search, science and epistemology will remain robust and intact.

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**Werner Hamacher**

*Pleroma — Reading in Hegel.*

Trans. Nicholas Walker and Simon Jarvis.

Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 1998.

Pp. viii + 304.

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US\$19.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8047-2185-8).

Werner Hamacher's *Pleroma — Reading in Hegel* presents a difficult and provocative deconstruction of Hegel's attempt to effect systematic closure to philosophical thought. As indicated by the book's original German title, *Hegel / Der Geist des Christentums*, the 'spirit of Christianity' in Hegel's writings — from his early theological studies through *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, to his late lectures on the philosophy of religion — serves as the point of departure for Hamacher's analysis. Hamacher examines the aporetic status of metaphoricity, textuality, and temporality in these writings in order to challenge speculative idealism's purported ascension to a position of absolute knowing.

For Hamacher, these aporias mark the insuperable limits to the dialectical movement of cancellation and elevation — of sublation (*Aufhebung*) — which is supposed to negate exteriority and difference in the passage towards interiority and identity. Initially, this movement is mapped out in Hegel's early critique of the 'fetish', which Hamacher calls a 'critique of writing, of materiality' (69). According to Hegel's early theological writings, worship of icons and laws as well as mere ritual gestures in religious practice are antithetical to philosophical truth, so long as they remain subservient to what is imagined to be exterior power or authority. African, Jewish, and Roman Catholic fetishisms must be superseded by a philosophical 'inte-

riorization' of their conceptual content, one which grasps the truth of these practices in an ideal synthesis of (communal) subject and object.

In *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, this movement of supersession and interiorization is characterized as the transition from *vorstellendes Denken* — representational or 'picture' thinking — to the standpoint of absolute knowing. Hamacher argues that this transition can only be actualized on the basis of elisions, evasions, exclusions and repressions of difference, such that difference (exteriority, materiality, textuality) inexorably haunts the system of speculative idealism. Hegel's early writings on Judaism, Mary Magdalene, and the Holy Trinity receive close scrutiny from Hamacher, who highlights the ambiguity of these texts through psychoanalytically-inspired attention to themes of castration, sexual difference, and incest. But the pivotal religious theme for Hamacher's reading in Hegel is the Eucharist: the ideal *pleroma* (fulfillment or fullness) of spirit in the bread and wine becoming body and blood of Christ highlights the centrality of eating in Hegelian metaphors.

Over the course of four long, densely argued chapters — appropriately titled 'Hors-d'oeuvre', 'Last Supper', 'Course of History' and 'Consummation of the Feast' — Hamacher argues that metaphors of ingestion, digestion, and excretion are central to Hegel's texts. But this centrality has for Hamacher a profoundly destabilizing effect, insofar as speculative dialectic cannot operate without appeal to metaphors of organicism and materiality. In short, the sublation of 'picture thinking' is rendered impossible by Hegelian philosophy's abject dependence on metaphors of nutrition — an abjection which nauseates the system. 'Consummation of the Feast' includes a detailed exegesis of passages from Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* on the topic of nausea, which Hamacher audaciously relates to the schema of orality and nutrition in order to invoke cannibalism and vomiting as the limit and ungraspable excess of systematic totality. (Hamacher's debt to Nietzsche, Bataille, and Derrida can be strongly felt throughout this chapter.)

Readers who may be unsympathetic to deconstruction might well find this exegesis nauseatingly excessive (and Hamacher might not win friends to his position by his punning on Hegel's name and the German for nausea, *Ekel*: 'The intersection between the contingent empirical name of the philosopher of speculative dialectics and the name of that movement which ... designates the outer limits of his system' [267]). Nevertheless, his motives are serious and his arguments consistently compelling. *Pleroma* does not conform to the widespread stereotype of deconstruction as meretricious exercise in hyperbolic fancy; rather, it represents a sustained attempt to locate the ambiguous and problematic status of reading within Hegel's text. The subtitle, *Reading in Hegel*, is deliberately polysemic, in that Hamacher not only offers close and nuanced readings of Hegel's work, but also attempts to call into question the status of reading and writing — of textuality — in Hegel's work. Hamacher argues that temporality is the ineluctable modality of reading, such that temporal delay ruins in advance the annulment of time to which Hegel's system aspires. 'Reading names a generative separation which never

conclusively coincides with itself in fulfilled co-presence at any site of self-encounter' (280).

The originality and audacity of *Pleroma* may have been attenuated for North American scholars by time, as 20 years have passed since its first German publication. Readers of Derrida especially will note familiar preoccupations and motifs, such as the analysis of nausea, explored at considerable length in Derrida's article 'Economimesis', and the analysis of the temporality of reading, a theme elaborated in the seminal '*Ousia* and *Gramme*' essay. Nevertheless, Hamacher's work stands on its own as a significant and challenging contribution to Hegel scholarship.

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**Daniel M. Hausman**

*Causal Asymmetries.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 1998.

Pp. xv + 300.

US\$54.95. ISBN 0-521-62289-1.

This book discusses a mixture of approaches to and problems in causation with both rigour and depth. The object is not so much to give an analysis of causation as a characterisation of the idea through the various asymmetries to which it is related. Nonetheless Hausman does tend to bicker about the meanings of words, despite his attention to the objects of these words, causes and causal relations among events. Usually, he does this to draw attention to the differences in the meanings of words or statements to what they refer to in common. For example, he uses this device in defending the relational view of causation against examples of statements that assert a cause, but mention irrelevant circumstances to the cause. He argues that such statements imply a causal relation, despite their grammatical form, and what makes them 'true are the relations that obtain between *aspects* of cause and effect' (24; emphasis in original).

For Hausman, causal relata exist in space and time, and can't be abstract objects like facts or variables or properties (at least as measured values). The relata are distinct, and, in a somewhat stronger than logical sense, independent. Hausman calls the spatio-temporal manifestation or instantiation of properties and variables *tropes*. The causally relevant relations are between tropes, which in turn determine facts and the values of properties and variables. Tropes themselves are opaque, since they are non-extensional, so

Hausman holds that causal relations are ultimately between events, with some causally relevant aspect of one event being causally relevant to some aspect in another. Other than that, Hausman has little to say about events, since they are notoriously hard to individuate, and tropes have the sort of content that permits linking causation with explanation. The ambiguity of Hausman on tropes and events is brought out in Figure 2.2, in which the same notation is used for events and tropes. Supposed negative causes and omissions are handled in much the same way, by pointing out that the facts involved in the circumstances are usually taken into consideration through an accounting of the events that led the supposed non-occurrent effect not to happen. For Hausman, causation is always situated and particular, so the linguistic context of any causal reports should be considered in evaluating causal claims. This book is not an exercise in the linguistics or semantics of 'causation', or at least it tries not to be.

Hausman takes a fundamentally epistemological or Humean approach to causation, which creates a tension with his ontological view, perhaps reflected in the ambiguity between tropes and events. He reviews Hume's specific account of causation and various attempts to repair it, but concludes that it lacks a theory of laws and specific necessary parts of sufficient conditions that characterise causal relations. It either implies that successive and contiguous effects of a common cause are related as cause and effect, or else implies that many causal intermediaries are not causes, and it closes apparently empirical questions of backwards causation and remote causation. This chapter (3) is followed by a chapter on causation and independence that Hausman believes gives an account of causal priority, on which many of the other causal asymmetries are based. Here, he seems to me to be talking primarily about uses of 'cause' in natural language, which may contain presuppositions (right or wrong) about cause. (Hausman recognises that pragmatic considerations influence the use of the word 'cause', but doesn't apply this reflexively to his own use as clearly as he might have.) He is cautious enough not to say anything wildly counterintuitive, but this limits his positive theory to a specific notion of cause (and of causal explanation) that perhaps too closely reflects the vagaries of everyday usage. The independence assumption itself leads to a Humean style approach to causation with its inherent mixing of epistemological and ontological issues, since it makes no internal account of causal connection possible. I believe that a Humean approach should not be considered complete; we also need an internal account of causation for a full explication of the notion. Hume's scepticism leaves this issue open, but Hausman is not quite so careful.

Hausman introduces the Connectivity Principle (CP) to codify independence. It states that '*a* causes *b* if and only if *a* and *b* are causally connected and everything causally connected to *a* and distinct from *b* is causally connected to *b*' (70, 84). This rules out Dowe and Salmon's conserved quantity approach, which Hausman rejects quickly in the first chapter, as well as my own account that bases causation in the identity of instances of

symmetry. Most of the rest of the book depends heavily on CP, so personally I found it a hard read.

Hausman considers Agency Theory, Lewis's Counterfactual Theory, Mackie's Counterfactual Theory, and the relations among counterfactuals, agency and independence. He also takes up issues of explanation and laws, rejecting the deductive nomological model for now well known reasons, and draws the moral (which I find to be an unfortunate consequence of the quasi-Humean approach) that theories of explanation differ among disciplines, despite the existence of broad commonalities among asymmetries involving causation and explanation.

The last topics are probabilistic causation and conditional probabilities, including the fork asymmetries, and then interventions. The discussion of these topics is fairly standard (given CP), but very careful, and well worth study. This is followed by a useful chapter on operationalizing and applying the results of the book, something that many philosophers would do well to pay more attention to.

Hausman does not really tell us what causation is, but he does establish that a purely Humean account is unworkable. He takes the notion of nomic connection to be an idealisation of probabilistic dependency between events (which leaves its real ontological status in limbo, in my opinion). The book is carefully reasoned, with many definitions and theorems, summarised in two appendices. My main complaint with the book is that it does not separate ontological and epistemological issues (though it is sophisticated enough to reject pure empiricism, and to introduce intervention to establish the probabilities that are later idealised to get causation). As such, I see the book as dealing more with our knowledge of causation than with causation itself. Despite this criticism, I can highly recommend the book to anyone working on causation, whatever their methodology; it is both broad and deep in the subjects it treats. I do regret being left out by CP, which I do not find at all intuitive, but my understanding of alternative views was certainly deepened by reading Hausman's work.

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**Nancy J. Holland**

*The Madwoman's Reason. The Concept of the Appropriate in Ethical Thought.*

University Park: Pennsylvania State

University Press 1998. Pp. xxxi + 120.

US\$30.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-271-01770-8);

US\$14.95 (paper: ISBN 0-271-01771-6).

**Frederick A. Olafson**

*Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics.*

*A Study of Mitsein.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 1998.

Pp. 108.

US\$49.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-63094-0);

US\$14.95 (paper: ISBN 0-521-63879-8).

The question of to what extent (and how) Martin Heidegger's philosophy contributes to ethics has been neglected for long, or has simply been answered in the negative. Heidegger's thought seemed to wholly lack an ethical dimension, or, even worse, to replace ethics by an existentialist *laissez faire*, let alone the difficult issue of whether there is a continuity between Heidegger's philosophy and his — at least initial — involvement in German Nazism. The pathos of individualistic freedom, choice, or decidedness appeared to simply situate Heidegger's thought far beyond ethics. There is, however, an increasing interest in the impact of both Heidegger's earlier and his later thought on philosophical ethics. This is all the more interesting a question as regards to the common reading of Heidegger's philosophy and to Heidegger's rejection of seemingly objective values. But it is also an elucidating question as particularly French post-Heideggerian philosophy is characterized by its interest in (trans-)ethical issues and by its definition of ethics as *prima philosophia*.

Frederick Olafson's *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics* takes Heidegger's ethically relevant phenomenology of *Mitsein* (the being in the world with one another) in *Being and Time* as its point of departure. We are, as Heidegger has it, even for the sake of others; our being with one another is intrinsically distinguished by what Heidegger calls caring about/for one another (*Fürsorge*). Olafson aims at clearly developing a more elaborate notion of *Mitsein* since 'an ontology of human nature is of fundamental importance to any effort to get at the ground of ethics' (8). Olafson strongly refuses to give up the search for a ground of ethics and suggests to think through not yet sufficiently explored alternatives to what served traditionally as grounds for ethics.

It is precisely the essential relationship to one another which is prior to all ethical rules and which invokes the question of 'how we can be authentic together' (3). Far from idealising Heidegger's thought against his many critics, Olafson argues 'that the profoundly original constellation of ideas he

(sc. Heidegger) introduced in *Being and Time* can make an important contribution to our understanding of the whole ethical side of our lives' (6).

Olafson's rather sketchy (and yet concise) study is divided into three main chapters, the first of which explores the character of being-with-one-another and questions a view which understands being-with-one-another as merely contingent and which thus relies upon a solitary self. Quite in contrast, there is an insurmountable social dimension of human life which is prior to all knowledge and disclosure of objects. We are thus essentially 'sharers in a common truth' (29); truth and its cooperative disclosure appears to be based on partnership between humans. In the following, Olafson discusses a problematic understanding of the Heideggerian One (*das Man*), for if it is simply understood in terms of an 'oppressive super-entity', the notions of responsibility and individual personality would inevitably lose their meaning. The second chapter deals with the notion of caring about/for and provides an original account of responsibility and trust by criticising Heidegger in that he did not satisfactorily develop the linkage between our being-with-one-another and our caring for/about one another. Olafson argues convincingly that there might be 'a level of complementarity among human beings in the domain of choice and action that is modeled on but also goes beyond the complementarity of disclosure' (40) as discussed in the previous chapter. Responsibility means, 'that my choice must be such that it can be presented as being at least compatible with some wider form of life in which there is a place for others that is arguably consistent with their interests' (53). In the next few paragraphs, Olafson draws attention to the idea of trust. Since we have to rely on others already in the situation of complementary disclosure, trust is of huge ethical significance. This is made clear by Olafson's analysis of the analogous situations of truth-telling and promising.

In the third chapter (the most interesting and controversial one), Olafson even offers a criteriology for good and evil, which, as it were, does leave Heidegger's philosophy behind while yet, as Olafson upholds, being compatible with it. It strives to radically think through the essential character of *Mitsein* and thereby to lay bare where the ground of ethics is to be looked for. *Mitsein* is, as Olafson argues, an ideal and thus a 'necessary condition for wrongdoing and evil as well' (69). To deny that human beings live essentially with one another appears to be a fundamental evil. Olafson then describes the devaluation of the ethical attitude by egoistic self-interest in order to ask if there are any means to handle this corrupt moral situation. The fundamental role of *Mitsein* and its ethical meaning entails, as he states, a notion of good set in the very context of *Mitsein*. This notion is meant to counter-balance any self-interest, but also refuses to be swallowed up by the language of values: 'In general, the use of the language of values to render what can only be understood in terms of the relationship between one human being and another can only distort what is really involved, because it passes over this essential difference between the one and the other as though it were of no consequence' (93).

One should be aware of where Olafson's view appears difficult to reconcile with Heidegger's. Olafson defines his thesis by referring to Karl-Otto Apel, that 'the authority of the ethical is quite generally grounded in a "subject-subject" relation'. What he is in fact in danger of is to overlook the irreconcilability of Apel's (and of Habermas's as well) linguistically transformed transcendental philosophy and his own interest in an ultimate grounding of ethics on the one hand and, on the other, Heidegger's hermeneutics of facticity. It is indeed very arduous to understand how Heidegger's attempt to question supposed securities and to open up questions rather than to propose answers can be reconciled with Olafson's endeavour, let alone the repeatedly harsh critique of Heidegger's thought and its claim as regards to ultimate justification by Karl-Otto Apel. It would also have been illuminating if Olafson had drawn more attention to the later Heidegger's 'anti-humanism' and the (still to be more deeply explored) ethical importance of the *Ereignis* thought.

Olafson's study is undoubtedly a substantial contribution both to Heidegger research and to systematic ethics. It is particularly important, as it supplements Hodge's *Heidegger and Ethics* (which strangely overlooks the ethical significance of *Mitsein*) and as it could support the depolarisation of contemporary interest in Heidegger.

Nancy Holland's *The Madwoman's Reason* alludes to Jean Giradoux's play *The Madwoman of Chailot*, which problematises that an ethically wholly appropriate behaviour as that of Countess Aurelia, the madwoman of Chailot, cannot sufficiently rationally be justified. Holland also takes Heidegger's thought as her starting-point while yet transcending it substantially. His notion of the appropriate and of the event of appropriation serves her as a key to originally demonstrate a way of how to rethink ethics after the end of metaphysics, as she states. A first chapter aims at exploring the meaning of the appropriate and the event of appropriation in both Heidegger's earlier and his later thought and takes also in account Derrida's interpretation of this crucial Heideggerian conception. In the second chapter, Holland examines both Aristotle's and Kant's philosophy and argues that the ethics of both can be understood independently of their metaphysics; their ethics, as she underlines, show an awareness of the appropriate and its ethical significance: 'If the Madwoman's reason seem to have no absolute metaphysical basis, she is in good philosophical company' (57). She then discusses modern virtue theory, postmodernism and feminist ethics (all of which are non-foundational philosophies) and states that her own ethics of the appropriate 'provides better reasons for the kind of moral decision that the Madwoman is forced to make than any of these alternatives' (xxx). Quite in contrast to Olafson's (in its aim very comparable) book, her study is characterized by manifold considerations of how to apply what she theoretically develops. Because of this and because of the repeatedly very brief discussion of far too great a deal of different ethicists, her book loses the intellectual rigour which is typical of Olafson's very straightforward argumentation. A more narrow focus would unquestionably have proven more appropriate. According to her self-esteem

as a feminist philosopher, issues such as female genital mutilation and the ordination of women in the Catholic church play a crucial role. Quite a minutely worked out interlude on what is appropriate now concerns the question of women's ordination; it is precisely this very chapter which demonstrates how insecure the results of a non-foundational ethics of the appropriate inevitably are. Holland seems to be, at least somehow, aware that one can have an utterly different understanding of what is appropriate in this particular situation, but she does tend to overlook that, in the end, the notion of the appropriate can not lead to satisfactory justification of why women should also be ordained. One might thus very well wonder if the notion of the appropriate can be really helpful for answering urgent ethical questions as regards to bioethics, economics, or politics (the same, of course, must be asked as regards to Olafson's book). It is also to be asked whether Holland's (and Olafson's) book would not have hugely benefited by an adoption of, say, Kierkegaard's thought and his differentiation of the religious and the ethical level.

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**Dominique Janicaud**  
*Rationalities, Historicities.*  
Trans. Nina Belmonte.  
Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press  
1997. Pp. xx + 175.  
US\$49.95. ISBN 0-391-04037-5.

*Rationalities, Historicities* is a translation of a French collection of Janicaud's essays, the earliest of which date from 1969 (we are given little other information on them). Though in his preface Janicaud denies that he intended to produce a retrospective volume, the essays seem to develop a career-spanning confrontation with the thinkers who have influenced him, primarily Heidegger, but also Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche and Foucault. To some extent, it appears, these essays have been revised in the interest of overall unity, and occasionally with the benefit of hindsight. But rather than present finished views or resolutions, the book is styled as a 'situation report' in which the contemporary state of philosophy is laid out tactically in the assistance of future work.

The problem for that future work concerns what is known as the 'End of Philosophy': a mix of related themes revolving around reason's putative

transparency to itself in reflection, pitted against the historicity of reason, its fragmentation into discontinuous local formations and its degeneration into instrumentality. From Hegel, we get the notion of a developmental course through which rationality unfolds over time, fulfilling a set destiny of full self-realization. In Nietzsche, the destiny of reason is tied to the inevitable degeneration of transcendent reality and value towards nihilism. Heidegger borrows themes from both: metaphysics, the culmination of philosophy, has misconceived Being, leading to the current nihilistic, instrumental view of beings. Our inauthentic grasp of the originary power of Being has so alienated us that there is little to be done at present but await the turning of destiny, when the concealed power of Being again reveals itself. Hence, philosophy and reason, at least while conceived as a timeless metaphysics, are without force or legitimacy.

Such is the post-modern claim with regard to reason and philosophy at any rate. Refreshingly however, Janicaud's aim is to moderate the dramatic claims of the end of philosophy and reclaim the tradition of modern reason once again, though with attention to the lessons of post-modernism. Rationality perhaps bears a burden of history and cannot escape its time into the realm of contextless truth, but is not enslaved to a destiny which it cannot contest. Rather, reason must face up to its 'lot'. Janicaud introduces the term *partage* ('lot' or 'portion') to moderate Heidegger's 'destiny', indicating the concrete historical situation in which reason has unavoidable problems but also resources. This situation is examined with respect to two linked themes.

The theme of rationality begins with an 'experimental confrontation' between the analytic and continental camps of philosophy. (These 'camps' however are local to France, for the 'analytic' in this case is Gilles-Gaston Granger and the 'continental' Jean-Luc Nancy.) The point of this confrontation is to strike a common ground in the project of philosophy's self-reflective 'thinking of its own possibility', which project is addressed directly in the next essay via a reexamination of Kant's Critical Idealism and a brief look at the response to it by a number of contemporary French thinkers. Following this, Janicaud subjects this self-reflective power of reason to some of its major problems. First, the Nietzschean unmasking of reason as an instrument of power is addressed in an essay that examines the Foucault-Habermas debate. Second, the dissolution of reason into rationalization, the manipulation and control of daily life by instrumental reason, is dealt with through a consideration of the 'philosophy of technology'. Finally, Janicaud foreshadows the second theme with a discussion of reason's ability to face its own historicity and tradition.

The theme of historicity is introduced with a series of essays on Hegel and Heidegger, attempting to bring into dialogue their opposing views on the relationship of history and philosophy. Both of course have views on the unfolding of philosophy as metaphysics through time, leading up to a momentous event which for one is the completion and for the other the rout of philosophy. But they also disagree fundamentally on the nature of time and the sense in which philosophy has a destiny. Following this, Janicaud

presents a discussion of the possibility of a philosophy of history, not primarily referring to Hegel as one might expect, but rather to a few French historians. Finally he finishes off with a reexamination of Paul Valéry's *The Crisis of Spirit*, as an emblematic precursor to the present sense of crisis, asking what of the crisis truly deserves our attention.

Janicaud seems to be one of a number of thinkers recently retreating from the excesses of post-modernism, and beginning a refreshing second look at the tradition of philosophy. There are however problems with the book. Though Janicaud's writing sparkles with wit, he too often alludes to debates rather than engaging them. The reader not already familiar with the substance of these debates will not be informed by this book, but more likely bored. Part of the problem here may be the narrow focus: the primary scope of comment, and indeed the primary audience, of the book seems limited to the French intellectual community. In the final analysis, it remains unclear why an English translation was really necessary.

**G.E.A. Williamson**

Red Deer College

**John I. Jenkins**

*Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 1997.

Pp. xv + 267.

US\$59.95. ISBN 0-521-58126-5.

The late medieval period, much as our own, was characterized by intense methodological debate. After the translational frenzy of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, Aristotle's entire corpus became available to European philosopher-theologians for the first time, and scholastics were faced with a systematic presentation of human knowledge that rivaled their own theologically-centered worldview. Some, such as Bonaventure, argued vehemently against including the new Aristotelian texts in the curricula of the newly formed universities. Aquinas and many others, however, stood firmly against such pedagogical conservatism. They sought to synthesize further the competing traditions, especially as regarded *scientia* (Aristotle's *epistēmē*). It was this concept of scientific knowledge, discussed most prominently in the *Posterior Analytics*, that took on an increasingly important role in the scholastic debates of the period. In particular, it was asked, is theology a science or not?

In this book, Jenkins argues that a full understanding of Aquinas' conception of *scientia* requires examination both of his interpretation of Aristotle and his account of theology. As a result, Jenkins' book speaks to many readers, and it has elements that will appeal not only to specialists in medieval philosophy, but also to philosophical generalists and contemporary theologians. Unfortunately, this broad appeal is not found throughout the work. Rather than being presented with an even-toned monograph, the reader instead finds a patchwork of themes, alternating between subtle philosophical analysis of key doctrines (chapters 1, 4 and 6), and very basic pedagogical chapters, which though suitable for classroom explication of key issues, seem out of place in the book as a whole (see especially chapter 3).

Despite a few obviously typographical errors (e.g., '*sorties*' is substituted twice for '*sortites*' on pp. 14-15), the book is well edited. Jenkins' use of helpful illustrations (e.g., comparing *scientia* to a modern automobile engine on p. 4) and current epistemological notions, and his thoughtfulness in leaving very few untranslated Latin passages makes the bulk of the work accessible to any non-specialist philosopher. In addition, his writing is exceedingly clear despite the complexity of the terminology and issues involved.

With these formal points in mind, we may now turn to the philosophical content of the book, which is indeed impressive despite its shortcomings. One such weakness is found in his Introduction, where he inveighs against those who remove Aquinas from his own medieval intellectual context by likening him, e.g., to Descartes, Kant, or present-day thinkers. But Jenkins does little to remedy this deficiency in his own work, as Aquinas is placed against Aristotle and contemporary philosophy, rather than against the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish thinkers who were so important to his thought. Instead of treating Aquinas as a historical figure, Jenkins considers his philosophy a living one, stating (e.g.) that 'the prospects for forming a viable Thomistic epistemology ... are very good' (128).

This epistemology, viable or not, relies crucially on the notion of *scientia*, and it is in his discussion of this concept that Jenkins does his best work. In his opening chapter, Jenkins draws on contemporary Aristotle scholarship to emphasize the dual nature of *scientia*: there is a first stage, in which the knower must gain familiarity with the concepts of a science, arguing from effects to causes. It is only once this first stage has been completed that one may enter into the second stage, arguing from cause to effect: at this point, the knower's order of intellection becomes identical with the order of nature. The *Summa Theologiae* (hereafter *ST*), in Jenkins' view, is a prime example of what he calls 'second-level pedagogy', insofar as it was written for advanced theology students who have already worked through the first stage. For them, the arguments of the *ST* are not meant to establish the truths of theology. Instead, they are meant to order those truths, helping the student create intellectual habits that lead from cause to effect.

While arguing for this basic position, Jenkins makes a few especially noteworthy points. First, he argues, any attempt to liken Aristotle's *scientia* to theology must come to terms with the nature of principles. For Aristotle,

principles must be better known than the conclusions drawn from them, and they must be non-inferential. While most interpreters agree that the truths of faith — e.g., that God is one — are meant to perform this function in theology, medievals held that direct, face-to-face knowledge of God (and hence of the truths about him) is not available to humans before death. As a result, it seems, it is impossible that theology can be likened to *scientia*, since the truths of faith cannot be better known than the worldly effects that we all observe. Jenkins argues that for Aquinas, truths of faith, while not directly available, are in fact more certain than other propositions. But it is only through what he calls ‘supernatural externalism’ that such truths are known as such.

In arguing for supernatural externalism (chapter 6), Jenkins convincingly casts doubt on the two reigning interpretations of Aquinas’ view of faith: naturalism and voluntarism. Naturalism (seen in Plantinga and Penelhum) is the view that the truths of faith are warranted only because they are proven through theological arguments, such as are found in the *ST*. Voluntarism (seen in Ross and Stump) is the view that grasping such truths requires an act of will: to assent to them is an arbitrary leap. Jenkins rejects both of these alternatives, arguing instead that the theological proofs of the *ST* are meant only to help order theological knowledge, rather than to establish what are supposedly non-inferential theological principles. But for him, though these principles are grasped non-inferentially, neither are they arbitrary: they are what he calls ‘basic’ propositions, guaranteed by God’s grace. In such cases, truths of faith are grasped by humans *as being guaranteed* by God, thus giving them an accessible mark of truth.

Though Jenkins’ focus on theology is unlikely to attract the non-specialist initially, those who summarily reject considering the epistemological issues involved will miss an important philosophical treatment of *the* central concept in most ancient and medieval theories of knowledge.

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## Shelly Kagan

### *Normative Ethics.*

Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1998. Pp. 337.

US\$69.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8133-0845-3);

US\$24.00 (paper: ISBN 0-8133-0846-1).

Shelly Kagan's *Normative Ethics* is a welcome addition to Westview Press's Dimensions of Philosophy series. It introduces in a clear and interesting way some of the central problems in contemporary normative ethics.

In the first chapter, Kagan takes the reader through the territorial divisions in ethics and the requisite distinctions regarding what normative ethics is and is not. Excluding the first chapter, *Normative Ethics* is divided into two parts. In Part One, entitled Factors, Kagan enumerates some of the normative factors which, intuitively, seem relevant in determining the moral status of actions, ontologically speaking; in addition, he attempts to display how these factors interact to determine the morality of an act. Kagan starts with the intuition that the goodness of outcomes matters to the morality of actions. After sorting out the various ways this claim can be interpreted and complicated by other intuitions (or 'subfactors'), Kagan moves on to discussing how other factors, e.g., harm doing, promising-keeping and special obligations, constrain what can be done in pursuit of good outcomes. (Kagan calls any theory that accepts a constraint on pursuing good outcomes deontological.) In the four chapters that comprise this part of the book each factor gets teased out and analyzed while we are introduced to several important ideas, e.g., the doing/allowing distinction, thresholds for constraints, rights, utilitarianism, value theory, and so on. Kagan's presentation of these issues is engaging, providing readers with a wide variety of arguments and intuition-pumps culled from important works in contemporary normative ethics.

Part Two, entitled Foundations, canvasses and evaluates views regarding 'what it is that explains why a given factor ever makes a difference to the moral status of any act at all' (20). Here, Kagan gives an account of the rival theories that attempt to explain the relevance of certain normative factors. The competing theories at the foundational level divide into teleological and deontological. Teleological foundational theories hold that 'the relevance of basic normative factors (whatever they are) is ultimately explained in terms of the significance of some good or group of goods' (191). Deontological foundational theories deny this. The idea behind this section is that normative ethical theories include an evaluative perspective from which to justify factoral theories, e.g., from the point of view of the goodness of their impartial consequences. Teleological foundational theories include egoism and consequentialism; deontological theories include contractarianism, reflectionism (the idea that 'morality must adequately reflect the nature of beings under its domain' [280]), universalizabilism and impartial spectator theory. These various theories break down further according to their chosen evaluative focal points, e.g., rules, acts, institutions, and so on. The result is that there can be, for example, rule egoism, act egoism, institution egoism, and so on.

The focus of *Normative Ethics* is the morality of actions rather than the morality of character, dispositions, intentions, and the like. But a number of happy consequences follow from Kagan's narrow focus. Most notably, he manages to avoid the trap that many introductory ethics texts fall into, namely, constructing and transmitting useless caricatures of rival ethical theories which ignore the fact that ethics is a messy and confusing business. This is a noteworthy and attractive feature of *Normative Ethics*. However, the narrowed scope and more sophisticated approach takes the book into territory which might render misleading its claim to be an introduction to ethics. (Kagan makes clear that he is in the business of offering an introduction to normative ethics [7].) For example, the sections devoted to foundations are difficult and highly theoretical, and therefore, well beyond the scope of an introduction. In part, this might be due to the fact that Kagan divides up the territory of normative ethics in a non-standard fashion which, though illuminating, complicates things. Kagan might also have tried to reduce the number of foundational theories that he discusses in favour of less cursory discussion of some.

For whom is this book suitable? It is probably too advanced for students just starting in philosophy; nor, I think, would it be useful as a primary source in an advanced course since it does not defend a substantive position, and therefore does not furnish students with something to criticize. It might easily function as a supplementary reader for upper-level students, who might find useful the Suggested Readings section included at the end of the book. This book might well serve as a primer or catch-up for non-ethics-specialist graduate students who desire to know more about contemporary theorizing in normative ethics.

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**Teodros Kiros**

*Self-Construction and the Formation of Human Values: Truth, Language, and Desire.*

Westport, CT: Greenwood Press 1998.

Pp. xv + 205.

US\$59.95. ISBN 0-313-30808-X.

In this wide-ranging discussion of theories of power in the Western tradition Teodros Kiros attempts to 'participate in a reconstructive healing of the broken self that exists within the torn fabric of modernity' by arguing that real power is an inner-directed self-construction that overcomes the desire to dominate others and that requires 'existentially serious' selves to construct values that reverse the Cartesian separation of reason from desires and feelings, particularly compassion.

The core of his argument claims that self-construction, or self-empowerment, aims at 'achieving excellence in the realm of action and not in the realm of truth. The norms that guide the person to meaningfully and coherently lead a particular way of life are not grounded upon a single Truth. Rather, ways of life and styles of existence are grounded upon individual truths — truths that reflect the plurality of human nature,' which is itself reflected in 'the plurality as opposed to the singularity of truth' (43). Kiros' extensively argued and currently rather conventional relativist thesis is essentially that self-constructed and self-empowered human beings achieve freedom in their autonomous creation of and living by whatever seems true for them according to their own 'tastes' as long as they do not interfere with the values, truths, and tastes constructed by others. Because racism, for example, is a value that involves wielding power over others it is irrational and therefore wrong. Moreover, religious dogmas that characterize God in terms of specific values tend to express the will to power by restricting religious truth to one's own conception of God. Instead, modern selves should embrace the rather nebulous vision of God as 'a sublime intelligence that commands the depth and loyalty of faith, as well as the conviction and persuasion of reason' (56).

Kiros develops his detailed analysis of self-construction and empowerment and the construction of true values, as well as their opposites, through a generally interesting and often insightful discussion of what many philosophical and literary thinkers have said about power, from Plato, Aristotle, and Epictetus in the ancient world to Kant, Dostoyevsky, Freud, Foucault, Habermas, Baudelaire, and Mann, among others, in the modern world. Yet, ultimately, he makes very little headway in overcoming the problems of modernity because he has only modernity's conceptual tools — autonomy, relativism, self-empowerment, the construction of truths and values according to one's own preferences — to work with. Although he admires Plato's critique of the despotic sense of power, in focusing on his theme of the self-constructing ego isolated in its private truth he completely misses Plato's essential point that reason must be oriented toward a transcendent Truth. Without this Truth, which 'empowers' and creates a community of all rational

beings, the self remains in the complete isolation that is precisely the source of the modern anomie and angst that Kiros is trying to overcome. His book is an excellent example of modernity trying, and failing, to pull itself up by its own bootstraps.

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**Andrew Light and Jonathan Smith, eds.**

*Philosophies of Place.*

Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield  
Publishers, Inc.

US\$68.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8476-9094-6);

US\$25.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8476-9095-4).

*Philosophies of Place* is the third instalment of the Philosophy and Geography series by these same editors. The present volume is an illuminating examination of many of the issues implicated by the notions of place and space. These twelve essays discuss, for example, the historical and philosophical uses of the terms 'place' and 'space'; inherited place versus created place; technological innovation and place; and concerns about the continued importance of place at this late date in human history. The work is divided into the following sections: 'Place and Meaning', 'Place and Ethics', and 'Changing Places: Political, Technological, and Economic'.

*Philosophies of Place* takes an interdisciplinary approach to place, and therein lies one of its strengths. It does contain articles that are primarily or largely philosophical, though. In 'Finding Place: Spatiality, Locality, and Subjectivity', Jeff Malpas examines the philosophical and historical meanings that the terms 'space' and 'place' have traditionally been assigned. He complains that thinkers typically combine or even conflate the meanings of the two terms, and when they are not committing this disservice to place, they are relegating it to a subordinate position with respect to space. Place is typically regarded as simply an open space, but Malpas counters that place as a source of meaning is crucial for human subjectivity, thought, and experience.

In one of the more tantalizing contributions, James Dickinson addresses the problems that inhere when an artist seeks to impose a piece of sculpture onto a site where it lacks congruity both for its intended audience and with its environment, and he specifically addresses James Serra's ill-fated attempt to locate his 120 feet long and 12 feet high steel *Titled Arc* on the

Federal Plaza in New York City in 1981. (He includes five superb illustrations of the artworks he is discussing.) Dickinson concedes the difficulties that such art poses, but suggests that much of the blame for the sculpture's ultimate removal lies with 'a handful of fanatics' who 'cynically manipulated' the Federal Plaza's workers' opposition to *Titled Arc* (67). He also introduces a political analysis which does little to detract from the reality that Serra was indifferent to the expectations of the viewers of his work. (Dickinson might have profited from a revisit to Arthur Danto's contemporary article on this episode. In that piece, Danto counted himself on the side of the 'philistines' with respect to *Titled Arc*.)

What this case underscores is the continuing relevance of place. To be successful a work of sculpture must be seen as either 'belonging' to its site or at least having the potential to flourish in its new place with respect to its audience. The vastly different experience of the Vietnam Memorial is instructive here. It too faced initial opposition; its detractors alleged that it lacked sufficient reverence; that it was ugly; that it was too abstract. But that work possessed something that Serra's *Titled Arc* did not: the possibility of a mythological connection with its audience. Visitors to the Memorial bring memories with them; these memories and the sight of the name of a loved or remembered one overshadows any initial aversions regarding the design of the sculpture. At present, most visitors to the Wall probably could not imagine any other design for the Memorial. Place was created by an artist and then accepted by an audience. With the *Titled Arc*, there was not even the potential for a symbolically important place to have formed.

Places are subject to change, so one of the important problems concerns the ability of some places to maintain an importance long after their initial purpose has evaporated. Some of the articles discuss the continuing symbolic importance of certain geographical locations: Mexico City, Israel, the South, and the farm. Katya Mandoki incorporates the conceptions of space and time that relativity suggests in her analysis of the continuing symbolic importance of Mexico City. It has had a multi-layered significance — a 'symbolic density' — that has outlived its initial importance. An Aztec myth gave Mexico City its initial meaning: an eagle was discovered to be resting upon the cactus that was growing from the buried heart of a priest, and a temple was ordered built on the site. Later the location was utilized by the Aztecs and Cortes, then by the colonial administrators, and presently by the Mexicans themselves. As Mandoki writes, "The eagle and the cactus are no more — and yet the space in which they stood is irreversibly bowed" (89).

The preservation of a small section of the South is the concern of David Wasserman, Mick Womersley, and Sara Gottlieb's contribution. Their article is sociological in nature, and purportedly relies on first-hand accounts and interviews. A minor criticism is that the authors' 'speakers' do not consistently use the speech patterns that are attributed to them. For example, native Southerners routinely do not pronounce the 'g' in a gerund. So when a speaker drops it in one part of his sentence, one would expect him to drop it elsewhere (198). Related to this inconsistency is the use of 'lookit' by one

of these interviewees, a term which is more likely to have been spoken by a denizen of a Northern city. Speech reflects and recapitulates Place. Place informs and directs Speech. The authors' decision to not correctly present the dialect and speech that would be used by their subjects attenuates their very project of presenting a sense of place in a Southern fishing town in Maryland.

Two articles which indirectly broach this task of preserving a Southern sense of place take local rule and farming as their topics. Bryan Norton and Bruce Hannon underscore the continued need to substitute local rule for federal rule on matters of place; Ian Howard shows that farms continue to possess more than simply a nostalgic importance. The former authors allude to the Southern Agrarians, and it is these thinkers who immediately come to mind as sources of inspiration with respect to the need for state and local government, yeoman farming rather than industrial agriculture, and the all-important sense of place.

In 'Commonplaces', David Glidden echoes the continuing importance of local narratives which all too frequently are sacrificed to philosophical generalities in his examination of some Californian communities. Lea Caragata's 'New Meanings of Place: The Place of the Poor and the Loss of Place as a Center of Mediation' discusses the difficulties that urban centers present both for those who reside in them and for those who merely work there. Phillip Brey engages the manner in which technology has altered our relation to space and place: airline travel and computers, for example, 'shape' space and 'disembed' place. Jonathan Maskit, using Deleuze and Gutarri, argues that wilderness is no longer possible for us; wildness, on the other hand, does remain a possibility. Holmes Rolston III maintains that the earth is a unique place, and that interacting with this 'storied' place provides humans with both a natural and a cultural history. These articles serve to make this a fine introduction to the philosophy of place.

**Steve Wall**

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**Hugo A. Meynell**

*Redirecting Philosophy: Reflections on the Nature of Knowledge from Plato to Lonergan.*

Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1998.

Pp. ix + 327.

\$70.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8020-4314-3);

\$21.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8020-8140-1).

Hugo Meynell's *Redirecting Philosophy: Reflections on the Nature of Knowledge from Plato to Lonergan* addresses the complex questions surrounding the foundations of knowledge. Meynell tackles these issues to address modern skepticism that, at best, finds true knowledge only in the natural sciences and relegates ethics and philosophy to foundationless opinion.

The book is divided into four equal parts that build upon each other. The first part begins with a presentation and argument for Meynell's position. For him, one of the most troubling issues in today's society is skepticism. It has trivialized some of humanity's greatest achievements and promoted an ethics that is detrimental to all. One might hesitantly accept these consequences if the position was true, but Meynell argues that skepticism does not even have this attribute. He says that it is self destructive because it claims to know that knowing is impossible. Knowledge is possible, Meynell maintains, as the result of 'the three-fold process of attending to data, of envisaging possibilities, and of judging on sufficient ground that some rather than others of the possibilities are probably or certainly so' (20). He calls the correspondence between these judgments and the way the world is prior to and independent of any human inquiry truth. Reality is the accumulation of true judgments, and one approaches reality the more one is attentive to data, intelligent in understanding it, and reasonable in evaluating it.

Parts two and three of Meynell's work address the positions of several contemporary thinkers on epistemology such as Rorty, Heidegger, Derrida, and Habermas. Instead of arguing that everyone else is wrong, Meynell chooses an intelligent, helpful, and even friendly approach. He takes what others think seriously, clearly articulates their position, and pulls out their strengths and weaknesses. He uses their strengths to supplement what he has to say and shows how his own perspective overcomes their weaknesses.

Meynell's discussion of Karl Popper is a good example of this process. Popper argues for a way of demarcating the lines between what counts as justified and unjustified knowledge. He holds that a proposition can be justified only if it can be tested and terms this position fallibilism. The problem arises when one asks how fallibilism itself can be defended. How can one test the grounds for testing?

Meynell believes that fallibilism is true as far as it goes. However, one must not take it as a statement about the whole of knowing. For one to know, one needs to have data, understand it, and pass judgments on it. Fallibilism helps one with the last aspect of the process and thus needs to be understood as one part of knowing. In addition, fallibilism also presupposes a world

whereby one can advance in knowledge by testing hypothesis. While Meynell believes that this assumption is true, fallibilism taken by itself cannot ground such an understanding of the world. Meynell's discussion of the three-fold process that a person must go through and its correspondence with the world can justify such a claim and thus provide a context where fallibilism can be properly understood and accepted.

The fourth and final part of Meynell's book discusses the relationship of his position with the greats of the philosophical tradition, Plato, Aristotle, and Descartes. Like Plato, Meynell argues that the real is the intelligible and not the empirical. Like Aristotle, Meynell believes that the empirical world is closely linked with the forms or, in Meynell's language, the intelligible. Lastly, like Descartes, Meynell believes that one can ground philosophy in the functioning of the human subject. These insights are what Bernard Lonergan grasped in his work, and Meynell depends on Lonergan for his own position. Thus, Meynell's work is not some creation *ex nihilo* but a position that builds upon and develops the positions of the past.

The truly interesting thing about Meynell's approach is its similarity to Thomistic dialectics. Like Thomas Aquinas, Meynell considers the contemporary sources and positions surrounding the issue. After taking a stand (Part One), he discusses the relationship of his position to others considering the same question (Parts Two and Three). He notes what is good from these positions, nuances his own stance accordingly, and shows the weakness of their arguments. Meynell even clarifies his position in relation to the tradition he is working in (Part Four). Where Thomas cited scripture and St. Augustine, Meynell cites Plato, Aristotle, and Descartes. This engagement with other thinkers promotes a sense of dialogue and cooperation that is always needed and appreciated in the pursuit of knowledge.

Meynell's book provides a great service to contemporary philosophers, graduate students, and professors. He lays out the basic arguments for and against the foundations of knowledge and metaphysics. This by itself is an important contribution, but he continues by giving arguments for foundations and showing the weaknesses of those who argue against them. He ends with general criteria for knowing that support the possibility of knowledge in ethics and philosophy as well as science. This task is of the utmost importance for Meynell because he believes that without these foundations, 'the distinction between science and pseudoscience, and between human acts which are excellent and those which are abominable, must remain wholly arbitrary in the last analysis' (279).

Some of the strengths of this text are also the grounds of its few weaknesses. Meynell's style keeps the issues from being lost in ideological battles. The work has the feel of two friends disagreeing on things instead of two adversaries arguing. However, this style also causes the arguments to become convoluted or meander and, thus, hard to follow at times. In addition, given the number of contemporaries that Meynell deals with, the presentations are not always lucid. While this does not affect his argument, it does mean that the more one is familiar with the individuals Meynell is discuss-

ing, the easier the reading will be. All these criticisms however, do not overshadow the fact that the book is extremely interesting, well informed, well argued, and significant for anyone seriously dealing with epistemological issues.

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**Julius Moravcsik**

*Meaning, Creativity and the Partial  
Inscrutability of the Human Mind.*

CSLI Lecture Notes #79.

New York: Cambridge University Press (for  
CSLI Publications) 1998. Pp. viii + 200.

US\$64.95 (cloth: ISBN 1-57586-127-5);

US\$23.95 (paper: ISBN 1-57586-126-7).

This is a fairly short book, but it covers a lot of ground. As I read it, its central aim is to present and defend a theory of lexical meaning, according to which word-meanings are 'explanatory schemes'. The lexical theory is then situated within a 'general theory of cognition and language', founded on the idea that humans are explanation seeking creatures — one tenet of which is that our understanding of human understanding must remain always partial. I won't say much about this larger framework, focusing instead on the lexical theory.

According to Moravcsik, an explanatory scheme consists of four 'factors'. Simplifying greatly, these are: ontological category of the item (e.g., spatial, abstract, etc.); individuation and persistence principles; any essential causal powers; and, lastly, the item's function — where 'function' is construed very broadly indeed. (If material, formal, efficient and final cause springs to mind, as you read this list of explanatory factors, that's all to the good: the view is self-avowedly Aristotelian in spirit.) Given this, it should now be somewhat clearer what it means to say that lexical meanings are explanatory schemes. Here's an example, taken from pp. 106-107. The lexical entry for the word 'baseball' would note that, ontologically speaking, the item is 'multicategorical' — that is, aspects of it pertain to distinct ontological categories, including time, rules, agents, and spatial information. As for individuation principles, the entry must specify the rules about what agents in different roles can and must do; what spatio-temporal arrangements are required, and what legitimate gaps may be permitted. The causal factor remains basically empty in this case, noting only that baseball is not a natural process but is

instead a social institution. Finally, under function, the explanatory scheme 'specifies what must be achieved in order for the motions, [and] actions, including rule enforcement, to count as a baseball game' (107); and it also describes what counts as a win, what skills are required of a pitcher, what a pitcher's aims are, etc.

Clearly this puts much more information into lexical entries than is standard. Indeed, it isn't *prima facie* plausible that all of this information belongs in the lexicon. One therefore expects a thoroughgoing positive defense of the move. Instead, Moravcsik spends chapters one and two criticizing an alternative, according to which natural languages are 'formal languages in Tarski's sense'. Call a theory of language *T-formal* if and only if, first, the theory adopts a sentential calculus/set theoretic framework; and, second, the theory considers meanings to be constant, totally explicit, and exhaustively determined by syntax and denotation. The only source of 'meaning variation', according to a T-formal theory, is either indexicality or genuine ambiguity.

Moravcsik argues that T-formal theories, understood as accounts of natural language, are root and branch inadequate. Specifically, he contends that very many natural language words — both logical words like 'all', and category words like 'snow', 'white', etc. — are polysemous: rather than having many different *meanings*, they merely have a variety of closely related *senses*. The sense/meaning distinction is crucial to the argument, but it is never adequately explained. The central criterion for multiple senses seems, however, to be this: a predicate 'f' is polysemous if 'what counts as a f' varies from context to context. Thus, for example, what counts as an emergency changes from one context to the next; therefore, by this criterion, 'emergency' has multiple senses. Still, 'emergency' is not ambiguous. (Compare 'bank', where the same sound happens to correspond to two different lexical items.) Nor is this a case of indexicality. But then it's not true, as T-formal theories maintain, that the only sources of meaning-variance are indexicality and genuine ambiguity. So, T-formal theories are deficient.

Why might anyone have thought otherwise? Moravcsik's diagnosis, as I understand it, is presented in the Introduction. He there notes that techniques which were developed for one task — by Russell, Wittgenstein, and the Positivists — were simply taken over by contemporary semanticists (read: Montagovians), whose task was radically different. In particular, whereas the former were interested in finding languages that could highlight the underlying metaphysical (or scientific) reality, the latter are describing natural languages. It is (at best) with the former purpose in mind that it makes sense to adopt a T-formal theory.

There's more going on than this — indeed, I've barely mentioned chapters five and six — but I hope the above adequately introduces the book's central themes. Time for some evaluation of the text. I begin with a substantive worry.

Moravcsik presents a very 'thick' theory of lexical meaning, which includes a lot within the lexicon. This raises the worry — addressed only sketchily in the book — that he is including many facts about the world in his account of

what words mean. For instance, he never really justifies including all and only the four explanatory 'factors' within word-meaning. In addition, though Moravcsik seems to suppose that the only alternative to his very 'thick' explanatory scheme theory is an orthodox T-formal theory, this is not the case: a semanticist might favor a rather 'thin' theory without endorsing all of the many facets of a T-formal theory, as defined by Moravcsik. Indeed, by my count, Moravcsik includes a solid dozen features in his definition of 'a T-formal theory', thereby making it rather easier to defeat 'the' alternative, by construing it as the very implausible conjunction of all of these.

This isn't to say that T-formal theories are the only 'thin theories' which currently ignore multiplicity of sense. Far from it. But there is an obvious weapon available to 'thin theorists': pragmatics. Moravcsik explicitly discusses pragmatic approaches to polysemy, but he understands pragmatics to be little more than a few Gricean maxims and some speech act theory, thereby rendering it powerless to account for 'shifts of sense'. But, speaking as a fan of Relevance Theory, it seemed to me that pragmatics, properly construed, could lend great comfort to the 'thin theorist'.

In the end, I doubt the book will convince many. Those who 'need convincing' won't find the arguments compelling: they will see Moravcsik's attacks on 'formal theories' as largely bypassing their own views; they will darkly suspect that Moravcsik places knowledge of the world into knowledge of language; and they will accuse him of giving short shrift to pragmatics. Those who don't need convincing, on the other hand ... well, they don't need convincing.

Turning to the structure of the book, readers must 'guesstimate', especially at first, what key terms mean. 'Polysemous' and 'sense' are cases in point. But the same occurs with terms like 'formal' and 'explanatory scheme'. Instead of explaining such key terms explicitly, Moravcsik simply uses them, at best offering clues to their meaning rather later in the text. (For instance, the dozen or so criteria for a T-formal theory must be pieced together, at intervals, between pp. 16 and 88.) Another structural point: the narrative I described above is one which, to a large extent, I imposed on the text. That such imposition was required testifies to the fact that the book reads like a collection of short articles on disparate topics.

In the end, then, *qua* sustained treatise the book is flawed. On the positive side, however, it is jam-packed with interesting data; and the discussions of the data highlight how very complex communication and interpretation are. Thus the trees are fascinating, even if the forest is a bit tangled.

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**Ossi Naukkarinen**

*Aesthetics of the Unavoidable: Aesthetic Variations in Human Appearance.*

International Institute of Applied Aesthetics  
Series Vol. 3.

Saarijervi: Gummeris Kirjapaino Oy 1998.

Pp. 221.

Np. ISBN 952-5069-04-4.

There has certainly been a surge of philosophical interest in everyday qualities recently. Nothing seems to appeal as much to aestheticians these days as the boring, the neutral, the unavoidable, and, in fact, the unappealing. The title of this book, *Aesthetics of the Unavoidable: Aesthetic Variations in Human Appearance*, is slightly misleading. The focus here, really, is on the type of aesthetics one should use to analyze human appearance, not on appearances themselves, per se. What Naukkarinen actually presents is a continuum of 'explicit', 'semi-explicit', and 'implicit' aesthetic approaches. He defines 'explicit' aesthetics as traditional academic aesthetics, where there is a high level of verbalization and analysis. Human appearance, he feels, falls more towards the 'implicit aesthetics' end of the scale; that is, with little verbalization and analysis. Between these two, in 'semi-explicit aesthetics', lie many of the artifacts of contemporary culture, such as magazine ads and television commercials.

Naukkarinen's confidence in his scale is initially a bit off-putting: 'To begin with, I maintain that the outline I will present is comprehensive, and that there are no additional forms of aesthetics in human appearance' (78). There are other bold statements here. Naukkarinen also believes that 'aesthetics need not be philosophy but can be straight-forward action or "physical" presentation of conceptions and preferences' (207), and he pushes for something other than formal, language-oriented analyses. Current philosophical positions on the aesthetics of clothes/appearance/the everyday are diligently set forth here, if only briefly. Although several aestheticians are writing specifically on human appearance (for example, Tom Leddy on surface qualities, Peg Zeglin Brand on beauty), Naukkarinen instead chooses to emphasize David Novitz's and Noël Carroll's discussions on the boundaries of art and art practice. In fact, Naukkarinen's argument on fashion turns on Carroll's assertion that the crucial relationships between new works of art and those of the past are repetition, amplification, and repudiation.

Fundamentally, Naukkarinen believes that the aesthetics of human appearance are to be found in the tacit, the unoriginal, and the volatile. In the everyday world of clothes and bodies, he believes, 'the status of originality is not as central as in the art world' (125). Just to put clothes on a naked body is to produce a 'product', but 'before we can say that someone's look is a manifestation of aesthetics we can "meet", we should have good reason to suppose that the person in question really has paid conscious attention to aesthetic matters ...' (51).

All of this makes good sense. It seems odd, though, not to at least touch base with feminist concerns such as body image and fat, not to take on the concept of all clothing as drag, and not to discuss the issues of sexuality and gender identification that clothing can arouse. If not in fact a 'male gaze', there is definitely a male point of view presented here. The scenario that runs through this book involves the author sitting at a café, looking at the waitress: 'She appears beautiful to me, her shoes almost kinky, and I think that her clothes suit her exceptionally well. I believe she wants to be slim, have blond, curly hair and accentuate her big eyes with make-up' (73-4). Would he notice a man in the same way?

Human appearance is a lot to take on in such a slender volume, and there are other notable omissions. Although Naukkarinen mentions that physical attractiveness has been shown to be a social advantage, he doesn't discuss the very real dangers of looking different in dress or visage. Those who are not the preferred race (white), sexuality (straight), and age (young) risk not only social struggle, but also discrimination in employment and perhaps even hate crime victimization. Naukkarinen also doesn't offer us any tools to deal with nudity in art or life. The word 'erotic', in fact, only appears once in passing.

Yet none of this is to say that there aren't many good points scored here. Naukkarinen does ask some good questions, such as: which visible items belong to a person's appearance, and which are background? And his cries for actions speaking louder than assertions on human appearance are justified: 'Just think how credible it is to hear participants in beauty contests say over and over again that what is really important is some kind of "internal", not "external", beauty' (44). There are also many tantalizing strands that would be fascinating to pursue, such as 'double-coding': 'A black suit might imply funerals, the business world, or the Blues Brothers, depending on the context ...' (139). (As an aside, I was surprised to learn that in Naukkarinen's country, the public toilets have blue lights in them, not for the ghost-like aesthetic effect they create, but rather so that heroin addicts can't see their veins.) However, if you want to find out why someone, with just a glance, can pull your heart up into your throat (or even if you just want to know how come you can always count on your lucky underwear), you won't find the answer here.

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**Luis E. Navia**

*Diogenes of Sinope: The Man in the Tub.*

Westport, CT: Greenwood Press 1998.

Pp. x + 208.

US\$59.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-313-30672-9).

Public humanities programming in the United States has recently expanded its repertoire. In particular, it has taken up the old Chautauqua (dating back to 19th century New York State as a kind of educational summer camp for adults) and turned it into living theater. Visiting scholars now tour cities, towns, and villages, acting out literary figures they have assiduously studied. In this way, Jefferson, Thoreau, Cicero or Socrates might appear to make presentations and subsequently converse with contemporaries gathered under a circus tent, on a summer night in Independence, California, for example. Plato might be interviewed on Arcata talk-radio, while Whitman can be seen on Oprah or some other such television program.

It is hard to imagine Diogenes of Synope being invited to perform at a Chautauqua, or at least invited back for an encore, considering his penchant for public defecation, urination, masturbation, copulation. That would be taking adult education in an entirely different direction, more toward Jerry Springer. Yet, in his third book on Cynicism within four years, Luis Navia has taken up the cause of shamelessness and embraced Diogenes as a hero for our time.

Navia's largely biographical account of Diogenes' brand of Cynicism relies heavily on Book VI of Diogenes Laertius' *Lives*. Indeed, Navia reprints Hicks' translation from the Loeb in his appendix, along with annotations of his own invention. Navia clearly knows his way around the secondary literature, including rather recondite materials. Yet, this is not a book for scholars. Navia's heavy reliance on selective sources is not counterbalanced with a critical assessment of the literature. Greek errors in the text abound, which is a pity since citing the original Greek was never really necessary for Navia's broader purposes. Items in footnotes are missing from the bibliography. Navia sometimes cites sources rather strangely, to substantiate his own contention that we human beings remain thoroughly depraved (cf. vii, 26, 42n58, 109). In short, Navia's book on Diogenes is entertaining, designed to titillate the general reader (especially anarchists and libertarians). This, I should note as a thoroughgoing democrat, is a public purpose well worth serving.

Navia's opening chapter largely reiterates Diogenes' biography as presented in Laertius, with tidbits sprinkled in (albeit secondhand) from Arabic gnologies or other ancient sources. Editorial comments abound: 'As Schopenhauer once perceptively observed, popularity and greatness of mind are often in an inverse ratio' (29). Navia follows this biographical sketch with a brief speculation on the theatrics and antics of daily Cynicism, designed, it seems, to highlight the hypocrisy of humanity.

In 'The Making of a Cynic' (chapter 3) Navia explores rather idiosyncratically the social milieu which gave rise to Cynicism, finding it to be none other than 'the moral and intellectual bankruptcy that has characterized and still characterizes *all* nations and societies' (Navia's italics, 80). This is followed by an effort to summarize the twelve steps of Cynicism, a chapter especially disappointing in its philosophical ambitions, due its obvious dependency on a previously published essay by Tony Long (cf. 129n17). By the time he finishes the final chapter on 'The Legacy of Diogenes', the reader may be thoroughly entertained, but probably not enlightened, and possibly (like myself) provoked.

It is important for Navia (cf. 22-3) that Diogenes of Sinope was the man who lived in a tub. Another way of describing his abode would be to say he was a man who lived in a vat, an empty wine cask possibly. Indeed, Navia's account of Diogenes' twelve steps suggests to me the story of an alcoholic. Diogenes' life, his values, his attitude toward others certainly reads like a case of clinical depression, especially that varietal of melancholy which finds solace from humanity by taking refuge in a bottle.

The depiction of Diogenes in Navia's rendering also suggests a form of cynicism that goes well beyond depression — a vitriolic hatred of humanity, more sadist than therapist, or so it seems to me. It is hard to imagine such a Diogenes would be capable of love (as opposed to lust) or capable of accepting tenderness from anyone. If Navia's depiction is truly discerning, there is something sick and sad about the man who lived in a vat, notwithstanding Navia's valorizing him.

Diogenes was always on stage, defecating (or whatever) after each performance, as an encore. Such shamelessness must have quickly gotten tiresome. So, what must it have been like to continue living such a life day after day? What must it have been like to have actually been Diogenes?

Fortunately, Epictetus presents a lighter portrait of the person: a Cynic wedded to his public life of excoriating citizens but a man all the same who refused to take himself more seriously than he did anyone else, a Cynic with a sense of humor. Perhaps Epictetus was more perceptive and Diogenes was not the misanthrope Navia would make him out to be. To be sure, Epictetus was bigger-hearted than most melancholics are. Late into his life, he married and adopted a homeless orphan. Epictetus personally knew what it was to love and be loved. His *Discourses* reflect this, with endearing references to children and the games they play. Possibly, Diogenes simply could not comprehend how to love or be loved. Perhaps that was his pathology. But one hopes so sad a story about the man in the vat isn't true.

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**Christine Overall**

*A Feminist I: Reflections From Academia.*

Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press 1998.

Pp. 214.

\$19.95. ISBN 1-55111-219-1.

Christine Overall's project in this neatly assembled and accessible book is to offer some personal reflections on the struggles facing academic feminists as they try to mesh their personal and professional identities. Writing in the genre of 'theoretical autobiography' (marketed as 'new', although actually it's been around for a long time), she speaks in the first person, using her own experience as the foundation of her political philosophical analysis. The narrative is candid and direct, and it's tremendously heartening to hear a senior scholar and teacher discuss her fears and struggles as well as her evident achievements in the classroom and the university. Overall successfully uses her life to illuminate more general feminist political conflicts without over-generalising or including the awkward caveats and painful circumlocutions that give so many feminist texts a wordy and politically tentative quality. She also does feminist theory a great service by helping to lay to rest the fundamentally anti-feminist claim that testimonial or 'confessional' writing (by women — the likes of Descartes and Rousseau miraculously escape these accusations) must be unintelligent or unphilosophical.

In several chapters Overall helpfully describes and theorizes experiences familiar to many feminist academics. In 'Role Muddles', for example, she examines the conflict between being accessible and responsible on the one hand, and resisting exploitation on the other; she also explores often ambiguous or conflicting loyalties to other women, feminists, and patriarchal institutions. She has a clear and unequivocal critique of 'political correctness' discourse, and how it is used against members of oppressed groups to sustain privilege. In discussing her experience of teaching two different incarnations of the same course, and in suggesting strategies for women and men in education, she vindicates the importance of feminist influence in universities (though she focuses too narrowly on individual reform and the value of education in undoing privilege for my political taste). The chapter on 'Feeling Fraudulent' usefully discusses a common sentiment, and will be a valuable reference for those of us looking for intelligent analysis (and reassurance).

Overall's book is most successful and compelling when she writes about political facets of personal identity commonly overlooked by other feminists. In her chapter 'Passing For Normal', for example, she offers an insightful analysis of the pressures on the disabled to 'pass' as non-disabled, making explicit the analogies with passing as white, heterosexual, or younger than one's actual age. She identifies two damaging metaphysical assumptions — that disability is a totalising identity, and that the disabled inevitably make demands on the non-disabled — and elucidates how these assumptions by others had a negative impact on her own experience of disablement as a result of viral arthritis. In unpacking the implications of these presuppositions and

outlining the demands of passing, Overall shows why she is justly 'angry that they tried to remake me into their image of who I most usefully could be for them' (170).

I found the most absorbing and novel chapter to be Overall's discussion of social class. While there's a (now rather moribund) tradition of Marxist and socialist feminisms that offers structural analyses of class relations in capitalist patriarchies, it is surprisingly difficult to find convincing phenomenological writing about how class inequality actually shapes the contours of everyday life, especially in academia. As Overall says, 'While working-class culture is not, by any means, uniform and monolithic, it socializes its participants ... to see the world with different beliefs, hopes, and expectations from those held by middle-class people' (110). It's important for middle-class feminists, like myself, to know what these differences are, and Overall's specificity is particularly helpful: 'Before I went to university, no one in my family had ever written a term paper or sat in a lecture hall, and no one could explain to me how to communicate with professors (none of us had ever met a professor), how to dig out obscure information in the library, which extra-curricular activities would be useful, what magazines and journals to read, how to handle myself at social events, or where to find a summer job that would complement my studies rather than just exhausting me (we didn't have the right "connections")... I had to learn, slowly and painfully, to "pass" as middle class' (119). Overall's writing is thus an important Canadian counterpart to the work of U.S. feminists like Dorothy Allison (*Skin: Talking About Sex, Class, and Literature* [Ithaca, NY: Firebrand 1994]) and Irena Klepfisz (*Dreams of an Insomniac: Jewish Feminist Essays, Speeches, and Diatribes* [Portland, OR: Eighth Mountain Press 1990]), and merits a place on a variety of syllabi.

It is a challenge for autobiographical feminist philosophy to avoid short-changing either theoretical substance or narrative drive. This balancing act requires both philosophical sophistication and great writing, and for the most part Overall manages this well. However, the book does tend to pose more philosophical questions than it answers, and some parts of the text consist of a pastiche of familiar views rather than original contributions from the author. This is particularly true of the final chapter, where Overall runs through the pros and cons of personal histories as a mode of theorizing without really settling on an argument or solving the problems she poses.

*A Feminist I* is clearly intended as a popular book able to reach a wide audience, not only feminist scholars. This is a welcome move at a time when feminist theory is increasingly specialised, while hostility to feminist influence in academia is ever more damaging. Overall's obvious integrity shines through, and I hope that her honest and thoughtful style will convince some doubters of the value of feminist pedagogy in particular. It's also striking that the book remains convincing while using the language of radical feminism: too many popular 'feminist' books use extremely insubstantial liberal frameworks that preclude any meaningful political analysis. I welcome Overall's lucid uses of important concepts such as oppression and patriarchy, and her

careful attention to the mutual implications of sexism, racism, ageism, ableism, and class discrimination.

Another tricky balancing act for this kind of book, however, is between being accessible and being simplistic. While always admirably accessible, sometimes Overall's commentary leans toward blandness, especially when she deviates from her own narrative to connect her experience to problems in contemporary feminist discourse. Her chapter on education, for example, seems to gloss over relevant ideas in debates about gender 'sameness and difference', while slipping into an unexamined humanism that is at odds with other parts of her political analysis. Editorial flaws unnecessarily exaggerate this effect: Overall is too heavily dependent on quoting the ideas of others in place of her own sustained analysis, and lengthy quotes often pop into the text with little further explication or development. Sometimes she makes effective connections with feminist work too often neglected, but at other times quoted voices seem to be suspended mid-text, lacking context or purpose. The parenthetical referencing style, which Overall uses liberally, also inhibits easy reading.

In general, however, this is a very well-crafted book, and a valuable and original addition to feminist literature. It would make an excellent undergraduate text for an ambitious feminist teacher, and its accessibility and freshness might even increase feminism's appeal to sceptical readers.

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**Hannah Fenichel Pitkin**

*The Attack of the Blob:*

*Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social.*

Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1998.

Pp. vii + 365.

US\$30.00. ISBN 0-226-66990-4.

*The Attack of the Blob* is primarily a detailed 'genealogy' of Arendt's concept of 'the social', a concept which is explicitly formulated in *The Human Condition* as a modern phenomenon which contrasts with the political realm of collective action, freedom and individual disclosure. What troubles Pitkin is that Arendt tends to present the social as if it were something powerful, autonomous and able to rob us of our capacity for action and to deny us agency and individuality. The social seems to attack us like 'a Blob' (4) from a science fiction movie of the 1950s. This metaphorical personification and demoniza-

tion is troubling precisely because Arendt was so deeply concerned with collective freedom and human agency and Pitkin's book sets out to understand Arendt's use of such an image of the social and so relocate the problem onto less mystified terrain.

The social is, according to Pitkin, prefigured in Arendt's early biography of Rachel Varnhagen in which Varnhagen's attempts at assimilation into genteel 'high' society are seen as inevitably leading to a loss of individuality and freedom. Implicitly and paradoxically, Arendt saw something like the social as *both* given power by human willful agreement and as subsequently becoming omnipotent and coercive. The development of this paradox in Arendt's thought is then traced from the Jewish parvenu to the collaborating refugee on to the established Jews and gentiles who failed to resist Nazism; in each case a story emerges of willful acquiescence leading to the eventual loss of agency. By the end of the *Origins of Totalitarianism*, notes Pitkin (95), totalitarianism becomes a radically evil force which no longer depends on the centralization of power and which autonomously 'imposes on its members the helplessness and depersonalization that parvenus [now understood as acquiescing Jews and gentiles alike] once chose and by which they helped produce totalitarianism.' For Pitkin, the paradox here becomes a mystified account of the social as Blob, 'the ultimate stage [of which...] may look more like an apathetic, administered consumer society than like a ruthless dictatorship' (97).

Pitkin gives several explanations of Arendt's recourse to the social-as-Blob, beginning with the fact that grammatical hypostatization (in 'the social') contributes to such imagery. More important to her argument is that, rhetorically and unconsciously for Arendt, the image of the Blob restores some of the dyadic choice between action and inaction, between good and evil of the wartime years and provides urgency to what, in the absence of war, is a warning against an amorphous and abstract danger: loss of worldliness. Delving into biographical material, Pitkin comes close to psychological reductionism in suggesting that the image of the Blob is in part a regression fantasy, 'a fearful vision of ... the "bad mother" of infantile experience' (230). But finally we get a less critical account of Arendt as a political theorist who momentarily falters in dealing with inevitable paradoxes associated with the problem of writing coherently about collective agencies as abstractions (while avoiding the seductive nature of the metaphor) and about collective agency in the face of structural constraints. Thus Arendt shares more than she acknowledges with Tocqueville and Marx who, according to Pitkin, are 'absent authorities' who passed on to Arendt the tension implicit in the desire to theorize human initiative, freedom and politics and the tendency to mask that very tension through such images as the social as Blob.

A general audience will find Pitkin's book to have a rather narrow focus even if Pitkin's writing is always accessible. To the growing number of students and researchers interested in revisiting Arendt's thought, this book provides a valuable resource. Pitkin's reading counters both an older understanding of the social as simply misplaced economics and as 'expressing

[Arendt's] opposition to communism, socialism and even the welfare state' (16), as well as a more recent version of the social as 'disciplinary normalization, oppressive conformity ... [and] the obliteration of individuality' (17). Pitkin's reading draws on a wide selection of Arendt's work and includes a wide array of considerations about the meaning of the social for Arendt. Coupled with Pitkin's habitual analytic rigour, this approach produces a balanced account welcome to Arendt scholarship. In the final chapter, Pitkin presents several ways of understanding why human collectivities can be understood to generate ineffectuality. Given that it comes as too little of an extrapolation of Arendt's thought at the end of a very different book, this brief map of the problem of the social cannot help but be somewhat disappointing — it also perhaps removes too much of the creative dissonance of Arendt's thought. At the conclusion of Pitkin's admirable critical reading, one is left with a renewed respect for Arendt as a political theorist able to uncover our lost treasures.

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**Richard Polt**

*Heidegger: An Introduction.*

Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1999.

Pp. xi + 197.

US\$39.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8014-3584-6);

US\$18.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8014-8564-9).

Martin Heidegger is, without a doubt, one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century, and a knowledge of his thought is essential to an understanding of post-war Continental philosophy. But this knowledge is hard to come by: Heidegger's writings are notoriously obscure. An introduction to Heidegger therefore fulfils an important task. But it is also a task which confronts a dilemma. Heidegger insisted that the difficulty of his thought was not an extraneous obstacle to understanding, but arose from the nature of his subject — nothing less than Being itself. Being is 'covered over' by our ordinary concepts, our usual ways of thinking, and it takes a tremendous effort on the part of both thinker and reader to reawaken themselves to its simple mystery. To the extent that Polt makes Heidegger accessible, that he succeeds in introducing Heidegger to his audience, he risks failing. By making Heidegger too accessible, he would acquiesce in the forgetting of Being.

Polt negotiates this difficult path between introduction and over-simplification skilfully. *Heidegger: An Introduction* succeeds in making the philosopher's thought accessible without rendering it simplistic. The greater part of the book is devoted to *Being and Time*, and a section-by-section reading of the text. Unlike other such commentaries on philosophical texts, however, Polt provides his readers, not with detailed analyses which attempt to make sense of the entire text, but with a guide for reading and understanding the original. Accordingly, as he proceeds his analyses get less detailed, concentrating only on what will be strange or obscure to the reader who has read the book with some degree of understanding to that point. The text is not directed at the absolute philosophical beginner, but assumes a little knowledge of the history of philosophy. In particular, his chapter on Division I of *Being and Time* engages in a constant dialogue with Descartes. But the knowledge assumed is no greater than would be expected of an intelligent undergraduate.

The remainder of the book is devoted to a similar introduction to key post-*Kehre* (as the transformation in Heidegger's thought is called) texts. The analysis of the 'The Origin of the Work of Art' is especially illuminating. Polt takes as his exemplar, not the Greek temple and the Van Gogh painting of the original essay, but the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, thereby succeeding not only in making sense of this difficult essay for those new to it, but perhaps of deepening the understanding of those who know it well. Polt brings to these readings a deep knowledge of the later Heidegger, a knowledge which encompasses those many *Gesamtausgabe* texts which have yet to appear in translation. For example, he devotes twelve pages to the as yet untranslated *Contributions to Philosophy*, a text which Heidegger showed only to a select few confidants and upon which he seems to have placed great store (Polt himself seems to share Heidegger's assessment of its importance, but as it emerges from his discussion, the *Contributions* does not seem to contain much to distinguish it from dozens of other post-*Kehre* texts).

One issue alone has dominated recent work on Heidegger: his politics, and especially the question of the depth of his involvement with Nazism. Though Polt devotes only twelve pages explicitly to this question, it serves as what Heidegger might have called a horizon of interpretation throughout the text. Polt attempts to steer a course between those who would, with Bourdieu, see in Heidegger's work simply fascism transposed to the philosophical field, and those who proclaim these same texts the most profound critique of the impulses which lead to fascism. Polt forcefully argues that neither of these attitudes to the question of Heidegger's politics, nor any of the other five which he analyses, ought to be used as excuses not to engage with the work itself. As he suggests, Heidegger's commentators are under an obligation not to attempt to gloss over the question of Heidegger's politics, as an unfortunate but essentially irrelevant episode, but to take it seriously. If Heidegger's life makes us more skeptical, more probing, of his work, then that is precisely the attitude that Heidegger would have liked us to adopt.

Polt himself maintains this questioning attitude throughout the text. All too many of Heidegger's commentators fall under the spell of this strange

thought, and take each of his assertions as deep truths, but Polt is more discerning. It is refreshing, for example, to have someone point out that Heidegger's reading of Sartre (in the 'Letter on Humanism') is superficial. Nevertheless, Polt's tone is generally positive, and his conclusion — that Heidegger's understanding of modernity is simplistic — comes as something of a surprise. This glaringly evident fact has escaped the notice of most Heideggerians.

*Heidegger: An Introduction* concludes with a helpful annotated bibliography of both primary and secondary texts. Polt hopes that his book will be read in conjunction with these original texts. If it is, it will fulfil its function of opening a way into Heidegger's difficult thought admirably.

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**Jacques Rancière**

*Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy.*

Trans. Julie Rose.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

1999. Pp. vii + 150.

US\$29.95. ISBN 0-8166-2844-0.

Contemporary philosophical discourse frequently centres itself about the problem of otherness, underscoring the radical singularity of the other and the ethical necessity of humility regarding the possibility of knowledge of the other's interiority. However, it can be argued that the contemporary discourse of 'difference' and 'radical alterity,' while ethically and philosophically compelling, offers little of concrete utility to the disowned and the forgotten who dwell on the margins of democracy's 'success,' so generally trumpeted in the modern era.

In *Disagreement*, Jacques Rancière takes up the question of the unqualified 'success' of modern democracy. He demonstrates that, in the claimed identity between 'consensus democracy' and the 'legitimate state' — a claim which issues in the modern mind as a logical consequence of the collapse of Marxist and totalitarian regimes throughout the world — democracy is actually displaced by 'postdemocracy' in the realization of political philosophy's founding myth, the Platonic utopia. For Rancière, democracy is not the name of a political regime, nor a system of institutions through which popular sovereignty materializes. Democracy is that unique situation where politics

— conceived as the activity that ruptures the official configuration of the social body — can occur.

Rancière returns to political philosophy's inaugural discourse (Plato's *Republic*) to mark the point where the *logos* splits, revealing that which is peculiar to politics and must be rejected by philosophy. A curious paradox is thereby exposed at the core of political philosophy: the impossibility of the conjunction of its parts — philosophy and politics — based on the mutual-exclusivity of their objects.

Since Socrates, Rancière argues, it has been the work of philosophy to think politics *in truth*, as an account of humanity's harmony with itself and with the cosmos. Politics, on the other hand, as 'that activity which turns on equality as its principle' (ix), reveals the empirical truth of the disorder which lurks beneath the cosmic perfection. Since the principle of equality is constantly transformed by the shifting distribution of community shares, politics constantly gives rise to spontaneous eruptions and paradoxes, forcing fissures in the prevailing system, and upsetting the official ledger of its social constitution. Rancière states: 'Politics occurs because, or when, the natural order of the shepherd kings, the warlords, or property owners is interrupted by a freedom that crops up and makes real the ultimate equality on which any social order rests' (16). Thus equality, as the principle of the interchangeability of anyone and everyone, suggests a freedom that 'gnaws away' at any claim of natural order. The only way to ground a hierarchy and cure politics of its inherent ills is to invent a 'noble lie', a myth of origins, to provide the community with an *archē* which masks the anarchic truth of all social orders.

Politics, in revealing the forgotten and the incommensurable, is intolerable to philosophy and a threat to the state, not merely because it witnesses internal dissention, Rancière explains, but because the injustice it reveals puts into question the city as the mirror of cosmic perfection, and raises the questionability of the very foundation of community. That is, it raises the possibility of the impossibility of the *archē*. Politics throws the social order from the logic of its perfect proportions, back upon the reality of the utter contingency of all social order. It discloses the frightening truth about all orders of domination: the ultimate anarchy upon which they rest.

The silencing of the 'part which has no part' and the erasure of this fundamental 'wrong' from the account of the polis, Rancière posits as the accomplishment of the Platonic *politeia*. In the philosopher's reconstruction, all parts are counted, all needs and desires are accounted for, and the shift from democracy's vulgar and problematical arithmetic to the ideal geometrical equality, guaranteed by the *archē* of cosmic harmony, is achieved. However, Rancière explains, this perfected account, which marks the over-coming of politics, also signals the demise of democracy, properly understood.

The regime of Platonic archipolitics, claims Rancière, finds reification in modern 'consensus democracy.' In the utopia of consensus theory, parties come together in speech, and opt for peaceful negotiation — social contracts — over war. But consensus theory, warns Rancière, in thematizing 'difference' into its account of the citizenry, inscribes into the system even the

voiceless, under the category of the excluded and the discounted. Thus, despite the claims (of theorists like Habermas) that consensus is always open-ended, the very notion of consensus carries with it the risks detected in Platonic archipolitics. Wherever the conflict over the sensory space that organizes domination is claimed as settled, the myths of state, including its divine right of domination, remain uncontested and incontestable, and virtually any state action can be justified as politically expedient and necessary to the accomplishment of the common good.

Rancière's *Disagreement* is compelling and offers unique insights into the paradoxes at the heart of political philosophy, insights which problematize the unqualified valorization of the modern democratic state, and question the effectiveness of philosophical discourse to address these problems, without a fundamental reorientation. Rose's translation masterfully maintains the poetic current of the work, while permitting its ethical urgency to bleed through.

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**James F. Sennet, ed.**

*The Analytical Theist:*

*an Alvin Plantinga reader.*

Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. Eerdmans 1998.

Pp. xviii + 369.

US\$30.00. ISBN 0-8028-4229-1.

The initial impression on opening this book is of having drifted into a religious gathering. Sennet devotes much of his ten-page introduction to praising Plantinga for greatly increasing the numbers and status of Christian philosophers, by which he means not so much philosophers studying the philosophy of Christianity, as philosophers who are practising Christians. In British universities we would not speak in this way. Philosophy of religion has to hold its own as philosophy irrespective of the religion of the philosopher. For philosophical treatments of specifically Christian doctrines we have the term 'philosophical theology', but even this does not imply that its practitioners must be believers: the seminal volume *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* was co-edited by A.G.N. Flew.

As one would expect from its title, this collection is devoted exclusively to Plantinga's work in the philosophy of religion. His work on modalism, foundationalism, proper names, and the philosophy of mind are covered only in their application to his views on theism. These areas probably represent his most important contributions to philosophy: in the volume devoted to him

in the Reidel Profiles series (edited by Tomberlin and van Inwagen, Reidel, 1985) only a minority of the papers were mainly concerned with religious issues. Sennet's selections serve to make clear the extent to which all Plantinga's work has been motivated by his Christian commitment, which Plantinga himself underlines in a brief afterword.

Plantinga is a demanding philosopher, and where he has dealt with the same subject-matter in more and less technical ways, Sennet has sensibly preferred the more approachable treatment. There is nothing bitty about this reader: only thirteen sources are used, and the excerpts are substantial, averaging more than twenty pages each, enabling the reader to get fully to grips with Plantinga's way of building an argument, and capturing flashes of the dry wit which must make him a splendid speaker. The papers range from philosophy of religion through philosophical theology to not very philosophical theology. Sennet is sparing in his commentary, but his own philosophical acuity is shown by the appearance of notes whenever essential background is required to follow the argument.

Plantinga's most widely known views in the philosophy of religion are his comparison of knowledge of God with knowledge of other minds, his version of the free will defence to the problem of evil, his form of the ontological argument, and his claim that belief in God can be basic and foundational. The first three are dealt with, in that order, in the first section of the collection, making an impressive start. The first paper, chapter 10 of *God and Other Minds* (1967), is to my mind much the strongest in the book.

The second section of the collection deals with Plantinga's efforts from 1980 onwards to establish what he terms 'Reformed Epistemology'. The basis of this is his contention that belief in God is a foundational belief which does not require reasons or evidence, though he does claim that it is not immune to contrary arguments or evidence. This seems a rather disappointing retreat for someone who had made such a good start at showing what the reasons and evidence might be. Plantinga's formidable philosophical skills are well displayed, though he sees nothing question-begging in including among the reasons why belief in the Great Pumpkin cannot be as basic as belief in God the fact of 'there being no Great Pumpkin' (152). Great-Pumpkinian philosophers presumably differ.

The third section contains three fascinating papers in which Plantinga addresses the nature of God. His views in this area of philosophical theology have attracted less critical attention than his better known work in the preceding sections. He pays close attention to Augustine, Aquinas, William of Ockham, and Descartes. However, he seems always to make God rather more ordinary than they did. So God must have a nature, God is not timeless, God ends up sounding like a person much like you or me, only bigger. For all Plantinga's respect for Aquinas, he seems never to grasp Aquinas's constant awareness of the gulf between his conceptualising and the Deity.

The book ends revealingly by exploring Plantinga's views on 'Christian Philosophy'. The last two papers were included at Plantinga's own urging, and his choices are less happy than Sennet's. His foray into biblical criticism

is simply embarrassing in its refusal to acknowledge the methods and requirements of another discipline. He attacks the distinguished Franciscan scholar Barnabas Lindars for refusing to accept the biblical accounts of miracles as evidence, in tones reminiscent of the Vatican's denunciation of Duchesne for excluding the miraculous from his great history of the early Church. That, though, was some ninety years ago, and Rome has come a long way in that time. Plantinga would seem to think it has moved in the wrong direction.

Plantinga's other selection again makes clear that he sees a Christian philosopher as a Christian first and a philosopher only second. If his personal faith is uncompromising, though, it is neither bigoted nor ungenerous. This collection does include a paper entitled 'A Defense of Religious Exclusivism', but by religious exclusivism Plantinga turns out to mean only the insistence that one's own religious beliefs are true. He makes no comment on the likely spiritual fate of those who hold other beliefs.

Few of these papers can be read without concentration, and none without pleasure to those who relish the process of philosophising, as Plantinga clearly does, whether or not they share his faith. This is a valuable volume, and even those who know Plantinga's work well may find that this collection subtly changes their understanding of him.

### **Adrian Machiraju**

*(Bedford Library)*

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### **Peter Smith**

*Explaining Chaos.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 1998.

Pp. viii + 193.

US\$59.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-471710);

US\$19.95 (paper: ISBN 0-521-477476).

Among the philosophical and semi-popular books on Non-linear Dynamics or chaos theory, Smith's is the jewel. At least for readers who have tried to figure out some of the topics for themselves and were left puzzled, it makes for thoroughly enjoyable and even exciting reading. Smith achieves all this with the most deflationary strategy imaginable: he frequently announces that 'there are no mysteries here', 'no surprises', 'nothing new'. Thus the book is enlightenment in its original sense — removal of prejudices, demystification. Readers who have been frustrated by the claims of alleged innovations and wide repercussions of chaos theory made often in the popular literature but also in many a philosophy paper, will fully appreciate the sober analysis presented here.

The most space in the book is taken up with laying out the physics and mathematics of Non-linear Dynamics as far as needed. I have not seen better intuitive glosses on the technical description of dynamical systems. Formulas are not avoided but are treated more as mnemonic devices than as tools with which the reader is supposed to be able to work. The philosophical themes of the book are centered around *methodological* issues rather than around *metaphysical* ones — correctly I think, because the really new insights of Non-linear Dynamics pertain not so much to our metaphysical views about the world than to the ways scientists are able to design models of this world. One of the main surprises of Non-linear Dynamics was the discovery that relatively simple models — describing deterministic dynamics in low-dimensional phase spaces — can generate very complex behaviour, including behaviour that can look random.

Smith develops several philosophical topics that naturally arise from this discovery. How can such ‘simple’ models possibly succeed in describing the behaviour of real systems if the models owe their simplicity to the neglect of many factors that actually play a role in the systems? This is of course not a question that pertains exclusively to modeling in Non-linear Dynamics. But the problem is made more acute in this area because it is a characteristic feature of models of chaotic behaviour that their output is highly sensitive to changes in initial conditions; a little change in these conditions can have very large effects for the behaviour generated by the model. If the models themselves tell us that we have to expect such sensitivity to details, how can abstracting away from many details of the real systems possibly result in ‘good’ models for them?

A related worry arises from the kind of picture non-linear dynamical models seem to give us of the real world systems to which we apply them. How can such models be successful in accounting for a system’s behaviour if the models’ accounts of the dynamics involve geometric structures of ‘infinite intricacy’ (fractals)? That is, such models seem to presuppose that we can give meaning to infinitely finely structured successions of values for, say, the velocity of a fluid even though we know that a fluid is really not a continuous but a discrete medium and that therefore its velocity cannot be defined for very small regions (which may well be empty of molecules). The systems described do not contain fractal structures. How do we treat this ‘surplus content’ of the models, which misrepresents the actual systems? Smith explains why fractal structures in the models are necessary to generate complex behaviour in a *simple* way (through stretching and folding of trajectories). Thus, the fractals in the models are the result of constructing the models according to ‘normal canons of simplicity’ (50); and the price we pay for achieving simplicity (or, rather, a judicious balance of simplicity and empirical adequacy) is misrepresenting nature by a fractal.

The same feature of sensitive dependence on initial conditions has led to a related concern: how can such models make useful predictions at all, given the unavoidable imprecision of our determinations of initial conditions? Shouldn’t we always expect a huge discrepancy between the predicted and the

observed behaviour? Smith explains that chaotic models, due to their built-in determinism, do allow us to make predictions — comparatively short-term quantitative predictions and long term qualitative predictions. He also debunks one of the alleged qualitative predictions of a particular model of the atmosphere, the almost proverbial 'butterfly effect': It is supposed to be a consequence of a relatively simple model of the atmosphere that a small variation in initial conditions, e.g., whether or not a butterfly flaps its wings in China, can have enormous effects later on, e.g., whether or not there will be a hurricane somewhere in England. The model in question does not (and cannot possibly) make such a prediction; claims to the contrary extrapolate the applicability of the model in unjustified ways. A later chapter deals very nicely with the techniques developed to actually test such models against data from real systems. Along the way Smith develops a working notion of what it could mean for these models to be 'approximately true', a notion which turns out in his version, in contrast to other philosophical attempts at explicating it, to be closely connected to the actual procedures for testing the models. A model is approximately true of a system if the trajectories generated by the model 'track' the trajectories of the system 'closely'. This notion of closeness of geometric structures obviously invites further elaboration beyond Smith's discussion; one might, for instance, distinguish topological (qualitative) from metric (quantitative) senses of closeness.

Given such worries about their unrealistic nature, how can non-linear dynamical models, even though they may be successful in *describing* the behaviour of real systems, possibly *explain* anything? The answer Smith offers (125ff.) is not special to non-linear dynamical models but applies much more generally — in this sense there are no radically new kinds of explanation in chaos theory. The criterion for distinguishing potentially realistic (and hence potentially explanatory) from probably unrealistic features of models he suggests is the 'robustness' or stability of the features, i.e., whether the features are resilient against slight changes in the details of the models. Thus, if a certain mechanism, like a specific route to chaotic behaviour, is shared by a series of slightly different potential models of a system then we should have some confidence in the accurateness and explanatory relevance of the mechanism.

The methodological precept Smith is referring to has been called 'the stability dogma' (Guckenheimer/Holmes 1983). Although this view has great intuitive appeal and reflects an important aspect of scientific practice, more discussion of the ramifications is needed. For instance, what are we to say about a model that describes a bifurcation of a system, a qualitative change of behaviour when a control parameter is slightly changed? By definition, the model is not robust at the bifurcation point but, nevertheless, if many variant models share this bifurcation behaviour, they should be classified as robust in a wider sense. What do we say about models which contain the structures which are characteristic for the chaotic dynamics ('strange attractors') when these structures are not robust, as appears to be the case with a great number of such models?

Smith argues that, by and large, Non-linear Dynamics is not special among the various sub-disciplines of physics in raising these methodological problems. While Smith may well be right in this, the study of Non-linear Dynamics can still throw light on certain *philosophical* views about scientific practice. Research in chaos illustrates the pragmatic and tinkering nature of research in all of physics and that this does not fit in well with some traditional philosophical doctrines about science (114). Smith does not attempt to offer an alternative theory of scientific method but the insights into the modeling practice of chaos research he does offer to philosophers are splendid nonetheless.

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**James P. Sterba**

*Justice for Here and Now.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 1998.

Pp. x + 246.

US\$59.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-62188-7);

US\$19.95 (paper: ISBN 0-521-62739-7).

In *Justice for Here and Now*, Sterba carries forward the project he has engaged in elsewhere of trying to bring reconciliation between philosophical positions. Academic philosophers are all too familiar with the practice, which provides the foil for Sterba's project, of philosophy being carried out as if it were a battle in which the victory was awarded to the participant who scored the most points by, for example, finding flaws in other people's arguments. Sterba would like to see this replaced with a peaceful and cooperative model of doing philosophy which required that we put the most favorable interpretation on the work of others (5), and 'which is committed to fair-mindedness and openness in seeking to determine which philosophical views are most justified' (6). In the area of ethics he hopes to implement that model of doing philosophy by examining 'carefully the possibility of grounding morality on the widely shared norms of rationality' (6). Two other requirements are: (1) the 'willingness to put ourselves into the philosophical shoes of those who maintain different views and see things from their perspective', and (2) the willingness 'to radically and publicly change our views if the evidence points in that direction' (7).

After finding flaws in Gewirth's and Baier's attempts to ground morality in rationality, Sterba, in ch. 2, seeks to justify morality on the grounds that

morality 'can be viewed as ... a nonarbitrary compromise between self-interested and altruistic reasons' (27). In the process he replies to a number of objections to earlier versions of his thesis.

In the third chapter, Sterba takes his now familiar approach of arguing that Spencerian liberals should see the conflict between the rich and the poor as a conflict of liberties — one liberty being the liberty of the poor to take what they need from the rich, and then arguing that it is more unreasonable to expect the poor to give up this liberty than it is to expect the rich to give up their liberty to defend their surpluses (45-52). Further arguments attempt to show that 'a libertarian conception of justice supports the same practical requirements as welfare liberalism or a welfare liberal conception of justice: Both favor a right to welfare and a right to equal opportunity' (65), which applies to distant and future people as well as members of one's own society (56-65). Sterba then seeks to answer the replies to earlier versions of his arguments which have been urged by Machan, Rasmussen, Hospers, Mack, and Narveson (66-76).

In chapter 4, Sterba defends androgyny as an ideal which requires that the traits that are truly desirable in society be equally open to both women and men, or, in the case of virtues, equally expected of both women and men, other things being equal (78). He argues that libertarian and welfare liberal support of equal opportunity, and socialist support of a right to equal self-development, all lead to the same conclusions. At first he avoids advocacy of the 'technological fixes' (e.g., lactating men and inseminating women) that turn some people away from androgynous feminism, but then he leaves the door open by saying that if they 'should prove to be cost-efficient, then obviously there would be every reason to utilize them' (82).

Among the practical applications of Sterba's principles are some that are not very controversial, e.g., more flexible working hours. Others are more controversial. The need for affirmative action and comparative worth are asserted more than argued for except by appeal to statistics about women's lower earnings — statistics that have been interpreted in different ways by other writers. He only very briefly takes note of the far more serious problems of gender inequality in third-world countries (88). He invariably supports left-feminist conclusions, some of which are accepted with little argument. Do we in fact, for example, have good reason to believe that the de-emphasizing such sports as football would lead to a decrease of violence toward women? (91)

Chapter 5, 'From Feminism to Multiculturalism', seems to me to throw together too many issues to be adequately addressed in one chapter or to be fruitfully discussed in this short review. The heart of the project of the interesting chapter on environmental ethics (ch. 6) is to show biocentrists that they ought to accept certain principles which seem to give some priority to the interests of human beings. The heart of that argument is the following: 'We would be required to sacrifice the basic needs of members of the human species only if the members of other species were making similar sacrifices for the sake of members of the human species.' It would seem that Sterba is

arguing that to a certain extent we are in a Hobbesian state of nature with respect to other beings, so that we cannot have duties which require greater sacrifice on our part than on the part of members of other species. Thus the door is opened for reconciliation with far-sighted anthropocentrists on policy issues. The specifics of policy recommendations, however, are not always in agreement with other reconcilers (e.g., Bryan Norton).

In chapter 8, Sterba argues 'that pacifism and just war theory, in their most morally defensible interpretations, can be substantially reconciled both in theory and in practice' (151), but it does not seem clear where those reconciled positions lead with respect to specific issues, e.g., NATO's war with Yugoslavia.

The project that Sterba sets forth in the first chapter is a noble one. The question of the success of his efforts may be the basis of a fruitful ongoing discussion. One could pose many questions, however, that as of yet seem to be unanswered, including a question about whether communitarians and conservatives are also to be included in this reconciliation project.

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**Jon Stewart, ed.**

*The Debate between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty.*

Evanston: Northwestern University Press

1998. Pp. xlvii + 634.

US\$89.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8101-1531-X);

US\$24.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8101-1532-8).

Life is full of falsehoods: deceptive smiles for the sake of politeness go hand in hand with contradictions between what we say and what we do. History also forces us to take a stand for policies that we do not accept completely, or to find friendship where we might otherwise have remained strangers. The exchange between Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty was more than an exchange of ideas, but a paradigm for the human endeavour to make sense of a world full of falsehood. It is marked by attacks against positions sometimes never held, and the application of political ideas later defeated by unexpected circumstances.

Stewart's monolithic volume brilliantly captures the debate on a variety of levels. There are twenty critical articles by noted scholars such as Martin Dillon, Colin Smith, Ronald Aronson and Mikel Dufrenne, including one by Joseph Catalano published here for the first time. They are arranged accord-

ing to the topics of ontology, intersubjectivity, embodiment, freedom, politics and aesthetics. There are also excerpts from numerous texts by Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, including Merleau's 'Sartre and Ultrabolshevism', 'The Philosophy of Existence', 'Introduction to *Signs*', 'Interrogation and Dialectic', Sartre's 'Merleau-Ponty *vivant*', and Simone de Beauvoir's 'Merleau-Ponty and Pseudo-Sartreanism'. Stewart also includes a biographical overview of the philosophers and his English translation of an exchange of letters between them at the time of Merleau's resignation as political editor of *Les Temps Modernes*.

Differences between Sartre and Merleau abound. On a personal level, Sartre took sides in a debate while Merleau enjoyed listening to a multiplicity of unresolved positions (568). In politics, Merleau was cautious to join a party while Sartre made bold decisions in an instant. These differences resulted in a quarrel documented by the translated letters, written when Sartre came to support communism and Merleau came to reject it. Sartre accused Merleau of being indecisive, and Merleau claimed that Sartre was unreflective of the overall effects of history on the meaning of an action (334). Merleau explains: 'I didn't want [an] event to force my hand, and you didn't want to make a retreat' (344).

These differences become more complex when traced through the different levels of their philosophies. Two levels much discussed throughout *The Debate* are the relation of consciousness to reality and intersubjectivity. Ronald Aronson, Marjorie Grene, John Moreland and Colin Smith repeat Merleau's accusation that Sartre reduces consciousness to being a situation-less negation of reality and an affirmation of subjectivity. Moreland draws the contradictory consequences of giving to this 'negation' the status of self-transparency, as it fails to account for the problem of false perceptions and of how perception is different from other states of consciousness. Smith follows up this complaint by claiming that Sartre does not allow for the revision of decisions over time, as that would be to falsify one's original intentions and to be living in bad faith. Merleau, by contrast, admits that consciousness is not transparent to itself, and that it explores its self-knowledge in a provisional way. James Sheridan and Monika Langer echo Simone de Beauvoir's accusation that Merleau is attacking a 'pseudo-Sartre'. They show that there is a place for social existence in Sartre's philosophy because he separates the spontaneity of consciousness from the socially and historically determined ego (106). Merleau conflates consciousness with the ego and thus overlooks the potential for social and political thought in Sartre's philosophy.

The discussion concerning intersubjectivity is focused on Sartre's description of the look. According to Sartre, when I spy on the Other through a keyhole, the Other becomes an object for my consciousness, but when I am discovered, the Other steals my subjectivity from me, reducing me to the status of an object. Merleau argues that there is no place in the look for two subjectivities to meet, but only an exchange of looks (388). Langer defends Sartre by claiming that the look is only an extreme form of intersubjectivity,

and that Sartre develops others that are more commensurable with Merleau's demands — in particular, the caress, in which two people reveal to each other their interdependence and contingency (106-7). In response, Glen Mazis shows that since we can never dissolve our subjectivity into contingency, the caress as described by Sartre can only approximate the Other. For Merleau, the caress brings consciousness into direct contact with the Other by identifying it in terms of its own divergent experience of simultaneously touching and being touched; it is because I experience my own duality of roles that I am able to transfer that awareness to the Other when I am touched by the Other. Thus Merleau provides access to the Other while Sartre only gives a trompe l'oeil.

A weakness of Stewart's collection is that it contains little about the relation of political theory to Merleau's later works. The articles on consciousness, intersubjectivity and politics overlap quite well, but with the exception of Mazis, Grene and a few others, Merleau's later works are hardly mentioned. There is also a tendency to either defend Merleau against Sartre or to defend Sartre on Merleau's grounds, making the book seem weighted in favour of Merleau.

The huge volume, however, is a bold testament to the importance of both philosophers at a time when phenomenology has been eclipsed by other methods, and also to the plight of the French Communist Party at a time when democracy has won the day. This is because we identify with the struggle to make sense of a world that is never totally in view. Sartre's words are telling here: 'We are entangled. The ties uniting us to others are false ones. There is no regime which, by itself, would suffice to disentangle them, but perhaps the men who come after us, all men together, will have the power and the patience to take up this work where we left it' (619). The collection by Stewart boldly takes up this task without forgetting the personalities and the context in which the task was born. By making sense of the debate between Sartre and Merleau, we also can begin to make sense of ourselves.

**James B. Steeves**

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**Jenny Teichman**

*Polemical Papers.*

Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited

1997. Pp. x + 167.

US\$59.95. ISBN 1-85972-670-4.

**Mary Warnock**

*An Intelligent Person's Guide to Ethics.*

London: Gerald Duckworth and Co., Ltd. 1998.

Pp. 128.

£12.95. ISBN 0-7156-2841-0.

At first glance it seems like there is not much that connects the chapters of Warnock's book except that they all fit within the field of ethics. Their focus ranges from ethical case studies suitable to an applied ethics course, to issues such as the implications of determinism, to the question of how we should best teach our children to be ethical. While each of the chapters is interesting, it was difficult to see how the book as a whole fit together. Yet, as Warnock puts it, 'The point of a Guide is ... to show how theory and practice interlock' (107). Thus the point of the book seems to be to first awaken our own moral sensibilities with dramatic dilemmas dealing with life and death, then to discuss how best to talk about those moral sensibilities, then to defend their rational validity, and finally to suggest applications of them to the future.

Nevertheless, because the chapters cover such different issues, I will summarize them separately. Chapters one and two examine cases appropriate to biomedical ethics, such as voluntary euthanasia, research on live human embryos, and abortions. Warnock examines both how private morality, or moral sense, affects one's decisions in specific cases, and how public morality, or laws, should be framed in response to accommodate similar cases. Chapter 3 deals with her analysis of and objections to rights-based discussions of such issues. Chapter 4 examines the root of ethics, or more accurately one's moral sense. Warnock concludes that an ethical person requires both the imagination to be able to see what other people's needs and desires are, and the sympathy to be motivated to help others based on that imaginative understanding. Together, these qualities are what makes a person altruistic, that is, 'prepared to forgo what you might like to do, or to suppress a claim you might like to make for yourself, for the sake of other people' (86). This chapter not only defends the existence of altruism, but gives a better idea of what private morality consists of, which is important to Warnock because she believes that public morality requires at least some members of society to be altruistic. Chapter 5 examines the free will problem and its relation to moral responsibility. Here she both defends the inherent unpredictability of human beings' actions in principle, and also takes a Strawsonian line that our attitude of assuming that most people are morally responsible is not one that can be dismissed in practice, regardless of what theories of determinism seem plausible. Finally, chapter 6 looks at moral

education, and the threats imposed upon it by Relativism, particularly the postmodern form of it advocated by Derrida and Rorty. She tries to find a middle ground between the above and anti-rational fundamentalism. She holds that teachers should 'unashamedly use the language of ethics' (120) and both through word and through their own living example should show that some behaviours and forms of society are morally better than others. In addition, teachers should attempt to excite a child's imagination, since such imagination is necessary for the development of altruism.

On the whole, I find the book gives an intelligent account of the theoretical basis for, and applications of, one's ethical sense. And given that Warnock describes what her considerations were as she helped to form public policy about research on live embryos in Great Britain, she seems to have established credentials in both ethical theory and its applications. Yet to a philosophy student this book might be less useful as a whole than its individual chapters, depending upon the student's particular interests. For the layman, it provides a good introduction into a variety of ethical issues. Obviously a book that covers so much ground cannot deeply investigate any one issue, so it may be more useful as a way to begin examination of the issues it raises.

Teichman's essays and reviews are not all polemical, and of those that are, some are far more polemical than others (probably most polemical is the essay entitled 'The false philosophy of Peter Singer'). This collection has no unified point of view, mainly because it examines the works of many philosophers (and others) in quite different fields. Some of her targets are famous in philosophical circles; some are less so. However, what she does, she does very well, giving a good (albeit in some cases necessarily incomplete) description of their points of view before she shows why she disagrees with them. And it is refreshing that she does not pretend to be unbiased in this (for instance she is vehemently against mutilating the dead, considering it an atrocity and a form of terrorism, and she doesn't feel any need to support her view [43-4]). Upon reading her works, one is forced to engage with her, whether one agrees with her views or not.

Teichman divides her book into sections. In 'War and Peace' she discusses terrorism, pacifism, and the idea of a just war. Her only target in this section is Jan Narveson's view that pacifism is self-contradictory. The rest is more descriptive than polemic, with many references to Grotius. In 'Love and Sex', on the other hand, there is no shortage of criticism, as the first three chapters are book reviews. The fourth deals with Anscombe's defence of the catholic opinion on contraception, and the fifth is a description of illegitimate births in literature.

The third section, entitled 'Life and its Meaning', is the longest. The first two chapters attack Peter Singer's views and defend those who protested against Peter Singer's right to make public speeches advocating euthanasia in post-WWII Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Then follow reviews of works by Ronald Dworkin, Hannah Arendt, Alasdair MacIntyre, Iris Murdoch, Richard Rorty, and James Q. Wilson. Her review of Murdoch also examines

Murdoch's other reviewers, which means that in reading this sentence you are reading a review of a review of some reviews! She then examines Jacques Derrida's work and deconstructionism in general. Her final chapter is an examination of whether life has any purpose or intrinsic value.

A book of reviews is a strange thing to review. Unlike Warnock's book, there is no grand plan being laid out. Teichman seems to be a good critic but since she has not claimed to be unbiased one would be well advised to investigate the works she is reviewing for oneself. On the other hand, her writing style is exciting. There are times in her refutations of others' over-reaching arguments that she seems like the Socratic gadfly from hell. In short, this book is not a teaching aid, but it does make an interesting read.

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*Emerson's Ethics.*

Columbia: University of Missouri Press 1999.

Pp. xii + 182.

US\$29.95. ISBN 0-8262-1215-8.

That Emerson was preoccupied with ethics is well understood. Since he deliberately wrote for a wide variety of readers rather than for trained philosophers, he is usually interpreted as a moralist, not a philosopher of ethics. But, Van Cromphout argues, we should not dismiss Emerson as only a moralist. He influenced Nietzsche, James, and Dewey, each of whom apparently perceived more in Emerson than popular wisdom. Van Cromphout (159-60) cites Richard Rorty's characterization of philosophers as either 'edifying' or 'systematic' and places Emerson in the former camp, more interested in 'coping with the world' than in discovering 'truth'. Like Socrates, Rousseau, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Tolstoi, and other morality-obsessed edifiers, Emerson also contributed to the philosophical science of ethics. The purpose of Van Cromphout's book is to elucidate this contribution.

The influences of Socrates and Kant upon Emerson are well known. Van Cromphout's analysis of Emerson's study of these thinkers shows, for example, how Emerson misinterpreted Socrates as a moral relativist (10), saw Kantian self-reliance on conscience as essentially slavish (94-5), and wrestled with issues of universalizability (84-9). Emerson's reworking of Kant's ethics derives somewhat from German Idealism, especially Schelling and Hegel,

but also makes significant original progress, arguing that morality is 'the essence of human nature' or the 'defining characteristic of our humanity' (35).

Less well known is Hume's influence on Emerson. In an early essay called 'The Present State of Ethical Philosophy', Emerson criticized eudaimonism, especially the Aristotelian and Christian versions which regarded happiness as an objective goal. He acknowledged Hume as the most cogent expositor of a eudaimonism which is not dependent upon externalities. Emerson rejected Hume's idea that moral feeling is merely sentiment (21-2), but remained convinced, partially by Hume's theories of benevolence and the natural expression of self-love as kindness toward others, that morality is determined by feeling, albeit in the general form of intuitive perceptions. Traditional eudaimonism relied upon an Aristotelian hylomorphic metaphysics of the self, but, as Emerson noticed, Hume's 'bundle of perceptions' theory of personal identity allowed him to desubstantialize the self to the extent that a commonsense subjectivist eudaimonism could arise without degenerating into a socially destructive hedonism (59-61). Emerson's own thought never approached eudaimonism — he was too much a romantic deontologist for that — but his reading of Hume reinforced his view that for each individual a subjective 'condition of mind [exists] without regard to the particular objects of contemplation' (20). In other words, one's beliefs, not one's circumstances, determine one's reality.

Emerson's contribution to philosophical ethics consists in a deontological subjectivism wherein the individual cannot be objectified (58-64) and moral decisions and actions are grounded in a universal moral law which is more easily known than one's own individuality. Self-realization is learning how to be a moral agent. Self-fulfillment is the striving after the good life, not any alleged attainment of it. This theory shows the deep influence of both Hume and Kant, as well as Goethe, Hegel, and Lessing.

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**Steven Wall**

*Liberalism, Perfectionism and Restraint.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 1998.

Pp. 244.

US\$54.95. ISBN 0-521-62411-8.

The justification of ideals of the human good and their place in political morality is a recurring theme. In this book Wall follows a path first cleared by Joseph Raz in arguing for a liberal perfectionism, in which the state can legitimately promote the good of personal autonomy — understood as making for oneself from a range of alternatives the central defining decisions of one's life.

After a preliminary chapter clarifying the concept of perfectionism, the book falls into two halves. The first is a critique of a leading rival to perfectionism, John Rawls' political liberalism. This is the view that, since citizens can reasonably disagree about ideals of the good, they should exercise restraint and not seek to use political power to advance the ideal they favour. The state should not aim to promote such controversial ideals nor justify its actions by reference to them. Wall sets out what he claims to be the main arguments for this view and tries to show that they don't work. He does so in painstaking analytic detail, in a manner foreign to the writing of most political liberals. Along the way some good questions are posed. But, as with any translation, there is always the worry that something is lost. Wall would say that what he eliminates is the sloppiness in argument that allows Rawls' work to carry credibility. An alternative view is that Wall ends up attacking a straw man of his own construction, and I will mention below a reason for thinking this to be the case.

The second half of the book contains an account of personal autonomy, a justification of it as a central component of political morality, and a necessarily brief discussion of some policy implications. The view developed here is basically an elaboration of that first advanced by Raz. Wall claims that personal autonomy is universally intrinsically and instrumentally valuable, but necessary only to the flourishing of all those who live in modern western societies. Some policy implications are suggested, notably forcing children of religious minority families to go to state schools and an immigration policy which discriminates against those unfamiliar with the native culture.

Wall characterises the debate between political liberals and perfectionists as focusing upon the respective claims that political morality should be based upon premises which are shared, regardless of their content, and that it should start from premises which are sound and are known to be sound. But to characterise Rawls as holding the first of these positions is a misunderstanding, albeit a common one. Rawls himself insists that his political conception is a moral ideal. What is distinctive about his position is that political morality is not derived from any single more comprehensive moral ideal, but is to be reconciled with a wide range of them. He doesn't start simply from shared values but from the claim that we do have deeply imbedded in our

culture an ideal which is fundamental to morality: that social arrangements should be fair between citizens who are each free and equal. Put more intuitively, this is the moral belief, which he is surely right in thinking is widely shared, that our basic status and entitlements as a citizen should not depend upon our wealth, gender or ethnic group, religious affiliation, etc. The charge that Rawls must endorse just any set of values which happen to be shared in a society is misplaced.

The debate between perfectionism and political liberalism is better understood, then, as one over the content of the premises fundamental to political morality. Wall acknowledges some problems of justification: he admits that no-one can ever be certain that their views are sound, and he attacks Rawls for underestimating the extent to which citizens argue about basic premises, a charge which doesn't sit well with a perfectionist morality. These considerations, however, don't stop him proposing that political power should be used to enforce one particular ideal. Yet his justification of the central value of personal autonomy is hardly conclusive. For one thing, he ducks a confrontation with those critics of modern western society, like Alisdair MacIntyre, who say that if the forms of those societies mean we have to live autonomous life styles that is sufficient reason to regret and, if possible, change those forms. Wall thinks this too big a debate to enter into, yet if he is to fully justify the ideal of autonomy as a sound basis for the exercise of political power it cannot be avoided.

Moreover, Wall's justification depends heavily upon an appeal to intuition, but this is a game critics of autonomy can also play. At bottom he appeals to the idea that we value fashioning our own lives and characters. Yet even if we value that, autonomy does not follow. Our self-fashioning takes place in response to conditions which are given to us, and just as we make what we can of our genetic inheritance and our social and economic context, so we can respond to the challenge posed if some other key aspects of our life are not chosen by us either — in an arranged marriage, say. There is even a case to be made that our lives and characters better develop if key decisions about career and marriage are made for us while we are still young and inexperienced. As Wall doesn't enter into such debates the victory of autonomy is too easily won, and the worry which motivates Rawls, that using political power to enforce such controversial ideals amounts to unjustified coercion, isn't allowed to disturb the confidence Wall shows in the correctness of his conclusions. Some might think that, given what's at stake, Rawls' caution is to be preferred.

These faults gravely undermine the book. It does justice neither to the view it attacks nor to that it seeks to defend. In many ways it's a shame because Wall gives plentiful evidence of a capacity for sharp and detailed argument. Those deeply immersed in these debates will find some of the detailed points he makes of interest, but the book can only mislead and disappoint those wanting the bigger picture.

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