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Table of Contents · Table des matières

Joseph Agassi, <i>The Gentle Art of Philosophical Polemics</i>	89
A.J. Dale	
Richard E. Aquila, <i>Matter in Mind:</i> <i>A Study of Kant's Transcendental Deduction</i>	91
D.P. Dryer	
Annette Barnes, <i>On Interpretation: A Critical Analysis</i>	93
Michael Hancher	
Jon Barwise, <i>The Situation in Logic</i>	96
Alasdair Urquhart	
F. Neil Brady, <i>Ethical Managing: Rules and Results</i>	98
Ken Hanly	
Jonathan Dancy, ed., <i>Perceptual Knowledge</i>	101
D.L.C. MacLachlan	
Shadia B. Drury, <i>The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss</i>	104
Leon H. Craig	
Carol Gould, ed., <i>The Information Web:</i> <i>Ethical and Social Implications of Computer Networking</i>	110
Kristin Shrader-Frechette	
Russell Hardin, <i>Morality within the Limits of Reason</i>	112
Wendy Donner	
Peter H. Hare, ed., <i>Doing Philosophy Historically</i>	115
Anthony Kerby	
Paul Harris, ed., <i>Civil Disobedience</i>	118
T.C. Pocklington	
Zellig Harris, <i>Language and Information</i>	121
Ken Warmbröd	
Mark Warren, <i>Nietzsche and Political Thought</i>	123
Robert Nicholls	

Joseph Agassi

The Gentle Art of Philosophical Polemics.

La Salle, IL: Open Court 1988. Pp. 521.

US \$45.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-912050-63-2);

US \$19.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8126-9036-2).

This review is a review of a book of book reviews. Given the size of the volume – 500 large pages – and the limitation to 1,000 words of this review I can hope only to give some idea of the content and flavour of Agassi's book. The reviews are mostly collected from philosophical journals though there are some which were previously available only in less accessible publications and a couple unpublished previously. There is also a diverting introduction on the vicissitudes of reviewing and the recounting of quarrels which result from such scholarly pursuits. The book ends with Agassi's overview of Popper's work and importance.

The title is of course ironic: there is nothing gentle about the polemics. Agassi defends the sharp tone of his criticisms by claiming that criticism 'is a sign of appreciation of ideas and thus of their bearers' and that any aggressiveness the reader may discern in the reviews shows a failure on Agassi's part. Such a defence is disingenuous. There is no way that some of these criticisms can be taken as showing an appreciation of the ideas and thus of their bearers. To take at random two of the reviews: *Rudolf Carnap, Logical Empiricist, Materials and Perspectives* edited by Jaakko Hintikka and *Understanding Wittgenstein* edited by Godfrey Vesey (chapters 7 and 8 of Agassi's book). In his review of the first he devastates one of the papers in it without a hint of appreciation of the ideas expressed within it, using heavy sarcasm and outright accusations of editorial laxity. Perhaps the paper deserves criticism but Agassi is deluding himself if he believes that such reviews are not written aggressively. Some of the methods used by Agassi to undermine an author are questionable. In the same review he asks why the author does not mention Tarski's proof that the identity sign is not a logical sign. The conclusion the reader would no doubt draw from this is that Tarski offered such a proof and that the author did not know it. The proof that Agassi gives is that if the identity sign were a logical sign the closed sentence $(x)(y) x = y$ would have to be 'true in all substitutions (as there are none) or, likewise, logically false'. Since it is true only for those universes containing one member the identity sign cannot be a logical sign. Unfortunately Agassi gives no reference to Tarski's proof

so that the reader cannot check whether this concise proof was indeed given by Tarski. It certainly does not occur in Tarski's published books and the view would seem to be belied in his *Introduction to Logic* where ¶16 is headed *Logical concepts outside sentential calculus; concept of identity*. As for the proof itself it does not stand without amplification for some axioms of infinity are valid only in infinite domains but which do not contain any non-logical signs – e.g., $(\exists F)(x)(y)(z)(\exists w)(Fwx. \neg Fxx. ((Fxy.Fyz) \supset Fxz))$. Of course this sentence belongs to second-order logic and may be dismissed as such by those unconvinced as to its logical status but it has to be taken into consideration. I suspect that Agassi's citing of the proof was merely to embarrass the author since it is at best controversial. Nor is his invective used only against fairly minor figures. Carnap's work itself is disparaged: he writes of Carnap's 'incredible clumsiness,' of his 'excellence in mediocrity' and he describes him as a 'clumsy technician.' But these epithets are undeserved for what was 'clumsy' about Carnap's use of formal tools? And why the judgement of mediocrity? To be sure Agassi does not share Carnap's views about the nature of philosophy but to trivialise Carnap's work mostly because he failed finally to complete his programme is to go beyond criticism: hindsight is, as we all know, never less than 20-20.

The other example illustrates the same method of criticism: if this is appreciation then bulldozing buildings is appreciation of their architecture. Here Agassi calls one section of a paper 'an insult to the reader's intelligence' and of three pages of another that they are 'pointless' and that most of the remaining three hundred are of the same level and below. When not directly insulting he uses sarcasm referring to the same paper as 'brilliant analysis' before returning to insult mode referring to the volume as revealing 'the appalling intellectual poverty' of its contributors.

In both reviews it is apparent that it is the *subject* that arouses such hostility, for both Carnap and the later Wittgenstein cannot compare in Agassi's sight to his mentor – Karl Popper. True, Agassi has a critical review of Popper's *Objective Knowledge*; but a comparison of his style in this case with the others is revealing. Intellectually the criticisms are as germane but they are presented with what I can only describe as sadness. Agassi was however, as he himself recounts, to suffer for this review since it ended his personal relations with Popper who presumably disliked his former student exhibiting such a critical review. Indeed, from what we glean from Agassi, neither Popper nor Lakatos took kindly to open criticism of their views, and in

one case at least Lakatos succeeded in suppressing some of Agassi's papers.

I wish I had more space to do justice to the positive side of this book since it contains many interesting thoughts and arguments which need to be taken seriously by the philosopher of science. The book is broad in its scope and erudite in its content. It should be read by all philosophers of science of whatever persuasion and by any philosopher who likes his arguments spiced with vitriol.

A.J. Dale

University of Hull

Richard E. Aquila

*Matter in Mind: A Study of Kant's
Transcendental Deduction.*

Bloomington: Indiana University Press

1989. Pp. xiv+245.

US \$35.00. ISBN 0-253-33712-7.

Aquila subtitles his work, 'A Study of Kant's Transcendental Deduction.' The Transcendental Deduction, he tells us, is concerned only with 'the conditions sufficient for the conceptualization of intuitions'; 'the problem' of the Deduction is that of "getting" from intuitions ... to the actual formation of empirical concepts applicable' to them (105, 103). Aquila puts forth two main theses. (1) Although he confesses that Kant does not offer textual support for it (xi, 133, 204), he repeatedly holds that whenever Kant speaks of a 'synthesis of the manifold of an intuition', the manifold of which Kant is speaking is a manifold of anticipations and retentions (30, 65, 73, 111, 131, 135, 174). These anticipations and retentions are of a kind 'that is not conceptually judgmental at all' (153, 29, 181). (2) Few would dispute Aquila's remark that 'in conceptualizing an appearance as an object of a particular kind, I necessarily anticipate the possibility of additional appearances' (179). Distinct from this is the second thesis he attributes to Kant, that any empirical concept, as derived from empirical intuition, is 'composed of a manifold of anticipations and retentions'

(71, 74, 204, 207). He admits that Kant again fails to offer textual support for this (147).

In spite of calling his work 'A Study of Kant's Transcendental Deduction' Aquila completely ignores the problem Kant says (B116-124) the Transcendental Deduction addresses and says next to nothing about the argument of the Deduction. This is not surprising in view of Aquila's ascribing to Kant the views that 'an ordinary sense perception is an instance of intuition' (2), that 'unconceptualized intuitions are instances of "consciousness",' that 'ordinary sense perception involves concepts' (5), that 'judgments must simply be intuitions' (203). A further obstacle Aquila puts in the way of the reader is his use of sentences such as, 'According to the proposed view, a judgment, at least in the sense that concerns us, involves the ingredience of a body of anticipations and retentions in an intuitional state. Namely, it involves the ingredience of the sort of body of anticipations and retentions that is sufficient to constitute, in constituting the awareness of an object or possible object, a mode of self-consciousness sufficient for grounding the eventual formation of a genuine self-concept.'

In spite of the shortcomings mentioned, Aquila's book has considerable value. Like a Talmudic scholar, he wrestles with sentences occurring in the Transcendental Deduction. How can a concept, to be empirical, 'contain sensation'? (B74) How can a concept be both a rule (A106) and a predicate (B94)? Why does the associability of representations require them to have an 'affinity', an order intrinsic to them (A123)? If Aquila's solution is rejected what items constitute the manifold of an intuition (A94)? How can 'synthesis' be exclusively attributed to understanding (B130) as well as to imagination (B103)? Why can we not represent matters as combined in an object without ourselves having combined them (B130)? A question I would like Aquila to have dealt with is, what bearing has the possibility of ascribing representations to the 'I think' (B131) to do with the 'unity of apperception of the concepts' contained in a judgment (B140). Even if one cannot be satisfied with the answers Aquila gives to these and other questions like them, by examining alternative answers proposed he challenges the reader to come up with an answer he has not already shown defective.

D.P. Dryer

University of Toronto

Annette Barnes

On Interpretation: A Critical Analysis.

Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press;

Boston: Blackwell 1988. 171 pp.

Cdn \$75.00 US \$ 45.00

(cloth: ISBN 0-631-15947-9);

Cdn \$26.95; US \$16.95

(paper: ISBN 0-631-15963-0).

I first read this book near a small dig on a lakeshore in northeast Minnesota. Archaeologists, having strung a grid over an ancient campsite, had begun their laborious work of excavation, stripping successive half-inch layers of blown topsoil, which they sifted and sorted for clues until they reached levels a foot or so below the surface. Their discoveries soon made front-page news in the Minneapolis newspaper: a few flakes of stone and broken spearheads, disclosing the social structure of a Paleolithic civilization older than any yet recorded for the region. I was more struck by the scientists' painstaking care and their powers of inference than by the scale of the enterprise or the physical impressiveness of the results.

Their work resembles the interpretation of interpretation that Annette Barnes offers in this book. The care of the archaeologists is matched – exceeded – by the patience with which she unearths, excavates, sifts and analyzes the philosophical ground of interpretation. The precision is daunting, the inferential claims are large, but the manifest results are likely to disappoint those who are not analytic philosophers.

Barnes's method is Wittgensteinian though not wayward; her argument proceeds in explicit steps. Some of her conclusions are:

- 'While what is obvious to a critic cannot yield an interpretation *for that critic*, it nevertheless can yield an interpretation *for others*' (23).
- Some critical claims can be significantly defeated despite a generous tolerance of critical practices.
- 'Rationality and objectivity are possible in interpretive criticism' (3).
- Artist's intentions are relevant to critical interpretation but not definitive of it.

Though I am prejudiced in favor of these claims their justification here often seems narrow or unconvincing. The discussion of inten-

tion, for example, is too tightly confined to its bearing on art objects. Intention matters in ordinary discourse, too, and ordinary discourse is subject to interpretation; *how* intention matters in such circumstances has implications for interpretation in general. Also, Barnes's privileging of aesthetic objects or 'artworks' makes her give too much theoretical weight to the concept of artistic 'success', a notion that properly has more to do with critical evaluation than with interpretation. (In literary theory this red herring dates back to the New Criticism.) Meant meaning may succeed (or fail) to be communicated, but it is not constituted by such success; a meaning that secures no uptake can have been meant nonetheless. The question isn't whether a particular intention was 'successful' or not but whether a particular meaning was meant or not.

The first of the claims listed above concludes the first of two chapters about the bearing of obviousness on interpretation. Can something that is obvious, open for all to see, be *interpreted*, or can it only be *described*? While reviewing controversy about this question, including some comments of my own, Barnes surfaces a distinction between *interpreting for oneself* and *interpreting for others*. She implies that interpreting for oneself is the core concept, and interpreting for others the marginal one (e.g., 15, 16, 25n. 20), but historically the reverse is true. The Latin root *interpretes* denotes a mediator, an interpreter for third parties. An international broker who by translating reconciles in two languages the divergent interests of parties to a contract, the *interpretes* (like the critic) interprets *for his clients*, not for himself. Only secondarily does the concept of interpretation attach to inner ponderings. The *OED* traces this course in English: at first to *interpret* is 'to expound' or 'to explain' (fourteenth century); only later, 'to make out the meaning of, explain to oneself' (eighteenth century).

The history of hermeneutics reenacts this same shift toward the psychological. For biblical scholars such as J. J. Rambach and J. A. Ernesti the business of public interpretation (*subtilitas explicandi*, aptness of explanation) was distinct from private interpretation (*subtilitas intelligendi*, keenness of understanding); in the later hermeneutical tradition (Schleiermacher, Gadamer) these enterprises are merged into one. But the old difference can still be felt. Though the mental act of understanding is necessary in any case, explaining, the optional public speech act, can have broader consequence. More to the point, obviousness (Barnes's topic) matters chiefly as regards the audience for the public act. What is obvious for a certain audience

is just what can safely be 'taken for granted,' or (a more telling idiom) what 'goes without saying'. You would not undertake to interpret discursively to others what is already obvious to them; nor would you mentally interpret to yourself what is already obvious to you; but you might well interpret discursively to others what, though obvious to you, is not obvious to them. Grice's maxims of Quantity, partly structuring interpersonal conversation, govern here: 'Make your contribution as informative as is required ... Do not make your contribution more informative than is required'.

Better to investigate interpretation as a social act – a speech act – following Grice, than to psychologize it as Barnes does, following Wittgenstein. 'To interpret, as Wittgenstein said, is to think,' she remarks with qualified approval near the outset, having identified interpretation as a kind of understanding (7). But Wittgenstein's remark, '*Deuten ist ein Denken*,' has only the euphonious ring of truth. More radically, to interpret is to talk or write; *Deuten ist ein Dichten*. Barnes correctly concludes that nonobviousness is requisite to explaining, not to understanding; but she gains that conclusion the hard way; an account of the social situation of interpretation would have led her more directly to it. 'The obvious' does not really condition the truth claims of a particular interpretation, nor the epistemic contrast (for the interpreter) of interpreting vis-à-vis describing – topics that preoccupy this book.

Though Wittgenstein presides here his investigation of language-games is only an implicit force, recognizable in Barnes's distinguishing of the speech acts of interpreting, describing, stating and hypothesizing. (Incidentally, Searle's discussion of hypothesizing as akin to stating could be used to clarify several points at issue; see his *Expression and Meaning*, 13.) Notably absent is a Wittgensteinian skepticism – famously expressed by Morris Weitz – about the coherence of the category of 'art'; Barnes speaks of the class of 'artworks' with unwarranted confidence (e.g., 42, 160). And if the language-games of 'art' are multifarious so are the language-games of criticism and interpretation. Who plays those games? In what circumstances? For what stakes? These social questions have untidy, miscellaneous answers, which if foregrounded would complicate and enrich the analysis of interpretation.

Michael Hancher

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Jon Barwise

The Situation in Logic.

Stanford: Center for the Study of Language and Information (CSLI Lecture Notes Number 17) 1989. Pp. xvi+327.

US \$34.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-937073-33-4);

US \$12.95 (paper: ISBN 0-937073-32-6).

This book is a stimulating collection of essays written by Barwise from 1981 to 1988, as part of the ongoing programme of situation semantics developed by Barwise and his collaborators, of whom the most important are John Perry, Robin Cooper and John Etchemendy. The papers range from very informal discussions in the philosophy of language to fairly technical model theoretical semantics. The three parts increase in technical sophistication from the first part, which is almost wholly informal, through the second part, which is mostly a polemical attack against Jerry Fodor and his 'language of thought', to the last part, which is devoted to technical questions in the logic of common knowledge and non-wellfounded set theory.

Barwise makes very large claims for situation theory. Situation theory represents a radically new departure in logic in which information and context replace the classical notion of context-free truth (xiii), thus allowing us to give an account of the meaning of natural language sentences which is superior to approaches derived from classical or modal logic (21,18). Unlike traditional approaches, situation semantics allows us to give an account of what a statement is *about* (56); situation theory aims to give us a mathematically rigorous theory of how cognitive agents pick up and transmit information (57). The mathematical theory of situations, when it is developed, will throw light on cognitive science, artificial intelligence, robotics, information theory, literary interpretation and so on (296).

Turning to the theory itself (in so far as it exists) is a little disappointing, given the very sweeping claims detailed above. For example, Chapter 3, written for Umberto Eco, is a lengthy discussion of literary interpretation. The only mathematical contribution to this discussion, however, is the single equation: $C_R(S,c) = P$. According to Barwise, once one understands this equation, a lot of the puzzles about language disappear. However, the equation simply says: 'The content of symbol *S*, relative to context *c*, with respect to conventional constraints *R*, is *P*'. It is hard to see what the 'mathematical' formulation contributes here, except for a little mystification of those

who are not technically sophisticated. The content of the theory is in the surrounding 'gas' (to employ G. H. Hardy's phrase), not in the mathematics, which is virtually non-existent. Similar remarks apply to Chapter 2, entitled *Logic and Information*, which claims to provide an account of common-sense reasoning. In the end, all the theory tells us is that mental states correspond to external states and that sound reasoning about external states consists in the 'logic' of mental events corresponding to the 'logic' of the external events (52-3). Certain conventional constraints governing external events (e.g., the clock's pointing to 4 means it is 4 o'clock) are postulated, but exactly what these constraints are is not clarified. The result is a sketch of a possible theory, not a theory.

The third part of the book is more interesting, as it is more substantial mathematically than the earlier parts. Barwise argues persuasively for a view of situations in which situations can contain themselves as proper parts. This view finds its most natural expression in the non-wellfounded set theory developed by Aczel. The arguments adduced by Barwise that the model theory of common knowledge requires such an approach seem quite convincing. This aspect of situation semantics (which does not appear in its earlier versions) may be among its lasting contributions.

It is difficult to describe what the basic ideas are in the theory, since they appear to be in a state of constant flux. In particular, what is the meaning of the key term 'situation'? According to one description, a situation is a part of the world (27), a complex of entities having certain properties and relations (26); any situation forms part of the unique real world that determines the basic facts (81). However, in later versions of the theory, non-actual worlds and non-actual situations are seriously considered (260). This later change in the theory makes the approach much more like the possible world semantics against which Barwise argues strongly in earlier chapters. If non-actual situations are admitted, this does not easily square with the robust realism of the earlier work on situations. However, as Barwise admits (260), even robots need to consider alternative situations when confronted by a choice. The ontological status of alternative worlds is not clear; Barwise seems to favour a suggestion of Stalnaker that alternative worlds are abstract objects, like sets, hence part of the real world. There are many other points on which situation theory is not clear; Chapter 11 consists of a list of points which the theory in its present form does not settle (the confused reader would be well advised to begin here).

The collection is somewhat disappointing, given the very large claims made. There are many promissory notes, to the effect that a large scale mathematical theory of language is forthcoming (xvi, 57, 77, 92, 297), but little is done to cash them. Barwise, though, admits as much in a refreshingly candid confession which concludes the book: '... I have to face the fact that we have failed, so far, to turn the theory into a piece of serious mathematics. Worse, having these papers all before me at once makes me realize what a small fraction of my own research over this decade has been spent in contributing to the mathematics which is my real dream' (296).

As always with Barwise, the exposition is clear, witty and lively. If we forget for the moment the larger claims of situation semantics, there is much in this book to interest logicians, linguists and philosophers of language. It is highly recommended reading, even if you are skeptical about the situation programme as a whole.

Alasdair Urquhart
University of Toronto

F. Neil Brady

Ethical Managing: Rules and Results.

New York: MacMillan 1990. Pp. xiii+218.

Cdn \$22.50. ISBN 0-02-313341-4.

This book approaches the ethics of management from a methodological viewpoint rather than a topical approach. Brady argues that a topical approach has major flaws. First, since there are so many issues only a somewhat limited survey is possible and there is always the temptation to give in to fads, to overemphasize 'in' topics. Second, a topical orientation may not provide any overall theoretical orientation, in fact it may undermine this by using common intuitively acceptable assumptions rather than developing an adequate theory which may be applied to *all* topics. While these remarks may apply to some texts in the field, it is also a common practice for topics-oriented texts to have extensive introductions which outline the basic features of ethical theory and suggest how ethics might apply in general to moral issues in business. Brady's book is primarily con-

cerned with developing his own theory of ethical managing and not with any specific issues. The latter are dealt with only coincidentally as part of the process of theory development.

The book progresses quite logically from an introductory overview, to chapters which deal with what Brady considers the two main views on ethical decision criteria, formalism and utilitarianism. Brady uses one chapter to provide a brief historical background to each type of theory, to provide examples of their application, and to sum up some of their main strengths and weaknesses. In a following chapter Brady outlines his own 'Janus-Headed' view which suggests that the two theories should be regarded as complementing each other rather than as antagonists in which one view must be seen as 'superior' to the other. One of the difficulties with Brady's account of the two theories is that his characterisation of what constitutes a utilitarian or a formalist theory is somewhat vague and definitely confused. In his chapter on formalism Brady associates formalistic analyses with producing a system of rules which will not be rules of thumb but constitutive or defining of what is moral—and at this point Brady makes reference to Rawls (52). What Brady ignores is that rule utilitarians also regard rules in this manner, yet they judge the adequacy of rules by consequentialist utilitarian criteria.

Brady writes as if only formalist or utilitarian theories are possible but he overlooks the possibility of theories which are deontological but do not focus on rules – such as those of the existentialists and Butler. To a considerable extent Brady's distinction between formalist and utilitarian views corresponds to the traditional distinction between teleological (excluding ethical egoism) and deontological views, but at the same time Brady confuses the issue by associating formalism (deontology) with rules and teleology with consequences. This is an oversimplification. Although Brady is correct that many deontologists (or formalists) and utilitarians regard themselves as rivals, there are many other philosophers who have taken the same tack as he has and combined both deontological and teleological viewpoints. It is perhaps significant that of the many philosophers quoted Sir David Ross is not mentioned, and that in spite of the fact that other texts in business ethics such as Beauchamp and Bowie point out his system of prima facie duties as one that combines deontological and teleological features. W. Frankena's theory of obligation provides an even closer analogy with Brady since Frankena, (*Ethics* [Prentice-Hall 1973], 43f) also uses both a principle of beneficence which is teleological and a complementary principle of justice which is deontological.

Having presented his own 'two-faced' theory Brady returns in the next two chapters to outlining and developing utilitarianism and formalism in a managerial setting and he also identifies more specific managerial versions of each theory. In the case of formalism Brady claims to demystify Kant and provide a more adequate account of formalist thinking in managerial decisions. The final chapters deal with the methodology for making exceptions to rules, ethical management as an art form, and a critique of the game analogy of business behavior. This last chapter is a good summary critique of the view that business operates with a special set of rules of the game which are independent of and not subject to ordinary moral evaluation. Brady provides excellent summaries of key concepts at the end of each chapter and also exercises, many of which should provoke good class discussions.

While Brady's overall aim of providing students with a solid grounding in ethical theory and its use in making decisions is to be applauded his own theory of ethical management seems to me seriously flawed. Although Brady cites many different philosophers and uses their ideas throughout the book he often misapplies and/or misinterprets philosophical ideas. In his second chapter Brady uses Wittgenstein's concept of language-games to identify three ways of talking about business ethics. The first language is that of the empirical scientists who, according to Brady, simply do empirical research, describe rather than prescribe. As an example Brady cites the work of Lawrence Kohlberg on moral stages. While it may be a bit artificial to call this a 'language' rather than a type of enquiry into moral matters this is perhaps not too significant. However, the next two 'languages' seem to involve a much greater confusion. Brady identifies a 'language of virtue' which he traces back to Aristotle and which deals with an examination of virtues and 'their application to human living' (17). Finally, there is a 'language of ethical theory' which deals with the study of procedures for deciding on the right course of action. Obviously the last two types of 'language' are really 'parts' of what is traditionally called normative ethics one part being a theory of virtue and the other a theory of obligation. No doubt if Brady had searched further he could have added a language of values to cover the theory of intrinsic value. Of course terminology varies among philosophers but Brady's distinctions in this case are misleading in that two parts of ethical theory are made to look much more different and unrelated than they are. A utilitarian with respect to Brady's 'ethical theory' will have a related view about 'virtue' namely

that those dispositions are virtues which tend to lead to good maximising behavior. At times Brady's solemn pronouncements about philosophy are downright annoying: 'The philosophical search for an ethical criterion was begun almost single-handedly by Aristotle' (35). Not only did Socrates die in vain but the teacher of Aristotle fails to get any recognition.

In spite of quite serious flaws and quite questionable arguments this is an interesting and lively book and well worth reading as collateral material. Brady certainly tries to use philosophical ideas to develop a more adequate theory of ethical managing and in the process makes numerous interesting observations, but as Brady himself notes in his preface: 'Philosophers, who typically require rigorous logical development of ideas, may complain about the lack of detailed argumentation' (vi). Beyond rigor and detailed argumentation Brady's work also often suffers from vagueness and oversimplifications which ignore important distinctions. If Brady produces a second edition of this work he should remedy these shortcomings and thus ensure that his aim 'to meet the urgent need for clarity of thought in management ethics' (v) will be more adequately met.

Ken Hanly

Brandon University

Jonathan Dancy, ed.

Perceptual Knowledge.

Don Mills, ON and New York: Press 1989.

Pp. 226.

Cdn \$52.50; US \$39.95

(cloth: ISBN 0-19-875075-7);

Cdn \$20.95; US \$13.95

(paper: ISBN 0-19-875074-9).

This book consists of a selection of pieces on various topics, associated with the theme of perceptual knowledge, together with a useful introductory essay by the editor.

The first two essays deal with the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge in general (R. Nozick) and perceptual knowledge

in particular (A.I. Goldman). This project – reasonable enough, if it could be done quickly and simply – has degenerated into a complexity reminiscent of an income-tax act designed to close all loopholes while permitting everything legitimate. Consider, for instance, Goldman's analysis of perceptual knowledge (58-9). The impressive ingenuity displayed is necessary to handle the bizarre counter-examples devised by those who work in this area. A string of particularly grotesque counter-examples is to be found in the fourth paper by D. Lewis, 'Veridical Hallucination and Prosthetic Vision', where an analysis of seeing is attempted, different from Goldman's, although along the same lines.

The third essay is the classic piece by H.P. Grice, 'The Causal Theory of Perception'. It has a central position because of the centrality of the causal fact on which Grice insists. The material object said to be perceived is causally related to an effect, variously regarded as sensation, sense-datum, percept, or perceptual experience. The act of perception cannot be specified without bringing in this relation, but it is hard to stipulate the conditions for treating one particular causal factor among the many involved as *the* object of perception. There are also difficulties at the other end about the exact nature of the item which is the effect. Finally, there is the problem of explaining either how perceptual beliefs are possible, if they are not based on inference, or how they are justified, if they are.

P.F. Strawson focuses on this last problem in 'Perception and its Objects'. He is attacking the view proposed by A.J. Ayer, after recovering from phenomenalism, that our ordinary perceptual judgments, which embody common-sense realism, have the character of a theory with respect to the immediate data of perception. Strawson's point is that 'we cannot give a veridical characterization even of the sensible experience ... without reference to those judgements themselves; that our sensible experience is thoroughly permeated with those concepts of objects which figure in such judgements' (95-6). The second part of this quotation does not, however, follow from the first. Even if *we* cannot describe our experience without bringing in concepts drawn from common-sense realism, it does not follow that the concepts permeate the sensible experience. A related point is made by R. Firth when he argues that the tendency to name a sense experience after its normal condition 'is merely a baptismal rule' (167).

After dealing with Ayer, Strawson attacks the view of J.L. Mackie that even common-sense realism is representative in character. He concludes his paper with an ingenious reconciliation of common-sense

and scientific realism by affirming that properties that count as real are *always* relative to some human standpoint.

The next paper by F. Jackson defends the existence of mental objects. The focus is on sensations and mental images, but the implications for the theory of perception are clear. There is a powerful argument that alternative analyses, such as the adverbial analysis, cannot handle the complexities of our experience.

This is followed by an excerpt from *A Materialist Theory of Mind* (1968) by D.M. Armstrong. Mental objects are rejected on the basis of arguments recognised to be 'not ... quite conclusive (138).' Perception is analysed as a special kind of belief acquisition, and a clever, but somewhat laboured, defence is mounted to deal with counter-examples.

Selection VIII is extracted from *Knowledge and the Flow of Information* (1981) by F. Dretske. Against Armstrong, Dretske draws a convincing distinction between two levels in the response to incoming sensory stimuli, between the sensory representation itself and the cognitive processing of the information it contains. An interesting use is made of the analog-digital distinction. The idea is that sensory experience contains in analog form information which is converted to digital form by cognitive processing at the conceptual level.

With selection IX, the emphasis swings back from perceptual experience to epistemology. R. Firth presents (and tones down) the foundationalism of C.I. Lewis, according to which judgements which express the content of my present experience have a fundamental role in the structure of my knowledge. The very next selection, however, contains an attack by W. Sellars on just this theory. Although it is tempting to suppose that sensible experiences found and justify the empirical beliefs forming the superstructure, Sellars is worried about how this supposition might itself be justified. To offer an inductive justification seems circular: to affirm self-evidence is too dogmatic: to argue that it is 'this or nothing' (186) is too weak. Sellars' solution is that empirical considerations cannot be used to justify the supposition, but may explain why it is justified.

'Perception, Vision, and Causation' by P. Snowdon is an attack on the causal theory of perception. The aim is not to refute it, but to undermine its support. The standard theory argues that just as hallucinatory states are caused by the 'heat-oppressed brain', so in veridical perception there is a corresponding state caused by external objects. Snowdon replies that in the latter case, there may be a

logical tie to the object which precludes a straightforward causal relation.

The final paper by J. McDowell continues Snowdon's 'disjunctive' theory. Veridical and non-veridical cases do not share a 'highest common factor', which is the epistemic basis for perceptual claims. McDowell bravely extends this approach to the case of other minds, where the highest common factor is easily identified, e.g., as the contortions of the face which display the pain. No need here to introduce sense-data! The main argument for the disjunctive theory seems to be that it will 'cause a sea of philosophy to subside' (214), by eliminating the need to get past the barrier which the highest common factor sets up.

These too brief remarks will give some idea of the variety of topics covered. It goes without saying that everyone working in the area will find sins of inclusion and exclusion, but there is an obvious need for a collection of this kind. Nothing comparable has appeared since *Perceiving, Sensing, and Knowing*, edited by R.F. Swartz, 25 years ago (Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1965). The book is not, indeed, easy going; nor does one complete it with any great sense of illumination; but this may be a fair enough reflection of the state of the discipline at the present time.

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Shadia B. Drury

The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss.

New York: St. Martin's Press 1988.

Pp. xv+256.

US \$29.95. ISBN 0-312-00830-9.

As the name of Leo Strauss is apt to be a good deal more familiar to political scientists than to academic philosophers, some background information about the man may prove helpful for readers curious about this book. The essential facts are these. He was born a German Jew in 1899, and studied at the Universities of Marburg and Hamburg (doctorate, 1921), where he became acquainted with the

work of both Husserl and Heidegger. He left Germany in 1932, and eventually established himself in American academia, spending a decade at the New School for Social Research before being appointed a professor of political science at the University of Chicago. Although he held emeritus appointments thereafter until his death in 1973, it was primarily during his Chicago tenure (1949-68) that he made his mark as a teacher and scholar of political philosophy – a mark which not only endures, but lengthens and broadens with each passing year as new collections of his essays and lectures continue to be published posthumously, previous books are re-issued, and students he taught generate in their turn still more ‘Straussians’. While it is unlikely that this new breed of academics will ever become thick upon the ground, the distinctive perspective they bring to political philosophy is increasingly influential in universities throughout North America, and is beginning to show up in Europe as well. But whether that influence is salutary or malignant is a matter of deep controversy; virtually no one familiar with Strauss’ work – even if only by rumor and reputation – is indifferent to it.

By all the accounts of those who knew him well, Strauss was a teacher of extraordinary charm, whose deep and spacious mind and other qualities of soul attracted a galaxy of gifted students (e.g., Allan Bloom, Stanley Rosen, Seth Benardete, Joseph Cropsey, Thomas Pangle, to name but a few). Socratic in many ways, so too in this: the apparent idolatry with which Strauss was regarded by his students is regarded by ‘outsiders’ with distaste, if not outright distrust. Such passionate attachment to a man and his ideas is certainly at odds with the cool, skeptical sophistication graduate students are expected to cultivate in most academic venues. This, however, was but the first source of Strauss’ controversiality. He and his students antagonized the political science establishment in two other ways. First, he led an attack on the then newly emerged ‘Behavioral’, supposedly ‘value-free’, therefore rigorously ‘empirical’, thus genuinely ‘scientific’ political science which had been fashioned in the post-WWII era along Logical Positivist lines; of special concern here was its dogmatic proselytization of the distinction between ‘facts’ and ‘values’. Second, he simultaneously attacked the then dominant Historicist approach to studying the tradition of political thought; for pursued in that spirit, political philosophy had degenerated into a sterile ‘history of ideas’ of only antiquarian interest inasmuch as these ideas had been generated without regard for the higher truths since revealed by Historicism and Positivism (that assure us there is no wisdom to be had of

the sort mistakenly sought by philosophers for over two millenia). These efforts earned Strauss and his followers an enmity that has not noticeably diminished despite his being vindicated on the first count by the utter demise of Positivism, and on the second by the increasingly recognized incoherence of all varieties of Historicism. That there has been a major revival in the serious study of the masterworks of political philosophy may largely be credited to the stimulus provided by Strauss and his students.

Fundamental to their success has been Strauss' re-discovery (or, rather, confirmation of Nietzsche's rediscovery; cf. *Beyond Good and Evil*, aph. 30) of the exoteric-esoteric distinction as the key to penetrating the often confusing and contradictory surface of a philosopher's writings, thereby gaining access to a richer, coherent and consistent teaching within. The need for such a distinction arises out of the commonsensical observations concerning the differences between oral and written speech as articulated by the Platonic Socrates in *Phaedrus* (274b-78d). But the peculiar strengths and weaknesses of written speech bear with special force on a philosopher (by definition, a radical thinker) who wishes to write about politics, or what often comes to the same thing, religion. In reading such political philosophers, then, Strauss taught that one must constantly bear in mind that they could not write with exclusive regard for communicating their truths fully and clearly to that precious few who care only about the truth, but (rather) had to keep one eye on political considerations. Thus they resort to a variety of stylistic devices whereby they may conceal within a fairly conventional exterior a more radical teaching intended for the careful, diligent, truly philosophical reader. The most important part of Strauss' own scholarship consists of commentaries which demonstrate the soundness of these interpretive assumptions by partially revealing the inner, 'esoteric' reasoning imbedded in the addressed text, enough to convince an open-minded student that it is there and worth working to uncover fully for himself. As a consequence of this approach, Strauss' own interpretations of Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, Thucydides, Maimonides, Machiavelli, Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, inter al., differ markedly from standard textbook accounts, and raise eyebrows if not hackles among those who have not carefully considered these philosophers in light of Strauss' observations. More than anything else, acceptance of this exoteric-esoteric distinction as a provisional interpretive assumption when approaching the writings of the great political philosophers is what – to my mind, at least – makes one a 'Straussian'. My only acquaint-

tance with Strauss has been through the study of his writings in conjunction with the classical texts he comments upon, and his scholarship has so convinced me of its soundness that I happily acknowledge myself a member of this tribe. But because such an approach easily lends itself to caricature; and because there is, unfortunately, an all-too-human tendency among many of those who regard themselves as Strauss' followers to treat his interpretations (or, more likely, their partial understandings of them) as new 'orthodoxies', this entire interpretive approach is one more source of controversy.

One needs to know at least this much in order to assess the book here under review, for it not only trades on the antecedent controversy surrounding Strauss' legacy, but apparently is intended to contribute a new dimension to it. For, in effect, it purports to be an exposé of the fact that Strauss is himself 'a philosopher in the rich and meaningful sense of having a comprehensive view of the world,' a 'vision [that is] complete and compelling, formidable and frightening' (4), and which includes moreover a covert *political* ambition. Drury regards Strauss as a practicing esotericist who uses his 'sometimes tedious commentaries' to veil an essentially Nietzschean conception of the world, to which corresponds an essentially Nietzschean political project of indirect rule by philosophers well-schooled in what Drury contends are 'the political ideas of Leo Strauss': 'For Strauss, the task of political philosophy in the world is to educate a special elite that will exert its influence in political life..., to "found an aristocracy within democratic mass society"' (16). Moved by a faith in the Enlightenment ideal that knowing the truth would set us all free (cf. 15), Drury means to expose Strauss' ideas and ambitions to the full light of day. Thus the book frequently lapses into that tone of breathless confidentiality – at once scandalized and titillated – which one more readily associates with gossip columnists and tabloids than with scholarship:

Strauss's political objectives may be well on the way to being realized.

Everywhere conservative politicians are happy to lend an ear to conservative intellectuals influenced by Strauss. What are they whispering in the ears of the powerful? How do they hope to change the world?

What vision of a better world do they share? Unless we understand the political ideas of the man behind this fantastic project, the very meaning of the contemporary conservative movement will remain elusive. (17)

This tone is unfortunate inasmuch as the scholarship is certainly there. In addition to displaying a breadth of acquaintance with

Strauss' own writings that many a Straussian might envy, Drury has combed through an enormous literature – both pro and con – *about* Strauss (almost a fifth of her book is substantial notes and bibliography). Her avowal of detached objectivity, however, supposedly transcending the various controversies surrounding Strauss (cf. 5, 182), is rendered suspect by her willingness to say something flattering about every anti-Straussian diatribe ever written.

Drury assures us that her intention 'is not to heap abuse on Strauss, but to uncover the fact that he is a thinker with a set of ideas that is novel, unexpected and imaginative, even if they are somewhat perverse' (xiv). In pursuit of that intellectual vision, she consults virtually the entire corpus of his writings, but not as a means of thereby better understanding the philosophers about whom he writes; she is so perfectly confident of her own understanding of their real teachings as to make it the yardstick whereby to judge, not only the distortions and other inadequacies of Strauss' interpretations, but the means of detecting that presumably deviant 'set of ideas' hidden therein which are uniquely his. The bulk of her book is given over to this task, devoting roughly half of her effort to searching through his account of the Ancients and half to his critiques of the Moderns. Drury acknowledges early on that she has never been 'greatly moved by any of his books': 'I confess that I generally found his commentaries on the classic texts arid, insipid, tedious, and repetitive. I was sympathetic with those reviewers who were genuinely perplexed as to how such rubbish could have been published' (4). And I would have to say, the fundamental problem with her project begins right here. Anyone who admits seeing no further than this stands self-convicted of superficiality, and inadvertently testifies to the efficacy of esoteric writing. I would agree that Strauss emulated the great philosophers he admired in being himself an esoteric writer, but Drury's understanding of the reasons for and ways of practicing esotericism is woefully inadequate. She sees it exclusively in political terms (a self-concern of censorship and persecution, and an humanitarian concern about the inherent dangerousness of certain terrible truths). That is, she does *not* see that it also serves a philosophical purpose: that a subtle, allusive (and elusive) mode of writing can itself be a very effective means of promoting the *activity* of philosophizing. Anyone who appreciates this maieutic intention in the writings of the great philosophers will be careful not to subvert it. Strauss' own commentaries on the classical works of our tradition are true to their spirit in this fundamental respect. Accordingly, his writings have an inconclusive texture that is

designed to open questions for those readers who are naturally akin to him. They are best approached in a spirit of Socratic ignorance, one which by all appearances is utterly alien to Drury. Read with sufficient care and sympathy, one sees that Strauss is exceedingly subtle, and intentionally ambiguous as to whether he is speaking in his own name or 'merely' articulating the inner rationale of the text under examination. Those who think they have found in his writings *the* answers to any of the permanent questions – or even that they understand what Strauss himself 'really thinks' about these questions – have been beguiled.

Thus, as surely I've not failed to make clear, I have serious reservations about Drury's book. But for all of them, I do *not* think that it is a simply bad book. Nor, despite its many vulgarities, is it a typically vulgar anti-Straussian misunderstanding of Strauss' efforts. Quite the contrary. Drury's interpretation of certain major themes of Strauss, for all of its coarseness and partiality, is sometimes insightful. In particular, I would agree with her that, contrary to the view of most Straussians, the foremost influence on Strauss' own thought is Nietzsche, and that his whole understanding of the Western cultural tradition is Nietzschean in character. Moreover, the ideas she attributes to him could not but stir the interest of a truly curious reader; the fact that Strauss is infinitely more interesting than most any other political philosopher of this century shines through even her tainted presentation of him. For a reader not compromised by Drury's innocent confidence in having gained a transcendent synoptic vision – not only of Strauss' lifelong work and that of his students, but of the entire philosophic tradition – her book could well serve as a truly stimulating introduction to the man and his ideas.

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Carol Gould, ed.

The Information Web: Ethical and Social Implications of Computer Networking.

San Francisco: Westview Press 1988.

Pp. xi+280.

US \$23.50. ISBN 0-8133-0699-X.

All over the world, scientists, scholars, business people, policymakers, and laypersons communicate daily with each other and process information as they sit in front of their computer terminals or modems. In addition to enhanced cooperation and efficiency, however, their computer networking also raises a number of important questions related to plagiarism, privacy, property rights, equal access, deception, fraud, and manipulation of data or opinions. The first book to examine the social and ethical issues related to computer networking, Gould's volume includes essays written by computer scientists, engineers, philosophers, and natural and social scientists. It should become a classic in the field.

In the first chapter, Gould gives a history of computer networking and provides a taxonomy of ethical issues that arise in connection with its use. Arguing that two principles (free, informed consent and equal access to information) can be used to adjudicate conflicts between the individual and social interests that are at stake in networking, Gould gives a general principle of network ethics: maximum sharing of information and maximum equal access compatible with preserving privacy.

Discussing computer conferencing, in the second chapter philosopher Deborah Johnson argues that the status of communications in conferencing, as public or private, is unclear, and hence that the solutions to various ethical cases that typically arise are also unclear. This results in part, she says, because the status of comparable, non-computerized communications is also often unclear. To address this problem, Johnson argues for consent of participants in conferencing. One of the best essays in the volume, the Johnson piece reveals the author's extensive background in computer ethics and her ability to draw on excellent examples and specialized insights.

After discussing a Swedish sociological study that used computer databanks to 'profile' persons on the basis of employment, health, criminal activity, alcohol abuse, marriage, and education, philosopher James Moor tackles the issue of privacy in Chapter Three. He analyzes both what is meant by privacy and how it might be protected

in a computerized setting. Computer scientist Donn Parker also discusses privacy, but in a corporate setting, in Chapter Thirteen. He analyzes various issues concerning the ethics of revealing an employer's sensitive security information. Continuing similar lines of analysis, chemist Rodney Andrews chronicles the misuse of computers, in part in privacy-related cases, in Chapter Twelve. Philosopher John Snapper helps to clarify all three discussions; in Chapter Four he argues that many alleged cases of computer invasion of privacy are really other forms of misconduct, e.g., violations of equal protection.

One of the most important questions raised by computer networking is what sorts of restrictions government ought to impose on for-profit use of networking by nongovernmental groups. In Chapter Five, philosopher Robert Baum argues that, to allow individuals to give free, informed consent to networking technologies, it may be necessary to remove some or all of the existing governmental protections of corporate interests that militate against a freemarket. Just as Baum redefined and applied 'consent' in the networking context, so also computer scientist Peter Jurkat (in Chapter Six) redefines the meaning of 'property rights' in the context of owning computer programs. In order to achieve this redefinition, Jurkat shows how to define computer programs with sufficient specificity so as to allow their unambiguous characterization. This characterization, in turn, can be used to protect certain programs.

In Chapter Seven the late Richard Lapidus discusses the impact of computer networks on scientific activity. In general, these impacts include less secrecy, more access to information, and the disappearance of printed journals. Engineer Frank Boesch, in Chapter Eight, discusses some of the ethical issues associated with these computer impacts on scientific activity.

The first 'naysayer' in the volume, philosopher James Nickel argues in Chapter Nine that the impacts of implementing networking technology, especially on our concepts of privacy and democracy, are likely to be small. Disagreeing with Nickel about the nature of these impacts, political scientist Arnold Urken believes that one of the main results of networking will be to improve our knowledge about the consequences of structuring voting processes. He argues in Chapter Ten that networking will challenge us to reconsider traditional doctrines of fairness and will enable us to understand the conditions under which procedural fairness produces just outcomes.

Like Urken, philosopher John Ladd believes that computer networking will force a redefinition of traditional ethical concepts. His

concern in Chapter Eleven is to examine moral responsibility for evil outcomes of technologies like computer networking. Arguing that individual human agents are not 'let off the hook' of responsibility for many computer-generated mishaps, Ladd argues for a type of 'prospective' moral responsibility.

With a diversity of essays written by technical experts as well as by philosophers distinguished in applied, business, and computer ethics, *The Information Web* is an excellent example, both of good interdisciplinary work and of how moral philosophy can be made interesting and accessible to almost anyone. Suitable for use in undergraduate classrooms, the book should also be of interest to computer scientists, policymakers, philosophers, and indeed to all computer users. None of the essays are weak, and the book has no major flaws. One minor improvement might have been to edit out repetition of the same technical information, e.g., explanation of ARPANET.

One of the main assets of the volume is the fact that the authors often seem to be making logical contact with each other and addressing point and counterpoint on a variety of ethical issues regarding privacy, the neutrality of technology, responsibility, and the impact of networking. Because of this interaction and the authors' obvious familiarity with certain basic texts, e.g., Johnson's 1985 *Computer Ethics*, the volume was easier to follow and more unified than most anthologies. Gould has set an excellent precedent for future work on ethical issues associated with computer networking.

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Russell Hardin

Morality within the Limits of Reason.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1989.

Pp. xx+234

US \$24.95. ISBN 0-226-31618-1.

Hardin's book offers a qualified defence of what he calls a reconstructed form of utilitarianism. His argument proceeds by separating out two fundamental components of utilitarianism, its structural conse-

quentialism and its value theory based in human welfare. The book refreshingly addresses an issue which affects virtually all contemporary moral theories but which is not often taken into account: the painful reality that, despite human pride and the disproportionate currency given to rationality, there are clear constraints and limitations to the powers of human reason. Moral philosophers have tended to confront this fact in one of two ways. The first way is to downplay the reality of the limits of human reason. Strategies in this mode often take the tack of building in assumptions of full rationality or attributing full rationality to the moral agents at the core of the theory. The extreme of this approach is the postulation of an ideal observer who is fully rational as the moral agent. These theories must then attempt to bridge the gap between the ideal observer and actual human moral agents. The second approach admits the limits of human reason but faults the moral theory for the problems encountered by actual moral agents. This latter approach is often taken by critics of utilitarianism. Hardin's approach also fully admits the limits of human reason but then asks what form of utilitarianism can be constructed and defended on the basis of this brute reality. He maintains that the consequentialism of utilitarianism, despite being on the receiving end of most attack, is actually the most solidly grounded component of the theory.

In Chapter 1, Hardin takes up the general issue of the cognitive limits of reason that confront moral choice. The thrust of utilitarianism is to view obligation in terms of good consequences, and thus means-end reasoning is at the core of ethical deliberation under the terms of this theory. Hence this theory must come to grips with the actual powers of reasoning of choosers, but the force of utilitarianism is not altered by facing these facts. As Hardin puts it, 'the moral impulse of utilitarianism is constant, but our decisions under it are contingent on our knowledge and scientific understanding' (4). Since our ability to calculate consequences is limited, we must devise strategies in line with the principles of this theory in making moral decisions.

In the second chapter, Hardin grapples with issues raised by the limitation that moral reasoning occurs in the context of interactions with other people and thus individuals rarely can fully determine the outcomes of their actions. Hardin's examination begins with the weak theoretical assumptions of ordinal utility rankings without interpersonal comparability. He carries out his analysis of some traditional moral problems by using a typology of social interactions and applying

the techniques of game theory to them. In this light he uses the game theory framework on pure conflict, mixed-motive and coordination interactions intersecting with small number and large number interactions. By looking at the strategic nature of many of these problems, his analysis offers a means of evaluating outcomes and resolving some thorny problems of social interaction. Hardin works through a healthy list of moral problems and related social interactions – beneficence, distributive justice, promise keeping, justice as order, coordination promises and conventions. He then builds in the stronger theoretical assumptions of weakly cardinal rankings with rough interpersonal comparisons and explores what further insights and resolutions are yielded by this stronger theory.

In Chapter 3 Hardin pushes the analysis further by examining large-number interactions in an institutional setting and looking at some institutional means of handling these problems which can work without using interpersonal comparisons. This highlights the boundaries within which resolution of these problems can be achieved without interpersonal comparisons of welfare and indicates when we must begin to turn to such interpersonal comparisons of welfare. Hardin argues that rights can fruitfully be viewed as institutional means of promoting welfare in the face of the limits of human reason. In taking this approach he joins other philosophers arguing for utilitarian rights theories in which rights play a central role but are justified in terms of their grounding in utility. Hardin claims that rights should be understood 'as institutional devices for reducing the burden of gathering information and calculating consequences' (78). Since they have institutional backing they are stronger than rules of thumb and require weighty considerations before they can be violated in particular cases. Hardin points to Mill as a utilitarian who recognized the use of rights backed up by institutions to protect certain vital interests. Hardin also extends this analysis to certain collective protections and group rights.

Some institutional social interaction issues cannot be resolved without making use of interpersonal comparisons of welfare, and Hardin delves into these in Chapter 4. We cannot make any headway on questions of distributive justice without at least some rough interpersonal comparisons of welfare and so Hardin strengthens the theoretical assumptions. This chapter contains an insightful comparison of Rawlsian and utilitarian theories of distributive justice. The strength of value theory assumed very much shapes how far we can go in resolving some of the other questions Hardin looks at last, namely, conflicts

between rights, paternalistic state interventions, and collective responsibility.

Hardin takes up questions of utilitarian value theory in the last chapter. While he has more reservations about the value theory of utilitarianism than about its consequentialism, his object is to point out issues in the value theory based on welfare that need to be worked out for the utilitarian program to succeed, even as he recognizes that work is proceeding on this front. This chapter is the least satisfying as the discussion, while being the most critical of utilitarianism, is spotty and the arguments are not sustained. Utilitarians are still grappling with theoretical means of measuring utility, and Hardin raises measurement issues of comparability, scale and scope that still require treatment. Utilitarianism also needs further to come to grips with questions concerning the nature of the human person and personal identity. Finally, Hardin argues that questions about the endogeneity of preferences and the social formation of preferences and values threaten to undercut the autonomy of moral agents.

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Peter H. Hare, ed.

Doing Philosophy Historically.

Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books 1988.

Pp. 352.

US \$34.95. ISBN 0-87975-426-5.

The 27 essays and commentaries in this volume are the proceedings of a conference held in Buffalo a couple of years ago, and cover issues that will be familiar to readers of *Philosophy in History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy*, edited by Rorty, Schneewind, and Skinner which appeared in 1984. The central concern is something of a perennial issue: philosophy *vs.* its history. This division yields two strains of, or approaches to, philosophical writing, which Hare terms 'historical' and 'analytic.' The problem is whether these two approaches are ultimately mutually exclusive, or whether there is a middle path that can legitimately be called 'doing philosophy historically'.

As presented by Hare, the purist analytic philosopher views the strictly historical approach to an author's writings as not really doing philosophy, and at best as having only historical value (history of culture) or pedagogical uses. The analytic philosopher seeks in past writings only what is true and lasting, or what is relevant to present philosophical issues. This is not, of course, to deny that both approaches can occur in one work, only that they should be seen as separate achievements. The purist historian of philosophy, on the other hand, would reject as naive and possibly anachronistic the analyst's appropriation of past ideas to present contexts and to present problems (11).

The papers in this volume are, however, somewhat uneven in their explicit addressing of the above problem. The book is divided into seven parts – Raising the Issues; Ancient Philosophy; Descartes; Kant; Hegel; The Scottish Commonsense Tradition; Recent American and European Philosophy – and attempts a hands-on approach to the historical/analytic debate by presenting numerous examples of doing philosophy historically, followed by critical evaluations. The lead essays either deal with a recent work on a major philosopher (e.g., Jonathan Bennett's *Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, Henry Veatch's *Aristotle*) or offer an exposition and analysis of some controversial or important aspect of a philosopher's work. The papers, though valuable in their own right, sometimes leave the reader guessing as to their importance to the book's theme.

This central theme is summed up in the opening essay by Daniel Garber: 'Most of us here would agree that understanding the history of philosophy is somehow important to doing philosophy, that we are better philosophers for knowing the history of our subject' (27). But this importance can take various forms, as we discover in Part I.

Garber finds Bennett's work on Spinoza to be guided by a search for philosophical truth. This entails that past works be seen as reservoirs of positions and arguments that serve to exercise our philosophical abilities – be those positions false or not. The end of the exercise, however, is to take over what we consider to be true and lasting. We are seeking answers. The problem here, as Garber points out, is that one is easily influenced by one's interests and by standards of contemporary relevance. This may well lead to a clouding of historical understanding and hence to a misrepresentation of the figure and his position. Garber mentions, in this regard, Bernard Williams' application of contemporary epistemological concepts in his study of Descartes' *Meditations*. Garber himself promotes a more disinterested

approach to the history of philosophy. We should study past figures *on their own terms* for two primary and connected reasons: 1) because past beliefs can make us critically aware of the limitations of our own beliefs and assumptions, and 2) because new and fruitful philosophical questions may arise this way (36).

In a parallel essay by Jonathan Rée an alternate, and somewhat Gadamerian, option is proposed. Rée recognizes a certain openness to past texts that allows the interpreter an inventive leeway. Although preferring a more contextual and antiquarian approach than Bennett, he nevertheless accepts that one must finally interpret works into one's own language if they are to be understood. Rée's approach, reminiscent of Rorty's, is that 'philosophy ought to be interpreted as part of literature and of general history' (59). Needless to say, Bennett's response to the above papers sheds some new light on the issues. He is particularly accepting of alternate approaches: 'My choice of what kind of thing to look for is determined by what interests me and, I think, by what I am good at. We all tend to do what we think we can do best, don't we?' (69).

These selections from Part One contain, I believe, the basic positions that are, in various guises, argued for and against in the later parts. Part II contains papers on Plato and Aristotle, and includes an interesting debate, between Daniel Graham and Josiah Gould, concerning the supposed anachronism in Aristotle's account of the Presocratics in *Metaphysics A*. Graham contends that anachronism is inherent to the historian's enterprise, but that it becomes pernicious only when the concepts utilized in an interpretation are themselves inappropriately attributed to past authors. Part III contains lead papers by Georges Dicker, Frederick van de Pitte, and Lilli Alanen on aspects of Descartes' philosophy: Dualism, the mathematical method, and theology. Along with the three articles on Kant in Part IV, and the article on Reid and Tappan in Part VI, this part of the book appears the least revealing concerning the central theme.

A text on the relevance of history to philosophy, one might well claim, would be incomplete without some mention of Hegel. There is just one lead paper in Part V, but it is an excellent overview of Hegel's position by Kenneth Schmitz. The final Part contains a discussion of Myers' *William James, His Life and Thought*, with a response by the author, and concludes with a paper on hermeneutics (Frithjof Rodi), plus a skeptical summing up by Rudolf Lütke.

This volume is certainly an informative and very practical introduction to the history/philosophy debate, and contains numerous

examples of how this gap might be bridged. Because of the quality and variety of papers this book should also be of independent value to readers with a general interest in the figures discussed.

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Paul Harris, ed.

Civil Disobedience.

Lanham, MD: University Press of America
1989. Pp. 296.

US \$36.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-8191-7442-4);

US \$14.50 (paper: ISBN 0-8191-7443-2).

Although Harris does not say so, this book is clearly intended principally for use in university courses in moral, legal, and political philosophy. It is for this use that the book will be assessed here. The main question is this: Is this book better than any competing collection of essays on civil disobedience found in a single volume? To this question my answer is an unqualified, Yes.

The contribution of the editor to this collection is first-rate. The first chapter in the collection is a lengthy essay (56 pages, including 14 pages of endnotes which thoughtfully guide further exploration of various issues) on the nature and moral justification of civil disobedience. Using as a foil what he calls 'the orthodox theory of civil disobedience,' Harris discusses separately (to the extent that it is possible, and he realizes that it is possible only to a certain extent) the definition of civil disobedience and its moral justification. Admirably, Harris does not fall into the common and annoying trap of using the introduction simply to preview concerns, themes, and lines of argument addressed by the other contributors. Instead he takes up a wide range of questions provoked by the 'orthodox theory' thoughtfully and critically, providing considered arguments to support his own thought-provoking conclusions. Harris's introduction is itself a major contribution to the collection.

Both the selection and the arrangement of the essays in this collection are generally well considered. We are started off with Martin

Luther King Jr.'s 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' and Herbert J. Storing's condemnation of King's practice, 'The Case against Civil Disobedience'. These are excellent starting points for the beginning student, because they express views that are widely shared but open to fairly obvious criticisms. Next, at a somewhat but not intimidatingly higher level of difficulty, we get Abe Fortas' 'Concerning Dissent and Civil Disobedience' and Alan Gewirth's rejoinder, 'Civil Disobedience, Law and Morality: An Examination of Justice Fortas' Doctrine'. In the name of the rule of law, Fortas maintains that justifiable civil disobedience must be scrupulously nonviolent and that civil disobedients must be punished with the same severity as other law-breakers. Gewirth's critique explores carefully the question whether any attempt like Fortas' to defend the primacy of both moral obligation and legal obligation can succeed.

The sixth selection in the collection, entitled, 'A Theory of Civil Disobedience', contains three of the sections from Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* that deal with illegal political activity. I assume that readers of this journal are sufficiently familiar with this work that I need say nothing about its substance. However, I do want to suggest that the placement of this piece at this point in the book is particularly felicitous, because Rawls' discussion is embedded in a general theory of legal and political obligation. Thus, at just the right point, the student is discouraged from seeing civil disobedience as just a batch of discrete questions about one form of political disobedience. The seventh selection, 'Symposium on Civil Disobedience,' which is a debate between Joel Feinberg and Bruce Sievers, also addresses issues of civil disobedience in the light of broader questions about political obligation. In the fashion of A. John Simmons (*Moral Principles and Political Obligations* 1979), Feinberg examines critically the leading theories of political obligation and concludes that 'there is no general moral PFO [prima facie obligation] to obey valid law, even in a democratic state with a just constitution' (173). Sievers sees Feinberg's whole enquiry as misguided, in that it presupposes an indefensible understanding of persons as atomic individuals. Sievers argues for a shift to the pre-Hobbesian focus on the creation of a sense of collective identity and consensus in which the central question becomes not 'Why should I obey?' but 'Who should decide public issues?'

Hugo Adam Bedau's 'Civil Disobedience and Personal Responsibility for Injustice' is one of the most provocative and stimulating pieces in the collection. Bedau begins his essay with a fairly conventional critique of Fortas' strange view that 'indirect' civil disobedience

is never justified. But he quickly moves into deeper water, raising the question how far (if at all) we are entitled – or possibly required – to combat, especially using illegal methods, injustices committed against others. The ninth selection, Harry Prosch's 'Limits to the Moral Claim in Civil Disobedience', argues that even nonviolent civil disobedience constitutes a resort to force in that the disobedient inescapably departs from rational persuasion by using his or her body as a kind of political weapon, and thereby departs from the high ground of morality. With its very narrow conception of morality and its very broad conception of force, I find this essay unpersuasive. Of the book's tenth selection, Ronald Dworkin's well-known 'On Not Prosecuting Civil Disobedience', all that needs to be said is that it obviously deserves its place in this collection.

Clyde Frazier's 'Between Obedience and Revolution' makes clearly the point, ignored by most writers on civil disobedience, that civil disobedience is by no means the only kind of political disobedience. Wilson Carey McWilliams' 'Civil Disobedience and Contemporary Constitutionalism' aims at breadth and achieves banality. The final essay, Paul F. Power's 'Civil Disobedience as Functional Opposition' is the only piece in the collection by an empirical social scientist. Though theoretically weak (I think functionalism is a dead end), this essay has the merit that it does explore the actual effects of civil disobedience. If nothing else, it demonstrates the need for more and better work on this matter.

This book certainly does have shortcomings. It is unduly preoccupied with the United States in general, and with the black civil rights movement and resistance to the Vietnam war in particular. And the perspective of the authors is almost remorselessly liberal. Still, it is by a good margin the best of its kind.

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Zellig Harris

Language and Information.

New York: Columbia University Press 1988.

Pp. ix+120.

US \$20.00. ISBN 0-231-06662-7

The 1986 Bampton Lectures seek to develop a general theory of syntax and to explore the consequences of that theory. The theory of syntax which Harris presents in the first lecture purports to characterize all natural languages in general formal terms. The theory resembles the grammar of first-order predicate logic in many respects, though there are also significant differences. The remaining three lectures discuss various consequences of the grammatical theory.

Lecture Two considers the application of the general theory to 'science sublanguages,' that is, specialized languages which scientists use in writing research reports. The main focus of the lecture is a single example consisting of language that appears in published reports of research in immunology. The third lecture on information theory discusses the way in which various grammatical constraints recognized by the theory express information. Towards the end of the lecture Harris suggests that his grammatical constraints reflect the structure of information itself. However, this latter claim is entirely unargued. The final lecture is mainly a speculation about the historical origins of natural languages. Harris conjectures that expressions which are simple under his grammatical theory came into use before expressions which are complex. Since no competing theories about the origin of language are discussed, Harris cannot be said to have shown that his theory is better than any other theory-based hypothesis. In the absence of any direct empirical data concerning natural languages more primitive than those found in modern cultures, Harris' suggestions must be considered to be, at best, a plausible conjecture.

The central doctrine of the book is clearly Harris' formal theory of grammar. Under this theory, each word in a language is classified (i.e., assigned a certain level number) according to the number and categories of other words it requires in order to make a grammatically proper expression. Concrete nouns such as 'Fred' and 'child' are zero level words since they require no other expressions. Operators such as 'sleeps' and 'loves' are first-level words because each requires one or more zero-level words to form a grammatically proper expression. Up to this point, Harris' grammatical categories correspond at

least loosely to categories familiar from the first-order predicate calculus. However, a major difference emerges with Harris' second-level operators. These consist of terms that require some combination of zero- and first-level words. For example, 'assert' requires one zero-level word and one first-level word. In 'Fred asserts that someone sleeps' the zero-level requirement is satisfied by 'Fred', and the first-level requirement is satisfied by 'sleeps'. Harris' proposal that 'asserts' be viewed as operating on a predicate rather than on a sentence raises a number of troubling questions. For one thing, it is not clear how the proposal actually works in view of the fact that the blank in 'Fred asserts that ...' can be filled by a sentence of arbitrary complexity (i.e., not just by a simple predication). Further, the much discussed ambiguity between *de dicto* and *de re* interpretations of the quantifier in the above example appears to be simply lost under Harris' account. A more general worry arises from the fact that Harris' grammar recognizes no genuine *sentential* operators.

Harris ties his theory of formal grammar to methodological assumptions which are quite austere. Simplifying somewhat, the linguist's task in analyzing a language is to determine which words belong to which levels and which words can legitimately occur in the argument places of given operators. These classifications are to be arrived at by examining only a typical corpus of utterances of the language without reliance on native speaker judgments about which sentences are grammatical, which are true, etc. Instead, Harris' linguist considers only the frequencies with which given words occur in the argument places of operator words. Thus one determines that 'Fred' but not 'is' can occur in the argument place of 'sleeps' by observing that, in the sample corpus, 'Fred' but not 'is' occurs in this position with a frequency of greater than zero. Questions naturally arise as to whether such an austere methodology will actually be capable of carrying out the classifications needed to generate the required type of grammar. Harris acknowledges at one point that a corpus which is itself metalinguistic might contain ungrammatical expressions such as 'is sleeps' (10-11). However, nothing is said about how we are to separate such spurious talk from discourse which is grammatical. A further problem arises because Harris regards word frequency as indicative always of word meaning. Thus the fact that 'Fred eats berries' occurs more frequently than 'Berries eat Fred' is assumed to be due entirely to a difference in the meanings of 'Fred' and 'berries'. Harris' methodology does not appear to allow for the possibility that the difference in frequency might be better accounted for in terms

the factual beliefs of speakers than in terms of the meanings of the words.

In his lecture on information theory Harris briefly considers expressive capabilities which actual natural languages could have but do not have. Surprisingly, he holds that one such capability is self-reference using ordinary cross-referential pronouns. This affords a novel resolution for some versions of the liar paradox. According to Harris, 'This sentence is false' inevitably speaks not of itself but of some other sentence. Hence, the sentence generates no paradox. Harris acknowledges, however, that the suggestion does not provide a general solution to liar paradoxes since there are many other ways of achieving paradoxical self-reference.

As the founder of the first department of linguistics in the United States, Zellig Haris enjoys an especially distinguished status among linguists. However, Harris is not a philosopher, and his work is generally unfamiliar to philosophers. It is not surprising, therefore, that when he occasionally addresses issues that are of interest to philosophers, his discussions leave many questions unanswered. This book will no doubt be of greatest interest to Harris' fellow linguists.

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Mark Warren

Nietzsche and Political Thought

Cambridge: The MIT Press 1988.

Pp. xv+311.

US \$25.00. ISBN 0-262-23135-2

Mark Warren has written an important but highly contentious book about what *he* understands as Nietzsche's 'political' thought. Warren acknowledges his position is only one interpretation, and to be fair, the work actually covers far more ground than its title suggests: six of the seven chapters provide important background analyses of human agency/subjectivity/selfhood, on the proper assumption that power and willing belong to subjectivity in an existential sense, and prepare the ground for the central argument in the concluding

chapter. Yet it must seem strange, as Warren himself remarks, that so much attention be paid to the task of reconstructing Nietzsche's 'political' thought when Nietzsche never made politics, in either the practical or the theoretical sense, a central concern of his writings. Warren's reading can hardly be called sympathetic, but is certainly controversial in its attempts to praise the modern rationalist virtues of the 'gentle' Nietzsche, while it villainizes the politics of the 'bloody' Nietzsche, those politics which alone 'violate the intellectual integrity of his philosophical project (208).' Given that Warren's arguments concerning Nietzsche's political thought are to be found in his final chapter, I wish to focus my discussion there.

Of the many interpretive assumptions Warren argues for, including his rejection of a textual approach to Nietzsche, perhaps the one substantive claim both decisive for his position yet uncritically presupposed is that power is 'organized' subjective capacity, i.e., 'power is a category of meaningful behaviour ... related to reflective processes of self-constitution,' and 'power has *value* when it attains a self-reflective identity (9).' The assertion is, then, that Nietzsche understands power, whether as motive or end for action, as a *reflectively* grasped element of the agent's subjectivity, something the agent reflectively posits or pursues for the constitution of its identity. Warren's own sympathy for modern rationalism here has oriented his conception of both power and subjectivity in a way which ignores the distinction, central to Nietzsche's view of a division between the ego and self, of unconscious drives and reflectively posited values. If Nietzsche's concept of power is indeed a value freely and rationally chosen by an egoic agency, and if power cannot be conceived as other than its instantiation in the specific actions of individuals, then of course it will follow that power means, among other things, the political domination and subjugation of others. But this is the vulgarized conception of power that Nietzsche clearly rejects. Warren is doubtless right in maintaining that power is not the effect of a 'metaphysical' subject, but he is doubtless wrong in suggesting that power in Nietzsche's sense could be identified as a specific empirical end or state of affairs to be pursued through ratiocinative calculation. Power is, as Warren holds, an 'ontological' concept immanent within all motives and actions, but pace Warren, *how* power is realized defies the prescription of particular kinds of action. Thinkers as distant as Adler and Sartre have agreed that 'will to power' in the context of human existence must be conceived as an unconscious principle which underlies and resists any determination. Warren's

interpretive assumption to the contrary quite expectedly has disastrous consequences for Nietzsche's 'political' thought.

One of Warren's central arguments in his concluding chapter urges that, when Nietzsche politicizes his philosophy of will to power, 'he describes human agency in the language of exploitation, domination, struggle, mastery over others and hierarchy (208).' Warren grants that, when the will to power is grasped 'critically' as an ontological structure, its practice could involve valuing both intersubjectivity and agency understood as the possibility of individual, autonomous, responsible action. But when Nietzsche asserts that the will to power, and hence, e.g., 'exploitation', are the *essence* of life, Warren claims that Nietzsche has violated his own critique of metaphysics, because, in a way incommensurate with his philosophical position, Nietzsche has 'explained' empirical events 'by deducing them from a posited, universal, non-empirical entity (208).' In the context of his thought about politics and society, Nietzsche breaches his otherwise consistent critique of metaphysical explanation by importing an essentialist stance, viz., that the will to domination rooted in life inevitably finds its expression in specifiable proto-fascist practices. Warren maintains, then, that in the context of politics, Nietzsche failed to distinguish the critical use of will to power as describing the conditions under which *all* human practices are possible, from the metaphysical use through which it stipulates and justifies the empirical content of specific acts of will involving political domination, exploitation. From here the way is open to some remarkably naive claims, such as: 'his political ideal [is] a hierarchical society with a small leadership of aristocrat-philosophers' (210); 'Nietzsche's vision of ... political domination of the spiritually superior few over the "herd"' (211); 'his politics *systematically* draws on the will to power as a modernist metaphysics of domination (230).' Overlooking the fact that Warren perversely ignores the considerable textual evidence which contradicts these kinds of charges, his argument simply fails to appreciate how sophisticated Nietzsche's insights into individual and collective psychology really are. While Nietzsche certainly understood 'life' as will to power, his analyses of *ressentiment*, e.g., reveal an understanding of how power as a value, or domination, exploitation as perspectival descriptions of 'life', can manifest themselves in empirical acts of submission, contrition, altruism, self-sacrifice, etc. Nietzsche knew that as an explanatory principle (but *not* as metaphysics), the will to power found its limit only in '*cosmos*', in the world as totality (*WM*, 1067), and that therefore it could never adequately

be interpreted in any specific explanatory context, whether that be psychological, biological or political. One would have thought that the depth and extensiveness of Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics alone might have recommended to Warren the highly improbable nature of his argument. Warren's use of his misunderstanding and selective scholarship to perpetuate the tired story of the 'neo-aristocratic conservative' Nietzsche who advocates a 'pre-modern' politics of domination only confirms the limits of Warren's own philosophical imagination.

Warren's defense of his main thesis, that Nietzsche's philosophy 'underdetermines' and is 'at odds with' his politics, is not without its own ironies, particularly in his account of Nietzsche's views about the state. No account of Nietzsche's political thought could ignore his remarks about the 'new idol,' his insistence that creative culture is 'antipolitical,' his antistatist and anti-*Reich* attitudes, his contempt for anti-Semitism, and so Warren does contend that 'Nietzsche's comments suggest that all politically sustained hierarchies are inconsistent with the intersubjective space of individuation (223).' But in order to read Nietzsche 'consistently,' Warren argues that Nietzsche also 'believed that without a class of 'slaves,' no higher culture would be possible' (225), a claim he bases upon passages from *Human, All Too Human* and *Nachlass* material. And Warren extends this argument further by maintaining (on the basis of *one note* and one which I think he completely misreads) that Nietzsche theoretically defended an 'institutionalized division of ... economic labour in society' (237), whereby a class of 'economically productive but dehumanizing labour' would provide the material necessities for the 'new aristocracy.' The double irony in this position is that 1) the Nietzsche who at length acerbically criticizes the 'herd' mentality is now viewed as a reactionary who *perversely defends* the 'mediocritization' of Europe; and 2) the Nietzsche who criticizes the history of Western culture as leading to the crisis of nihilism is now viewed as a Straussian who 'believed modern societies to be in precisely the same situation as ancient Greek societies (239).'

No Nietzsche scholar would dispute with Warren the fact that Nietzsche's thought appears on the surface to be contradictory and replete with tensions; nor is it controversial to suppose that Nietzsche's thought operates on several different levels. But it is surely an unjustifiable and unwarranted assumption to suppose that Nietzsche's penetrating analyses of historically extant cultures commits him to the balefully absurd conclusion that the future must

resemble the past. Zarathustra not only 'buries' the history of mankind, he redeems it *for* the future. Yet on Warren's reading, Nietzsche's recognition that, e.g., the higher culture of the Greek *polis* possessed two castes, a caste of forced labour and a caste of free labour, is taken as evidence for Nietzsche's advocacy of a future society based upon an identical structure – a reading which makes a mockery of anything like a 'critical' historiography, not to mention *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Warren is quite right in holding that, for Nietzsche, the historical 'measure' of a culture is its capacity to creatively 'overcome' itself, its capacity to engender the creativity of those exceptional individuals whose vision does open a possible future. *In the past*, the relationship between creative individuality and the mass of society has taken many different forms; but Nietzsche's own view of what that relationship should be is clearly committed to the understanding that the creator's vision is *for* others, and that in the face of possible political power rather than self-mastery, the ethos of creativity is 'to pass by'.

I cannot pursue here the several ironies or inconsistencies which devolve from this latest attempt to superimpose a kind of irresolvable dualism – for Warren, the 'gentle and bloody' – upon Nietzsche's thought. Reading Warren's text, a text which can at once insist that 'Nietzsche's criticisms of the state are consistently anti-totalitarian' (223) and that for Nietzsche 'the best *possible* ... situation would be ... a hierarchy of political and economic domination' (226), leaves one musing about where the schizophrenia is actually to be found. My own view is that Nietzsche did *not* 'present us with the political alternatives of a mediocre and unhuman equality of the 'herd', or an inhuman cultural aristocracy' (226), but that Nietzsche's thought is the attempt to overcome precisely this false dichotomy.

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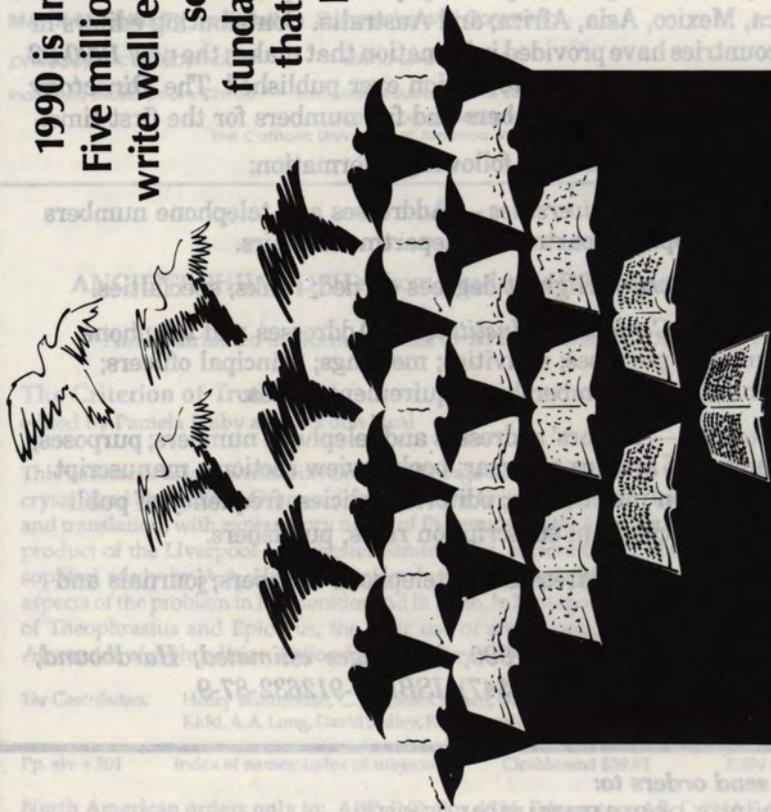
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The anglophone editor of

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Revue Canadienne de Comptes rendus en Philosophie

is pleased to announce the acquisition of an address for **electronic mail** on the University of Alberta's mainframe computer.

Correspondents and contributors are encouraged to use the address for replying to invitations, submissions of reviews and any other messages.

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Any institution's computing services department will be able to advise on how to access the address.

R.A. Shiner