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Theodor W. Adorno

Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic

Tr. Robert Hullot-Kentor. Minneapolis:

University of Minnesota Press 1989.

Pp. 166.

US \$35.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8166-1186-6);

US \$14.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8166-1187-4).

This book was written at the height of what was known in Germany as the Kierkegaard renaissance. Barth, Bultmann, Jaspers, Heidegger, Tillich, Przywara, Guardini, were among the major intellectuals who read Kierkegaard assiduously, seriously. It was published in 1933, that is, when Adorno was thirty years old. The age factor may have something to do with the energy, the style, and the flaws of the book.

Like almost everyone of his contemporaries, Adorno read Kierkegaard's authorship collectively. Differently phrased, he did not discriminate between the pseudonyms and their works. Or rather, he identified the respective pseudonymous author of a text; however, he allowed that they all had the voice of Kierkegaard. This was a common practice at the time. Nevertheless, when it is done, usually a Kierkegaard without consistency and coherence emerges. The text of Adorno, however, does not eventuate in this kind of Kierkegaard. Instead, we are given a gloomy Dane. The very last sentence of the book reflects this observation: 'For the step from mourning to comfort is not the largest, but the smallest' (141).

There are two theses that underlie Adorno's book: (1) The entire pseudonymous authorship is aesthetic, and (2) the philosophy of Kierkegaard in private person advocates an 'objectless inwardness.' While I agree with Adorno on the first point, I take issue with him on the second.

Incontestably, the thrust of the pseudonymous works adheres to the principle that literature is by nature aesthetic. From the diapsalmata of *Either/Or* to *Anti-Climacus' Training in Christianity*, there is every indication that language and life cannot be confounded. Language, in conformity with thought, constructs, but what it constructs are images that are more often than not incompatible with the exigences of existence. Adorno then interprets this tenet to mean that in the world of Kierkegaard 'objectless inwardness,' which implies a realm without things, is the thinking that guides the philosophy of Kierkegaard. He is mistaken.

There are seven chapters in the book, the first of which is entitled 'Exposition of the Aesthetic'. In it Adorno establishes his claim that the pseudonymous writings of Kierkegaard are essentially aesthetic. Adorno distinguishes three senses of the term 'aesthetic' in Kierkegaard: (1) The word has the broad meaning of whatever pertains to art; (2) from the perspective of the ethical it is the absence of decisiveness; (3) it represents the manner in which inwardness is manifested, specifically as this concept is explicated in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.

Significantly, chapters two and three, entitled respectively 'Constitution of Inwardness' and 'Explication of Inwardness', together embody the nucleus of Adorno's text. The remaining four chapters combine consistently to complement and confirm the tenor and theses of the preceding three. They are: Ch. 4: 'Concept of Existence'; Ch. 5: 'On the Logic of the Spheres'; Ch. 6: 'Reason and Sacrifice'; and Ch. 7: 'Construction of the Aesthetic'. Obviously, since the title of the last chapter is the same as that of the book, it must have been considered by Adorno to be consequential. Indeed it has such import, but only because in it Adorno recasted his arguments and resolved his problems with Kierkegaard.

This book is not easy to read. Thankfully it is so small. The language is dense and convoluted. Adorno does not argue in a sustained fashion. Thus, readers are required to divine their way through the text, hoping to have adequately understood the insights and ideas of the author. The book's translator, Robert Hullot-Kentor, tries to explain, apologetically, the basic organization of *Kierkegaard*: — 'Apparently, seven chapters are composed of a sequence of paragraphs. But these concepts are misleading as any attempt to read straight from one paragraph to the next, even one sentence to the next, makes evident. The parts are not related to each other by way of the compulsion of argumentation, logic's instinctual life; while they are completely logical, they do not develop by way of a subordinating logic of chapter and paragraph. Adorno's ideal of form was that "every sentence should be equally near the center-point." The parts refer to one another and complete one another by a principle of contrast' (xiii).

It is praiseworthy that Adorno had his own theory of literary forms. However, it is questionable whether his attempt to represent Kierkegaard's thought and art in the manner described by Hullot-Kentor is at all feasible. That Adorno understood the central nerve of Kierkegaard's mind I cannot presume to judge; but that he mishandled Kierkegaard's work I feel competent enough to ascertain. The two

major premises of the book are closely related: the task is to understand how they relate, and how, in the final analysis, the phrase 'objectless inwardness' is to be understood.

To claim that literature is aesthetic means that it cannot be a substitute for living, because in fact it is nothing but a construct of the mind. Another way of expressing this principle is to identify 'aesthetic' with metaphor. In this sense, all the pseudonyms, including the spheres they represent, are aesthetic. Since the personae and the spheres are mental constructs, Adorno discovered in Kierkegaard's philosophy a fine example of mere idealism. This way of reading Kierkegaard at the time was a bold gesture. For during the 1920s Barth, Bultmann, Jaspers, Tillich, Heidegger, found in Kierkegaard the intellectual means whereby to combat idealism itself.

Therefore, in construing the world of Kierkegaard to be nothing other than idealism, Adorno, using the concept of inwardness as an exemplary function of a solitary mind, is able to reason thus: 'Inwardness presents itself as the restriction of human existence to a private sphere free from the power of reification' (47). What Adorno means by 'objectless inwardness' is the individual subject's reduction of finite existence to a minimum. It coincides with consigning relative values to their proper goals. In the language of the pseudonymous works, infinite resignation is the meaning of Adorno's phrase. While infinite resignation is surely a form of inwardness, this latter has a wider connotation in Kierkegaard's authorship (see my 'Kierkegaard's Ideal of Inward Deepening', *Philosophy Today* 32:2 [Summer 1988]). My disagreements with Adorno notwithstanding, I must admit that *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic* has the merit of engaging the reader on almost every page. The book reflects, without doubt, a very close reading of Kierkegaard's works. This fact alone suffices to ensure the prospective reader that his or her time with the book will not be spent in vain.

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Barry Barnes

The Nature of Power.

Champaign: The University of Illinois Press
1988. Pp. xiv+205. US \$29.95.

ISBN 0-252-01582-7.

Barry Barnes has written a genuinely interesting and penetrating book whose title is altogether appropriate. His focus is precisely on the nature of social power and, in keeping with current tendencies (Foucault, Habermas), reflects a concern for links between power and cognition, knowledge and belief. Barnes' predilection is anti-functionalist; his point of departure is a critique of Talcot Parsons in favour of 'rational choice' social theory – the view that 'social actions have to be understood and explained by reference to the people who generate them,' rather than in terms of 'alleged functions in maintaining the stability of the society' (xii). At the same time, Barnes' sympathy for positing rational calculation of self-interest as the basis of social explanation is tempered by his rejection of methodological individualism, and in this respect Barnes tends to side with functionalists.

It is one of the charms of *The Nature of Power* that it evinces a certain philosophical sophistication. Barnes (associated with the 'Edinburgh school' in sociology of knowledge) appears to affirm a continuity between natural- and social-scientific knowledge, and at the same time declares a commitment to scientific realism. It is not however clear in practice that these standpoints are compatible; witness Barnes' remark that 'natural order is an ordering constructed by people and used to make sense of nature, not an ordering insisted upon by nature and imposed upon people by nature. Natural order is just as much a system of conventions as social order' (50). Surely there is some confusion here; planets do not describe their elliptical orbits of the sun through adherence to 'convention', although no doubt our description of these orbits has a conventional form. Again, the order of the planets is such that Mercury is closer to the sun than Mars; yet this fact is hardly a matter of convention in any sense whatever. Nonetheless it would be unfair to make too much of these matters, since it is not clear that Barnes' basic thesis concerning power and knowledge depends in any crucial way on them.

It is much to Barnes' credit that he devotes a major effort to clarifying conceptual fundamentals, and indeed explicitly invites criticism at this level. A 'first priority' in moving beyond the book would in-

volve giving 'yet more attention to its basic themes', and in particular, concentrating on 'difficulties and obscurities' (166). It is in this spirit that the remainder of my remarks are framed.

As I have remarked already, Barnes' basic concern is to assign a primary role to knowledge in the constitution of social order, and to understand power as an aspect of that knowledge. For Barnes, there is an important sense in which society just *is* a structured distribution of knowledge over its members, while power 'is an aspect of that distribution' (53). At the same time, and in keeping with his rejection of methodological individualism, Barnes wishes to make a distinction between power *as such*, and its *distribution* (or, as he puts it, 'discretion in the use of power'). Power itself, Barnes maintains, is 'embedded in society as a whole. But discretion in its use is distributed more selectively. Power structures or distributions of power are distributions of discretion in the use of power ... power, capacity for action, is actually right down there amongst the supposedly powerless ... it is only discretion in its use which is strongly concentrated at the higher levels of society' (61-2).

What is very unclear about this distinction, as it seems to me, is whether it can be maintained in light of Barnes' emphasis on the idea that power is an aspect of the distribution of knowledge. Is it power itself, or just the distribution of power, which is an aspect of the distribution of knowledge? Barnes in fact equivocates on this, frequently making remarks to the effect that a '*distribution of power is an aspect of the overall distribution of knowledge*' (125, *italics mine*). Either way, it is not clear how the distinction between power and its distribution, which is for Barnes a central posit, can be sustained. If it is the distribution of power which is an aspect of the distribution of knowledge, and a distribution of knowledge is the fundamental society-constituting fact, then it is not clear how there can be any such thing as power over and above its distribution. If on the other hand it is power itself which is an aspect of the distribution of knowledge, then it is not clear where the distribution of power, as distinct from power itself, can gain a foothold.

The obscurity on this matter is I think only deepened by a related obscurity concerning the link between Barnes' twin notions of 'discretion in the use of power' and 'possession of power' (see in particular Chapter 3, *passim*). It seems plain that (although Barnes himself does not clearly draw it) a valid contrast may be drawn between the notions of distribution and possession: a structural distribution of some benefit or burden may be more or less unequal through time,

regardless of which particular individuals currently happen to participate in that unequal distribution (which individuals possess what). (To say this is just to move in the direction of some notion of socioeconomic class). But this contrast does nothing to validate the contrast between power and its distribution. It is as if, on the basis of a legitimate distinction between power and/or the distribution of power on the one hand, and the *possession* of power on the other, Barnes contrives to erect a distinction between power and its *distribution*, by illegitimately collapsing the distinction between distribution and possession. Barnes himself seems to manifest a certain unease on these matters; this is revealed especially in the following remark: 'When one person is said to have more power than another it is a matter of the one having discretion over a greater capacity for action than the other. Nonetheless, it is cumbersome to refer always to discretion in the use of power when a reference simply to power will do ... I have lapsed into this idiom already, and referred to power when to be precise I should have referred to discretion in its use' (61). It is possible that Barnes' architectonic can after all be salvaged, but how this might be done I am not at all sure.

Henry Laycock

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Barry Brundell

Pierre Gassendi: From Aristotelianism to a New Natural Philosophy.

Norwell, MA: D. Reidel 1987. Pp. x+251.

US \$49.50. ISBN 90-277-2428-8.

Lynn Sumida Joy

Gassendi the Atomist: Advocate of History in an Age of Science.

New York: Cambridge University Press 1987. Pp. xiii+311.

US \$39.50. ISBN 0-521-30142-4.

There has been a growing awareness in the last decades of the importance of Pierre Gassendi's contribution to modern philosophy. The pioneering work of Bernard Rochot on Gassendi's atomism and his

theory of knowledge (*Les travaux de Gassendi sur Épicure et sur l'atomisme* [Paris: J. Vrin 1844]); the portrayal of Gassendi's role in the history of scepticism and empiricism by myself (*The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1960, 1979], chs. v, vii) and by Tullio Gregory (*Scettismo ed empiricismo. Studio su Gassendi* [Bari: Editori Laterza 1961]); Olivier Bloch's study portraying Gassendi as an eclectic nominalist without a coherent and consistent system (*La philosophie du Gassendi. Nominalisme, matérialisme et métaphysique* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff 1971]); the English translation of some of Gassendi's writings by Craig Brush (*The Selected Works of Pierre Gassendi* [New York: Johnson Reprint 1972]); all greatly increased knowledge of Gassendi's sceptical and Epicurean efforts. The publication of the complete text and French translation of Gassendi's answer to Aristotle, and his devastating critique of Descartes (*Dessertationes en forme de paradoxes contre les Aristotéliciens. Exercitationes paradoxicae adversus Aristoteleos*, ed. B. Rochot [Paris: J. Vrin 1959]; *Disquisitio metaphysica, seu dubitationes et instantiae adversus Renati Cartesii metaphysicam et responsa. Recherches metaphysiques, ou doutes et instances contre la métaphysique de R. Descartes et ses réponses*, ed. B. Rochot [Paris: J. Vrin 1962]) showed Gassendi at least the equal of the so-called 'Father of Modern Philosophy'.

I had expected that contemporary analytic and empirical philosophers would have traced their roots to the resurrected 17th-century atomist, rather than to Francis Bacon, René Descartes or John Locke. Gassendi's epistemology, his philosophy of science and the scientific model he presented, were and are closer to 20th-century views than other 17th-century thinkers, with the possible exception of Pascal. Instead he remained outside the canon of our philosophical heroes.

Two recent studies, plus a forthcoming one, may finally turn the tide, and force recognition that Gassendi played a major role in the development of 17th-century thought, in the development of modern materialism, and in the development of modern scepticism. In the late 17th century Gassendi was regarded as a greater (and less dangerous) thinker than Descartes. Even among French Jesuits like René Rapin, Gassendi's hypothetical atomism, his mitigated scepticism, and his renovated Epicureanism, was considered a better replacement for a bankrupt Aristotelian Scholasticism than Cartesianism.

By the end of the 18th century Gassendi had almost disappeared from the mainstream of modern philosophy. His books were too big,

too unreadable because they were in Latin and and were too philosophical. Our history of modern philosophy now consists of a conversation, or debate, between just Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Malebranche, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, that led up to Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy. Gassendi survives only as a footnote to Descartes, as the author of the fifth set of objections to the *Meditations*.

The most important of the new studies, Lynn Joy's *Gassendi the Atomist: Advocate of History in an Age of Science*, makes clear what Gassendi was trying to do, and the extent to which he succeeded. Some previous interpreters concentrated on Gassendi's epistemology, and his hypothetical atomic science, and paid less attention to the enormous amount of humanistic philological research which appeared in each of Gassendi's formulations. Joy has, I believe, given us the first fully rounded picture of Gassendi's philosophy, and in so doing, has made clear why it did not keep the interest of modern intellectual world. Barry Brundell's book, *Pierre Gassendi: From Aristotelianism to a New Natural Philosophy*, gives us a more accurate picture of when Gassendi wrote what, by checking the available manuscripts against the printed texts, and tries to argue that Gassendi from beginning to end had the same goals, that of developing a truer and better philosophy of nature than Aristotelianism. And Kroll, in a work that will appear next year (vid. infra), offers the historical linkage between Gassendi's sceptical, Christianized Epicureanism, and the prevailing thought of the English Restoration, including that of John Locke, thereby placing the French atomist in the mainstream of modern thought again. (It may be of some significance that none of these works on Gassendi is by someone trained in philosophy *per se*. Joy and Brundell did their studies in the history of science, and Kroll in English literature.)

It is strange that a French priest, (1592-1655), who became Royal Professor at the Collège de France, should have been the reviver, expositor and advocate of ancient Epicureanism. Gassendi began his career teaching philosophy at the University of Aix-en-Provence, from 1616-1622. His anti-Aristotelianism led to his immense scholarly endeavour. Joy then shows how Gassendi, starting out to disprove and debunk Aristotle, was led to examine the Greek texts, to undertake an impossible task, that of examining all the texts of Greek thought, and finally settling for trying to establish the correct texts that stated the views of Epicurus, and to answer the criticisms raised against him principally by Aristotelian, Stoic and Sceptical philosophers. To buttress his philosophy, Gassendi was led to become a humanists'

humanist. He studied the published and manuscript materials about ancient philosophy. In 1624 he published Book I of his *Exercitationes paradoxicae adversus Aristoteleos* in which he advanced many of the humanist criticisms of Aristotelianism, and pointed to the need to study ancient alternatives to Aristotle's views, and to critically assess the extant Aristotelian texts to determine which are authentic, and what Aristotle's doctrines really were. Book II was suppressed from publication by the author in 1625. Gassendi here offered a strong attack on Aristotle's method and doctrines, and used much material from Sextus Empiricus to attack Aristotle, and to offer a form of scepticism as an alternative. Joy suggests that Gassendi's suppression of his work was not just because of his friend, Father Mersenne's, opposition to scepticism, nor because of the power of the entrenched Aristotelians. Rather she attributes it to his turn, possibly influenced by Mersenne, from extreme scepticism to what I have called his mitigated scepticism combined with Epicureanism. Brundell argues that Gassendi did not change his aim, that of replacing Aristotelianism, and hence that there was no real change in his philosophical outlook. Brundell also contends that Gassendi was not a participant in what I have called *la crise pyrrhonienne*. However he contributed to it by using sceptical texts ancient and modern, by allying himself with the leading sceptics of the period, Naudé, Patin, La Mothe Le Vayer. Gassendi also severely criticized both Herbert of Cherbury and René Descartes for their unsuccessful attempts to answer scepticism. Gassendi was not panicked by the sceptical crisis, but he was a major actor in the developing sceptical drama of the time.

After his trip to Paris, Gassendi worked on astronomy, and studied the history of ancient philosophy. By 1626 he was studying the life and opinions of Epicurus. He was concerned about the difference between Epicurus's bad reputation in popular accounts, and the actual picture of him given in Diogenes Laertius. He gradually came to see that Epicurus' method, physics and ethics could replace Aristotle's as an adequate philosophy for understanding nature.

Joy and Brundell trace the development of Gassendi's researches about Epicurus and Epicureanism. Brundell checked the sequence according to what is in the manuscripts of Gassendi's notes and writings, while Joy traced the emergence of Gassendi's humanistic historical approach. Gassendi and his fellow humanists of the time 'did not distinguish between the study of nature as a separate enterprise and the study of nature as part of the study of Greek and Latin culture in general' (191). Gassendi's extensive researches into the best expli-

cation of Epicurus' views, his technically accurate edition of Diogenes Laertius' life of Epicurus, and the translation of it into Latin, were part of the humanistic enterprise of understanding nature in terms of the history of philosophy and the history of science. As Gassendi made clear in his full length answer to Descartes, the *Disquisitio metaphysica seu dubitationes et instantiae adversus Renati Cartesii* (1644), the most rigorous way of carrying philosophical and scientific discussion 'would be the writing of a history relating the beliefs of each modern generation of thinkers to the beliefs of its ancient predecessors' (Joy, 209). Descartes' way of philosophizing was completely ahistorical. An individual, standing apart from history, could search for truth individually and within his or her own mind. Gassendi, in contrast, saw the historical scene as intertwined with the search for knowledge. Problems had to be seen in historical context and related to the past search for solutions. What scholars could do is present their best understanding of the past, from a present vantage point, and a tentative proposal for understanding, subject to later revision. This best understanding of the past is not at odds with seeing nature as an object of empirical study. Empirical research would make more sense, and be more acceptable, when it was realized that the conception of nature involved in looking at nature in this way was the outcome of debates within the history of philosophy. So, Gassendi was not for rejecting the views of the ancients in favor of just empirical inquiry.

Joy has given an excellent historical explanation of how Gassendi went about dealing with intellectual problems, why he wrote as he did, and why his presentation of Epicureanism took the form it did, of a life of Epicurus, the editing of texts, and finally in his posthumous *Syntagma Philosophicum*, the presentation of a logic, theory of knowledge, physics and ethics of a philosophy for the here and now, a replacement for the discredited Aristotelian world view, 'a truer and better' philosophy (Brundell, chap. 5). This also explains the *fortuna* of Gassendi's philosophy. As long as the humanistic method of exposition was still in vogue, the linking of discussing problems with their connections with ancient views, Gassendi was readable by the learned public. (Important humanistic philosophical and theological texts were being written decades after Gassendi's death. Cudworth's *True Intellectual System of the Universe*, and Isaac Newton's *Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms, Amended* are in this genre.) By Voltaire's time, Gassendi had become a bore. Gassendi needed 1,600 pages to present his Epicurean philosophy. By the 18th century many thinkers

could no longer see why all that erudition was required to set the stage for 'modern science' and 'modern philosophy'. Gassendi may have thought that his massive presentation and exploration of the history of philosophy was what was needed to justify the metaphysics of modern physical science. After Newton modern science was taken for granted as a system that did not have to be explained by its intellectual origins.

Before Gassendi passed into oblivion his views played an important role in English thought. Richard Kroll, in his forthcoming *Words and Actions: Method, Language and Society in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), has found much intriguing material about how Gassendi's ideas became known to leading English thinkers, and how Epicureanism became a major intellectual view in England. Gassendi was a major figure in Father Mersenne's circle in Paris. Included in the group were Thomas Hobbes, when he lived in Paris (1640-51), and other English refugee scholars connected to the Stuart cause. They transmitted Gassendi's views by correspondence and personal contacts. Gassendi's leading disciple, Samuel Sorbière (who translated Hobbes' *De Cive* into French at Mersenne's suggestion) made a trip to England, and met with many important people. Possibly most important, Kroll found that the first two books of Gassendi's *Philosophiae Epicuri Syntagma* appeared in English in Thomas Stanley's *History of Philosophy*, first published in 1669 and then reprinted several times. (Stanley's work also contains Sextus Empiricus's *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* in English.) Hence, a text was readily available in a fairly popular work. Kroll also shows that Epicurean writings appeared in English from the 1650's onward, including a translation of Lucretius's *de Rerum Natura*. Leading figures like Charleton and Boyle offered atomic or corpuscular theories of science. Kroll contends that neo-Epicureanism became the prevailing philosophy of Restoration England, the most accepted form of neo-classicism. This may be going too far, but, from Kroll's data, Gassendi and his Epicurean ideas, expressed in mitigated sceptical terms, were well known in Great Britain (as well as in New England).

The most intriguing aspect of all this is that the question of whether Locke knew of Gassendi's empirical philosophy seems to be getting settled. Up to now, people have speculated as much, because so many similar views appear in Locke and in Gassendi. Locke met some of Gassendi's disciples in France, and he bought books that contained some of Gassendi's ideas. But a closer connection could not be found.

Locke, however, owned Stanley's *History*, and knew many of the neo-Epicureans. Kroll tries to show that Locke's views in part grow out of Gassendi's. The extent to which this is the case will, no doubt, be a subject of much study in years to come.

With these new studies I think we have a much clearer picture of the development of Gassendi's philosophy, and his influence, at least in England. The evaluation of the import of Gassendi's views is still open to discussion and debate. Was Gassendi, the sceptical Epicurean, a sincere Christian or was he a secret atheist, a *libertin*, or...?

One reason for questioning Gassendi's religious sincerity has been his adherence to Copernicanism. Brundell (chap. 2) carefully traces Gassendi's original advocacy of Copernicanism and of Galileo's ideas, and then his shocked reaction to Galileo's condemnation. Gassendi wrote nothing about Copernicanism between 1633 and 1644. Brundell suggests he was hoping for a change in Papal opinion, even a reversal of the condemnation. When this did not happen, he (and also Mersenne) finally adopted a version of Tycho Brahe's astronomy. Gassendi rewrote his physics so that his Epicurean philosophy would not contravene the ban on the teaching of Copernicanism. Though he apparently thought that the evidence for Copernicanism far outweighed the evidence for the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic system, 'as an orthodox Catholic, however, he felt obliged to accept the ruling of the Holy Office, and had to cope with that ruling as best he could' (Brundell, 43).

The question, of course, is, was Gassendi an orthodox Catholic? He functioned as one all of his life. He was a priest. He was never accused of heresy, or non-Catholic behavior. He, like Mersenne, was aware of the politics of Church decisions, and kept within the permissible grounds, presumably because he wanted to stay in the good graces of the Church. Why, if he was not sincere? Fear of condemnation? He could have moved. Gassendi was invited by then Protestant Queen Christina of Sweden to be the real ornament of her court.

In studies like Pintard's *Le Libertinage érudit*, Gassendi is shown to be a key member of the Tetrade, the *libertin* sceptics. But all of them were Catholics. The naughtiest of them, Gabriel Naudé, had been the secretary of two cardinals, and then became the librarian of Cardinal Mazarin's great collection. They all functioned most successfully in the French Catholic world. But were they sincere? I have argued that there is no reason for assuming the answer is 'no'. There were all sorts of acceptable levels of belief, from liberal, humanistic, almost deistic Christianity, to the super-orthodoxy of Pascal and the Jansenists (who were condemned). Studies by Margaret Osler and

Linda Sarasohn have shown that Gassendi altered Epicureanism to fit Christian requirements in ethics and theology. He was not offering an atheistic materialism, but an amended version compatible with official Catholic claims. Kroll shows that Gassendi made Epicureanism acceptable to Anglican Latitudinarians in the Restoration. He showed that Epicurus was not an atheist, and that if one amended Epicureanism, so that the world of atoms was created by Divine Action, the theory could fit with a Christian world view. Gassendi's theology, which has been too much ignored, makes sense in terms of the kinds of theologies being offered by his friends Hugo Grotius, Mersenne, and Herbert of Cherbury, and does not in any obvious way conflict with accepting Christianity in some sense. His theology is not Thomistic, or Augustinian, but it is one of the amalgamations of Hellenistic philosophy and Christianity that were so prevalent in the 17th century.

And lastly, when all is said and done, and all of the revisionism offered by Brundell and Joy are considered, has the interpretation of Gassendi as a mitigated sceptic, been seriously challenged or changed? Both Joy and Brundell say they are criticizing my view, but, it seems to me, that they end up with a reading much like mine, though more carefully stated because of the findings of their researches. Brundell, after saying that Gassendi's scepticism was predominantly an anti-Aristotelian strategem, not a mitigated scepticism to overcome the sceptical crisis, states that Gassendi 'advocated the more sceptical Epicureanism as an alternative to the Aristotelian *scientia*' (140). And, Joy, in showing how Gassendi overcame Pyrrhonian objections to Aristotelianism, indicates, I think, that he developed a tentative, hypothetical formulation of Epicureanism, what Gassendi himself called, a *via media* between scepticism and dogmatism. Kroll makes this the same kind of mitigated scepticism that developed in England in Chillingworth, Wilkins, and Glanvill.

Hopefully these new fine studies will help to bring Gassendi back as one of our intellectual ancestors, and allow us to profit again from his insights and explanations. It will probably do us more good than constantly wallowing in the results of Cartesianism. We might consider as Joy suggests what philosophy today might be like if Gassendi rather than Descartes had been taken as the creator of the modern mind and mentality.

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John Fekete, ed.

Life After Postmodernism:

Essays on Value and Culture.

Montreal: New World Perspectives; New
York: St. Martin's Press 1987. Pp. xix+197.

US \$29.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-312-00833-3);

Cdn \$15.95; US \$12.95

(paper: ISBN 0-920393-98-5 [Cdn.];

0-312-00834-1 [U.S.A.]

John Fekete's bricolage of postmodernist contributions to the thematic of value is part of the CultureTexts series, which has established itself on the leading edge of the postmodernist discourses. Fekete, who is Professor of English and Cultural Studies at Trent University, seeks to initiate a discussion of value among postmodernists, who have generally shied away from addressing that category, perhaps because of the skeptical drift of such techniques or moves as Derridean deconstruction and Foucauldian discourse analysis. Value skepticism is the bogey that Fekete and many of the other contributors seek to exorcise from the postmodern scene. That is a formidable task and, whether or not it is consummated, the attempt to perform or to question it is worthy of attention.

Until Fekete's intervention the critical thrust of postmodernism was directed against dogmatism in all of its forms, including the dogma that Being and Value are coextensive and consubstantial. The attack on logocentrism and meta-narratives did not protect postmodernism on its skeptical flank, and tended to abolish normativity as a consequence of the rejection of foundational metaphysics. How can a discussion of value be restored within a set of discourses that claim to have destroyed or at least deconstructed the systems in which it used to be discussed? That is the question which guides Fekete's program, which is a call for new beginnings.

True to the spirit of postmodernism, not all of the contributors follow that program or even believe in its possibility or desirability. The nine essays, including Fekete's introduction, explore and elaborate, as he says, 'aspects of the postmodern discourse of value,' but they 'engage also in family quarrels with variant interpretive or evaluative currents' (xvi). Indeed, it's doubtful whether there is a family at all here, except in the sense that all of the contributors use the vocabularies associated with post-structuralist art criticism. They use the terms, however, to different effects, replicating in many ways the de-

bates of modern value theory in a new language. The essays show that postmodernism has come of age. Like previous broad cultural movements, it has embraced within its languages nearly all of the diversity that is familiar to philosophy – nearly all, because the contributors are united in criticism of logocentrism. None of them proposes to offer a discursive explication of Being and to ground or justify Value in its terms.

Most generally, three distinct positions on value theory emerge in the texts. The essays by Fekete, Charles Levin, Jay Bernstein, and Arkady Plotnitsky all attempt to confront the challenge of how to affirm normativity in the absence of metaphysics. Barbara Smith's essay, which follows the introduction, eschews normativity in favor of suggesting a sociology of value. Finally, Gyorgy Markus, Susan Stewart, and, most pointedly, Arthur Kroker tend to the position that normativity is a lost cause. One finds that the philosophical life after postmodernism is as frustrating to the seeker for unity as it ever was before.

Philosophers outside the postmodernist camp will be most interested in determining whether or not Fekete's program meets with any success. Can there be a philosophical discussion of value in the absence of metaphysics? A reading of the essays that attempt to answer this question affirmatively produces an equivocal judgment. Yes, it is possible for postmodernists to write about value at great length, but, no, these writers have not yet found a way to provide any reason why something might be judged as better or worse than something else. The most that they are able to do is to argue that the critique of logocentrism does not prohibit a discourse on value. They are unable even to begin to constitute that discourse. Take Fekete, for example, who, though he believes that 'the renewal of value discourse seems to be indicated as the ineluctable order of the day,' can get no farther than promoting 'a more differentiated worldview and a more differentiated value language,' and 'a postmodern pluralism of images and narratives of action, rationality, and value, within the frame of a commitment to foreground with richer density the play of value in the practice of life' (x). This call to pluralism, which is echoed elsewhere, is neither grounded nor justified. One suspects that its hidden presuppositions are either Rousseau-style optimism or Kantian rigorism, probably the former. But neither Fekete nor those other contributors who more or less embrace his project attempt to justify their preferences. They do not exorcise the bogey of value skepticism but show clearly how pervasively it haunts one of the tendencies of

postmodernism, the tendency which has received the legacy of modern naturalism and reformist liberalism.

A less troubled version of postmodernist value theory appears in Barabara Smith's essay, 'Value Without Truth-Value.' Smith's contribution is the weakest in the volume, but it is also the challenge to which several other contributors try to respond. Apparently without being aware of it she has appropriated the legacy of classical or possessive individualism and has worked it into a theory that judgments of value are currencies in a competitive struggle for control over evaluation. Her work shows that some quarters of literary studies have not yet caught up with the sociology of a prior generation, since her ideas echo those which were made popular by George Homans and Peter Blau in their exchange theories of society. There is no normativity here, but just a positivistic sociology of value, though Smith asserts that 'value judgments can still be evaluated, still compared, and still seen and said to be "better" or "worse" than each other' (16). Her theory, however, offers no standards for such comparison, unless she means something like 'justice is the interest of the stronger'. Smith is clearly a modernist in postmodernist dress, which perhaps explains why some of the other contributors find her work tantalizing but problematic.

A full, sane, and self-aware commitment to postmodernism marks the final essay in the volume, Arthur Kroker's reflection on 'Panic Value'. Kroker, who is one of the most profound and perhaps the most existentially sensitive theorist of postmodernity, overturns the other projects in the volume by forwarding the Baudrillard/Nietzsche thesis that ' "value" is the dynamic discourse of nihilism, and to speak of the "recovery of the question of value" is only to assent to the language of deprivation' (183). Rather than succumbing to the nostalgia of promoting the possibility of a new approach to value studies he shows that the fate of value in postmodernity is to have been split into a culturally encoded body and a schizophrenically decoded mind. He provides the diagnosis of the failure of the others to revive normativity by revealing that there are no longer any grounds for it.

Taken as a whole *Life After Postmodernism* is an important collection of texts which deserves careful study by those who wish to understand how questions about value are discussed in postmodernist discourses. The very diversity of positions taken in the texts is a clear warning against oversimplified polemics for or against this

new body of thought. Postmodernism as Fekete et al. present it to us is a struggle to think through a fragmented and divided culture without wishing away its disunity.

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Philosophy of Technology.

Scarborough, ON and Englewood Cliffs, NJ:

Prentice Hall 1988. Pp. x 147.

Cdn \$19.95; US \$14.95. ISBN 0-13-662586-X.

This is the latest offering in Prentice Hall's much-touted 'Foundations of Philosophy Series', and marks an important step toward belated recognition on this continent of the philosophy of technology as a distinct and legitimate sub-field within philosophy. Appropriately enough, F.'s aim in this volume is 'to clarify the foundations of philosophy of technology' (7), exhibiting in orthodox terms the main problems that define this area. His intended audience is comprised chiefly of philosophical neophytes. 'Most ... users will probably be students of philosophy working in classes with their professors and with other books,' as well as those in similar contexts 'who are not philosophy students' (ix). With this audience in mind, F. appends a glossary of technical terms (3½ pages) and a short bibliography (39 entries) of 'sources likely to be companions of this book, or at least to be found in many libraries' (ix).

For the benefit of the neophyte, F. devotes Chapter One to some 'methodological' clarifications. He offers a general definition of philosophy as 'the sustained effort at wondering critically about ... comprehensive issues' (2), explicating 'comprehensive' (2-4) in terms of the traditional divisions of philosophy – epistemology, axiology, metaphysics, methodology – and 'critical' in terms of the criteria of 'consistency,' 'coherence' and 'adequacy' (5-6). He then shows how comprehensive critical wondering can be mapped onto various fields to yield 'philosophies of ...' (e.g., religion, science, history, law, art, etc.).

On this account, the philosophy of technology is 'simply philosophy dealing with a special area of interest' (9), raising epistemological questions (e.g., what is the relation of modern science and technology, of theoretical and practical reason?), axiological questions (e.g., how do increases in technological power alter our ethical responsibilities?) and metaphysical questions (e.g., what implications does our power to manipulate material reality in regular and dependable ways have for our conception of reality as a whole?). These considerations yield the plan of the book:

Chapter 2 will continue the ... focus on *methodology* and critical clarification, both on the definition of technology itself and the logical character of our job in doing that defining. Chapters 3 and 4 explore aspects of *epistemology* raised by technology insofar as modern technology rests on types of knowledge, both practical and theoretical. Chapter 5 presents four general visions of distinctively modern technology, as we exist within it. Chapters 6 and 7 then pursue principally issues in *axiology*, discussing the implications of technology for ethics and religion. Finally, Chapter 8 carries certain of these issues to the level of *metaphysics*, on which, with a speculative look to the future, the book concludes.

In defining 'technology,' F. begins with arguments pro and con concerning whether 'technologies must be made of matter, be science based, be credited to animals, are natural or unnatural?' (15-20). The ostensive purpose is 'to illustrate the need for more conceptual refinement' (20), but for the neophyte it serves also to exemplify a form of philosophical argumentation. F. warns that philosophical definition-making 'is not a process of *reporting* but of *deciding*' (20), and rehearses some standard criteria by which such 'decisions' are made, applying these to establish working definitions of 'technology,' 'artifact and artificial,' 'nature and natural' (20-9). He defines 'technologies' (for which 'technology' is simply the general term) as 'the practical implementations of intelligence,' 'practical' indicating what is 'not wholly an end in itself' and 'implementations' entailing 'concrete embodiment' in 'artifacts or social organizations' (26). F. acknowledges that this definition is in keeping with what Heidegger calls the 'instrumental anthropological' conception of technology (64). He also glosses Heidegger's critique of that conception, to wit, that it is 'correct' but not 'true.' It is said to be 'correct' in pointing out something pertinent about technology, but 'untrue' in not disclosing the essence of technology as a whole, thereby concealing the more

basic truth which founds its correctness. F. admits the strategic usefulness of this distinction, but does not go the step further to ask what bearing it has upon his own definition.

Chapters 4 & 5 continue to unpack the definition of technology by examining the meaning of 'intelligence' in its 'practical' and 'theoretical' forms. The point of departure is Whitehead's distinction between 'the reason of Ulysses and the reason of Plato,' which F. extrapolates in some detail and shows how, in our time, these two modes of intelligence have a special unity. He concludes that modern science and modern technology are 'the joint products of theoretical and practical intelligence. ...Neither gave birth to the other. They are non-identical twins of the same parents' (44). Moreover, through the modern unity of theoretical and practical intelligence, we stand 'in a qualitatively different cognitive position regarding nature than was possible in an earlier time in history' (50). At the same time, however, the success of techno-scientific thinking in uniting knowledge and power tends to hegemony, effectively precluding or marginalizing all other critical perspectives (52-3).

In line with the book's introductory character, F. begins Chapter 6 with some reminders of 'basic ethical theory,' drawing principally on Frankena's *Ethics* (also from the 'Foundations' series) as well as on Rawls and Rescher. He goes on to discuss the strengths and limitations of cost/risk analysis and alternatives assessment, against the background of such problems as defining goods and harms, applying the principle of justice, establishing responsible agency. He concludes the chapter with a brief discussion of five ethical issues for current technologies. Not all philosophers of technology would find this account unbiassed. Those of a more existential bent (e.g., Don Ihde) might argue that ethical considerations come too late, if technology is interpreted as a *neutral* implementation of practical intelligence. Others (e.g., George Grant) might argue that the liberal humanism represented by this basic ethical theory is in fact an expression of the hegemony of instrumental reason, not a basis for its normative critique.

Chapters 5 and 7 provide summary accounts of different perspectives on technology. In the former, F. considers philosophical assessments, outlining two examples of 'bright visions' (Marx and Fuller) and two of 'somber' (Heidegger and Marcuse). His aim is not to judge these visions but 'to share' them 'momentarily' in order 'to see from different vantage points the many-faceted phenomenon of technology' (74). In the latter, F. considers religious perspectives, specifically,

the image of technology in the Promethean myth, the conflicting images in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and images in Taoism, Buddhism and Hinduism.

In the final chapter, F. broaches three metaphysical questions evoked by reflection on technology; namely, that of 'the *reality of the world of nature*,' and 'thus the epistemological reliability of science and the firmness of technology's grip on what matters, ... the *nature of human nature*, and the *reality of human freedom* in the face of apparent technological determinism' (116). F. does not presume to answer these questions, but uses the occasion both to clarify a dimension of the philosophy of technology and to indicate something of the nature of metaphysical thinking. By way of summary, F. poses what he declares to be 'the biggest philosophical question of our age' (132). Recalling the critical criteria from Chapter 1, he argues that there is an intrinsic 'incoherence' and 'inadequacy' to instrumental reason, leading us to ask 'whether there might be some alternative to modern techno-scientific thinking,' one that is 'critical, penetrating, empirical, and yet not wholly comfortable with the approaches of analysis, reduction, and alienation that have been the marks of modern science' (133). F. ventures that 'ecology' may herald such a science, from which we might draw a model that 'does not share the basic metaphysical and epistemological assumptions ... of the modern thought-world' (132). Such a model would enjoin technologies that 'aim at *optimization* rather than *maximization*,' would 'lead to more technologies of *cultivation* and fewer of *manipulation*,' and would 'embody technologies of *differentiation* rather than *centralization*' (134).

These final speculations aside, this volume has the best virtues of an introductory text, offering a broad, methodical summary of the area in terms that are, if not always readily intelligible to the novice, then at least clearly explicated. In my own seminars, I have used it successfully as a general reference to orient students to philosophy of technology and to supplement more tendentious readings. To engage more advanced philosophy students, I have also used it as the subject of an exercise, where the task is to evaluate certain sections of the book, ostensibly non-partisan, from the perspective of a particular philosopher of technology (e.g., Grant, Heidegger, Marcuse). In this way, students see how, in certain conceptions, the philosophy of technology is not a sub-field but radically subversive of philosophical orthodoxy.

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William J. Gavin, ed.

Context Over Foundation: Dewey and Marx.
Norwell, MA: D. Reidel Publishing
Company 1988. Sovietica, vol. 52. Pp. 259.
US \$69.00. ISBN 90-277-2670-1.

For those with an interest in either pragmatism or Marxism, and especially both, this is an excellent book. I myself, as one with a strong interest in pragmatism, disagree with many particulars in the work (how could one do otherwise when there are nine authors?), but I find the whole volume to be the most interesting book I have read all year.

Dewey-Marx scholarship has an intense history going way back before the 1930s and the Great Depression. Even Lenin found time to criticize Dewey. Whatever one thinks about the grand philosophies of Dewey and Marx it's hard not to believe that each man had his heart in the right place – i.e., on improving the human condition. Both men were brought up on Hegel and both became 'scientific' materialists who paid their highest respects to Darwin – while at the same time rejecting the 'social Darwinism' of Herbert Spencer. In practical terms their epigoni have been arguing with each other for decades over whether social improvement should be reformist and evolutionary, or carried on through class warfare and revolution. Marxists and pragmatists both claim to be taken seriously on the basis of their thoroughgoing empiricism: i.e., each claims the privileged position of calling its method 'scientific'. Marxists have tended to charge pragmatists with being unscientific, with (ironically) being too empirical to notice the laws and direction of history, thus putting themselves on the side of the capitalist system as mere ineffective reformers. Deweyites, on the other hand, have charged the Marxists with being unscientific for still being too close to Hegel, i.e., too 'metaphysical' when it comes to the status of the dialectic and classes, thus leading to totalitarianism and stagnation (at best) whenever Marxists come to power. Although all the above has been said many times before, the authors in this book are considerate enough to document it for readers new to the area.

What has occasioned the present round of Dewey-Marx scholarship is the rise of 'postmodernism', especially the works of Richard Rorty attacking the metaphysical foundation or basis for certitude and objectivity. While it is difficult to gain focus on a work with nine authors, one can say that the general synthesis they pursue is a bringing together of postmodern 'contextualism' (a rejection of metaphysics

for concrete circumstances) with the claim to objectivity by left-wing political reformers. In other words, can one be a postmodern and still expect to have one's ethical and political platforms taken seriously by others? Can one be certain of being on the right ethical-political path while being a thoroughgoing empiricist?

Seeing Dewey as a postmodern contextualist isn't all that hard: after all, Rorty himself is a pragmatist. Marx, on the other hand, has to be defended as being not a Marxist – or at least as being other than a 'vulgar' Marxist who reduces literally everything to economics. Again nothing new, but the authors have done it with good academic style.

I believe that, in spite of the apparent leanings of several of the authors, Dewey comes off the better against Marx in the light of post-modernism. As the editor, William J. Gavin, puts it in his essay, 'any non-foundationalist philosophy, or any contextualist position, seems to demand, at some level, a Jamesian will to believe' (62). Still, Marxists should find this book every bit as edifying as other high-quality Marxist scholarship – and quite possibly might come to a conclusion different from the one just given. Moreover, like the Strausians and Thomists, it should be noted that the Pragmatists and Marxists still are taking philosophy very seriously.

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Leslie Green

The Authority of the State.

Don Mills, ON and New York: Oxford
University Press 1988. Pp. viii+273.

Cdn \$68.95: US \$49.95. ISBN 0-1-824926-8.

Although traversing familiar terrain in what Green anticipates might be regarded as an 'old-fashioned' manner, this admirable reflection achieves fresh perspectives on much-discussed issues and effects a distinctive amalgamation among well-rehearsed theories of authority. Green's incisive critiques of received formulations and bold if occasionally adventuresome proposals enliven a slightly tired set of topics.

Having dispatched crude functionalist views that sacrifice the conceptual distinctiveness of authority on the altar of system-maintenance, Green argues convincingly that otherwise much more refined conventionalist theories from Hume to the most *au courant* rational choice theories are also theories of social *order*, not social *relations* and especially not of that mode that involves commitments which circumscribe reliance upon 'first-order' reasons for action. More surprisingly, Green makes good the same claim concerning leading versions of contractarianism. Both of these types of theory are concerned with the availability of public goods, preeminently the public good of order, in societies consisting of rational but primarily self-interested individuals. Conventionalists see this as a coordination problem solved by providing information necessary to rational conduct in prisoner-dilemma situations, contractarians as one of motivating action on longer-term or true interests. Unbeknownst to their proponents, however, these modes of theorizing, so far from providing justifications for authority, teach us that it is irrelevant to the problems that animate their theorizing. Insofar as conventions assist or social contracts yield agreements concerning ends and purposes, there is no work for authority to do.

Green's critique of teleological theories relies on an analysis of authority broached by Hobbes and refined in recent years by Richard Friedman, Joseph Raz, and others. In this respect his contribution is to display in detail and over surprising domains the devastation that this analysis wreaks on theories that are not only influential but widely received as theories of authority. Green does little to improve upon the analysis he accepts (he relies most heavily on Raz's formulations); he largely forgoes the opportunity to coordinate it with more general discussions of modalities and types; and he ignores recent challenges such as those of James Griffin and Samuel Scheffler. A consequence is that Green leaves the key notion of 'surrender of judgment' in an unsatisfactory condition, albeit his concluding discussions of civility mitigate this difficulty.

Conventionalist and contractarian theories nevertheless play a major role in Green's constructive argument. In his view, members of modern Western societies have largely assured themselves of public order. Moreover, they have done so by acting in ways that are – the confusions about authority aside – often accurately described (whether guided or not) by these theories. (Is this an overestimation of the orderliness of the societies in question, a serious misestimation of the forces that maintain such order as there is, or both?) The

combination of this circumstance and the availability of refined theories that help us to understand it stills the fears of early modern conventionalists and contractarians. Accordingly, the way is opened to adopt a) suitably stringent criteria of legitimate authority and b) a more relaxed attitude toward those arrangements that involve authority and bear on the problem of order. These convictions inform Green's revival of consent theory as the only satisfactory account of legitimate authority, his flirtations with communitarianism, his argument that there are no universal political obligations, and his promotion of the virtue of civility.

Green construes consenting as an intentional alteration of rights and duties when the relationships to which they are integral are viewed by the parties as intrinsically valuable. On this understanding, which excludes tacit, hypothetical and other bogus renderings proposed by consequentialist thinkers, consent provides a sufficient but defeasible ground for legitimate political authority and for the obligation of consenting parties to obey it. To this extent, Green offers a consent theory of political authority and obligation.

To understand the content (as distinct from the 'incumbency') of the obligations undertaken by consenting, however, we must reject radical individualist views that treat it as a 'sheer act of will' and thereby deprive instances of it of the social dimensions that make them intelligible. To accomplish this, Green (mistakenly – his remarks about the will are little considered) thinks it necessary to endorse the 'social thesis' associated with Hegel, Bradley, and recent communitarian thinkers such as Charles Taylor. These writers, however, as well as the perfectionist and civil-republican tradition generally, think that the social thesis entails the intrinsic value of *political* association involving authority and the further proposition that there are political societies in which all citizens have political obligations.

Green allows that these inferences can be rationally drawn and that those persons who draw them and who consent to such an association thereby acquire political obligations. He argues persuasively, however, that the inferences, so far from being rationally compelling, have seldom been warranted and even less often actually drawn and acted upon. Attention to the character of the modern state, and in particular to the surrender not only of judgment but of self to the state that these conceptions entail, are enough to present 'communitarianism at its least appealing' (215). Whether for these reasons, many citizens of modern states have not consented to their authority. Accordingly, because legitimate political authority entails

obligation universal in the state's claimed jurisdiction, there is no fully legitimate political authority in modern states.

Rather than cause for alarm, Green sees this circumstance as creating opportunities. There is genuinely legitimate authority over those who have consented, citizens who confusedly accept conventionalist or contractarian arguments often think and act as if there is legitimate authority, and others who withhold consent and reject false accounts of authority regularly find sufficient reasons for obedience. (Green rejects the view that 'legitimate authority' is pleonastic, 'illegitimate' or 'non-legitimate authority' self-contradictory, and cheerfully contends that 'reasonably just' il- or non-legitimate authorities may coerce not only the confused but those who explicitly refuse their consent. As in Tussman's consent theory, in the stretch of discussion in question the latter become, disturbingly, political 'child-brides'.)

We can, therefore, not only safely dismiss the 'harangues of law-and-order ideologues' (209) but discourage the 'habit of obedience' as insufficiently discriminating. In their place, and out of concern for the quality of social relations, we should cultivate the 'virtue of civility,' a form of 'self-restraint' that is 'weaker,' more 'conservative' but better attuned to the requirements of justice than the surrender of judgement that is part of authority relations. Thus by a different and perhaps better (because in all but nomenclature more anarchistic?) route than that followed by other critics of the surrender of judgement, by the end Green largely rids us of that obnoxious notion.

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John Howie, ed.

Ethical Principles and Practice.

Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press 1987. Pp. xvii+171.
US \$17.95. ISBN 0-8093-1410-X.

The book consists of six essays which were originally presented as lectures at the Wayne Leys Memorial Lectureship at Southern Illinois University. The essays deal either with the theoretical issue of the role of moral principles in assessing particular cases, or with specific applied issues. All but one of the pieces have not been previously published.

One of the best pieces in the book is Michael Bayles' 'Moral Theory and Application' (reprinted from *Social Theory and Practice* 10 [1984]). Bayles articulates and defends an approach to applied ethics. He rejects two extreme views: (1) deductivism, the view that applied ethics simply involves applying (by means of empirical assumptions) fundamental moral principles to cases; and (2) pragmatic eclecticism, the view that moral problems are solved by attending to all the particular facts of the particular cases – with moral principles having no special justificatory role. By appealing to similarities with legal reasoning Bayles defends an intermediate position according to which the formulation, examination, and application of *prima facie* midlevel bridge principles (such as the principles of informed consent and of confidentiality) is the primary task for applied ethics. Such midlevel principles will be supported by a wide range of moral theories (e.g., various forms of utilitarianism, Kantianism, etc.), and so for many cases the applied ethicist need not enter the foundational debate. Of course, different moral theories will give different weights to the different midlevel principles, and in cases where those principles conflict, the foundational debate is unavoidable. Nonetheless, for most real life cases, Bayles rightly claims, there will be enough agreement on the weights of the different principles for there to be agreement on what is permissible.

Another interesting piece is James Childress's 'The Gift of Life'. Childress starts by giving a careful history and analysis of the problems in obtaining and distributing organs for transplantation. The basic problem is that not enough organs are donated for transplantation. The most obvious source for such organs is the recently dead. If all organs from cadavers were donated, there would be a surplus of organs. But only 1.5-20% of such organs are donated. So an impor-

tant question is: What sort of policy for obtaining organs for transplantation is both effective and morally permissible? Childress discusses the following policies for increasing the number of organs obtained: education, explicit consent (e.g., on a form with one's driver's license), presumed consent (which must be explicitly overridden), markets for organs, and tax credits. Childress also discusses – but does not clearly endorse – various policies for determining who receives a needed organ, and arguments in favor of state funding of organ transplants.

In 'Terrorism and Moral Rights' Carl Wellman considers the question of when terrorism is morally justified. He starts by arguing against a common view that a rights-based morality cannot justify terrorism. He claims roughly that terrorism could be justified by a rights-based approach in cases where it is an effective means to reducing the number of important rights violations without violating the rights of innocent people. He then goes on to tentatively defend the view the rights can be plausibly grounded in utility.

There are three other essays: Abraham Edel rejects the view that applied ethics simply involves applying rules, and defends a non-universal, pluralistic, exploratory view of ethical theory. Warner Wick argues that commitment to moral ideals does not commit one to fanaticism. John Lachs discusses some of the problems of modern life which make it difficult to combine freedom with responsibility.

Some of these essays are definitely worth reading, but many are not. Furthermore, the volume is a mix of pieces on *the nature of* applied ethics and pieces *in* applied ethics. As a result the volume lacks coherence, and therefore for most readers will probably not be worth buying.

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Robert Kalechofsky

*The Persistence of Error: Essays in
Developmental Epistemology.*

Lanham, MD: University Press of America
1987. Pp. v+73.

US \$17.25 (cloth: ISBN0-8191-6456-9);

US \$8.75 (paper: ISBN 0-8191-6457-7).

Kalechofsky is a professor of mathematics at Salem State College with a long-standing concern with 'the interface among the scientific disciplines, epistemology, and cognitive psychology' (73). The present work evidences these interests. In his Introduction, Kalechofsky states the thesis that the gap between our knowledge and that which we are attempting to know is mediated by 'metaphores' (3; the spelling is Kalechofsky's). 'Metaphore ... refers not only to the dramatic symbols of literature and poetry, but to all symbol formation including that of mathematics and science' (3). Kalechofsky defines 'metaphore' as 'a mental construct which can be put into a correspondence, tightly or loosely, with an aspect of our experience' (4). A tight metaphore is one in which there must be a one-to-one correspondence between the elements and appropriate operations of two systems. An example of a tight metaphore is the notion of isomorphism in mathematics. Creation myths are examples of loose metaphores. Kalechofsky generalizes the notion of metaphore to encompass all reasoning. Problem solving consists of searching for metaphores which fit. Sometimes other people are the source of our metaphores and sometimes we create our own. Kalechofsky's metaphores bear a strong family resemblance to Husserl's intentional objects and especially C. I. Lewis' principles of interpretation (in *Mind and the World Order*). Like the latter, metaphores undergo a continuing development in the life of both individuals and cultures. The motive force behind this evolutionary change is, on Kalechofsky's view, the persistence of error.

The primary argument of Chapter One is that knowing is an evolutionary process. Kalechofsky emphasizes the role of error in such processes. As a working definition of error Kalechofsky proposes using a suggestion of Charles Sanders Peirce that error may consist in seeing similar things as being different or different things as being similar (12). As an example of the evolutionary process of knowledge, Kalechofsky cites the change from a Ptolemaic to a Copernican to an Einsteinian perspective and claims the latter can subsume both the Ptolemaic and Copernican views (16). The same example forti-

fies the claim that the development takes place in an increasingly decentered manner. Since 'knowing and error are as two sides of the same coin ... a study of erring should exhibit stage developmental characteristics also' (22). Error must be a relative concept because one individual or group judges another to be in error on the basis of dissonance with its own metaphore.

Another aspect of Kalechofsky's cognitive developmental model is psychological. That is, there is a strong tendency for people to see or not to see what they expect. The example cited is the failure of Europeans, under the influence of the view that the heavens are unchangeable, to take note of sunspots until Galileo even though the Chinese reported seeing them without the aid of telescopes as early as 200 C.E.

In Chapter Three, Kalechofsky explores two mathematical models (compare Lewis' principles of order), themselves to be considered metaphore networks, which articulate the cognitions of young children. Kalechofsky reports that he was guided in the development of the models by several aspects of the research of Jean Piaget. The first model reveals a variety of errors made by children whose cognitive functioning is characterized by the model. The idea is to support the thesis that 'error does not occur in isolation but is linked to a metaphor network or set of linked cognitions' (40). The second model 'involves deeper probing into the class and relational structures of the concrete stage of childhood development and refers to children approximately nine to eleven years old' (49). In an appendix to Chapter Three Kalechofsky describes further experiments with children using the first model.

In the final section of his book, 'A Summing Up' (in which 'metaphor' replaces 'metaphore'), Kalechofsky asserts that 'Investigation of the process of metaphor formations can be a fruitful meeting ground for the sciences and the humanities' (67). This can come about by means of paying close attention to metaphors which tend to contribute to the split ('the arrogance of assumed superiority and uniqueness of explanatory efficacy' [68]) and metaphors which tend to decrease it ('the deep resonance of the poetic response to Newton's scientific metaphors in the seventeenth century' [68]). Kalechofsky's final counsel is the adoption in intellectual pursuits of a new attitude. Instead of 'the search for absolute truth which, like the wondrous stag, lead the hunters through wondrous forests ... we must see all truth as tempered by the possibility of error in the constant, developmental interaction between the thinker and reality' (70).

While Kalechofsky's writing throws off occasional poetic sparks, his manuscript is in desperate need of proofreading. It would also benefit from some simple editing. Much of his positive content is lost sight of in an attempt to understand the organization of the text. The connection between the sections of the text is by no means clear and I am not certain that I have not supplied something in my review. This is all the more possible in that I share Kalechofsky's pragmatism. It is not, however, altogether clear that Kalechofsky himself realizes that he is essentially setting forth the implications of classical American pragmatism despite the reference to Peirce. I suspect that someone who does not already share Kalechofsky's point of view will not see the point of the experiments with young children outlined in Chapter Three. This is a point which would be worth considerable elaboration. Kalechofsky has provided us with a brief sketch of an interesting book when what we have been led to expect by the format is a complete book.

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Mary O'Brien

Reproducing the World: Essays in Feminist Theory.

Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1989.

Pp. xiv+306.

US \$34.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-8133-0760-0);

US \$13.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8133-0761-9).

This collection of papers by Mary O'Brien is a work of 'passionate scholarship'. 'Passionate scholarship' is the term O'Brien herself uses to describe the new research and theorizing undertaken by feminism, 'with its commitment to collectivity (sometimes fractious); its commitment to the development of new forms of knowledge, a canonical fight whose lines are not yet clearly drawn; its commitment to the transcendence of violence as the world's star problem solver; its commitment to unifying theory and practice while rejecting blind orthodoxies' (256).

Thus, *Reproducing the World* is not a work of mainstream or 'malestream' philosophy. Rather it is feminist political theory, iconoclastic literary criticism, incisive cultural analysis, and trenchant bioethics. The scholarship is careful, thorough, innovative; the tone, uppity, cheeky, and feisty.

The diversity of research gathered here makes generalizations about it almost as difficult as are generalizations about anthologies with multiple authors. The papers range from O'Brien's chatty discussion of her own intellectual origins in 'Collective Pilgrimage: The Political Personal', to a feminist analysis of traditional education in 'Political Ideology and Patriarchal Education', to a reinterpretation of Samuel Beckett's 'Waiting for Godot' as a dramatization of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, in 'Resolute Anticipation: Heidegger and Beckett'. Because of the rich and eclectic nature of this collection, and its likely use by feminist scholars interested in the development of O'Brien's thought, it is regrettable that there is no index to guide researchers to the interweaving of ideas and themes throughout the papers.

The book draws together material written and presented by O'Brien to a variety of different audiences during the 1980s, and is divided into three main parts: 'Feminist Theory', 'The Critique of Patriarchy', and 'Women, Health, and Education'. Several of the papers have been previously published, but this anthology provides the first opportunity for readers to examine in book form the applications of O'Brien's thought as it has developed since the publication of her influential first book, *The Politics of Reproduction* (Routledge & Kegan Paul 1981).

Readers without much background in feminist theory may be most intrigued by O'Brien's reexaminations of such standard patriarchal thinkers as Machiavelli, Milton, and Hegel, and her contribution to the ongoing feminist critique of 'the intransigent dualism of malestream thought and ... the social structure of the traditional separation of public and private life' (133). For feminist readers, on the other hand, much of the interest of *Reproducing the World* may lie in the ways in which it elaborates, extends, and applies the theoretical framework first set forth in O'Brien's earlier book. O'Brien's presentation of the centrality of reproduction in human life and thought is not an argument or a set of arguments, but functions as a cumulative critical picture, focused on 'reproductive consciousness' as it is differentiated in males and females. 'There is such a thing as reproductive consciousness, and it differs between men and women.

Male consciousness is alienated from the process of reproduction. Man is related to his child only by thought, by knowledge in general, rather than by experience in particular – whereas motherhood is a unity of consciousness and knowing on the one hand, and action (reproductive labor) on the other' (22).

For many feminist theorists, O'Brien's original examination of reproductive politics was an invigorating declaration of the significance of an area of human life hitherto ignored by traditional political theorists. In *Reproducing the World*, this perspective continues to generate fresh insights: for example, that the conservative agenda to control reproductive power through the invention of new reproductive technologies is a struggle to 'preserve men's reproductive freedom while canceling their reproductive alienation' (235), and that 'the uncertainty of paternity *commands* co-operation between men as a class: lay off my woman and I'll lay off of yours' (185; O'Brien's emphasis).

But for many feminists, O'Brien's approach has also seemed uncomfortably close to a reinstatement of a feminist version of biological determinism. As O'Brien herself acknowledges, 'any attempt to examine reproduction of the species as a necessary substructure of history, or to assert that there is such a thing as reproductive consciousness, is likely to be treated with the special contempt reserved for those vulgarians who have not yet transcended biological determinism. Biology, of course, represents matter which does not matter, for it is immune to transformation by the serious attention of the thinking man' (51). Other feminists may have doubts about O'Brien's assumption that the reproductive consciousness of all women – celibate or sexually active, heterosexual or lesbian, fertile or infertile, mothers or non-mothers – is the same, or about her ostensibly essentialist view of men, which seems to imply that they are ordained to oppress: '[M]en appear to need patriarchy, and are still passionately engaged in the defense of patriarchal structures as "natural" phenomena' (49).

O'Brien's response to such doubts is both explicit and acerbic. She points out that 'large and impressive bodies of contemporary thought' are 'predicated on specific biological realities': Marxism on the need to eat, psychoanalysis on human sexuality, existentialism on 'the concrete inevitability of individual death' (52). 'I am not trying to set up a model of biological determinism, though I do think that intellectual denigration and hysteria produced by *any* notion of determinism is one of the more exaggerated genuflections to the notion of free-

dom which liberalism posits as existential. What is not biologically determined, as history shows us, is the cultural forms in which we deal with biological realities – the needs for food, shelter, sex and so forth which are clearly of biological origin' (298-9, O'Brien's emphasis). Moreover, she emphasizes, those forms can be changed historically (154).

Thus, despite the sometimes misleading generalizations inherent in much of her language, O'Brien's political theory is primarily a critique of patriarchal thought and of cultural masculinity, rather than of individual men or of men as a sex class. In *Reproducing the World*, as in her earlier book, O'Brien's feminist materialism calls attention to the social construction of reproduction, and to the previously-neglected ideological implications of human reproductive practices.

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Michael Ruse

Homosexuality: A Philosophical Inquiry.

Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press;
New York: Basil Blackwell 1988.

Pp. xii+299.

Cdn \$44.95: US \$19.95. ISBN 0-631-15275-X.

Ruse's book is divided into two unequal parts. The first and longer is devoted to epistemological questions, the second to ethical. Ruse aims to get at the foundational suppositions of people's thoughts and actions regarding homosexuality (x).

The epistemology of homosexuality turns out to be the explanatory theories of homosexuality dealt with in Chapters 2-6. A critical review of these theories is worth having and Ruse is able to show how frequently tests of them have been flawed and how scanty the evidence for them is.

But is the scientific status of the explanatory theories what is most important about them? The biological and psychological theories that Ruse discusses would mostly not exist if homosexuality as a medical category did not exist. The invention of the category and the theoriz-

ing are an expression of social hostility. Like the 'creeping schizophrenia' of Soviet psychiatry 'homosexuality' is a device for persecuting a group held to be a menace to society. To treat the etiology of creeping schizophrenia as one more psychological theory is to misunderstand it. Likewise homosexuality. The medical category serves to reinforce cultural notions about proper gender roles, to force people into them, and to penalize non-conformists by stigmatizing them as sick and assisting the agents of gender propriety in destroying their happiness. Nor does persecution turn into something else because the persecutors invoke paternalistic justifications. The social, political, and cultural aspects of the category as well as the explanatory theories are themselves part of the phenomenon that Ruse ought to address. To treat these theories as the only matter of philosophical interest is more an exercise in ignoring foundational suppositions than in uncovering them.

If Ruse's treatment in the first part of the book were broader, he might have been able to give a better account of perversion in the second part. Ruse sees perversion as a kind of violation of a cultural norm, a violation that one cannot empathize with. But this does not account for the lack of strong emotive response in some cases that Ruse ought to count as perversion, e.g., an undergrad with green hair. In fact, perversion involves a deviation from approved gender roles with regard to sexual activity, and the charge of perversion invokes values that are part of the cultural formation profoundly antagonistic to gays, matters which Ruse passes by. The homophobe will be unconvinced by the Kantian and utilitarian arguments for tolerance that Ruse offers because he doesn't care about the value of rational choice and respect for moral agents and he doesn't care about maximizing pleasure or happiness. He cares about forcing people into culturally approved gender roles. Progress here waits on a revaluation of these values.

The historical material on Western attitudes to homosexuality should include mention of the Romans and the early church along with its discussion of the Greeks. To say that with Plato's *Laws* the 'opposition to homosexual acts becomes absolute' (181) as if this represented the prevailing idea among the ancient pagans or among the Greeks is utterly misleading. Even early Christian attitudes included toleration and approval.

With regard to the Bible, the condemnations in Leviticus get trotted out though they have to do with ritual purity and have no force for Christians. Other texts are quoted just as if there were no prob-

lems at all about translation. John Boswell (*Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*) has argued that the same passages do not contain a general condemnation of homosexuality. Ruse refers to Boswell, but he doesn't agree with him and gives no reasons why. His statement that the passages are really condemnatory (183) is peremptory and unconvincing.

Much of the ethical discussion centers on what Kantian and utilitarian ethical theories make of homosexuality. Ruse's conclusion is that homosexual relations pass muster insofar as they mimic the loving relations of heterosexual monogamy. This is alleged to follow from Kantian premisses because only in such a relationship is it possible for people not to use one another as mere means to sexual gratification. If, however, the only morally defensible personal relations require intimate commitment, we're in trouble. How much more impersonal than casual sex is a typical encounter with a receptionist or a salesclerk! On Kantian grounds, whatever Kant himself may have thought, mutual consent seems to be enough.

Ruse draws a similar conclusion from Millian utilitarianism partly by invoking the possibly damaging effects of promiscuity and partly by appealing to statements of Mill's that depend on his unfortunate idea of higher and lower pleasures. The corrosive effects of promiscuity are mostly hypothetical and in any case it is a question of how much is too much. As for higher and lower pleasures, a committed relationship, involving the intellect, is a higher pleasure than a one-night stand. According to Mill pleasures involving the intellect are always supposed to be preferred by those in the know to sensual pleasures like eating and sex. This no doubt accounts for the poetry readings that go on until somebody drops from hunger. The conclusion seems to follow that on Kantian or utilitarian grounds even impersonal gay sex can be morally good.

The last chapter, 'Homosexuals and Society', presents valuable discussions of the legalization of homosexual acts, privacy, the age of consent, employment discrimination, and affirmative action. Ruse argues for the legalization of gay sex between consenting adults and the end of employment discrimination against gays. His treatment of age of consent laws is unfortunate. Ruse endorses a law that would entail the certain cost of imprisonment and ruined lives of some gays convicted under it. Against this he balances the near or precisely zero probability of saving a very few people from becoming gay as a result of early homosexual experience with an older person. Ironically, the motive for Ruse's position is to minimize the possibility that people

will be unhappy as a result of being homosexual. It is surprising that Ruse hardly mentions AIDS in this chapter. The reader looking for a discussion of the implications for gays of HIV testing, confidentiality, contact tracing, quarantine, insurance discrimination and the like will need to look elsewhere.

Ruse gives an enlightened discussion of many of the moral and social issues raised by homosexuality and a good account of the scientific status of explanatory theories of homosexuality. He has not, however, begun to get at the 'foundational suppositions' of people's attitudes toward it.

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Harry van der Linden

Kantian Ethics and Socialism.

Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co. 1988.

Pp. xi+369.

US \$32.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-87220-028-0);

US \$14.50 (paper: ISBN 0-87220-027-2).

The attempt to ethicize the philosophy of Marx with the moral principles of Kant may seem an incoherent enterprise. But there is more to its possibility than dogmatic Kantians or Marxians care to admit. At least that is the argument of Harry van der Linden in his interesting and learned study, *Kantian Ethics and Socialism*.

Van der Linden's analysis (awarded the Johnsonian Prize in Philosophy in 1985) resuscitates an earlier attempt in pre-First War Germany and Austria. Its project of combining Marxian historical materialism with Kantian moral metaphysics is best known in the work of Eduard Bernstein, but was pursued with far deeper philosophical understanding by the little known German-Austrian Marburg School and, in particular, by Hermann Cohen, who is the intellectual mentor of van der Linden's study and at the centre of his analysis throughout.

To most philosophers familiar with their work, there will seem to be impossible obstacles to integrating the Kantian and Marxian positions. To begin with, Kant took the idealist and transcendental rather than the material and the empirical as the ground of the real and the true. He prescribed, moreover, the individual and the moral rather than, as Marx, the social and historical as the ultimate framework of human value and development. His regulative ethical idea is systematically opposed to Marx's productively determined revolution as a mode and goal of human advancement. And in polar contrast to Marx, he identified with the property-holding bourgeoisie, despised violence, counselled change by free speech and constitutional means only, and thought the state or the collective had little or no place in the private sanctum of moral choice, and the willing of good on earth.

Van der Linden focuses on the social-versus-individual and historical-determinist versus moral-noumenal theoretical conflicts here, and he uses Hermann Cohen's Kantian socialism as a middle term to show a common ground of Marx's and Kant's moral concern. Kant's moral idea is, by drawing out its implications, socialized; and Marx's historical-determinist idea is, by recognition of its implicit moral content, made open to Kantian ethicization. The unrecognized socialist entailment of Kant's categorical imperative steps into the breach of the 'repressed morality' of Marx to yield a higher synthesis of both on the question of humanity's emancipatory movement towards a truly good world order.

The key step in this carefully prosecuted argument is the generalization of Kant's categorical imperative in its various forms (e.g., its universal law, kingdom of ends, autonomy, end-in-itself, and natural-law formulae) to *social* parameters of meaning. To summarize its pattern: *The individual, by his will operating in conformity to the categorical imperative, must by its entailment, will a moral social order where all are autonomous co-legislators seeking to make one another happy in a harmony of good wills participating not merely in abstracto in moral community, but effectively in social, economic and political institutions.*

Van der Linden begins from the outset with the concept of co-legislators giving the moral law to themselves, and step by step builds his case, exegetically and deductively, for the 'Kantian socialist ethics' he sees implicit in his opening spliced citation from the *Critique of Judgement*:

'The moral law ... determines for us ... a final purpose towards which it obliges us to strive, and this purpose is *the highest good in the*

world possible through freedom ... We are *a priori* determined by reason to promote with all our powers the *summum bonum* (*Weltbeste*), which consists in the combination of the greatest welfare of rational beings with the highest condition of the good in itself, i.e., in universal happiness conjoined with morality most accordant to law' (3).

Van der Linden does not, however, overlook Kant's own political positions which seem to rule against such a socialist deduction: for example, Kant's view that the state cannot enforce direct ethical duties, his defence of private property and capitalism, and his belief that equal freedom and autonomy are consistent with great inequality of wealth. Van der Linden replies to these anti-socialist positions that Kant's conventional political beliefs fail to realize his own ultimate moral principles (e.g., 35-7, 161-2, 200-5, 225). Van der Linden is very clearly a Kantian and not a Marxian, but he is perfectly willing, with his intellectual mentor Cohen, to separate the progressive wheat from the ideological chaff in the master's writing. In all, it is a vigorous philosophical treatise which answers, 143 years later, Marx and Engels' charges in the *German Ideology* (III. 6. A.) that Kant was merely a 'whitewashing spokesman' of 'impotent German burghers who cannot get any further than good will alone ... entirely without result.'

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G. Vesey, ed.

Philosophers, Ancient and Modern.

New York: Cambridge University Press
1989. Pp. v+313.

US \$13.95. ISBN0-521-33799-2

This collection of new essays was put together to help British philosophy students in their last year of school, or, perhaps, first year of University to understand some of the great philosophers of the past and the present.

Vesey invited the essayists to provide 'critical expositions of the prescribed texts, providing the highest standards of analysis and

evaluation, but expressed in such a manner as to make them accessible to sixth-formers without previous acquaintance with philosophy.' It goes without saying that no one came close to this impossible goal, but some did better than others.

There are two expository essays on Plato. J. Annas takes us through the central sections of the *Republic* (v-vii) while N. Denyer examines Plato's account of justice and why he (Plato) thinks that it pays to be just. Annas's essay is the easier to follow while Denyer's is the more interesting.

Aristotle only rates one essay. This is by R. Hursthouse and is on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. This paper is a joy to read even though she says such things as 'I should like to suggest that the belief that we are so constituted that the virtuous characteristically flourish while the wicked do not is a part of virtue itself' (51). I always thought it was a part of virtue to base one's beliefs on evidence.

There are two papers on Descartes' *Meditations*. J. Cottingham does a nice job of bringing into sharp relief the tension between Descartes' claim that 'my essence consists *only* in my being a thinking thing' and his claim that 'I am not lodged in my body as a pilot in a vessel, but that I am intimately conjoined and as it were intermixed with it.' He concludes correctly, I think, that what does the thinking is not an incorporeal mind but rather a *person*, 'and a person is, necessarily, something with a body' (89). J. Watling's paper on Descartes' method of doubt is probably a bit too difficult for beginners. He does however manage to make some interesting points. For example, although one could not depict a square in a dream with more than four sides one could dream *that* squares have more than four sides.

Hume gains top honours with three papers. E. Craig takes us through Hume's account of the distinction between impressions and ideas and through his theory of belief. G. Vesey deals with Hume's attempt to show that freedom and determinism are compatible. And A. Flew attempts to bring out the force of Hume's arguments on religion. Of the three papers Vesey's is by far the best. He obviously took to heart the instructions he gave his contributors even though he does say that 'it is easier to preach accessibility [to beginners] than to practice it.' His presentation of the free will problem and Hume's solution is clear, his criticisms of Hume's solution are succinct and he does attempt to present a better solution to the problem. My only complaint is that space prevented him from presenting his solution in a fuller form.

Only two 20th-century analytical philosophers are examined – Russell and Ayer. Two papers are devoted to Russell's *Problems of Philosophy*. R. M. Sainsbury's paper is on Russell's theory of acquaintance while J. O. Urmson's is on Russell's theory of universals. Urmson's paper is a model of clarity. In fact the problem of universals is so well dealt with it might leave the beginner asking – why all the fuss? Sainsbury's paper, on the other hand, is unnecessarily obscure. No doubt philosophy is a deep-end subject but some presentations of that deep end are murkier than others! As well as being obscure it does not bring into focus Russell's distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge of description. The beginner would be well advised to read just Russell.

O. Hanfling gives a solid critical review of Ayer's *Language Truth and Logic*. Even though he is travelling over well-trodden terrain he does manage to find some new things to say. Most of the things he has to say are sound, but one is, I think, mistaken. There are as Hanfling points out two uses of 'verify'. We can say that Smith verified the statement 'It snowed last night' and we can say that the statement 'It snowed last night' is verified by the fact that it snowed last night. According to Hanfling, Ayer uses 'verify' in the latter impersonal sense. He bases this on the fact that Ayer at one point says 'what may be said to verify them conclusively is the occurrence of the experience to which they uniquely refer.' But this claim of Hanfling is, I think, mistaken. First of all the whole thrust of *Logic, Truth and Logic* points towards the first interpretation. For example Ayer says in Chapter I where he introduces the criterion of verifiability, 'We say that a sentence is factually significant to any given person, if, and only if, he knows how to verify the proposition which it purports to express' (*L. T. & L*, 35). Furthermore when Ayer says that such statements as 'There are mountains on the other side of the moon' are verifiable in principle he is pointing to the fact that to verify it one would have to go in a rocket to the moon and take a look. If Ayer was using 'verify' in the latter impersonal sense he would have to say not that 'There are mountains on the other side of the moon' is verifiable but that it is *verified* – verified by the fact that there are mountains on the other side of the moon (if it turned out that there were mountains on the other side of the moon). Remember that Ayer was writing in 1936!

Finally, to give the beginner a taste of continental philosophy and political philosophy there is a paper on Nietzsche, a paper on Sartre and a paper on J. S. Mill's *On Liberty*.

Would I recommend the book to a person taking an introductory course on philosophy? No doubt some of the papers are too difficult for beginners but this is more than balanced by the clarity and exegetical value of some of the others. Yes, I would recommend it.

P. T. Mackenzie

University of Saskatchewan

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