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Mailed in March 1991

Jose A. Benardete
Metaphysics: The Logical Approach.
Don Mills, ON and New York: Oxford University Press 1989. Pp. x+210.
Cdn $48.95: US $39.95
(cloth: ISBN 0-19-219217-5);
Cdn $23.95: US $14.95
(paper: ISBN 0-19-289203-7).

Benardete has written an insightful, absorbing, fascinating book. It is an example of metaphysics in the grand style, concerning itself, as he says, with the theory of 'what lies founded deep in the nature of things' (4). He draws from both Anglo-American and continental sources, and makes good use of historical material, in arguing for the fundamental role of the Principle of Identity in metaphysics, telling us that 'to be as such is to be self-identical' (25). Yet, as his fundamental principle suggests, it is philosophical logic which plays the key role in underpinning his view. Indeed, he sees Frege as having inaugurated a renewal of classical metaphysics. Aristotle, Scotus, Quine, and Kripke are also major figures for Benardete.

Benardete begins, in the Introduction, by noting that, for Aristotle, metaphysics is concerned with the nature of being qua being. In Aristotle, logic and metaphysics are seen to emerge together, as the subject-predicate and thing-property distinctions are analogous (2). This leads to a discussion, in Chapter 1, of how a property might belong to a thing, essentially or accidentally. In Chapter 2, the discussion continues with regard to relativistic versus absolute predication. Benardete claims that, for Aristotle, metaphysics is to be the general theory of what (essentially) everything is qua itself (11) and of the attributes that belong to each thing per se (i.e., absolutely) (14).

Thus, in Chapter 3, we are told that the primary mission of metaphysics is to determine whether relativism – in either its classical (Protagorean) or its modern (post-Kantian) version – is true (18). The secondary mission of metaphysics is to determine whether things have any of their attributes essentially and, if so, which attributes. In arguing for the fundamental status of the Principle of Identity, Benardete has undertaken both missions.

Frege gives us, '$(x)\ x=x$', as a logical (though, perhaps, not purely formal [27]) principle. Benardete then claims that self-identity is both an absolute and essential property of everything *qua* itself (25). The rallying cry has become, 'No entity without *self*-identity'.

The rest of the book is an attempt to elucidate the status of the Principle of Identity as a fundamental principle of metaphysics. One worry is that in its analytic (Fregean) form, the principle appears not to extend our knowledge (26). By the end of the book, Benardete suggests that the principle can be understood really to have a synthetic a priori form (202). Yet, while he provides an extended discussion of the role of the synthetic a priori in philosophy, the argument for the synthetic a priori status of the Principle is less than obvious – until one realizes that the principle, 'to be is to be self-identical', has, in effect, become the principle, 'to be is to be (re)- identifiable' (156).

In acknowledging that any basic metaphysical principle must be controversial (given the serious reservations of Hume, Kant, and Wittgenstein as to the very possibility of the metaphysical enterprise generally), he notes that for Wittgenstein, 'Everything is identical with itself,' is meaningless talk (27- 8). It is here that a discussion of identity claims of the contrasting form, '$x=y$', is most needed and yet lacking. For it is only these latter claims which appear to be truly informative. This lack is especially puzzling in someone who takes his cues from Frege and twice mentions Butchvarov's *Being Qua Being* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1979), in which the importance of the so-called material or informative identity statement looms large.

Briefly, the rest of the elucidation runs as follows: In the chapter, 'Truth', Benardete takes the Liar Paradox as attempting to show that language and thought only function within a constrained universe of discourse (28). And for Tarski, then, truth gets relativized to a level of discourse as well (29). Thus, to claim that the Principle of Identity is a fundamental metaphysical thesis – not subject to such relativism – is to claim (i) that the whole Tarskian program is to be rejected and (ii) that metaphysics as such must have as one of its projects an anti-Tarskian solution to the Liar. Benardete's solution is ultimately to explicate predication in terms of set theory (89). Sets are held to be emergent entities which supervene upon their members (126-8). The members of any set must, then, all be found at some *lower* level. Thus, Russell's Paradox and the Liar are to be solved in a fashion not unlike that of Russell's own Theory of Types.

In the chapter, 'Functions', Benardete notes that, although Frege gives us, '$(x)\ x=x$', the formula is taken by Frege to say merely that every *object* is identical with itself, while 'not quite everything is an object for Frege' – namely, not concepts or functions (59). Benardete claims that existence is being self-identical (61-2), but here we come

to see that a thing's existence really turns on there being criteria for *re*-identifying the thing (71-2; 156) (again reminiscent of Butchvarov's claim that existence is to be understood as indefinite identifiability). While Fregean concepts and functions lack clear identity criteria (59), everything can still be understood to be self-identical, says Benardete (72). For the key terms ('thing', 'something', 'is') of the Principle of Identity undergo a shift in meaning when we move to second-order discourse.

This leads to a discussion of the problem of universals (73). Property-talk is not to be taken literally (76). Second-order things are not really things. Yet, the relevant first- and second-order statements appear to mean the same thing. This, Benardete says, may lead to a despair with regard to the notion of meaning. Meanings simpliciter then fall out of one's ontology, to be replaced by sense and reference (77). Does this mean that we can *refer* to second-order entities? No, says Benardete, not literally. This claim, in turn, leads to a discussion of, inter alia, poetic – that is, non-literal – uses of language in the remaining chapters of the book. He concludes: 'More than any putative world-view encompassing the two, it is the cultivation of metaphysical connoisseurship regarding mathematics and poetry that offers the best prospect today of achieving a reasonable facsimile of wisdom' (202).

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Seth Benardete
Socrates' Second Sailing.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1989.
Pp. ix+238. US $29.95 ISBN 0-226-04242-1.

Socrates' Second Sailing originated in Benardete's own review of another book, Leo Strauss' *The City and Man*. Indeed, the present work might best be characterised as an exercise in Straussian hermeneutic, the basic principles of which are set out in Benardete's original review of *The City and Man*. Chief among these are the following: a) nothing in a Platonic dialogue happens by chance (this view was

also held by Paul Friedlander); b) 'every Platonic dialogue is a whole; every Platonic dialogue deals with a part of the whole apart from the whole (i.e., the entire Platonic corpus)'; c) the speeches in a Platonic dialogue cannot be understood apart from their dramatic contexts and these contexts cannot in turn be understood apart from the wholes of which they form the parts; and, d) dialectic, as practised by Socrates, is the taking apart and the re-assembling of the parts in a quest for the understanding of the whole. The reader of a Platonic dialogue must approach the task of reading in accordance with these principles. In addition, the principles must be understood within the context provided by Strauss' own claim, in *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, that the 'teachings' of the great philosophers are to be found by reading 'between the lines' of their written works, works that must never be taken literally.

When approached on the basis of the above set of principles each of Plato's dialogues is not unlike a fragment of a broken hologram, each part, while existing apart from the other parts, contains within itself the whole which, in turn, integrates the parts and gives them their meanings as parts of a whole. Thus, to understand fully any part of Plato is to understand all of Plato and, conversely, one cannot fully understand any part of Plato unless one understands all of Plato. This means that criticisms directed against any part of Plato can be deflected on the ground that the critic fails to understand the whole from within which the part under attack makes sense. Faced with such a response the only path available to the critic might appear to be that advocated by Schopenhauer with regard to solipsism. Confronted with an impregnable fortress one must recognize that its defenders are trapped inside by the very nature of their defenses; hence, the only sensible course of action is to bypass the fortress altogether. It is in this way that the lines have been drawn between those who follow Strauss and those who do not. These lines are clearly evident in the present work in the absence of references to competing interpretations of the *Republic*. They are, of course equally evident in the absence of any references to Strauss, or, more significantly, perhaps, to Allan Bloom, in such recent works as Julia Annas' *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* and Nicholas White's *A Companion to Plato's Republic*. These latter works are themselves embedded in a tradition of Platonic criticism whose basic principles are very different from those outlined above, a tradition whose best known earlier representatives were Bosanquet and Nettleship.

As one who does not identify with either of these traditions, I find myself intrigued by an approach to Plato that is grounded in the recognition of the integrity of the individual dialogues, but I draw the line at the idea that the entire Platonic corpus might also be assumed to possess a similar integrity. For example, each of Beethoven's symphonies strives toward an integrity that it would be inappropriate to seek out in the entire set of nine symphonies. Similarly, each Platonic dialogue strives toward a degree of artistic and intellectual integrity that need not be present within the entire set of dialogues. The assumption that the entire corpus possesses that degree of integrity fails to recognize the extent to which intellectual development is inseparable from the contingencies of existence, even in the case of Plato. On the other hand, those who would divide each dialogue up into bits and pieces miss much that is of the utmost importance for a full appreciation of the richness of a Platonic dialogue. Moreover, while many of Plato's (Socrates') arguments are undeniably interesting outside their contexts, they cease to be *Plato's arguments* as soon as they are isolated in this way.

At the beginning of the book Benardete distinguishes between two forms of argument in Plato. Some Platonic arguments are 'burst-like' while others are 'filament-like'. The latter arguments must be followed throughout large stretches of the text, possibly through all of the text, while the former are relatively short and self-contained. Benardete's own style favours 'filament-like arguments' but the result verges on reverie at many points as he wanders throughout the entire Platonic corpus in his development of a theme. This can be disorienting and, in the end, unpersuasive insofar as the entire corpus is reduced to the level of a single work. Moreover the shorter arguments that might be offered in support of unusual interpretations are often missing. For example, Benardete claims that in the passage in which Socrates founds the city in book II of the *Republic* Socrates says that 'the jack-of-all-trades, in minding his own business, has less trouble' than the individual who cooperates with others in an effort to satisfy his needs (49). Yet, in the passage in question (370a3-4) Socrates says precisely the opposite. There are other problems, as well. Benardete translates *thumos* as 'will'. While this is not without precedent, the modern connotations of this word make it very unsuitable as a translation in the context of the *Republic*. Yet, given the set of principles underlying *Socrates' Second Sailing*, it is unlikely that criticisms such as these will have much of an impact upon its author.

One need not be an adherent of any one of the currently fashionable schools of literary criticism to recognize that there are important philosophical questions for anyone seeking self-knowledge through the reading of texts. Benardete's book (and the set of hermeneutic principles upon which it is based) raises a number of serious questions regarding the relation between Plato (the historical individual), Plato (as he is understood by given individuals at different times in history), Socrates (the historical individual), Socrates (the character in Plato's dialogues) and the reader of the dialogues. It would appear that there may be a continuum in the study of Plato, ranging from those who debate the accuracy of single words in different manuscript traditions to those who, like the followers of Leo Strauss, believe that only the whole can be meaningful. Yet, in each case there is an interpretation of the whole lying behind the approach being taken to the parts. Even a debate over a single word will be rooted in an overview of the Platonic enterprise. While this is not to agree with Benardete's approach, it is a recognition of the importance of the questions that are raised by that approach. I was somewhat disappointed, therefore, to discover that these questions are not discussed by Benardete. They are questions whose implications Plato would have been eager to explore.

This is not a work for anyone who is not already thoroughly familiar with the *Republic*. On many occasions I found myself returning to the *Republic* in an effort to understand Benardete, rather than the other way around. The work is neither an introduction nor a commentary in the sense in which those of Annas and White clearly are. Indeed, it is difficult to say precisely what purpose the work is intended to serve. On the one hand, much of what Benardete has to say regarding the *Republic* is provocative, but it is difficult to escape the feeling that Benardete does not intend to be provocative if one takes this to imply any kind of disagreement. On the other hand, Benardete's style is so difficult that it becomes a serious obstacle to understanding what he is trying to say. If the work is intended to present Plato's 'teaching' in words other than Plato's own then one would be better advised to read Plato in an effort to uncover that 'teaching', if indeed it exists, on one's own.

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Jack Donnelly
Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice.
Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1990.
Pp. x+295.
US $36.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-8014-2316-3);
US $12.95 (paper: ISBN 0- 8014-9570-9).

This is an interesting and informative book on a topic of considerable contemporary importance. There are, however, some philosophical difficulties – although, as I shall suggest, they need not detract from its overall merit.

In his first chapter, The Concept of Human Rights, Donnelly writes: 'The theory I have tried to sketch does not provide a comprehensive philosophical account of human rights but it does provide an analytic theory of the concept of human rights' (21). After stating that 'the theory is analytical or descriptive, not normative or prescriptive' (21) he goes on: 'I have not yet tried to argue that we ought to adopt the practice of human rights. Instead I have given an account of the implications for social relations of taking human rights seriously' (22). This is disingenuous, for, in the Introduction, referring to his discussion later in the book of human rights and cultural relativism, he writes: 'Although the well-known dangers of cultural and political imperialism demand respect for cultural variety, I argue that we nonetheless ought to defend and seek to implement the universality of human rights norms ...' (3). In the first chapter he says that: 'Human rights are a special class of rights, the rights that one has simply because one is a human being. They are thus moral rights of the highest order' (12). Later in the same chapter after saying that ' ... they are not given to human beings by God, nature, or the physical facts of life' he adds: 'Human rights represent a social choice of a particular moral vision of human potentiality which rests on a particular substantive account of the minimum requirements for a life of dignity' (17). This is how we should understand the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. '... It sets out minimum conditions for a dignified life, a life worthy of a human being ...' (18). Despite his disclaimer, Donnelly's theory is at least implicitly normative as well as analytical. He is concerned with not only what can be meant by human rights but also with how we ought to think of them.

Donnelly claims that his theory makes intelligible not only the moral universality of human rights but also their historical par-

ticularity. As I understand it, his argument is this: Human rights are applicable everywhere today because we live in the era of global capitalism. But in the past before capitalism became dominant they were not universally applicable. In tribal and feudal social systems respect for human dignity was most effectively secured through respect for community membership and traditional social status. Donnelly links the development of the idea of human rights with the development of liberalism, interpreting 'liberalism' in social democratic, not libertarian, terms. Liberalism was the moral and political response to the social and economic conditions generated by emerging capitalism.

Donnelly criticises contemporary Muslim theories of human rights on the ground that they are not theories of human rights properly so-called but of the duties of Muslims to other human beings, both Muslim and non-Muslim. But to this Muslims might reply that in their moral vision, rights are subordinate to duties and that human dignity must be understood in relation to the supreme duty of obedience to the will of Allah. The Salman Rushdie affair is eloquent testimony to the difference between liberal and Muslim moral visions. Are all moral visions equal, or are there rational grounds for discriminating among them? If knowledge and understanding are accepted as such grounds – i.e., the greater the knowledge and the deeper the understanding the better the moral vision – then a case can be made out for liberalism. It embodies a better informed understanding of the human condition than any other moral vision, and can accommodate modified versions of other visions. In particular it can accommodate religious moralities provided, admittedly a major proviso, that they abandon monolithic claims and accept religious pluralism. In his discussion of cultural relativism Donnelly does not argue the case for the liberal moral vision. Instead he assumes that it has been made out and argues from it.

Notwithstanding these philosophical criticisms, what is of value in this book – and there is much of value – can easily be preserved. This can be done by a simple amendment to the title, which might read: 'Liberalism and Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice'. Such an amendment would justify Donnelly in not providing '... a comprehensive philosophical account of human rights'. But he ought to retract his claim that his theory is not normative and admit that by 'taking human rights seriously' he means 'being committed to the moral vision of liberalism'. Among the much of value, I pick out in particular his discussions of the alleged necessity for a 'trade-

off' between respect for human rights and the needs of economic development, and of the problems of securing international respect for human rights. On both these matters he is highly informative. Indeed, this is true of most of what he has to say about 'human rights in practice.' He says of his book that 'It attempts not merely to analyse the interaction between theory and practice but to contribute in some small way to improving practice' (6). As one who shares his commitment to the liberal moral vision I wish him success.

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Rita Felski
Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change.
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1989. Pp. x+223.
US $25.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-674-06894-7);
US $9.95 (paper: ISBN 0-674-06895-5).

Literary analysis and feminist politics are the broad issues that frame Rita Felski's *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*. This complicated combination is kept under control by a focus on a particular genre of literature: contemporary women's 'realist' fiction. The result is a carefully balanced study that is both theoretically sophisticated and sensible.

A familiar set of problems confronting feminist literary criticism is presented in the Introduction and the first two chapters. Felski discusses several schools of feminist literary analysis that have been the site of the development of much feminist theory and their assessments of the political import of widely-read feminist literature. Part of Felski's goal is to defend popular, realist novels against experimental, avant-garde writing. In so doing, she takes on some of the heavyweights of European theory, though she is equally critical of what she sees as naive experiential generalization fostered by American-style criticism. She brings an analytical distance to this

enormous body of work which is most helpful in sorting through the tangle of rival views.

Chapter One, 'Against Feminist Aesthetics', presents profiles of feminist criticism in the U.S., England, France, and West Germany. Felski argues against the thesis that there is any distinctive 'feminine' style in art, whether it be grounded in experience, social marginality, or disposition to producing a text of a certain style. This position is supported by several broadly-directed arguments against 'content-based' criticism (largely American) that cannot account for varieties of literary form among female writers, and against the (largely French) idea of a 'feminine text' that would identify experimental, avant-garde writing as the locus of political disruption. Felski herself adopts a contextualist position that refuses to characterize women's writing by itself, insisting that its political dimensions will vary according to the social use it has at a given time.

Chapter Two, 'Subjectivity and Feminism', confronts current controversies over the epistemic standing of the consciousness of the female 'subject', including the role of subjectivity in discovering objective truths, the philosophical status of the self, and the presence of a subjective voice in feminist literature. Felski frames these issues by comparing the postmodern denial of a stable self that serves as a reference point for knowledge, and the assertion that a sincere, authentic self emerges from feminist consciousness. These views represent a 'dichotomy' within feminism that must be negotiated before analysis of feminist literature can be undertaken. In brief, '... "American" literary criticism typically assumes an autonomous female consciousness prior to or outside patriarchal symbolic and linguistic structures. By contrast, feminist poststructuralist theory has explicitly sought to displace notions of identity and experience as categories of a supposedly discredited patriarchal tradition and has been unable to offer a theoretical framework which can account for political agency and the function of subjectivity in relation to oppositional practices' (52). To chart a course that acknowledges the insights of the latter and the pragmatics of the former, Felski makes use of Anthony Giddens' 'structuration theory', combining notions of self and agency with attention to social determinants within which selves develop and function.

Poststructuralist theory has embraced experimental forms of literature, seeing them as subversive of patriarchal discourse because of their disruption of conventional narration and other bearers of

meaning. Felski is skeptical that the written word carries that much political clout. She argues that if we acknowledge that consciousness itself is always in a dialectical relation with social forces, the political need to avoid such familiar traditions as the realist novel diminishes. Its very popularity, rather than being suspect as bourgeois and patriarchal, is seen as a sign of vitality, though this literature is not without its own difficulties. 'The recognition of subjectivity as a central category of feminist politics and culture does not imply its unconditional affirmation; ... feminism necessarily remains both outside and inside, both oppositional and system immanent, offering a critique of patriarchy while itself continuing to be influenced by existing ideologies and conceptual frameworks' (75).

The next two chapters turn to literary works, beginning with eighteenth-century traditions of autobiography and confession and continuing with an analysis of a number of contemporary feminist novels notable both for their role in the development of this genre and their enormous readership. Frequently representing the repetitions of daily life typical of the lives of female narrators, feminist writing often breaches the boundaries between fiction and autobiography, thus dramatizing the problem of how to read the voice of the subject, since so much of this literature charts the inward journey of a woman seeking to discover a core of authenticity beneath layers of social conditioning. While critical of such quests, Felski appreciates this kind of writing as ' ... an anxious, often uneasy struggle to discover a female self, a struggle which is by no means free of contradiction but which constitutes a necessary moment in the self-definition of an oppositional community' (121).

The literature analyzed includes novels from Canada, the U.S., England, and West Germany, all of which share some version of the theme of self-discovery on the part of a female narrator/protagonist. While skeptical of the politics of some of these works, Felski believes they represent an important public development of feminism, which she refers to as a 'feminist counter-public sphere.'

The final chapter summarizes the problematics that frame her study and sets forth her her own position: a view that weights activist feminism as heavily as theory. The conclusion is finely drawn and sensitive to opposing dimensions of feminist literature, theory, and practice.

While there are a few dense patches in this study, on the whole the book is clearly conceived and written, and it should be accessible to a wide audience. It is somewhat repetitious, and the reader who

carries on from start to finish will experience some impatient moments. On the other hand, such a style has the advantage of making the separate chapters fairly easy to follow on their own, a useful feature should portions of the book be assigned in teaching.

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David Gauthier
Moral Dealing: Contract, Ethics, and Reason.
Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1990.
Pp. vi+371.
US $43.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8014-2431-3);
US $14.95 (paper: ISBN 0- 8014-9700-0).

The essays collected in this volume were originally published in the years 1974-85 and thus precede the systematic statement of Gauthier's theory in *Morals by Agreement* (1986). They nevertheless deserve careful study, because they contain – beyond sketches of his theory – more of an attempt to show why one should want to work out this kind of view in the first place, and because they reveal more about the deeper motivations and intellectual development of their hard-working and creative author.

The volume can be divided into two parts. The first set of seven essays discusses other theorists: Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Rousseau, Kant, and Rawls. These are impressive and provocative pieces, showing Gauthier's broad background knowledge and his ability as a close and independent reader. Lacking the space seriously to evaluate these essays, I concentrate this review on the second set of seven essays which much more directly develop Gauthier's own position.

His central project is to develop a morality that is a form of smart strategic egoism. *Egoism*, because this is Gauthier's default and baseline: It is the realization, from the standpoint of simple (straightforwardly maximizing) egoism, that smart egoism is better for oneself than simple egoism, that makes it rational to be, or become, moral. *Smart*, because morality pays more than simple egoism, and also

because it is quite difficult to figure this out and difficult also to determine which version of morality pays the most. Finally, *strategic*, becuase being moral makes sense only in strategic (as opposed to parametric) environments, in which what happens to one is a function, in part, of expectations formed about one.

On one side, Gauthier's approach needs defense against simple egoists. Here he starts out from the well-known fact that straightforward maximizers do poorly in strategic interactions of the prisoners-dilemma kind. Now suppose persons were transparent to one another (266). It would then be rational for our prisoners to become constrained maximizers: intending to cooperate with others who likewise intend to cooperate with would-be cooperators. And if this intention is rational, claims Gauthier, then so is its execution. (An interesting analogue to this claim is explored in Essay 13, where Gauthier argues that it is rational to worsen a nuclear war by retaliating after an enemy attack if, before such an attack, forming the intention so to retaliate was, on account of its deterrent effect, rational.) Transforming oneself from a straightforward into a constrained maximizer – or, more specifically, from a simple into a smart egoist – is therefore a straightforwardly maximizing (and hence rationally mandatory) act.

Skipping various obvious objections to this argument, let me focus on what it would show if it went through. It would show much less than Gauthier believes, in two dimensions. First, human beings are generally anything but transparent to one another, and a simple egoist pretending to be a smart egoist can thus, for the most part, do better than a genuine smart egoist. (Admittedly, such pretense may have psychological costs, but in appealing to them [266], Gauthier steps outside his argument that simple egoism *as such* counsels its own replacement.) At the very least one must reject Gauthier's statement that 'choosing conditional cooperation is the egoist's last act as an egoist' (267). An egoist would surely do better to keep his options open – deciding between simple and smart egoism case by case (on the basis of how transparent he believes himself to be to those around him).

Second, smart egoism would amount to a much more minimal morality than Gauthier realizes. One example of this is his contention that, as smart egoists, we should accept as just that social order upon which our bargaining would converge if each of us were (a) perfectly rational, (b) ignorant of her social position, and (c) trying to exact maximally favorable terms for contributing her talents (272).

But whence the asymmetry between (c), and (a) and (b)? Why should smart egoists not exploit differentials in rationality and present social position just as – according to Gauthier – they would exploit differentials in talents? Within his approach, stipulations (a) and (b) are entirely unmotivated.

Gauthier attempts to support stipulation (b) with an example:

> Suppose a sophisticated defender of the South African system were to point out that everyone, black and white alike, could benefit were the repressive apparatus ... dismantled and replaced by genuine interracial cooperation. Of course, our defender would insist, the present distribution of goods and services must be taken as the base point ....
>
> Black South Africans would be unlikely to give such a proposal serious consideration. Were the present coercive framework of interaction to be dismantled, they would not find it rational voluntarily to maintain a system resting on the distribution of benefits and costs that apartheid upholds. (183)

This story is blatantly inconsistent with Gauthier's key claim that, if it is rational to intend to do X (here: abide by the defender's proposal), then it is rational to do X. Moreover, the story does not show that, among smart egoists, social differentials will be washed out. If the blacks cannot be counted on to abide by the defender's proposal, then the whites will simply continue the repression rather than give up their privileges altogether. As egoists they will assess possible reforms-by-agreement against the baseline of their present privileged position – which therefore may well get reflected in agreements reached.

On the other side, Gauthier must defend his approach against those who want morality to be more extensive and grounded differently. He dismisses such alternatives as rendering morality 'not independent of rationality, but actually incompatible with it – irrational. This option is perhaps heroic, but absurd' (168). But this dismissal rests on his conflating *being rational (prudent)* – via slippery predicates such as *being self-interested, having an actor-relative conception of value, being a utility-maximizer* – with *being egoistic (concerned only with one's well-being, one's own self-directed aims)*. This conflation is neatly displayed in Gauthier's critique of Rawls:

> Consider ... the situation when the veil of ignorance is lifted. Under Rawls's interpretation of the difference principle ... the ratio of benefit received to talent employed and effort expended will decrease, as talent

> and effort increase. ... But [the naturally gifted man] will see no reason why he should not benefit from his own capacities to the same extent as anyone else. ... Thus he will not consider it rational ... to accept a lesser proportionate benefit, simply to increase overall equality of absolute benefit. (164)

But such acceptance by our gifted man would *not* offend his rationality. As Gauthier says himself: 'Reason takes the ends of our activities as given, and determines the means to those ends' (211). For *egoists*, to be sure, it would be irrational to adopt our morality – to care even one whit about the survival of the weak and handicapped, for example. But this does not show that *our* commitment to it is irrational.

To conclude. Gauthier shows at best that under *very* special circumstances (transparency), *very* minimal moral commitments may emerge among rational egoists. He may be right (210f) that there is no credible (e.g., Kantian [125f]) notion of Reason, beyond rationality, from which more extensive moral commitments could be derived. But, fortunately, most human beings have more extensive moral commitments and, pace Gauthier, not irrationally so.

Although its constructive arguments, for the most part, do not succeed, this is a challenging and sophisticated book by a bright and very serious author. It is definitely worth reading.

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Etienne Gilson
Linguistics and Philosophy: An Essay on the Philosophical Constants of Language.
Trans. John Lyon.
Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press 1989. Pp. xix+208.
US $27.95. ISBN 0-268-01284-9.

Gilson's main argument is that linguists cannot give a complete account of language unless they also give a philosophical account of language. Linguists, however, have attempted to avoid the philo-

sophical account in order to keep their analysis of language strictly 'scientific', that is, to treat language as a purely physical, material, even mechanical product. Gilson argues, however, that such a 'scientific' account of language cannot be an account of *meaning*, for meaning can never be reduced to the physical or the mechanical. As meaning is, in spite of the linguists, really an essential part of language, a linguistics that eliminates meaning (and philosophy) is not a study of language. 'To devise a linguistics which should succeed in treating language abstracted from its meaning is to demand a science founded on the preliminary suppression of its object' (20).

That which is merely material, Gilson argues, cannot, all by itself, have meaning, for meaning necessarily implies thinking in universals, and universals cannot be material. The communication which takes place through language is a real uniting of subjects: speaker and listener are united through a common meaning. Such a union cannot be a physical or material union, for physical things, which have parts outside of parts, can only unite by destroying one, or the other, or both, that is, if they really unite and are not merely mixed. Physical communication, if there were such, would be an occupying of the identical place and time by two bodies – an impossibility except by the destroying of at least one of the bodies.

It is the nature of the merely material to be spatial and temporal. But to be spatial and temporal is to be irreducibly particular such that what is in one place cannot be itself and also be in another place, nor can what is in one time remain itself and also be in another time. Communication, however, which allows a real, though not material, uniting *across* space and time, is a transcending of the temporal and spatial limits inherent in the material. Communication, hence, must be the sharing of that which is not limited to time and space; it must be the sharing of ideas which, as universals, are not bound to the here and now. 'All that is physically real is material and particular. The universal, whose nature we are seeking to understand, is immaterial by definition. It is necessary therefore, that that which produces it ought to be equally immaterial if one does not wish its production to be quasi-miraculous. But the order of the immaterial, of the nonphysical, is precisely that of the metaphysical. Language, therefore, involves the reality of the metaphysical by the very fact that it involves an element of universality' (69).

The study of language, therefore, raises a problem (81): 'How can bodies, which only communicate by the corporeal, that is by language, at the same time and by that very means have access to the plane of the immaterial?' How can language, which is material, be the vehicle of meaning, which is immaterial? Even before asking this question, Gilson has prepared the answer by saying that language is not merely material. No word can be merely physical, for if it were it would be a noise and not a word (30). A word is a word only when it has a meaning, for the speaker, at least, and also for the listener. The meaning is to the word what form is to matter in Aristotelian physics (35): an inseparable but real principle that makes the thing to be what it is. This means that a word cannot be a word apart from human thought (63-7): the signification of words is directly of things, but the meaning of words always reveals conceptualization (78).

Gilson has attempted to speak from the tradition of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas to contemporary philosophers, not only to linguists, to whom this book is principally addressed, but to all, such as analysts, who give great attention to language. He makes, in my judgment, an argument that is well worth hearing. Philosophers should take from this book not only the principal argument, which I think is sound, but also the implied judgement of the place of the philosopher in science. Gilson treats linguistics as a science that stands in need of philosophical reasoning in order to perform its proper scientific function. Too often, I think, the philosopher's job is thought to be one of commenting on the scientist's work, after the scientist's work has been done in a vacuum completely free of any philosophical impurity. Gilson has made a good particular case for what I think is generally true: that scientific conclusions always imply a philosophical position taken, though not necessarily defended or explained, by the scientist. The scientific project is not a project separate from philosophy, but is a thoroughly philosophical project from beginning to end, although this fact is not always adverted to by the scientists.

In this Gilson is not faithful to what he advertises in his own 'Preface'. 'For the philosopher nature is what the physicist and the biologist tell him it is. Language is for him what the linguist tells him it is' (xvii). Gilson by no means in this book accepts language as what the linguist tells him it is; Gilson is ever ready, as he should be, to tell the linguist what language is, for the question of what language is is a philosophical question, no less than the question

of what nature is. Gilson has given in this book, though not in the 'Preface,' excellent evidence of how the philosopher should work with scientific evidence to further the pursuit of truth, which is at once scientific and philosophical.

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Richard Grathoff, ed.
Philosophers in Exile.
Trans. J. Claude Evans.
Foreword Maurice Natanson.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press
1989. Pp. xxxviii+341.
US $39.95. ISBN 0-253-32627-3.

Published originally in 1985 by the Wilhelm Fink Verlag, this *Briefwechsel* between Alfred Schutz and Aron Gurvitsch spans the years from 1939 to 1959, the year of Schutz's death. Like so many other intellectuals of Jewish descent, the two philosophers found their lives more than a little disturbed by the ascendancy of Nazism in Germany, and its spread to neighboring countries.

Schutz was an Austrian, gainfully employed by the Viennese banking firm, Reitler & Company. Already long accustomed to performing his banking duties by day and his phenomenological researches at night, he continued that practice, with teaching duties added for the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research (1943-59), throughout his career, which sped through Paris (1938-39) and ended in New York at his death in 1959. Caught in Paris on the day of the German invasion of Austria, the Schutzes were persuaded by Gurvitsch and his wife to remain there until further emigration to the United States were possible.

Gurvitsch's exile was more chequered, much more insecure. Born in Vilna, Lithuania, he was removed by his family to Germany, following the pogroms of 1905-06. There, he attended the gymnasium in Danzig, and was graduated in 1919. Further schooling at Berlin, Frankfurt (with Adhemar Gelb), and Göttigen, under Moritz Geiger,

the first of Edmund Husserl's students to emigrate to America. His thesis was successfully defended in 1928.

Having been married in 1929, the Gurvitsches took residence in Berlin, where Aron began the habilitation process, under Max Dessoir, which was never finished. The couple fled Berlin for Paris in 1933, and they remained there until their final emigration to the United States in 1940. Although Aron was permitted, as Research Fellow for the Caisse Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, to deliver lectures at the Sorbonne's Institut d'Histoire des Sciences, he had no permanent attachment to the French academy.

His first job in the United States was at the Johns Hopkins University (as lecturer in philosophy), in 1940. There followed posts at Harvard (Research Fellow of the American Philosophical Society), 1942; Instructor in Physics, 1943-46); another fellowship year (1946-47); and at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, lecturer in mathematics, 1947-48. Having been promoted to Associate Professor of Mathematics at Wheaton in 1948, he left to accept a similar position as an Assistant Professor at Brandeis University, which he kept until his appointment at the New School as a member of the Graduate Faculty in Philosophy, in 1959, a replacement for the then deceased Alfred Schutz.

The two philosophers were brought together at Husserl's instigation. Schutz was described to Gurvitsch as a banker by day and a phenomenologist by night; Gurvitsch to Schutz as one of his most brillian students.

Readerly interest in their correspondence is not limited to a concern for suffering humanity, nor for the politics and economics of emigration. They were exiles from their native lands attempting to introduce Americans to the subtleties of phenomenological analysis, and so, within philosophy itself, exiled from the mainstream of American philosophical circles. One could ask why the exiled logical positivists escaped this second sort of vicious banishment. The answer is, perhaps, the same sort of pressures that led Gurvitsch to withdraw the manuscript of his *The Field of Consciousness* from further consideration by the Harvard University Press following its initial rejection. The exile theme once again, here inverted: Gurvitsch's masterpiece first appeared in French translation in 1957, seven years earlier than the original American English version. The sense of separation from the source of one's power is perhaps the most poignant theme of the correspondence.

Another is the friendship and the collaboration of the two. That story is not unlike the relationship, in American pragmatism, between John Dewey and G.H. Mead. One could, upon reading *Experience and Nature* and *Philosophy of the Act*, equate Dewey's interest in the origins of consciousness with those of Gurvitsch, and Mead's interest in the social dimensions of human activity with those of Schutz in the social structures of the human life-world. So much so, indeed, that the tunneling image applied by Gurvitsch to describe the cooperative nature of his and Schutz's work could easily call up the recollection of Charles Morris (a student of Mead) that he could perceive no point where the philosophical thrust of the one diverted from that of the other. But if each heard echos of the other's digging, what foundation was being built or undermined? Undermined – the constancy hypothesis, which takes objects as absolutely existing (primary substance). Built – a theory of the contextual relations between intending consciousnesses and their attendant objects that define a living culture.

As a last notice, consider the differences between the Schutz- Gurvitsch combine and the hagiographical Husserlians. Both philosophers acknowledge their debt to the master; both take their own turns away from the transcendental Ego; and both open the life-world to an infinite inquisitiveness.

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Rudolf Haller
Questions on Wittgenstein.
Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 1988.
Pp. ix+149.
US $24.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8032-2348-x);
US $9.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8032-7240-5).

The nine essays on Wittgenstein gathered in this volume, most or all of them previously published in German (H does not clearly indicate their history), are more genetic and comparative than critical or closely analytic.

The first piece, for example, rambles from Brentano to Wittgenstein in support of two theses: 'first, that in the last 100 years there has taken place an independent development of a specifically *Austrian philosophy*, opposed to the philosophical currents of the remainder of the German-speaking world; and secondly that this development can sustain a genetic model which permits us to affirm an intrinsic homogeneity of Austrian philosophy up to the Vienna Circle and its descendants' (2).

From chapter 2's treatment of the question 'Was Wittgenstein a Neopositivist?' it appears that the question is a bad one – not because there were two Wittgensteins, early and late (a thesis H repeatedly rejects), but because neopositivists varied so among themselves and in their relationship to Wittgenstein.

Another unfortunately formulated question – 'Was Wittgenstein a Neo-Kantian?' – may partially account for the shortcomings of chapter 3, which notes important differences between Wittgenstein and Kant but slights deep affinities, and neglects relevant differences between Wittgenstein's earlier and later thought.

In chapter 4, where confused accounts of Mauthner's critique of language, then Wittgenstein's, succeed one another without clear confrontation, precision is similarly affected by H's homogenization of Wittgenstein's earlier and later views.

Chapter 5 attends so little to its title question – 'Was Wittgenstein Influenced by Spengler?' – that its closing sentence comes as a surprise: 'However, it was not Bühler who prompted Wittgenstein's line of thought, his turn towards a morphological (Goethean) way of thinking, but Spengler' (87).

Chapter 6's answer to the query 'What Do Wittgenstein and Weininger Have in Common?' arrives equally unprepared: 'Both believe that neither logical nor ethical rules can be established, but yet that both logical and ethical rules have an essential connection to the world and are thus one and the same' (97). One is left to wonder which is the more astonishing: the logic of this closing inference, its conclusion, or its attribution to Weininger and Wittgenstein.

Chapter 7 focuses, fuzzily, on the question 'Was Wittgenstein a Sceptic?' and compares his views with those of sceptics on the one hand and of Descartes and Kant, most prominently, on the other. Chapter 8, on 'The Common Behaviour of Mankind', concludes, with typical abruptness, that Wittgenstein's anti- essentialism at the level of language rests on essentialism concerning human nature. Chapter 9 targets, first Newton Garver's reading of Wittgenstein's 'forms

of life', then Janik and Toulmin's naming Eduard Spranger 'as one of the principal sources – perhaps even the principal source – of the use of the term by Wittgenstein'. 'This is obviously false,' declares H (133). Already in 1911 the expression appeared in a book by W. Fred. But H offers no indication that Wittgenstein knew Fred's book. And his having read and been influenced by that work would not show it was *the* principal source of his use of the term or that Spranger was not *a* principal source.

I offer this closing detail as representative of many. It is unpleasant to write such a negative review, but still more painful to read a book so badly written, so disorganized, so pretentious, so careless about documentation, so murky and muddled in its reasoning, so facile in its criticism of others – in short, a book in which it is so difficult to discover any redeeming merit. However, this at least can be said in its favor, that H reveals wide acquaintance with Wittgenstein's writings and milieu. A bibliography and an index of names are appended.

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Michael H. McCarthy
The Crisis of Philosophy.
Albany: State University of New York Press
1990. Pp. xxi+383.
US $59.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-7914-0152-9);
US $19.95 (paper: ISBN 0-7914-0153-7).

This impressive book, which it is to be hoped will be widely and carefully read, describes the origins of the present crisis of identity and lack of direction in philosophy. I largely agree both with the diagnosis of the patient, and with the proposals for her cure.

Philosophy, as McCarthy tells us, has always had a problem about defining itself, and in situating itself in relation to the rest of culture. It is no wonder that when there are significant cultural shifts, these tend to be reflected by important philosophical developments. Probably scepticism and uncertainty about the role of philosophy have never been more acute than they have in the last two centuries; this

seems to be largely due to the fact that the culture shaped by Greek philosophy and medieval theology has broken down, and the distinctively modern culture which is striving to replace it has not yet reached maturity. As McCarthy sees it, there are four principal ways in which modern culture differs from what has preceded it. It is predominantly secular as opposed to religious; its science and other cultural practices are carried on independently of authority, whether ecclesiastical or philosophical; it is peculiarly sensitive to the range and variety of human practices and institutions; and it no longer takes traditional political and social arrangements as the norms of human order as such. The present times are certainly hazardous for philosophy; but the possibility should not be overlooked that they provide it with unique opportunities.

It is of interest that, in earlier times of crisis, it was persons outside the discipline, such as political leaders, scientists and theologians, who threw doubt on the practice of philosophy. But in recent times it has been the philosophers themselves – and ones of exceptional talent and range of influence at that, such as Nietzsche, Heidegger and Wittgenstein – who have turned against the discipline as traditionally conceived, attempting to show that the classical concerns of epistemology, metaphysics and ethics are illegitimate or due to conceptual confusion. Rorty has made an appeal for a philosophical culture where few any longer take seriously the problems which preoccupied Socrates, Aquinas, or Kant. He compares this with the result of the process of secularization over the last five centuries, which has made theological and religious concerns marginal rather than central in Western culture.

What has brought philosophy to this pass? At the end of the first stage of the Enlightenment, Kant acknowledged the achievement of modern theoretical science, but wished to limit its scope and validity. He did this by appealing to a series of controversial dualities, notably between pure reason and nature, and between transcendental and empirical modes of inquiry. Kant's successors rebelled against his dualism in two ways; by reconceiving nature as the expression of absolute Spirit, as the German Idealists did; or by attempting to naturalize the mind, a strategy which seemed to find powerful support in Darwin's theory of evolution. Frege, Husserl, and the early Wittgenstein, sensitive as they were to the precarious situation of philosophy, would not accept the solution to its problems proffered by naturalistic psychology.

While some wished to relocate human reason in nature, others set out to display it as entirely a product of culture; as subject to either form of reduction, it lost its autonomy and purity as conceived by Kant or by Descartes. Both perspectives render quite hopeless the traditional philosophical tasks of protecting the purity of reason, preserving the rigor of science, and testing the products of culture against epistemic ideals. At this rate one is left with the view of which Rorty is probably the most notable contemporary representative; to the effect that philosophy, so far as it survives at all, must in future be explicitly non-foundational and non-rigorous, analogous to literary criticism rather than to science, and aimed at facilitating the continuing conversation of humankind.

The way that Rorty has proposed through the *impasse* may suit very well the fashions of late modernity, but does not appeal to McCarthy, failing as it does to represent the best in philosophy's past. Is there an available alternative? It seems to him that there is. For all their limitless variety, contemporary science, common sense and scholarship are all founded on basic operations of the human mind. 'To appropriate, to make epistemically one's own, this cognitive process, operative but not objectified in all human inquiry, is to achieve a foundational ground from which the critical integration of knowledge might proceed' (xviii). The 'cognitive process' referred to cannot be *reduced to* logic in the traditional sense, for all that it *includes* it; excessive expectations of logic are among the things which have brought us to our present situation. But this does not imply that the process does not exist, or that it cannot be discovered and implemented by the right kind of inquiry. The task has in fact been performed, as McCarthy believes, by the Canadian philosopher Bernard Lonergan, especially in his most important book, *Insight*.

As a background to the outline of Lonergan's approach to the basic problems of philosophy, the book presents and assesses the programs of Frege, Husserl, Wittgenstein, Carnap, Sellars, Dewey, Quine and Rorty. So far, philosophers in the analytical tradition have generally refuted Lonergan by failing to advert to his existence. I hope this remarkable work will provoke them into finding some other means of doing so.

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John O'Neill
The Communicative Body: Studies in Communicative Philosophy, Politics, and Sociology.
Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press 1989. Pp. xii+264.
US $42.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8101-0801-1);
US $12.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8101-0802-X).

John O'Neill's writings on Merleau-Ponty have not merely been of the highest caliber; in many ways they have become the standard by which other works must be calibrated. He effectively provides a distillation of Merleau-Ponty's thought in a style which is both accessible and yet strikingly Merleau-Pontyan.

O'Neill has also beautifully articulated an original position in sociology. His approach reflects more than an academic understanding of the existential-phenomenological philosophical tradition. It reflects a commitment to this tradition, and most especially to the great insights of Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger.

This book is primarily a compilation of the work whereby he has earned his reputation. Yet it is more than a collection of 'greatest hits'. The seventeen essays which have appeared previously are amended with three important new essays and two short prefaces which serve to bring the earlier works into a new focus, or at least to make explicit a common theme which was previously implicit.

Revisions of two outstanding short books by O'Neill, *Perception, Expression, and History: The Social Phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press 1970) and *Making Sense Together* (London: Heinemann 1974), are included. One chapter of the latter work has been omitted in the revision process. Also, revisions of two key chapters from the important *Sociology as a Skin Trade* (London: Heinemann 1972) have been included.

For the most part, this review will be devoted to an examination of the new material. It is their themes which provide the unity – the binding – for this collection, which make it a book in its own right. This approach will, therefore, serve to illuminate the themes of the earlier works to some degree as well.

O'Neill sets out his position in three ways: (i) by explicating Merleau-Ponty's position; (ii) by contrasting this position to those of other thinkers; i.e., Sartre and Lacan; and, (iii) by extending the

existential-phenomenological philosophical tradition in an original manner to concrete applications in sociology.

By explicating Merleau-Ponty's 'Concept of mind' (4), O'Neill offers a detailed account of how the rational mind is grounded in the body. The recovery of the communicative body as *pre*-rational accomplishes the recognition of the rational mind as a posture achievable only within a world of institutions. These institutions include 'political economy, history, or science, or of philosophy, the arts, and psychoanalysis' (3). The body is 'the necessary organ' in this world, 'furnishing the bio-text upon which the principal social institutions inscribe themselves' (3). Embodiment is not an accidental attribute of mind.

Thus, O'Neill offers an alternative to traditional accounts which privilege rationality to the detriment of its embodiment. But it is his positive account of the relation between rationality and embodiment which sets O'Neill's critique apart from the vulgar post-modern negativity. The problem is not merely to avoid the privileging of rationality, but to provide an understanding of *how we are privileged by* rationality. The forte of this book is that it shows the absolute necessity of seeking this sort of understanding for both individual and scientific praxis.

The communicative body, which serves as a ground in O'Neill's account, is an embodied latency, a human predisposition toward language and society. This ground should not be misunderstood as a contrivance of metaphysical naïveté. It is metaphysical in the sense that 'the human body ... is the metaphysical subject of the world – and thereby of history and politics' (5). But this is the nexus of subjectivity, the ambiguous '*metaphysical structure of the body* which renders it an object for others and a subject for itself' (9), which must be presupposed by projects offering untenable accounts of rationality and mind. O'Neill demonstrates this by showing how the Lacanian dialectic of desire is intelligible only when one begins with an assumed corporeal schema; and that the Sartrean notion of body is inappropriate to political praxis since it is fundamentally alienated.

Communication, for O'Neill, bespeaks a communion of souls. 'In short, the presence of embodied consciousness to itself is from the beginning a copresence to a similarly embodied consciousness suspended in language ...' (10). Nevertheless, he does not presuppose some unrealistic and fanciful ideal speech community – although there are moments when he seems dangerously close to doing so. Actually, his project is a phenomenology critical of its own endeavor. But the only

hint of this in *Part One: Communicative Praxis* occurs in his discussion of Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'flesh' at the end of Chapter Two. There, and only there, he acknowledges that the anonymous intersubjective unity is, ironically enough, difference. It is not any transcendental standard of rationality, which would be metaphysical in the naughty sense. So, while O'Neill stresses 'the priority of consensus over conflict' (4) and the 'identity-within-difference' (16), he need not be seen as discounting the context of difference necessary for the pursuit of this identity. Rationality is a posture we are at once granted and condemned to. This theme moves from the nearly invisible to the visible in *Part Two: An Introduction to Communicative Sociology.*

O'Neill's extension of the communicative body to science leads him to a new vista. The resulting vision of sociology, O'Neill admits, is controversial insofar as one might read what he 'is saying and not find anything in it like sociology' (228). This ought to serve notice of the radical nature of his project. But one should not construe 'radical' to mean anti-science. His critique is best characterized as internal rather than external to science.

O'Neill makes it clear in the preface to Part Two that he wants neither to exorcize the rigor of traditional scientific sociology, nor to abandon the tenets of a humanistic approach. Instead, he seeks to 'remind these two sides of sociology of their common source. Yet it is not simply to insist upon what they have in common but rather to make their differences more vital, or more charismatic, in the sense that each labors toward a society that is not wholly its own' (182). O'Neill hopes that the phenomenological approach he advocates will foster reverence for what he describes as the holy aspects of society; i.e., the family, religion, marriage, etc. He accomplishes this by pointing out the paradoxical existential predicament of the inquiring sociologist: he or she is part of society, yet at the same time must stand apart from it. Sociology is alien to the everyday folk it studies; yet the sociologist's goal is to offer a contribution toward the cohesion of the whole. The very activity of the sociologist 'adds to the differences among men another alienation that is simultaneously the basis for its search for communality and care' (217). Human finitude determines both the hope and the despair of sociological inquiry. The privilege of embodied rationality affords the sociologist access to the inquiry. This same privilege also condemns the sociologist to work within the limits imposed by his or her involvement.

Communicative sociology, having acknowledged the finite parameters of its inquiry, does not purport to escape from the situation it

describes by objectifying society. 'Such a principle of humility is the conclusion to be drawn from the phenomenological revision of the place of philosophy and science within the life-world that gives rise to them, suffers them, and asks to be served rather than to be subordinated by them' (182). It seeks understanding rather than facts, and acknowledges that the world of science is also the world of moral value.

O'Neill has done the philosophical and sociological communities a great service by providing access to out-of-print and hard to find materials of considerable value. And he has done more than this. *The Communicative Body* increases the value of O'Neill's contributions to philosophy and sociology by illustrating their interdisciplinary relevance. This is what allows it to stand on its own as a significant and organic whole.

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Catherine Wilson
Leibniz's Metaphysics: A Historical and Comparative Study.
Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1990. Pp. 350.
US $39.50. ISBN 0-691-07359-7.

Of Leibniz's 'curious system' Catherine Wilson remarks, 'Why a theory which is so obviously false, which is probably the falsest theory in the history of philosophy, should be the basis of the fame of a great man was a question which Russell ... realized demanded an answer. The present study returns to this question ...' (1f). Wilson adopts it as a general principle for studying historical texts that they cannot be understood by examining what presents itself within the texts themselves but only by being taken within the context of the philosopher's interactions with other philosophers. This principle seems to me particularly apt when applied to Leibniz. Wilson not only looks at Leibniz's philosophy within its historical context, but follows sequentially its development from his first published work, *De arte combinatoria*, which grows out of a tradition which he encountered

in such figures as Weigel, Kircher, Lull, Bisterfeld, Alsted and Dalgarno, then on to his reactions to Bacon, Galileo, Gassendi and Descartes, and his concern that 'the whole labyrinth of the continuum must be unravelled as soon as possible' (74).

The *Discourse on Metaphysics*, which is often taken to be Leibniz's first statement of his system, is rather, according to Wilson, a statement of three distinct metaphysics though all are set within a theory of the nature and perfection of God. Metaphysics A is a theory of the individual substance as having a concept so complete that everything that can truly be asserted of it is contained within the concept of that substance. Metaphysics B arises out of Leibniz's criticism of Descartes's conception of material substance as extension, and in it he argues that bodies are real by virtue of their power of acting, that *vis viva* which becomes in his later writings a derivative of that primitive force which is the monad. In metaphysics C each substance is a world apart, in which 'nothing can in fact happen to us except thoughts and perceptions, and all our future thoughts and perceptions are only the consequences, however contingent they may be, of our preceding ones' (105). Leibniz was confronted with the problem of reconciling the notion of corporeal substances (i.e., animal organisms) with that of monads, finally accepting that there are only monads and their phenomena or appearances, the bodies of animals being only appearances.

In a chapter on Leibniz's theories of space, motion and gravity Wilson discerns further conflicting elements. From the consideration of Zeno's paradoxes Leibniz concludes that there is nothing real in motion except force, the rest is only phenomena and relations, a succession of appearances or perceptions. At the same time Leibniz was concerned with how to distinguish true and apparent motions. Of Newton's bucket experiment he finds nothing in it to prove the reality of space in itself. 'However, I grant that there is a difference between an absolute true motion of a body and a mere relative change of its situation with respect to another body. For when the cause is in the body, that body is truly in motion ... 'Tis true that, exactly speaking, there is not any one body that is perfectly and entirely at rest, but we will frame an abstract notion of rest by considering the thing mathematically' (214). Wilson finds this 'very puzzling, for on Newton's view, absolute true motion, which he calls "mathematical", just means motion through absolute space. It is thus unclear from what Leibniz says whether he (a) agrees that, abstractly speaking, true motion can be defined as motion through absolute space, even

if no possible world – including ours – exists in absolute space; or (b) denies that the abstract definition of absolute motion requires reference to absolute space. He appears indeed to embrace both positions (214). I confess I do not see any puzzle here. Leibniz agrees with Newton that there is a difference between absolute and relative motion. For Newton absolute motion is the motion of a body in relation to absolute space. For Leibniz that body is in motion when the cause of its motion is in that body. To frame an abstract notion of rest by considering the thing mathematically is not to be using the term 'mathematically' in the sense in which Newton refers to 'absolute', 'true', and 'mathematical' time, space, place, and motion, as opposed to relative, apparent and common. For Leibniz to consider motion and rest mathematically is to consider them kinematically and as relative. You can choose what you will to be at rest in relation to other bodies, although there are no bodies in the world which are truly at rest.

There is a chapter entitled 'Experience and the Self: the *New Essays*' in which Wilson considers some of the more important of Leibniz's responses to equally important theories in Locke's *Essay*. For example, what constitutes personal identity, and if this identity involves consciousness of what I am thinking and doing and equally of what I thought and did, then what about responsibility for what I did if I do not remember having done it. Then there is Locke's famous theory as to what moves a person to action and Leibniz's immensely interesting response to it involving an account of little appetitions of which I am not conscious. Finally there is the question of the self's knowledge and experience and the issue whether the mind at birth is a *tabula rasa* or is endowed with knowledge which is innate.

In a chapter on 'The Problem of Theodicy' the problem is put in a very clear historical perspective. It belongs in a period concerned with the subject of the reasonableness of Christianity and with questions about 'grace and predestination, the goodness of God and the origins of evil'. Wilson points up how the seventeenth-century approach to reconciling reason and faith differs from that of the Enlightenment. For the latter reasonableness meant the rejection of dogma, while for the seventeenth century and Leibniz the task was defense of dogma. This defense, says Wilson, has to meet three preconditions set by the Christian religion: (1) monotheism, (2) the transcendence of God, (3) divine providence. The condition of monotheism is generally met by Leibniz, but he has a theory which works with a

dualism of Being and Nothingness, with the latter providing a factor of limitation in creatures and therefore of evil. Apart from some tendencies to immanentism Leibniz rejected the notion of God as the sole source of agency in nature while allowing that God can intervene providentially on behalf of his creatures.

A conflict of tendencies occurs in Leibniz's account of the origin of things. In one of these God, as transcendental source, exercises the combinatorial art, and out of simple terms and their increasingly complex combinations he chooses the best from these possible worlds. On the other hand there is the Leibniz who asserts that 'unless in the very nature of things there were some inclination to exist nothing would exist (277). The outcome of the conflict of these essences with their varying degrees of perfection or tendency to exist is the best of all possible worlds, a world which would necessarily involve the destruction of some good and therefore the occurrence of some evil. This comes very close to making the world the cause of itself. To block this Spinozist possibility Leibniz was to argue that essences get their reality from God. It is, however, evident that the best is not the result of divine choice among possibles.

An alternative account for the existence of evil as necessitated by the best possible set of compatible essences is the identification of perfection with the production of maximum effects by the minimum means. Another account for the existence of evil is that something may seem evil when viewed apart from the whole of which it is a part, when in reality it actually enhances the beauty and perfection of the whole. Then Leibniz has a variant in which the perfection of the whole is taken not as the world is, but as it progresses in time.

In the last chapter Wilson confronts her original question why, since Leibniz's philosophy is obviously false, we should be at all concerned with it. For an evaluation of his thought, she turns to Kant, who, she thinks, gives the most convincing case. Her main use of Kant as an aid to understanding Leibniz is in the section entitled 'Kant rewrites the Monadology', in which he is concerned with 'the affinities between his project and Leibniz's and the task of metaphysics as the discovery of a means of "stepping beyond the knowledge of the sensible to knowledge of the supersensible by means of reason" ' (322). The dogmatic metaphysician can make claims about, say, God, freedom, and immortality, which are easily put off by a skeptic asserting the possibility of opposing hypotheses. What Kant does is to slide from the claim that belief in God, freedom, and immortality is possible to the claim that it is obligatory, i.e., that we have a 'moral duty

to believe'. Thus Kant, like the dogmatist, 'projects what he wishes into what he does not know' (323). In order to take the step from natural science, or empirical psychology, to metaphysics Kant, though denying that it is possible to take the step, nevertheless took as his datum the sense of guilt or conscience and then took the elicit step of asserting that this psychological fact could only be accounted for by the sense of moral law. He made no effort to account for this psychological phenomenon by any other hypothesis. According to Leibniz's theodicy there will be a perfect compensation of justice and injustice, although this goes beyond any empirical verification. But it destroys morality, for if it were a known fact that virtue is rewarded, all actions would be motivated by prudence. At the same time Kant has equally destroyed the possibility of morality because he has conceived of divine justice as prevailing, even if it is only something we have a duty to believe, in the absence of knowledge.

Against Wilson's version of Kant I think we must take into account his explicit statement that the very notion of a 'duty to believe' is 'nonsense'. He says, 'A requirement of pure *practical* reason is based on a *duty*, that of making something (the *summum bonum*) the object of my will so as to promote it with all my powers; in which case I must suppose its possibility, and consequently all the conditions necessary thereto, namely, God, freedom, and immortality; since I cannot prove them by my speculative reason, although neither can I refute them ... It might almost seem as if this rational belief were here announced as itself a *command*, namely that we should assume the *summum bonum* as possible. But a belief that is commanded is nonsense'. Nor in his argument does Kant claim to have arrived at the moral law as an explanation of states of feeling, but rather by having rendered explicitly a principle implicit in 'the moral knowledge of common human reason.'

Apart from the debatable last chapter this book will, for its breadth of learning and its sensibility to the often conflicting nuances of Leibniz's intentions, become a classic in the literature on Leibniz.

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R.A. Shiner