

# Philosophy in Review/Comptes rendus philosophiques

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### Theodor W. Adorno

*Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords.*

Henry W. Pickford, trans. New York:

Columbia University Press 2005.

Pp. lvi + 410.

US\$70.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-231-07634-0);

US\$26.00 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-231-13505-4).

Adorno's legacy is fraught with the unrelenting scorn of his critics, who accuse his theoretical writings of a guarded practical, and by extension political, stagnancy. Much of the criticism relates to matters of style: his writing is self-admittedly difficult, dense, and rigorous, often making for what Paul Lazarsfeld described as 'very unpleasant reading' (xxxix); his consummate pessimism can give way to querulous discontent; his philosophical engagements sometimes appear contradictory; and his theoretical refusal to paint positive images of a utopian society (the Jewish *Bilderverbot*) frequently incur accusations of 'resignation' and being noncommittal. Yet, as *Critical Models*, an extensive collection of Adorno's more significant postwar articles, essays, and radio talks, will attest, a funny thing happened on the way to the academic ivory tower. A series of *interventions* occurred; praxis is the central concern of *Critical Models*.

Following his return to Germany from the United States in 1949, Adorno placed himself in the public limelight, writing a great deal for popular journals and presenting over 160 radio lectures, some of which he later revised and published in two separate volumes, *Interventions: Nine Critical Models* (1963) and *Catchwords: Critical Models II* (1969). These, along with two late essays from the unfinished collection, *Critical Models 3*, are collected in this second edition of *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*. The volume first appeared in English in 1998, skillfully translated with extensive footnotes by Henry W. Pickford. The current edition incorporates a new introduction by Lydia Goehr.

In *Critical Models*, the reader encounters Adorno in an unfamiliar role as a public intellectual engaged with a wide range of disparate, topical concerns: a philosophical critique of positivism, German idealism, ontology and existentialism; sexual morality and criminology; the mass media; education; religion; nationalism; and even sports entertainment. The localized subject matter combine with Adorno's conscientious efforts to mold a series of critical reflections aimed at those questions, concepts, and *catchwords* that either indicate or help explain the lingering remnants of totalitarianism in postwar Western society. The result is a lucid encyclopedia of critical theory in motion.

In her extended commentary, Goehr elaborates the intellectual climate circumscribing Adorno's postwar writings. Providing an expansive overview of the criticisms leveled against Adorno by his contemporaries, Goehr effectively situates *Critical Models* in a fragile context that includes the Holocaust and negligent, widespread postwar forgetfulness. She also goes on to argue the continued relevance of *Critical Models* based on the recycling of 'similarly

complex or banal reactions of unease or concurrence' that characterize much of the recent commentary on Adorno. For Goehr, repeating the criticisms of old fails to come to terms with the fact 'that Adorno's work still has something to teach us' (lv-vi).

Indeed, the essays that make up *Critical Models* attempt to redefine what constitutes radical political engagement. In 'Marginalia to Theory and Praxis', for example, Adorno takes issue with the call to 'actionism' typified in the mass student movements, anti-war protests, anti-colonialist revolts, and feminist uprisings of the 1960s. Drawing a very different image of 'praxis' around the philosophical categories of autonomy and spontaneity, Adorno warns against headlong plunges into the fire. Lest the idea of what is practical be reduced to utilitarian recipes for instigating change, Adorno reminds us that 'thinking is a doing, theory a form of praxis' (261), and that intellectual autonomy is a prerequisite for effective democracy.

In addition to the 'Marginalia' essay, which finds its first English translation in *Critical Models*, the two short pieces that comprise *Critical Models* 3, entitled 'Critique' and 'Resignation', represent a philosopher with his back against the wall, facing his erstwhile acolytes and their fervent demands for mobilized support. Here Adorno makes concessions to the resentment shown him when he writes, 'I do not want to deny the element of subjective weakness that clings to the narrowed focus on theory' (289). Ultimately, however, the rift between theory and praxis must be attributed to capitalism and the premium it places on productive efficiency, i.e., the 'practical applicability of knowledge' (259). The divide echoes a more general alienation of ends from means, and the pervasive influence of commodity fetishism on all dimensions of life, including the isolation of praxis from theories that don't easily give way to 'instructions for action' (290).

In such a context, a focused intervention is necessary, and it must contend with the mother of all Adornian catchphrases: reified consciousness. Just as the fetish character of commodity production attributes to objects an inherent value that ignores their origin in exploitative social relations, so patterns of thought lose their connection to history and gain currency only to the extent they shed any and all relation to the conditions of their production. Rather than examine its own contradictions and limitations, thought merely confirms the 'factually existent'. Hence, in 'What is Philosophy?' Adorno challenges the intellectual supremacy accorded scientific method; drawing a connection between logical positivism and ontological schools of thought (philosophies of Being), he argues, 'in both philosophical movements thinking becomes a necessary evil and is broadly discredited' (9). Thinking, for Adorno, is not simply a process of administering, classifying, and verifying statistical data; neither is it 'the reverentially conceptless, passive hearkening to a Being that always only speaks of Being, without any right to critique' (9). Instead, philosophy must take as its object the historical material conditions that perpetuate suffering, fear, and blind obedience to authority. Put differently, philosophy's task is to 'come to know, without any mitigation, why the

world — which could be paradise here and now — can become hell itself tomorrow' (14).

Unremitting critique is thereby the foundational prescription for praxis offered up by Adorno in *Critical Models*. Whether staging a riposte to historicist claims of social advancement in the essay 'Progress', or framing a genealogy of boredom, apathy, and leisure in 'Free Time', Adorno ruthlessly engages the sedimented modes of thought underpinning modern society. Accordingly, philosophy is not only necessary, it is a mode of *intervention* into seemingly innocuous cultural formations and social practices. *Critical Models* aims to upset an all too comfortable 'common sense', buttressed by a cultural vocabulary of catchwords and phrases that perpetuate the impression of a reified consciousness in control of itself.

### **Joseph Tompkins**

(*Department of Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature*)

University of Minnesota

### **Peter Adamson and Richard Taylor, eds.**

*The Cambridge Companion to Arabic*

*Philosophy.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2005.

Pp. xviii + 448.

US\$70.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-81743-1);

US\$29.99 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-521-52069-0).

The market on introductory volumes to Arabic philosophy is far from crowded. A handful of single-author introductions exist, and the massive ten-year-old Routledge *History* has seen a paperback reprint — yet it is a sad indictment of the current state of publishing that until last year, reprints of Majid Fakhry's thirty-five-year old *History of Islamic Philosophy* still provided the best balance between affordability and comprehensiveness to the student or non-specialist. With an up-to-date overview of the state of the art and a wealth of materials for the interested reader to explore, this book transforms the landscape. The contributors represent the best of what the field has to offer, with a mixture of mature scholars, established researchers, and the most promising among the coming generation. The overall reading experience will prove rich and provoking to the newcomer who wishes to know more about this crucial link between ancient Greek and medieval Latin thought and why it should be considered a subject of considerable intrinsic philosophical merit. For those of us working in the field, the work satisfyingly demonstrates how far the discipline has come just in the past few decades and how exciting vistas are opening up for future study.

Adamson and Taylor have opted for a tripartite structure reminiscent of the Routledge *History*. After two introductory chapters that deal with necessary preliminaries, we get entries on individual authors: al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, early Isma'ili thinkers, Ibn Sinā (this chapter is double-sized due to the overwhelming importance of Avicenna for the tradition), al-Ghazālī, Andalusian philosophers, Ibn Rushd, and Suhrawardī. These are then followed by a cluster of more thematic chapters which give a taste of the way specific issues were handled in the Arabic tradition: logic, ethical and political philosophy, natural philosophy, psychology, and metaphysics. The volume is capped off by chapters on the Arabic influence on Latin and Jewish philosophy (Chs. 17 and 18) and on more recent philosophical trends (Ch. 19). As is customary for the series, a concise bibliography for further reading is offered.

In the midst of all this, a lone chapter on 'Mysticism and Philosophy: Ibn 'Arabi and Mulla Sadrā' (Ch. 11) sits not altogether comfortably. The chapter taken on its own merits reads fine, and the topic (to say nothing of the thinkers) surely needs to be addressed, yet one wonders how this placement is to be construed. Is this the last of the individual chapters? Or the first of the thematic ones? If the latter, then the net impression is that mysticism would be *the* paramount problem to philosophers in the Arabic tradition. This is surely not right, and hardly what the editors had in mind, yet it is a popular misconception common enough for one to wish that the sequence, or else the title of the chapter, had received a little more thought. A related worry has to do with the relative neglect shown the philosophical dimensions of speculative Islamic theology (*kalām*). Though the editors express their remorse over the fact, the net result is that these often very subtle discussions remain overshadowed by the comparatively marginal work done by the Arabic Aristotelians highlighted in this volume.

The entry on ethics and political philosophy seems out of place in more ways than one. The chapter presents, albeit in muted form, a Straussian take on the subject — and a newcomer to the field may be surprised to learn just how influential Straussians have been in the (academic, Anglophone) study of Arabic political philosophy over the past half-century. Alongside a useful exposition of ethics as therapy of the soul and of politics as the science of producing virtuous citizens, the reader is treated to puzzling hints about al-Kindī deliberately remaining silent about the final fate of the human soul (270-1), about Rāzī offhandedly tying a person's worth to his or her value to society (275), and about Fārābī and Averroës perhaps releasing practical philosophy from captivity to theory altogether (283-4). Taken together, these allusions hint at an understanding of the tradition starkly divergent from the received view, according to which the immortality of the soul, however interpreted, is taken as largely unassailable (Fārābī may have been the notable exception — it is hard to tell), and ethics flows from a genuine appreciation of metaphysics as revealing the great chain of being complete with an intelligible superstructure. The editors politely put it that the chapter takes an approach to Arabic philosophy 'different' from the one the volume as a whole represents (Ch. 1, n. 7), and they tacitly point out that

only other Straussian-flavoured studies are recommended in this particular chapter's bibliography. But while no one would deny that scholars of Straussian education and/or temperament are to thank for a major part of the extant literature — and the choice of an eminent latter-day Straussian might therefore seem a politic move — a more straightforward way of confronting this particular area of scholarly controversy would probably have served the readership better.

Of course, as scholarship progresses and old orthodoxies give way to more open-ended accounts, not every little bit of information or interpretation is going to hang together. Was Avicenna's father an Isma'ili? Walker in his chapter says yes, Wisnovsky says no. Was Ghazālī's *Intentions of the Philosophers* written as a preliminary to the *Incoherence*? Marmura says yes, Wisnovsky again has his doubts. Some of these discrepancies are trivial, some may yet prove important; all of this is as it should be: with many important questions even of a historical nature still in play, it would be foolish to paint a falsely unified picture of these issues or the philosophical questions that supervene on them. (On that note: Marmura's contribution on al-Ghazālī, instructive and authoritative as it is, largely suppresses mention of the major interpretive differences regarding this important liminal thinker's adoption of aspects of Arabic Aristotelianism. These, and the contested evidential value of Ghazālī's celebrated autobiography, could have been brought more to the fore.)

Overall the quality of entries is impressive, with several essays reaching above an already high standard into the realm of positive inspiration. D'Ancona's article on the Greek-to-Arabic translation movement is a model of concision, providing an overview not only of the late ancient developments that fed into the Muslim appropriation of Greek learning, but also of the modern scholars who have thrown light on these developments. David Reisman's piece on al-Fârâbî also is a standout, presenting an integrated account of Fârâbî's metaphysics and noetics (put another way, ontology and epistemology) that does far more than present the scholarly state of the art concerning this tough-minded philosopher's thinking. It in fact increases our understanding of Fârâbî's project, and moves the discussion past esotericist and political cul-de-sacs onto a properly philosophical plane. The same goes for John Walbridge's summary treatment of Suhrawardî. Wisnovsky's Avicenna chapter, meanwhile, distils the results of his studies into an almost impossibly dense yet highly rewarding read. These are only some of many highlights.

Equally as impressive as the scholarship is the editorial care that has gone into the preparation and presentation of the volume. In a work this wide-ranging it would be easy to lose sight of all that must be explicated and spelled out, all the connections that must be drawn: yet the editors have made sure to keep the reader apprised of all she needs to know at all times, with a comprehensive timeline offered at the outset and Arabic concepts and titles dutifully translated and explained as they arise. The only minor stumble I came across occurs in a thumbnail sketch of Shi'ism, which has been left in

an introductory section on Avicenna instead of lifted into the previous chapter on the Isma'ilis where it rightfully belongs.

The *Cambridge Companion* series has increasingly come to incorporate volumes showcasing time-periods and philosophical movements as well as individual thinkers. With a sweep of over a thousand years and nineteen chapters, this book is matched in scope only by the similarly broad *Companion* on Greek and Roman philosophy. The editors state that their aim has been one of producing 'an appreciation of the main ideas' as well as 'a sense of what is most philosophically intriguing about the tradition' — and in all of this, their venture must be deemed a rousing success. This is testament to the skill and hard effort of all involved. Yet it is a distinctive feature of this thematic *Companion* that not a single one of its subjects has been the focus of a dedicated volume in the series. As the work under review amply demonstrates, this is assuredly not for lack of philosophical interest. How long, then, until we get a *Cambridge Companion to Avicenna* (to pick only the most obvious target)?

**Taneli Kukkonen**

University of Victoria

**Éric Alliez**

*The Signature of the World:*

*What is Deleuze and Guattari's Philosophy?*

Trans. Eliot Ross Albert and Alberto Toscano.

New York: Continuum Press 2004.

Pp. xxv + 120.

US\$110.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-5620-5);

US\$29.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-5621-2).

Continuum Press is or is near the center of the publication of works by major Continental thinkers: Luce Irigaray, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Henri Lefebvre, Paul Virilio, Michel Foucault, Martin Heidegger, and Theodor Adorno, to name a few of the 'canonized marginals' (xiii). It continues to be the home base for more recently emerging not-to-be-missed Continental philosophers like Alain Badiou with his magnum opus *Being and Event* (2005). More to the point of this review, some of its subsidiary series like the 'Athlone Contemporary European Thinkers' series, and the 'Continuum Studies in Continental Philosophy' are where one looks to find the likes of the 'new Heideggerians' or the 'new Deleuzians': those younger philosophers having more recently completed their apprenticeships with the skilled masters and now setting their own philosophical compasses by problems left unsolved or inserted into philosophical futurity by those very teachers. Éric

Alliez is among the 'new Deleuzians'. This book follows his enormously influential *Capital Times: Tales from the Conquest of Time* (1996) published by that other hotbed of Continental unrest, the University of Minnesota Press.

Second Wave Continentalists all face the enormous challenge of engaging and sustaining engagement with an often cynical would-be readership while working on the 'difficulty of the original' (xiv) and avoiding the 'generalized practice of reduction of complexity' (ix). However, the specific challenge and the very heart of this book is Alliez' grappling explicitly with the very question of how to 'philosophize' in the wake of Deleuze and Guattari's harsh lessons in *What is Philosophy?* regarding that very question. Whether the 'teaching' or the 'learning' thereof, philosophy in their view is not the cheap labour of (re)production of the old into the ever-new, nor is it that which conceives of itself as creating 'access to a pre-existing object' (x), nor a 'divining process that coaxes, from a subject of teaching, some latent cognitive content' on behalf of a passive learner-receiver-reader. (I focus on the remarks in the preface because this book's success stands on whether it takes the advice it gives there.)

Philosophy qua philosophy involves a 'contraction of singularities into the ability to extract a material schematism, or spatio-temporal dynamism, out of one's encounter with ... the outside of thought' (xi). It is fully mediated: the relationalities between text and reading-reader sustained rather than vanishing after the initial situation of establishing the pecking order of knowledge. It does not 'end' in a point of final knowledge fully transferable to another point in the relay of ideas. Philosophy is somehow sensible, or involves the sensible. It is affective and experimental, not preordained or cerebrally flat-footed. It does not 'have' a method so much as is an 'involuntary adventure' involving, at times, cruelty and violence (xi) rather than the comfort and joy of the 'production of stable propositions in a present voided of virtuality or becoming' (xi). It is the opposite of 'information transfer with the least possible noise' (xvi).

A workable 'posture' for this philosophy, says Alliez, is the scholastic mode of *commentary*. Commentary is uniquely able 'to intensify the complexity of the text by selecting and modulating certain moments and perspectives within it, to reorient the reader by inflecting its topology and ... to spur the labour of new repetitions ... giving rise to novel connections and redistributions of its singular points' (xiv). Commentary involves a novel style and a 'very distinctive approach to the history of philosophy, as well as the complex relationship between philosophical invention and philosophical historiography' (xiii). It '... endeavours to link the subjectivity of the apprentice (or the commentator) to "the singular points of the objective in order to form a problematic field." Rather than as a mediator between the (ignorant) reader and the (final) text or doctrine, a commentary can thus be conceived as a novel problematization of the ideal connections that define a particular philosophical object, a repetition of the text that does not seek to identify its theses as much as turn heterogeneity into consistency, uniting differences to differences, and open the work in question both to the "empty time" \_ of the

event and the specific virtualities of the contemporary situation' (xi-xii). This is how Alliez sees himself 'engaging the chaos that beckons thought' (xix), the thought of Deleuze and Guattari and thought in general.

Alliez organizes his engagement beginning with 'The *Ethics* of Philosophy', further fleshing out the implications of 'What is Philosophy's *revolution of the concept?*' (29), drawing into his folds key Deleuzian terms such as 'the plane of immanence', 'conceptual personae', 'intensivity', and 'qualitative v. quantitative multiplicity' via the likes of Descartes, Duns Scotus, Spinoza, and Nietzsche in order to extend their force. Readers of Deleuze and Guattari know the connection of philosophy to the *concept*. Deleuze and Guattari distinguished philosophy's function from those of art and science precisely in terms of the production of concepts by philosophy, percepts by science, and affects by art. In the second chapter, 'The Aetiology of Science', Alliez attends to that demarcation of difference 'starting again from the question of the establishment of a non-hierarchical and non-hierarchizing difference between science and philosophy' (41), a difference which nonetheless has these 'two' in relation if across 'heterogenetic' planes. Alliez' solution involves qualifying and comparing the different kinds of movements or states of affairs (38) 'retain[ed] from virtual events ... potentials already in the course of being actualized, forming part of the functions' (38): rupturing (48); the back and forth movement of matter (49); climbing and descending along two different lines (44); slowing down (43); fluctuations. The last chapter, 'Onto-Ethologics', explores what *becomes* of the subject who inhabits the particular point of view in a mode of conceptualizing. Here Alliez draws on the 'thought-brain' ontology of Whitehead, Varela, Simondon, Ruyer and other exciting science nuts that anyone interested in the history of science will really enjoy meeting. Recalling that the concept has a matter or a skin (xxiii), and is 'a section of chaos' (36), the subject who creates or inhabits concepts 'arises from the prehension of its world meaning that the ontology of the sensible is not separable from the constitution of material processes and assemblages themselves' (xxi). The subject is also a strange attractor, a chaos machine, a difference-operator. That is not a bad description of this kind of a reader as this kind of a book draws to its (not) close.

**Karen Houle**

University of Guelph

**Tom P. S. Angier**

*Either Kierkegaard / Or Nietzsche:*

*Moral Philosophy in a New Key.*

Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2006.

Pp. xi + 159.

US\$79.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-7546-5474-2).

This is the latest of a series of texts that attempts to apply Nietzsche's and Kierkegaard's thought to contemporary philosophical problems within ethics or the philosophy of religion. Angier argues that, despite their oblique styles, it is possible to extrapolate arguments from these figures' work, and sets himself the task of subjecting those arguments to rigorous analysis. As the title suggests, this book plays Nietzsche and Kierkegaard off against each other, with Kierkegaard emerging the victor. Angier purports to demonstrate that 'Kierkegaard both anticipated, and subjected to detailed critique, Nietzsche's central arguments and views in moral philosophy' (1). This, Angier hopes, will lead us to undertake a major reassessment of Kierkegaard and the contribution he has to make to moral philosophy.

The book is divided into two parts: the first considers Nietzsche and Kierkegaard in relation to a certain ideal of individuality, whilst the second consists of two 'case studies' in which these thinkers' views on truth and communication are compared and contrasted. The book opens with a consideration of the different ways in which Nietzsche commentators are currently interpreting his ideal of 'sovereign individuality' and an evaluation of the exegetical strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations. Angier then settles upon what he takes to be the best reading: that Nietzsche's ideal is basically that of a self capable of creating itself *ex nihilo*. Against this Angier argues that such a conception of selfhood cannot do justice to the fact that the self's projects must ultimately depend upon social context, and so Nietzsche's ideal is untenable. Angier then claims that Kierkegaard subjected just such an ideal of individuality to effective critique in *The Sickness Unto Death*, thus anticipating and revealing the limitations of Nietzsche's position.

Kierkegaard is commonly portrayed as a proponent of individualism, thus Angier turns to examine his ethical thought in order to assess whether or not it too will fall to the above charge. He argues that although Kierkegaard's work contains such a notion of subjectivity, it is there for rhetorical purposes and does not represent his views (66). Angier examines the idea, famously proposed by Alasdair MacIntyre, that Kierkegaard be taken as proposing that subjects are confronted by a criterion-less (and therefore a-rational) choice between competing sets of values (aesthetic, ethical, and religious). Against this Angier argues, in the spirit of Louis Pojman's *The Logic of Subjectivity*, that Kierkegaard be read as giving reasons why it is rational to be ethical rather than aesthetic, and religious rather than ethical.

The arguments of the two case studies that make up the second part of Angier's book parallel the argument of the first part. The first case study examines Kierkegaard's and Nietzsche's views of truth, that is to say their

occupation with the kind of truth that concerns the good life for human beings. Angier submits Nietzsche's views on truth to detailed examination before maintaining that these commit him to a 'highly particularistic philosophical anthropology' (73). In comparison, despite perhaps being best known for his claim that 'truth is subjectivity', Kierkegaard, Angier claims, is no subjectivist when it comes to truth. Rather, Angier holds, we are to believe that Kierkegaard's work contains a counter to just this view.

The second case study considers, as Angier puts it, the extent to which these thinkers' views of truth 'admit of linguistic articulation and promulgation' (73). The issue of communication is perhaps the most interesting topic within Nietzsche's and Kierkegaard's work, and this chapter is the richest and most speculative part of Angier's book. In outlining Kierkegaard's views on communication, Angier focuses upon the treatment of Abraham in *Fear and Trembling* and the latter's apparent alienation from thought and language. To do justice to Kierkegaard's portrayal of Abraham, Angier claims, it is necessary to turn to recent developments in narrative theory, specifically to the works of Alasdair MacIntyre, Stanley Hauerwas, and Stephen Crites. Kierkegaard, Angier holds, both endorses and anticipates the insights of narrative theory, and his characterisation of Abraham is to be understood in just these terms. Against this background, Abraham's inability to communicate is attributed to his being portrayed in Hegelian terms, and independently of the narrative and biblical context in which his actions make sense.

Kierkegaard's use of indirect communication is thereby presented as a way of attempting to wean us away from an atomistic conception of human action (and the associated conception of morality) in favour of a narrative understanding. This, as far as I'm aware, is both a wholly novel reading of *Fear and Trembling* and the Kierkegaardian project of indirect communication. The chapter ends with Angier submitting Nietzsche's views on communication to detailed study, arguing that the whole notion of communication ends up being problematic for Nietzsche because his views are ultimately solipsistic. Angier closes with a brief consideration of the more overtly political issues surrounding equality and power in Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, concluding that Kierkegaard is a major force in moral philosophy which that discipline can 'no longer afford to ignore' (145).

The argument of this book, at times, moves a little quickly. For instance, Kierkegaard's individualistic notions are brushed aside as being merely rhetorical but, one surely wants to know, rhetorical to what end? In addition, the treatment of communication in Kierkegaard is limited to a consideration of *Fear and Trembling*, which is undoubtedly a text in which communication is a theme but not one in which Kierkegaard's views on this topic are explicitly presented (in comparison to, say, the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, or *Practice in Christianity*).

In sum, this book is eloquently written and the scope of its argument ambitious and impressive. It will be of interest to Kierkegaard and Nietzsche scholars, to those with an interest in narrative theory, and to anyone looking for a novel approach in contemporary moral philosophy. It also contains a

useful reading list of what Angier takes to be the best analytic treatments of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. Angier's book ranks amongst those that are thought provoking, and for that I recommend it.

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**Nomy Arpaly**

*Merit, Meaning and Human Bondage:  
An Essay on Free Will.*

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2006.

Pp. x + 148.

US\$29.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-691-12433-9).

In her widely acclaimed first book, *Unprincipled Virtue* (Oxford University Press 2004), Arpaly defended the view that good agents are properly responsive to moral reasons, though they may not be able to articulate these reasons. On this basis, *Unprincipled Virtue* advanced an account of praise and blameworthiness: an agent is praiseworthy insofar as her action expresses a good will, blameworthy if it expresses a bad will. In this book, Arpaly expands on this view and defends it against incompatibilists.

Much of this (admirably short) book is therefore concerned with an exposition and defense of the claim that agents can be reasons-responsive in a deterministic universe. Incompatibilists, Arpaly thinks, typically hold that if an agent's actions are determined, then her actions are not genuine responses to her reasons. But, she argues, this view presupposes an implausible view of mental causation. No matter what the causal structure of the universe, mental states can be causally efficacious. Hence our actions can express the quality of our wills.

Arpaly is no doubt right in claiming that causal determinism is no obstacle to the causal efficacy of mental states. The problem is that no prominent incompatibilist denies this. Indeed, libertarians themselves advance accounts of how our reasons (indeterministically) cause our actions (or, in the case of agent-causationists, how reasons structure the options between which agents select). Incompatibilist dissatisfaction with Arpaly's account does not depend on the claim that reasons-responsiveness is impossible in a deterministic world; instead it depends upon the claim that reasons-responsiveness isn't sufficient for moral responsibility or free will.

Some incompatibilists are motivated by concerns about the supposed similarities between manipulation and determinism; some are motivated by worries about ultimate responsibility (where to be ultimately responsible for an action is to be responsible for the reasons that are the non-deviant cause

of the action). Arpaly acknowledges that, in some moods, these kinds of concern can seem pressing to her; in these moods, as she puts it, cheap will, the kind of control we genuinely possess, just won't do. Nevertheless, genuinely free will is impossible, and though we may occasionally lament its absence, cheap — i.e., reasons-responsive — will gives us most of what we want from free will.

The manipulation concern Arpaly thinks she can see off entirely. On her quality-of-will account, an agent's history is simply irrelevant to his responsibility. What matters is the state of his will, and whether his actions express his will, not how his will came to be that way. Arpaly holds that those philosophers, compatibilist or incompatibilist, who think that the agent's history is relevant to assessing her moral responsibility are confused about the nature of blame. They take blame to be analogous to, or to entail, punishment. But blame should instead be understood as a belief-like attitude, she argues. To hold that an agent is blameworthy is simply to hold that a certain attitude toward him is epistemically justified, where the justifying condition just is that he has performed a wrongful act that expresses ill-will. On this view, to conclude that someone is blameworthy is analogous to concluding that he is a bad artist or bad businessman.

It is certainly true that understanding blame in this manner avoids the problem of manipulation. How someone came to be that way is irrelevant to whether she is a bad artist. But is this even a remotely plausible account of blame? I suggest not. Intuitively, there is a distinction between being a bad agent and a blameworthy agent, but Arpaly seems incapable of drawing it. Consider the case of the artist: if someone simply lacks all hint of talent, and there is nothing she could ever do about this fact, then she is a bad artist but not a blameworthy one. But if someone is a bad artist because of actions or omissions, over which he exercised relevant control, then he is a blameworthy, as well as a bad, artist. Arpaly needs to give us some reason to think that the analogous set of distinctions does not apply in the moral arena.

There is the further question whether Arpaly's view can account for the full range of excusing conditions. As she points out, she can easily account for excuses that make it more difficult for an agent to act upon a good will. Constant pain, for instance, may express itself in irascibility without changing the quality of the agent's will. But surely pain, mental illness or brain tumors can alter the quality of the agent's will, as well or instead of making it more difficult for her to act upon her will. Arpaly seems committed to holding that these conditions make an agent *bad* and — therefore — blameworthy. Surely this is implausible. Why does Arpaly hold this view? A clue comes late in the work. Most philosophers, she thinks, focus on morality as a guide to action. But morality is also about the assessment of actions, one's own past actions and those of others. This is obviously correct, but taking the worth of action to be the central concern of moral philosophy makes it easy to overlook the importance of questions about control over action, questions which become far more pertinent when action guidance is the central concern. One may easily be misled into thinking that judging the quality of the

action is all, or almost all, there is to morality, including moral responsibility. From that viewpoint, the distinction between bad actions and blameworthy actions disappears.

Arpaly is unsympathetic to incompatibilists because she doesn't grasp their concerns. She cannot see how questions of the source of the agent's will, or the metaphysics of causation, can matter to moral responsibility. If there is no distinction between badness and blameworthiness, then she is right: these concerns are irrelevant. If, however, there is such a distinction, then compatibilists cannot just dismiss these concerns, but must instead address them head on. As I have indicated, I doubt that Arpaly's strategy can succeed. Nevertheless, her contribution to the debate is important. *Like Unprincipled Virtue, this book is sure to exert a powerful influence over debates on moral psychology and free will.*

### Neil Levy

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### Richard Bett, ed. and trans.

*Sextus Empiricus: Against the Logicians.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2005.

Pp. xlvi + 207.

US\$70.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-5218-2497-2);

US\$27.99 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-5215-3195-0);

US\$22.00 (e-book ISBN-13: 978-0-5111-2651-2).

This recent addition to the Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy series will be greeted warmly by anyone with an appreciation for the richness and variety of Greek philosophy beyond Plato and Aristotle. Sextus Empiricus (ca. second century BCE) was a representative of skepticism, the discontinuous movement ('school' would be much too strong) in Hellenistic philosophy whose members dedicated themselves to the destruction of what they called *dogmatism*, the skeptics' catch-all category containing those who ventured positive claims about the nature of reality. The historical irony is that, insofar as it offers detailed descriptions of the views championed by his dogmatist adversaries, Sextus' work has preserved a trove of information about those very trends in Hellenistic philosophy he hoped to extinguish.

Accordingly, the book is valuable not only as a guide to Sextus' particular strain of skepticism but also as a record of the array of Hellenistic approaches to logic, by which is meant not formal logic but rather what we would recognize as epistemology broadly conceived. Bett has enhanced its value by rendering the original language in unadorned prose that captures the serene

minimalism of Sextus' Greek. This will come as no surprise to those familiar with Bett's excellent edition of Sextus' *Against the Ethicists*, an earlier contribution to the same Cambridge series. The two books respectively constitute the second and third parts of an extended exposition of Sextus' skepticism, the first part of which unfortunately is lost to us.

However, as Bett demonstrates in his introduction to the text, to refer to 'Sextus' skepticism' is at once necessary and misleading. Sextus stands apart from his predecessors (at least, all those predecessors of whom we are aware) in his conception of skepticism as rooted in *epochē*, full-scale suspension of judgment characterized by the refusal either to affirm or deny any serious claim about the way the world really is. Every skeptic emphasized the importance of suspending judgment, of course. But Bett makes a persuasive case (both in this volume and elsewhere) that Sextus' philosophical forebears, including the proverbial founder of skepticism, Pyrrho (ca. 360-250 BCE), as well as the influential revivalist Aenesidemus (ca. first century BCE), seem to have practiced a version of skepticism that included some claims about reality, even if these claims were largely, perhaps uniformly, negative (xv; xx-xxiii). Despite this key innovation to the skeptical method, there is no doubt that Sextus understands himself to be working within an identifiable tradition, proof of which lies not least in his apparent readiness to regurgitate entire swaths of other skeptic's writings onto the pages of his own book (xix).

Bett's expert opinion on this and other current issues surrounding ancient skepticism are found in his comprehensive yet unintimidating introduction, which maintains an appropriate balance between reconstructing the classical context of Sextus' work and reconsidering scholarly assumptions about it. Besides the introduction, Bett includes a chronological table of important figures (xxxi), suggestions for further reading (xxxii-xxxiv), a note on the text and translation (xxxv-xxxvii), a detailed outline of the argument in *Against the Logicians* (xxxviii-xliii), a glossary of technical terms (184-92), a list of textual parallels between *Against the Logicians* and other works by Sextus (193-5), a descriptive list of figures referred to by Sextus, and a subject index (205-7). All are designed to prepare the reader for a constructive engagement both with the text and with Greek skepticism generally. Of these, least useful is Bett's outline of Sextus' argument, which, curiously, does not cross-reference the chapter headings of *Against the Logicians*. Among the most useful is the glossary of technical terms, which catalogs Bett's consistent English renderings of recurrent Greek words and phrases, an essential tool for demystifying Hellenistic jargon. One wishes, however, that Bett in some cases had annotated the entries in his glossary. As it stands, one may use it to discover that 'demonstrative reference' translates the Greek *deixis* and that the Stoic term *katalēpsis* is 'apprehension,' though we will not learn there what a demonstrative reference or an apprehension *is*. Moreover, the glossary omits some technical terms that perhaps it would have been better to include. One such example is the Greek adjective *aperispastos* (rendered by Bett as 'turned away'), which Sextus applies not only to appearances that

have not been called into question by conflicting appearances but also to persons who 'turn away' from non-veridical appearances (176, 179ff.).

The only other English translation of *Against the Logicians* is that of R.G. Bury, first published in 1935 as part of the Loeb Classical Library Series. While still serviceable, much of the language is understandably outdated, and less care is taken to render technical vocabulary in consistent and philosophically faithful terms. The need for revision in style and conceptual clarity is especially pressing in the case of *Against the Logicians*, which, in contrast to Sextus' efficient *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, sometimes seems more a sprawling jungle of exotic arguments than a coherent philosophical treatise. Bett's translation does a better job than Bury's of delineating the denser patches in Sextus' thought. Scholars of ancient philosophy will note, too, that Bury often glosses over textual difficulties and imposes sense upon syntactical and grammatical nonsense. Bett, on the other hand, is forthcoming about manuscript problems and usually refuses to prejudice the reader's interpretation by wringing intelligible English from unintelligible Greek.

Occasionally, one notices a divergence from Bury that is not an improvement. In my opinion the most significant is Bett's decision to translate the ubiquitous (and epistemologically significant) Greek adjective *adēlos* as 'unclear,' where Bury gives 'non-evident.' Clarity admits of degrees, but *adēlos* does not: an object, fact, or proposition is either evident or it is not evident, and it is a legitimate question whether our understanding of Sextus' remarks on 'logic' might not be affected by the discrepancy. Still, the less experienced explorer of Greek philosophy who makes his way through Bett's edition will not be waylaid by such technical problems, while the veteran will know how to sidestep them. In any case, both will find their paths through *Against the Logicians* easier to follow thanks to Richard Bett.

### **Joel E. Mann**

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### **Natalie Brender and Larry Krasnoff, eds.**

*New Essays on the History of Autonomy:*

*A Collection Honoring J.B. Schneewind.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2004.

Pp. ix + 214.

US\$74.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-82835-2).

The articles in this collection offer an engagement with J.B. Schneewind's important work, *The Invention of Autonomy*. Of particular interest for the contributors is pursuing Schneewind's concern with contextualizing Kant's moral philosophy. The five chapters that comprise the first section address

the Kantian theory of autonomy in the broader historical context of moral philosophy, while the four chapters in the disappointingly much shorter, second section deal with autonomy in practice. The overarching consideration that connects these papers is the view that an understanding of Kantian autonomy requires a study of its historical context. Engaging with this approach to autonomy, the authors of this collection contend and illustrate, provides a more complex, interesting and challenging Kant.

The first section sees contributors explore various complexities in the history of Kantian autonomy. Theological and religious debates of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and their relationship to Kant's thinking on autonomy, are given special attention. Controversies over voluntarism, theodicy and toleration come under scrutiny. If the first part of the book releases Kant from the context of Enlightenment rationalism, the second explores the implications this raises in terms of human activity. The situated nature of human deliberations and the plurality of rational agents provide an account of autonomy in terms of a contextually and historically rendered human agency. What emerges is a Kant who is, as the editors put it, 'more sympathetic to our empirical nature' (3). The first chapters are especially concerned with addressing Kant's efforts to reconcile the insights of the voluntarist and antivoluntarist conceptions of agency and goodness. This follows Schneewind's emphasis on the problem of evil, especially attempts to reconcile the evil in creation with the perfect nature of God, in Kant's 'invention of autonomy'.

In the first section's final two chapters, Knud Haakonssen and Stephen Darwall provide challenging discussions of autonomy in the context of natural law, especially as viewed through the prism of voluntarism. Haakonssen concludes that Protestant natural law theory had a significance in the history of early philosophy that goes well beyond being simply a phase in the emergence of a Kantian notion of autonomy. Darwall focuses on aspects of voluntarist conceptions that lead in the direction of Kant, suggesting that elements of the Kantian picture are present in the voluntarist natural lawyers from the start (114). He is especially concerned with discovering what the contemporary idea of mutual accountability might owe to the early modern idea of morality as subjection to the will of a superior authority (114). Emphasizing the works of Pufendorf and Suarez, Darwall notes that although moral obligations are said to derive from commands of superior authority, these commands are addressed to free rational agents in the governing of their conduct. For Darwall, the category of moral subject carried implications both of subjection to a superior and of a free rational subject. Darwall's concern with contemporary conceptions of morality provides a nice lead-in to the discussions that occupy the collection's second section.

The second section, delivering exciting discussions of autonomy in the context of worldly practices, offers the most interesting analyses. It is unfortunate that more space was not given to additional or more extensive pursuit of issues dealing with autonomy and practice. Especially interesting is Natalie Brender's attempt to develop Kant as a resource for contemporary

thought. Exploring the difficulties agents encounter in pursuing moral ideas 'in a world that is grossly discordant with the one they seek to realize' (156), Brender brings Kant together with sociological concerns over contemporary movements for social justice.

Taken together, the articles in both sections of this collection present a vision of Kantian autonomy that goes well beyond notions that hold it as independent of time and space, the domain of the solitary rational agent and the legislation of eternally valid laws (3). Kantian autonomy, in the editors' view, following Schneewind, 'sprang not from a simple and dogmatic wish to transcend religion and community, but from a complex engagement with a set of debates about the nature and possibility of moral community with other human beings and with God' (3). Those who would position Kant too easily as part of an ahistorical 'Enlightenment project' (itself historically dubious) have themselves failed to appreciate the complex ways in which Kant's thinking is embedded in and engaged with history.

This book is about more than Kant, however. Indeed the background story that runs through and connects all of the contributions in this collection is the concern that philosophy has waged a constant struggle with and against the fact of its own history (1). The editors suggest that while philosophy, like any other academic discipline, has a history, it is less commonly accepted within philosophy, as opposed to literature or sociology for example, that current understandings are historically situated. Rather than take the approach favoured in the rest of the humanities, or the social sciences, in which authors openly present their works as influenced by and engaging with the concerns of their own spatial or temporal contexts, for philosophy the preference is for an approach that echoes the sciences. Philosophical positions are instead situated, for the most part, in the realm of reasons having no necessary connection to time and place (1). This is not entirely the case, of course, as the activities of historicist critics make clear, and the authors of the present work are certainly not using history to suggest that any specific philosophical position is incorrect (2).

In some ways this collection reads like two distinct books, in terms of the tone, content and readability of the essays in each section. The first section is much less accessible, its subject matter directed towards a specialist readership trained in moral philosophy. On the other hand, the essays of the second section, notably Richard Rorty's enjoyable critical reflection on the role of philosophers as public commentators, would make a useful contribution to discussions in sociology, politics or history, where interest in notions of autonomy has grown recently, especially as encouraged by the demands of global social movements.

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**Tad Brennan**

*The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Fate.*

Toronto and New York:

Oxford University Press 2005.

Pp. xi + 340.

Cdn\$60.00/US\$45.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-925626-6);

Cdn\$40.95/US\$27.50

(paper ISBN-13: 978-0-19-921705-2).

This, as its title suggests, is not an academic harrowing of an underworld of historical irrelevance, but an engaging invitation to Stoicism as a way of life that has much to recommend it. As an apologist for Stoicism, Brennan begins by noting all the misbegotten and even perverse notions to which the English terms 'stoic' and 'stoicism' are heirs, and the corresponding misunderstanding of the ancient school itself, which he hence designates with a capital S: Stoicism. His central thesis is that you can only appreciate Stoicism when you see it as a whole system, something rarely done. As such, the great virtue of Brennan's text is that it does provide a comprehensive and well balanced introduction to Stoicism as a complete system appropriate for the advanced undergraduate or beginning graduate student, but also suitable for the non-specialist, whether professional philosopher or otherwise.

*The Stoic Life* is divided into four main parts followed by a nicely critical conclusion. Part I, 'Introduction', provides us with a sketch of the main figures in the history of Stoicism, and a critical analysis and appraisal of its sources. Discussion of sources continues throughout the text and is alone worth the price of admission. In Part II, 'Psychology', Brennan lays the foundation for his thesis that Stoicism can only be understood as a system. Beginning with the concepts of 'impression' and 'assent', he shows how the Stoic accounts of belief, knowledge, impulse, emotion, *eupatheiai* (the sage's analog to emotions which are always flawed), 'selections' (non-emotional motivational states), and action all stem from these primary epistemological concepts. In particular, it is the strong assent to a *kataleptic* impression, an impression with an epistemic guarantee, that distinguishes the Sage from the non-Sage, the Sage's knowledge from the non-Sage's opinion, the Sage's *eupatheiai* from the non-Sage's emotions, and finally the Sage's life of virtue from the non-Sage's life of vice.

As Brennan moves into Part III, 'Ethics', the dependence of Stoic ethics upon Stoic epistemology is abundantly clear. The categories of 'goods and indifferents', 'final ends', 'living in agreement', what is 'befitting', and what is 'perfected', are all more intuitively understood and more fully appreciated against the epistemological foundation of 'impressions' and 'assents'. As Brennan puts it in his conclusion, 'we get a better account of the ethical theory — a more exegetically faithful and philosophically satisfying account — by ... making the ethical picture depend to a large extent on the non-ethical picture' (315). In Part IV, 'Fate', Brennan doesn't just give us the usual account of Stoic

determinism all too familiar from survey courses and texts, but in particular takes up the compatibilist position of Chrysippus, showing how his argument entails the whole Stoic system: 'the psychology of impressions and assents, the logical definitions of possibility and necessity, the metaphysical theory of causation, and the ethical analysis of responsibility' (264).

It is in such a fashion that Brennan pretty well succeeds in accomplishing what he sets out to do: making the case that Stoicism is more plausible and interesting when seen as a whole system, in particular a system with its foundations in epistemology. Along the way he also demonstrates how good history of philosophy is inseparable from doing philosophy. As Brennan unfolds the Stoic system, he shows just how foreign and unique the Stoic position is, how much it differs from our post-Humean world, and at the same time just how a case can be made for taking the world as the Stoics took it. For example, Brennan describes how some philosophers today commonly distinguish between 'occurrent' and 'dispositional' beliefs, with the latter commonly identified (if they meet additional conditions) with states of knowledge. He then compares and contrasts this with the Stoic view of beliefs and knowledge as events, a view with no place for 'dispositional beliefs'. Stoic belief and knowledge are present assents to impressions, they are events and actions. Instead of talking about 'dispositional beliefs', the Stoics would speak of having a disposition to believe, a disposition to undertake a certain epistemological action when the appropriate occasion arises (63-5). So one knows that  $2 + 2 = 4$  only when assenting to that impression and not, for instance, when conjugating Greek verbs. This has obvious problems of its own, but it does dispense with any such mentalistic entities as 'dispositional beliefs'.

Brennan not only elucidates Stoicism by comparing and contrasting it with contemporary thinking, but also does an excellent job of showing both its continuity and its discontinuity with previous thought. For example, he introduces the important Stoic ethical concept of 'indifferents' by setting out the position that Socrates at times expresses: that whereas only wisdom is good there are many things which are neither good nor bad in themselves, but which can be good or bad depending on how they are used, e.g., wealth, health, and beauty. Similarly for the Stoics, only virtue is good and only vice is bad, but in contrast, everything else, wealth, health, etc., are indifferent and *remain* indifferent; they don't become good or bad depending on how they are used (120). Lest one think that the Stoic category of 'promoted indifferents', indifferents that one ought in some sense to choose, is distinct from that of Socrates in name only, Brennan argues that the Stoic view of goods rests on the Stoic view of human nature, that the only thing that matters is the good of the soul; the body and all that attends on its prospering are a matter of indifference (129-31).

In conclusion, this is a comprehensive and detailed introduction to Stoicism as a complete system that delivers what it promises. But not only that, it is a helpful and thoughtful guide. For instance, at the end of every section Brennan has suggestions for further reading, with detailed comments about both the primary sources and the secondary literature. Concerning the latter,

for example, Brennan tells us that in the area of emotions Nussbaum and Sorabji err in treating the Stoic view as akin to that of a modern psychologist, focusing in on how emotions feel; whereas he places himself in the camp of Lloyd, Frede, Striker, and Long, who attempt to understand the Stoic view of emotions more from within the framework of Stoic ethical and epistemological theories (114). Brennan's conclusion is a nice critical appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of Stoicism, a system from which we can learn, even if we can no longer embrace it (320).

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**Christopher M. Brown**

*Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus:  
Solving Puzzles about Material Objects.*

New York: Continuum 2005.

Pp. ix + 194.

US\$120.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-7828-3).

The 'Ship of Theseus' puzzle is over two-thousand years old and goes something like this. As a ship ages its sailors have the weathered planks replaced with new ones. After a while every part of the original ship has been replaced. An eccentric philosopher collects all the discarded pieces and puts them back together. Which ship is numerically the same as the original: the ship which went through steady continuous changes, or the reconstructed ship? This isn't just an intriguing puzzle. Many contemporary philosophers think that this and other puzzles show that there is a logical incompatibility within and among our common-sense intuitions about material objects. While solutions to the puzzle attempt to save as many of these intuitions as possible, most conclude that some must be abandoned. Christopher Brown thinks that Thomas Aquinas' discussion of such things as substance, artifacts, matter, accidental form, etc. can be used to solve puzzles like this while maintaining all our common-sense intuitions about compound material objects.

The book begins with a discussion of contemporary solutions of the puzzle and of the intuitions we must abandon if we accept any of them. This is followed by an exposition of Aquinas' discussion of material objects. Although Aquinas did not write much on artifacts, Brown does a good job of dealing with scattered statements and presenting them as part of a unified account. Given this material, he discusses the Ship of Theseus and other puzzles. He proposes two strategies Aquinas could use. The first, which he calls 'the reductivist

strategy', rests on Aquinas' distinction between substances and artifacts. Artifacts are composed of matter and accidental form, not matter and substantial form. They retain numerical identity when there is no change in either the matter or the accidental form. Since a number of changes were made in the ship as planks were replaced, it is no longer the same boat. In fact, once the first plank is replaced it is no longer the same boat. Brown grants that 'Some may think that ... the view ... that an artifact is not the sort of thing that can survive replacement of its parts, i.e., a substance — is rather counter-intuitive'. He goes on to propose an alternate strategy for Aquinas.

The 'non-reductivist strategy' relies on the fact that the presentation of the Ship of Theseus puzzle requires one to accept the claim that objects can exist intermittently. Aquinas rejects the claim that a substance or artifact can remain numerically one while going through the sequence: exist, cease existing, and exist again. Brown argues that intermittent existence of material objects is 'in conflict with our ordinary ways of thinking about material objects'. Brown then points out that the non-reductivist strategy does not work against a different formulation of the Ship of Theseus puzzle. However, this different formulation is the same as another puzzle: 'The Debtor's Paradox'. Before going on he argues that the non-reductivist strategy, while a partial solution, is a powerful solution in accordance with common-sense intuition.

He then solves the Debtor's Paradox, i.e., the argument that because of changes in material elements (atoms, molecules, hair, etc.) the borrower and the person asked to repay a loan are not numerically identical, and the loan does not have to be repaid. The solution relies on the fact that the borrower is an organism, and as such is a substance. Substances, for Aquinas, can survive changes in their integral parts without becoming numerically different substances. It is important to remember that Aquinas makes a major distinction between substances and artifacts.

Brown goes on to resolve two more puzzles, 'The Growing Argument' and 'The Puzzle of Tibbles the Cat', using Aquinas' analysis of substance. Finally, he considers 'The Lump/Goliath' puzzle. Lump is a piece of clay and Goliath is a statue made out of that piece of clay. The puzzle comes from reasoning that Lump both is and is not Goliath. He resolves this puzzle by using a distinction between a material substance and the same material substance considered under a certain phase sortal, 'statue'. The distinction justifies the conclusion that there are not two objects occupying the same place.

It should be noted that Brown has not completed the partial solution presented of the non-reductivist strategy. Discussing organisms does not solve problems at the level of artifacts unless one is willing to blur Aquinas' distinction between substances and artifacts. This is exactly what Brown did earlier in the book when he asked, 'Given that Aquinas leans upon intuitions with respect to the compatibility of identity and mutability in material substances, why could he not soften the restrictive view of artifact identity in much the same way?' He thinks Aquinas' metaphysics could accommodate this approach without sacrificing any fundamental positions.

The book shows impressive research into Aquinas' discussion of artifacts and different levels of material substances. Including Aquinas' discussion of the potentiality of worms that have been divided and left into two living things indicates detailed research. In addition, Brown is careful to distinguish Aquinas' thought from speculations about what Aquinas might have said and how a Thomist could propose ideas differing from Aquinas which still originate in his thought.

Throughout the work Brown recognizes that some of the things Aquinas says differ from what many philosophers think today, but argues that Aquinas' claims are supported by very basic intuitions. He also argues that they allow a resolution of a number of puzzles without sacrificing any important common-sense intuitions about matter. The fact that a philosophical discussion of material things written long before the current discussion — and certainly not written to solve these problems — could do this, is impressive.

This is a very interesting book combining discussion of a current issue with the metaphysics and philosophy of nature of Aquinas. This is exactly the kind of writing needed for philosophers who focus on different eras to be able better to talk to each other.

**John Wagner**

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**Stuart Brown and N. J. Fox**

*Historical Dictionary of Leibniz' Philosophy.*

Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press 2006.

Pp. lv + 329.

US\$85.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8108-5464-2).

This volume — the first dictionary of Leibniz' philosophy — gives a concise overview of the main topics of Leibniz' philosophical thought and their biographical and intellectual context. The extensive introductory matter provides, among other things, a short biography of Leibniz and a very useful chronology that mentions not only the major events in Leibniz' life, but also outlines the history of his philosophical writings and, importantly, the history of the main editions of his works from the eighteenth century to the present, as well as giving some hints as to the reception of Leibnizian ideas in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by philosophers such as Schelling, Lotze, and Frege. The alphabetical entries in the main part, the dictionary itself, fall in four groups: 1) philosophical concepts that play a

central role in the work of Leibniz, 2) methodological concepts that explain how Leibniz thought philosophical concepts are formed, 3) philosophical writings that mark crucial stages in Leibniz' development, and 4) Leibniz' predecessors and contemporaries who played an influential role in the development of his life and thought.

The choice of headings in the main part is reasonably fine-grained, so that the dictionary provides both standard information, which will be useful for general readers and undergraduate students, and more sophisticated information, which will be useful for graduate students and professional historians of philosophy. While the dictionary gives clear and accessible characterizations of basic concepts such as unity, action, expression, individuation, free will, justice, happiness or pre-established harmony, it also goes into considerable detail in explaining less well-known concepts. The dictionary has particular strengths in explaining technical concepts pertaining to Leibniz' philosophical theology — some of which even may have eluded competent Leibniz scholars. For example, if you want to understand what Leibniz exactly has in mind when he distinguishes between transduction and transcreation, or if you want to know more about his attitude towards Socinianism, this is a good place to get started.

A further strength is the great emphasis that is laid on explaining Leibniz' methodological concepts. While the received view has it that Leibniz' rationalism should be characterized as a hypothetico-deductive methodology that applies the idea of a universal characteristics to all areas of human knowledge, Brown and Fox develop a far more detailed picture of Leibniz' methodological views. While they make clear which role Leibniz ascribes to hypotheses and the method of geometry, they also highlight the role of arguments from analogy, the conception of philosophical analysis, the logic of presumptions, the notion of eclecticism, the idea of resuscitating ancient philosophy, and Leibniz' views on controversies and disputes. These entries portray Leibniz much more as a methodological pluralist than the standard view would have it. Finally, there are some entries, such as those about Leibniz' idealism, his phenomenalism, and his theory of composite substances, which contain resolute and illuminating statements of Brown and Fox's own position regarding some hotly-debated interpretive issues.

One of the things that might puzzle the reader at first glance is the relatively small number of references to Leibniz' writings. It is clear that the dictionary is not meant to function as a concordance. This, of course, by itself is not a big shortcoming since a concordance to the Gerhardt edition of Leibniz' philosophical works exists (Reinhold Finster et al., eds., *Leibniz Lexicon: A Dual Concordance to Leibniz' Philosophische Schriften* [Hildesheim: Olms 1988]). Also, the fact that the dictionary is not overburdened with scholarly apparatus certainly contributes to the clarity of the entries. Nevertheless, some entries don't give a single reference (or only a reference to a particular work without further specification of sections or pages) and many entries give only one or two precise references. An impatient reader might not get much guidance for further study from such entries taken

in isolation. However, following up the tight net of cross-references between the entries in many cases leads the reader to entries where some more relevant references are given. Moreover, the bibliography at the end of the volume uses a fine-grained system of headings that, to some extent, mirrors the topics of the entries in the dictionary. This helps to locate further reading on a chosen topic, where additional references to the original Leibniz will also be found. All in all, the net of references to Leibniz' writings appears to be carefully crafted, but it takes some patience to discover how carefully it is crafted.

The extensive bibliography spanning almost eighty pages at the end of the volume is a tool that should be helpful both for a beginner's first orientation of the literature about Leibniz as well as for specialists looking for commentary about a particular topic. The bibliography nicely reflects the fact that Leibniz scholarship is a genuinely international affair. The reader finds not only references to works by North American and British Leibniz scholars, but also to works by scholars from continental Europe, Israel, South-America, and Asia. Preference is given to publications that are available in English, but there are also a good number of references to works published in French, German, and Italian. One of the implicit principles of selecting secondary literature seems to have been to include shorter, more accessible articles rather than longer, more technical works by the same authors. Moreover, in selecting secondary literature Brown and Fox luckily do not only go by the prominence of the place of publication but, in addition to well-known standard works, include many interesting and less well-known works published at more remote places. (The only, very minor down-side of their selection is that, at most places of the planet, one will have to use inter-library loan systems to get hold of a good part of the literature listed).

To sum up: this is a very useful volume that should be found in any university or college library.

**Andreas Blank**

Tel Aviv University

**Stephen Davies**

*The Philosophy of Art.*

Malden, MA: Blackwell 2006.

Pp. xi + 239.

US\$62.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-2022-7);

US\$24.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-2023-4).

This is a very well crafted introduction to the field. Stephen Davies is always very clear in his exposition of the views he considers, evenhanded in the description of the alternative stances one may take with regard to the issues at hand, and ready to engage the arguments that he encounters or fashions himself.

The book goes through the major topics typically encountered in anthologies of philosophy of art, including the definition of art, interpretation, expression and emotional responses to art, and the value of art. In this way the book makes for a valuable companion to such anthologies. Davies goes beyond this set of standard topics, however, offering the reader an introduction to an important issue not generally covered in the anthologies, namely, the debate on the origins of art.

Chapter 1, 'Evolution and culture', lucidly lays out two major alternatives on the origins of art, which furthermore shape our attitudes toward what counts as art and what does not. Davies proposes, on the one hand, that art has been conceived as a product of a particular historical period of European history (the 18th century) and, on the other, as the natural concomitant of the evolutionary development of our species.

Having set the stage in this way, Chapter 2, on the definition of art, opens up a number of centrally important issues, such as whether there is an essence to art and whether non-Western art can be art. These discussions lead into the topic of Chapter 3 on whether aesthetic appreciation should be understood as limited to the properties that are available to us in sensory perception. Davies proceeds to point out the importance of properties that are dependent on relations to matters 'outside' the artworks, such as the historical period in which they are made, the genre to which they belong, or the intentions of the artist.

In Chapter 4, 'Varieties of Art', Davies addresses not just the fact that art is diverse, comprising music, theatre, dance, painting, and so on, but that this diversity of forms of art means that their ontologies may differ quite radically. He carefully scrutinises the contrasting status of works for performance, such as plays and musical pieces, and works that have a completed, continuing existence in space and time, such as paintings or sculptures. On the way he also considers whether Platonist approaches to art's ontology could make sense, or whether for artworks to exist some physical rendering of ideas is always necessary.

Chapter 5 seeks to clarify the role of interpretation, when it is to the point, and what legitimises it when it is appropriate. Chapter 6 concerns expression and emotional responses to art. Here Davies sorts through the puzzles

concerning how works can be expressive given that they are inanimate, and why it may make sense that audiences have emotional responses to some works. Chapter 7 is focused on how art may be able to represent, whether representation fundamentally is based in biological or in cultural factors, and how to think about photography and film in contrast to painting and drawing. Chapter 8 finally considers what may give value to art.

In terms of problems, only two minor issues come to mind. The first is that, although aesthetic and artistic properties are contrasted as such in Chapter 3, aesthetics is not discussed independently of its ties to art. Arguably aesthetics is also relevant in non-art contexts, since landscapes and individual animals or plants (or parts of plants, such as flowers) are aesthetically appreciated or appreciable. The other problem arises in Chapter 8, 'The Value of Art', which like the rest of the book is well informed and evenhanded, but seems to be inconsistent in its treatment of the relationship between artistic and moral values in films. While Davies clearly points out the educative power of art, he has few qualms about endorsing the portrayal of explicit violence in works such as 'action' films, 'Westerns' and crime dramas, on the ground that violence is to be expected in these genres. As Davies himself notes, in action films the suffering, dismemberment and death of the 'bad guys', or even of bystanders, is systematically disvalued. We should think that the *formulaic* endorsement of violent ways of resolving conflicts represented in these films would seriously reduce their artistic value, and also be morally worrisome — not least because visible minorities tend to be targeted (as also is evident in Westerns). Davies' attitude seems strange when put side by side with his suggestion that gratuitous violence, misogyny and racism may compromise the artistic value of artworks.

Interestingly, with regard to pornography Davies argues that 'cheaply controlling, emotionally oppressive works fail both morally and artistically', when they do not respect their audiences 'by providing the space they need to reach an appropriate judgment of the work' (226). One might argue, though, that the most common, and effective, tools for controlling the judgment of audiences nowadays are applied in films (and television shows) produced with the aim of entertaining audiences through the display of the hero's 'private vision of justice'. Otherwise it would be difficult to understand how individuals who in real life would be horrified at the waste of lives, callousness, dehumanisation of characters, and suffering featured in these films, might praise them for their entertainment value. So, it remains a puzzle why Davies falls in with common attitudes that 'it would be prudish' to regard 'the immorality that [these films] endorse' as 'outweighing their positive artistic values' (223).

Notwithstanding these concerns, this is a first-rate introduction to the maze of debates that has been constructed around art. Each chapter comes with an up-to-date, annotated bibliography and a set of questions intended to help students enter deeper into the topics. This book is an outstanding achievement in pedagogical clarity and philosophical argument, and certainly is worth reading by students who seek an introduction to philosophy

of art as well as by professionals who look for a well-argued commentary on the quasi-totality of the key issues in the field. Without hesitation I recommend it to all.

**Thomas Heyd**

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**Wolfgang Detel**

*Foucault and Classical Antiquity:  
Power, Ethics and Knowledge.*

David Wigg-Wolf, trans. New York:  
Cambridge University Press 2005.

Pp. x + 281.

US\$75.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-83381-3).

This volume, first published in German in 1998 (*Macht, Moral, Wissen: Foucault und die Klassische Antike*), combines three purposes. Detel explains that the main goal of his reflection is to shed light on the connection between sexuality and morals in classical antiquity. However, this book is more accurately described as a commentary on Foucault's reflections on that question. Note that D does not offer an extensive study on Foucault's work on ancient texts though, since his book focuses exclusively on the second volume of the *History of Sexuality*. This critical examination of *The Use of Pleasure* (New York: Vintage Books 1990; hereafter *UP*) pursues two different objectives. First, it intends to correct Foucault's later analyses by providing alternative interpretations of texts which were at the center of *UP* and by drawing attention to ancient texts neglected by Foucault. Second, it aims to submit Foucault's later 'ethical programme' to an examination inspired by Foucault's early reflections on the relationship between power and knowledge. This last objective allows D to depict his program as a 'reconstruction of Foucault's own reconstruction' of classical thought on morals and sexuality (1).

In Chapter 1, 'Morals, knowledge and power', D begins with a critical examination of several contemporary theories on power and proposes a productive concept of power that may apply to the study of the ancient practices of the self. D next argues in Chapter 2, 'The ethical teleology', that Foucault's focus on sexual desire led him to neglect the context in which the moral concern for sexuality made sense for ancient authors, namely the search for *eudaimonia*, happiness. The adoption of such a limited perspective would be especially unfortunate as Foucault would falsely characterize the ancient practices of the self as based on a model of self domination and restriction. D proposes to 'redress this deficit' (60) using Aristotle's teleology of the good life as an example. Let us note though that a careful reading of

*UP* suggests that Foucault was perfectly aware of the limited scope of his own enquiry on *aphrodisia* and did not ignore the teleological orientation of Aristotle's ethics or of ancient ethics in general (*UP* 88-9, 134-5).

One of D's most important reservations toward *UP* is that, in contrast to Foucault, he believes that classical dietetics should not be described as an art of existence. In Chapter 3, 'The scientific regimen', D provides acute analyses of ancient medical texts, revealing that medicine became an autonomous field, distinct from ethics, in the course of the fifth century BCE. Although his examination of ancient medical texts is both rigorous and illuminating, one may think that there is, again, no major disagreement between D and Foucault. It is correct that medicine and ethics (or philosophy) were clearly separated disciplines in the classical period, but this does not change the fact that philosophers still considered dietetics as an important part of an 'overall regulation of life that covers both the mental and the moral aspect' (93), as shown by Foucault. The idea that ancient dietetics were not concerned with a model of domination and restriction of sexual activity, but 'with a model of its sovereign embedding in the physiological equilibrium of the body' (117), is not in contradiction with Foucault's analysis either. Indeed, Foucault stresses repeatedly that ancient dietetics' main concern was to submit sexual activity to a certain 'economy' (*UP* 115-16).

D's critical examination of Foucault's analyses of pederasty and marital relationships as an object of moral concern focuses on the question of power. In Chapter 4, he asserts that Foucault's interpretation is 'flawed by a number of serious misjudgments' (3), since he paid no attention to the dimension of power involved in those asymmetrical relationships between husband and wife, pederast and young beloved. His critique aims at showing that: 1) the 'moral stylisation of pederasty' was limited to a political elite; 2) the moral problematisation of homoerotic relationships relied on the same criteria determining the difference between free men and slaves; 3) the concern for the husband's sexual behaviour was based on the idea that it represented a threat for the stability of the *oikos*, the household; 4) homoerotic relationships were asymmetrical and could only be freed from their oppressive structure at the cost of the renunciation of all physical contact. Even if Foucault did not depict these relationships in terms of power, he nonetheless mentioned the last three aspects highlighted by D. As for the first, namely the limitation of homoerotic relationships to the elite, this reinforces Foucault's characterisation of the ancient practices of the self as a way, for a few *individus d'exception*, to give their life an admirable shape.

In Chapter 5, D undertakes an in-depth examination of the epistemological background of Plato's theory of eros, a dimension of Foucault's analysis he finds 'particularly unsatisfactory' (4). He first challenges the view according to which Plato's theory of eros would recommend an ascetic life model and an impersonal intellectualism; in his opinion, Socrates and Alcibiades' orientation should not be opposed as they agree upon the most important aspect of eros as a practice of the self: erotic restlessness. D then turns to *Lysis* and *Phaedrus* in order to show that the concern for the manliness of

the youth emphasised by Foucault has no connection with Plato's own interest in homoerotic relationships. He thus explains that 'what is at stake is the possibility and the perspective of a common, inspired philosophical life that must be based on an enthusiastic erotic attitude supported by sensuality as well as reciprocal friendship and recognition' (200). In the last part of this dense chapter, D suggests that an analogy could be drawn between the role of perception in Plato's theory of knowledge and physical love in philosophical erotics. After a long reflection on the 'early theory of the forms' and the anamnestic conception of knowledge (in *Phaedrus* and *Phaedo*), as well as a brief presentation of Plato's late ontology, D shows that they involve the same dynamic which 'demands a restless spirit that oscillates between plurality and unity and is the essence of "demonic" eros'. D concludes by stating that 'the educated and suitable erotic approach to physical objects and other beautiful images is only a special case of this dynamic, even if it is of particular importance pedagogically, and can only unfold its full power in a sublimated pederastic relationship' (219).

The last chapter, 'Gender, nature, reference', may be read as an appendix rather than a conclusion. Many post-modern theorists who emphasise the socially constructed nature of gender and downplay the significance of 'sexual difference', such as Judith Butler, were deeply influenced by Foucault's work on power, games of truth, and norms. This situation is paradoxical, as D rightly points out, given Foucault's own 'gender-blindness'. Indeed, in the two last volumes of the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault makes constant use of the category of sexual difference without justification. D's goal is to 'reconstruct the naïve reference to different sexes that Foucault relies on' (5) and to show how it may be possible to refer to sexual difference while doing justice to gender theorists' reservations concerning this notion. In order to accomplish this, D pleads for the complete dissolution of gender as a theoretical category and defends what he calls a 'thin concept of sex', referring exclusively to biological features.

D claims that Foucault neglected 'what the ancient texts have to say about epistemology and the analysis of power', a negligence which would indicate a 'misunderstanding of his own general project' (2). According to D, because Foucault erroneously thought that 'the ethical creation of the subject could more or less be separated from the archaeological and genealogical dimension developed in his earlier works', he 'did not say what, in his own best theoretical interest, he should have said' (2). In fact, Foucault emphasised on many occasions that the purpose of his research on antiquity was to make a contribution to a genealogy of the subject, or more precisely of the relationship between the subject and truth. He made clear in numerous short texts and interviews, now collected in the last volume of *Dits et Écrits*, that there was no radical chasm between his early political-archaeological work and his ethical research on the ancients. This leads to a final criticism of D. His book was written before the first publication of *L'Herméneutique du sujet* (2001) in which Foucault examines the articulation of the care of the self and politics in Plato's *Alcibiades*, a text which would obviously have been relevant in the

context of his enquiry. In fact, as long as the last course Foucault taught at le Collège de France - which also deals with Plato - remains unpublished, it appears that a study of Foucault and antiquity is premature, as all the relevant material is not yet available. Such a study is doomed to be incomplete and runs the risk of being inaccurate. (I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Ashley Biro and Gaafar Sadek in editing this review.)

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**R. W. Dyson**

*Natural Law and Political Realism in the History of Political Thought. Volume I: From the Sophists to Machiavelli.*

New York: Peter Lang Publishing 2005.

Pp. xiv + 342.

US\$78.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-820-47824-1).

The German theorist Carl Schmitt argued during the 1920s that the political remains the domain in which violent enmity between social groups manifests itself most clearly. Self-preservation thus becomes the *raison d'être* for what constitutes the rightness of violent action. Indeed it is often claimed that what has become known, particularly within the international relations literature, as political 'realism' embodies a set of ontological and epistemological assumptions recognized by the great texts of the Western political tradition. On the other hand, what is often counterposed to this form of political realism is a universal moral order, natural law, that guides political action towards the hope of justice, not mere self-preservation. This volume, the first of two, begins to explore the long history of 'dialectical interplay' between these two traditions.

For Dyson, the canon of Western political thought exhibits a certain thematic continuity in oscillating between these two traditions. While there might be differences, as contextual circumstances dictate (Dyson pays close attention to them throughout the text), about the specificities of what constitutes natural law or political realism, it is, nevertheless, possible to take them as 'ideal types' in the Weberian sense (xi). Accordingly, Dyson defines the tradition of natural law according to five general principles: 1) there exists a set of universal moral norms in an 'objective' sense lying outside human agency; 2) its 'naturalness' lies in the ability of human beings to deduce its content through reason, a natural faculty; 3) natural law functions as a benchmark for judging conventional norms; 4) human beings are

naturally accommodating and can work towards the fulfillment of a common good; and, 5) the content and applicability of natural law applies to all human beings equally. By contrast then, the tradition of political realism is taken as the mirror image of the above: 1) there is no 'objective moral standard' to judge the legitimacy of any norm; 2) all norms are thus conventional rules that are derived from a mélange of emotion and reason reflecting the distribution of power among agents; 3) what induces obligation to positive law is the power of command as distinct from the righteousness of truth; 4) conflict is the normal state of humanity; and, 5) moral relativism dominates the topography of rules between peoples and is a major factor, particularly in matters of foreign policy (xii-xiii).

Dyson's narrative begins by setting the Athenian political, historical, and scientific contexts that became the motivating factors of Plato's *Republic*, which he considers to be the first systematic attempt to establish a natural law philosophy. The political realism of Plato's (Socrates') opponents, the 'radical' Sophists, was an offshoot of the epistemological skepticism prevalent at the time. There were thus no absolute certainties; the sophists represented the primacy of *nomos* (convention) versus *physis* (nature) as it pertains to human community. The ethical relativism of the early Sophists, along with the Athenian position at Melos at the height of the Peloponnesian war, emphasize that pure might makes right, so an appeal to an objective form of justice appeared rather quixotic. By contrast, Plato sought to reestablish an absolute and objective standard for securing the idea of justice within the polis by deriving a justification for rule, not by the stronger, but through the wisdom of the guardians who have the necessary philosophical knowledge. Aristotle, by contrast, continued the natural tradition not by focusing on an otherworldly idea of the Good, but by demonstrating the natural conditions of the polis as a conduit for the natural condition of man as a political animal. But the political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, centered on the self-enclosed polis as a way of maintaining order and promoting the virtuous individual, could not cope with the transformation towards empire with the advent of Alexander the Great. The Stoics changed the debate by advocating the idea that any human being is by nature part of a larger universal whole. This cosmopolitan Stoic ideal would have an important influence upon Christian theologians, particularly Augustine of Hippo.

The chapters on Augustine and Aquinas are an excellent introduction into the emergence of Christian theological doctrinal thinking and its implications for rethinking the political. Augustine displays a remarkable political realism in his viewpoint of fallen man that will heavily influence twentieth-century classical realist literature, as seen in Hans J. Morgenthau and Reinhold Niebuhr. This corrupt man, Augustine argues, contrasts the irredeemable corporeal life with a neo-platonic construction of the perfect city, the *civitas dei*, which represents the nexus between natural law and what emerges as divine law. Aquinas' reintroduction of Aristotelian ethics and metaphysics into Christian doctrine results in a more optimistic view of political life. As Dyson points out, one of the major debates during that time

concerned the very idea of a natural law: 'who is to decide when the natural law has been infringed, and who is to prescribe what ought to be done about it' (201). This would go on to affect the relationship between the temporal European rulers and the ecclesiastical authority in Rome. With the tide turning in Italy, city-states using any legal means of safeguarding their independence from papal intrusions, and the continuous meddling of foreign powers in Italy, a new relationship between politics and morality was presented in the writings of Nicolo Machiavelli. His pessimism about human nature, and his decoupling of morality from the ultimate pragmatism the prince must exert (his *virtù*, as Dyson correctly points out), led to the necessity of the state. Machiavelli's concern for the welfare of the state, as opposed to the individual's need for happiness or salvation, marks him as the distinctly modern political writer.

Dyson's work is a well written and accessible introduction to the ideas of natural law and political realism as grappled with by early political philosophers. The second volume is thus to be highly anticipated, as the story that Dyson has begun to tell continues up to the present day.

### **Alexander D. Barder**

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### **Daniel K. Finn**

*The Moral Ecology of Markets:*

*Assessing Claims about Markets and Justice.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Pp. ix + 169.

US\$65.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-86082-6);

US\$23.99 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-521-67799-8).

In *Leviathan*, Hobbes infamously argued that morals and industry were only possible after the formation of government since both ultimately depend on the enforcement of contracts. There is a neo-Hobbesian bent to much twentieth-century economic thought. The new riff on old Hobbes is that *markets* provide the basis for governments and morals. Markets are the source of the tax revenues that allow governments to act. Markets are the source of incomes that allow individuals to be moral rather than merely survive. This is an idea that goes back to Aristotle: there are material preconditions for morals that are provided for in the *oikos* (the Greek word in which *economy* has its roots). But, economic neo-Hobbesians go further than either Hobbes or Aristotle. They argue that many of the functions of government can be achieved by self-regulating markets. The *polis* is thus subordinated to the

*oikos*, and the problem of Hobbes' all-too-powerful sovereign is solved. For better or for worse, political sovereignty morphs into consumer sovereignty.

Daniel Finn's *The Moral Ecology of Markets* argues against the neo-Hobbesian claim that markets are prior to morals. This is a refreshing book because it does not simply rail against markets, economics or self-interest — unlike frustrated Marxists such as Jameson, Hardt or Negri. Finn seems to accept that markets are, in one form or another, here to stay. Indeed, his stated aim is not to provide an argument for or against markets, but to provide a 'framework' for 'sorting through the conflicting and seemingly incommensurable claims about markets' (114). As the title implies, the central argument is that markets exist within a broader 'moral ecology'. The book makes its case in two parts. The first part argues that the economic analysis of markets is not a simple issue of empirical science or rational analysis but involves recourse to moral discourse. The second part attempts to sketch a framework (but sadly not a method) for the co-analysis of markets and morals.

The first part begins with a survey of Friedman, Buchanan, and Hayek, each representing a major school of modern economics (Chicago, Public Choice, and Austrian, respectively). The upshot of the survey is that, 'each needs a strong moral stance to complete his own vision, and these moral positions cannot themselves be defended on the amoral grounds they propose' (33). Moreover, understanding economics as a purely empirical, analytic or positive science tends to overlook 'the moral and legal embodiment of values that undergird and make possible even the most elementary forms of economic co-operation' (77). Finn then develops the claim that there are four basic problems of economic life — allocation, distribution, economic scale and the quality of human relations — and all four problems have an irreducibly moral dimension.

The second part argues that a clear understanding of markets does require understanding their mechanics, but also requires understanding the moral ecology that delineates a space in which markets operate. For Finn, the domain of markets is not defined from within by self-interest or any other factor. Rather, the domain of markets is defined from without by a variety of moral factors. Finn observes that 'Markets are highly complex institutions that vary widely in their history and operation depending on social, cultural, religious, political, and economic factors' (113). The domain of markets is defined by moral 'fences' consisting of laws, customs and beliefs produced by the 'political, social and cultural context' of the market (114). For Finn, it is the context that establishes the moral fences that determine what market behaviours are appropriate and inappropriate.

Thus, Finn's response to economic neo-Hobbesianism is Thomist, not Marxist. In the philosophy of economics, Thomists are a moderate bunch. They recognize that individuals have material needs that are probably best provisioned by markets, but they also claim that humans are first and foremost moral actors. They also hold that economics is a branch of the moral sciences not of the natural sciences. Within this broadly Thomist framework,

Finn is offering two different claims: first, the not uncommon or unreasonable claim that market relations have moral presuppositions; second, the more controversial epistemic-ontological claim that the moral presuppositions of markets imply the priority of morals over markets. This second claim is a problem for Finn and Thomists more generally.

The problem with the second claim is that it is consistent and reasonable to acknowledge that markets have moral presuppositions, and at the same time deny that such presuppositions imply the priority of morals. Consider this Wittgensteinian thought experiment: I can pour water from a blue glass into an empty brown glass, and back again. The fact that the water started off in the blue glass and not the brown glass does not imply that the blue glass has any relevant priority over the brown glass in the process of tipping water back and forth. Similarly, that markets appear to presuppose morals does not imply the priority of morals. Presupposition only implies priority if there are other assumptions at work. In this case, the assumption is the Aristotelian view that a hierarchical organization of classes or disciplines represents something essential, not mere taxonomic convenience or historical happenstance. In other words, for a Thomist, markets presuppose morals because, in the tree of disciplines or hierarchy of categories, morals come before markets. However, this is precisely the claim that economic neo-Hobbesians contest.

Criticism aside, this is a short, clear and well-written book. There is enough here to be of use and interest in undergraduate classes that deal with issues of distributive justice or the philosophy of economics. That the analysis does not go as far as one might like suggests that there is work to do in the philosophy of economics. Perhaps more of this work should treat the economic analysis of markets from the perspective of the philosophy of science rather than moral and political philosophy.

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**Richard Fumerton**

*Epistemology.*

Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing 2006.

Pp. x + 145.

US\$51.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-2566-6);

US\$19.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-2567-3).

This book will interest those who teach undergraduate or graduate epistemology, like the idea of using a single-author text, but are unsatisfied with the current options. It differs in a few ways from books like Richard Feldman's *Epistemology*, Robert Audi's *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, Laurence Bonjour's *Epistemology*, and Adam Morton's *A Guide Through the Theory of Knowledge*.

Chapter 1 begins with propositional knowledge and the evaluation of epistemic reasons for belief. The rest of the chapter draws a distinction between metaepistemology and applied epistemology. Applied epistemology is concerned with what we know and how we know it. Meta-epistemology is concerned with what knowledge is. Though this makes meta-epistemology more like normative ethics, Fumerton does not label it 'normative epistemology' because of his qualms with thinking of epistemology as normative — he returns to this issue in Chapter 3.

Newcomers to epistemology will find much of this book difficult, especially Chapter 2, 'The Analysis of Knowledge'. It begins with familiar reasons for including truth and belief conditions on knowledge. Fumerton says evidence is also needed. However, lottery cases suggest that the evidence must be strong enough that it *entails* the truth of the proposition believed. This coupled with Closure — the principle that if you know P, and you know P entails Q, then you are in a position to know Q — leads to skepticism. Fumerton argues against two ways out: contextualism and the subject-sensitive invariantism recently defended by Fantl and McGrath, Stanley, and Hawthorne. He goes on to suggest that knowledge does require truth-entailing evidence. Fumerton argues for this strong conception of knowledge on the grounds that it does a good job of handling the Gettier problem. Other solutions to the Gettier problem are covered: specifically, the no-false-lemma response, Nozick-style tracking, and the causal theory of knowledge. Much of this will be too difficult for newcomers, especially the intricate discussion of how the lottery puzzle, Closure, and competing views about the semantics of 'knows' relate to one another.

Chapter 3, 'Epistemic Rationality and its Structure', begins with an argument that the concept of an epistemic reason for believing is not a normative concept. Fumerton then provides a useful overview of the main positions regarding the structure of epistemic rationality. In the end, he favors foundationalism over coherentism, infinitism, and skepticism. This sets up the next chapters: chapters 4 and 5 go on to investigate Internalist and Externalist Foundationalism, emphasizing their accounts of noninfer-

ential justification; Chapter 6 looks at how we expand our knowledge via inference.

Chapter 4, 'Traditional (Internalist) Foundationalism', raises difficulties for familiar ways of drawing the internalism/externalism distinction. Fumerton opts for an unorthodox view: the main internalist thesis is that justifiers are non-natural properties, while the main externalist thesis is that justifiers are natural properties. His own internalist proposal is an acquaintance view on which S is noninferentially justified in believing P only if S is acquainted with the fact that makes P true; later, we learn that S must also be acquainted with the fact that this acquaintance state corresponds to the fact that makes P true. The acquaintance relation is a non-natural unanalyzable primitive. Since one can only stand in this relation to facts, it yields the truth-entailing justification of Chapter 2.

Chapter 5, 'Externalist Versions of Foundationalism', takes up the early Goldman's causal theory, Nozick's tracking theory, and the later Goldman's reliabilism. Each theory is carefully spelled out, and two kinds of criticisms are discussed. One brings revisions to the basic formulations of the theories. The other points to deeper difficulties with the general idea of epistemic externalism. The latter are illustrated with Goldman's reliabilism. Here, Fumerton reviews the new evil demon problem, Bonjour's Norman case, and the charge that reliabilism is unable to give those who have skeptically-induced worries assurance that skepticism is false. At the end of it all, Fumerton is happy to split differences: reliabilists are correct about one desideratum, while internalists are correct about another.

Chapter 6, 'Inferential Justification', takes up an intriguing issue. To be justified in believing the conclusion of an argument, do I have to possess a reason to think my premises support the truth of what I believe; or is it enough that my premises in fact support the truth of what I believe? According to Fumerton, requiring that my evidence in fact supports the truth of what I believe results in some of the same problems that plague externalist accounts of noninferential justification. So he opts for requiring that I need to possess the relevant kind of reason. However, if possessing such reasons involved cognizing a distinct argument, a regress would be triggered. So instead it involves acquaintance with probability relations between the premises and conclusion, relations that hold necessarily and are known a priori.

The last chapter is on skepticism. Skeptical arguments are construed as first isolating our evidence. The evidence we have for our beliefs about the external world consists in seeming states. The skeptic then challenges us to establish that this evidence either deductively, inductively, or abductively supports our external world beliefs. The skeptic contends that no deductive connections are plausible, that attempts to establish inductive connections of the enumerative variety end up begging the question (for Hume's reasons), and that attempts at establishing abductive connections have to eventually make appeal to enumerative inductions (where they then beg the question). That leaves two options: reject the demand that we establish any connection, thereby foregoing assurance that our beliefs are epistemically rational, or

adopt Fumerton's view that we are acquainted with relations of making probable, which now hold between (non-doxastic) seeming states and the basic beliefs that they make probable.

Though the book is clearly opinionated, Fumerton is fair to other positions and he is not overly concerned with persuading the reader of his own views. In all, the book is more engaging for being opinionated. However, it is difficult in spots, and in some spots it will be far too difficult for most beginners.

### **Peter Murphy**

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### **Harry J. Gensler**

*Historical Dictionary of Logic.*

Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2006.

Pp. ix + 306.

US\$70.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8108-5531-1).

Gensler's aptly titled work is intended to serve as a broad-ranging reference work on logic, its historical development, and its current applications in philosophy and other disciplines. As a book designed primarily for non-specialists, it provides the reader with four main avenues for logical investigation: a chronology of the development of logic and its applications, a brief introduction to the study of arguments, dictionary entries, and a bibliography.

The dictionary begins with a thirteen-page chronology detailing notable events in the history of logic. Four of the pages are devoted to the period starting with ancient Greek philosophy and ending in the late nineteenth century, with the rest detailing developments in logic from 1900 to the present. Several of the events included seem idiosyncratic, for example, the 1974 entry on Matthew Lipman's logic textbook for fifth-grade children. However, the sense of idiosyncrasy is at least partially mitigated by the connections between entries in the chronology section and later sections of the book. Concerning the example just mentioned, we find at least two dictionary entries that reference the Lipman textbook, one of which stresses the interdisciplinary applications of logic, as well as mention of this text in the introductory comments to the bibliography. Regardless, as the book develops it becomes very clear to the reader which developments in the history of logic are deserving of special notice and which are included to aid the reader in determining where other contributions fit within the overall historical picture.

The second section is a sixteen-page introduction to the field of logic, primarily designed to enable those beginning their study of logic to gain a firmer grasp of the topic before moving to the dictionary itself. Here Gensler gives a brief but clear explanation of the importance of logic, some key logical concepts (e.g., arguments, validity), and a brief history of logic. Having mastered the content of this section, readers should have no difficulty understanding the material covered in the dictionary proper.

Gensler devotes most of the work, 253 pages out of 306, to the dictionary entries covering what he identifies as four major categorizations in the book: (1) deductive systems, (2) the history of logic, (3) applications to fields of study outside philosophy and (4) miscellaneous entries (where inductive logic, among other topics, is treated). The selection of entries found within the first two major categories are what philosophers would likely expect from an introductory work on logic: quantificational logic, modal logic, free logic, set theory, medieval logic, Aristotle, Frege, Russell, Gödel, and so on. What is unusual is Gensler's ability to provide enough depth in each entry to give a sense of the major contributions made by each system, period or author. For example, in the Gödel entry readers are treated to a seven-page summary of Gödel's theory and an outline of its proof. While Gensler has no illusions of handling the details of the proof, he does provide the reader with enough information to independently explore the proof further (with help either from other cross-listed entries or works cited in the bibliography section).

However, it is the entries covered in the third and fourth categories that make Gensler's dictionary truly unique. While there may be some expectation that a dictionary of logic would touch on applications in mathematics and computer science, not to mention disciplines within philosophy — which the dictionary demonstrably does — readers may be surprised to discover entries on topics such as biology, gender and God. These entries, however, show the applicability of logic to other disciplines or topics, but more importantly they comport with the apparent overarching purpose of the work: to introduce readers to what the enterprise of logic is, why it is important and where it is applied. In the entry on God, for instance, Gensler translates three stock arguments about the existence of God into propositional logic to show how logic might refine our understanding of the arguments (the moral is that the stock arguments represented are valid but their soundness is in question). Here and in other entries within these categories we see logic and its application in sorting out difficult philosophical problems, or how logic is an important issue within a particular discipline or topic of study.

The book concludes with a bibliography section containing five and a half pages of introductory comments and recommendations followed by forty-eight pages of references, subdivided into seven categories, many of which have multiple sub-categories. The introductory comments not only explain the rationale and challenges of compiling a representative bibliography, but also provide Gensler's own recommendations for those beginning in logic. The bibliography conforms with both the dictionary and chronology sections, so

that readers should expect to find at least one reference that speaks to each entry or event.

Overall, Gensler succeeds in striking the balance of providing a newcomer with enough breadth and depth of explanation, while keeping discussions brief enough with appropriate cross-referencing to sustain a non-specialist's or aspiring specialist's interest.

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**John F. Haught**

*Is Nature Enough?*

*Meaning and Truth in the Age of Science.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Pp. ix + 223.

US\$70.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-84714-8);

US\$19.99 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-521-60993-7).

The ambitious goal of this recent book by noted Georgetown theologian John Haught is to argue the inadequacies of scientific naturalism (SN) as a world view (a comprehensive way of thinking about the world) and to sketch an intellectually defensible, scientifically informed, theistic alternative. Haught is not out to attack science. Indeed, he repeatedly insists that it has much to contribute to our understanding of life, mind, morality, etc. But a healthy respect for science does not, he thinks, require any commitment to SN, the 'belief that nature is all there is and that science alone can make sense of it' (2). The main problem with this mistaken belief, in his view, is that the sciences can provide, even at their best, only intermediate explanations of natural phenomena, not complete and ultimate ones, the most reasonable source of which is to be found in theology. Appealing to a number of features of our world as known by experience or through science, Haught attempts to show that 'the human mind must look beyond nature, as understood by science, in order to make *ultimate* sense of the world and ourselves' (19-20).

The central argument for this conclusion, based on Bernard Lonergan's account of cognitional structure, is that the natural sciences cannot account completely for what Lonergan calls *critical intelligence* (28-9, Ch. 3). All the other natural phenomena Haught then goes on to consider — life (Ch. 4), emergence (Ch. 5), purposiveness (Ch. 6), morality (Ch. 9), etc. — are, he argues, intrinsically connected to critical intelligence, so that the sciences aren't capable of completely or ultimately explaining them either. There is an *anticipatory* dimension to critical intelligence, directed to an open, hopeful

future, that cannot be fully naturalized. It is in terms of anticipation and hope — of being grasped by both even if one cannot understand either in scientific terms — that religion can function reasonably as the ultimate and complete explanation of nature. So nature on its own is not enough, even if it is understood pantheistically, since this identifies God with nature, but says that nature is all there is. Haught resists that idea. He also resists a simplistic supernaturalism in which God is ‘above’ or ‘apart from’ the created world, untouched by what happens in the cosmos. Haught is not a deist. Rather, he is a process theologian, whose inspiration comes from Teilhard de Chardin (to whose memory the book is dedicated) and Whitehead, who thinks that God works *in* and *through* nature.

The arguments Haught uses to criticize the inadequacy of SN resemble, in their approach, a prominent criticism of logical positivism. The logical positivists adopted the criterion that statements are meaningful if and only if they are analytic or empirically verifiable. But suppose we now ask: is this principle analytic? No, it’s not true solely in virtue of the meanings of words. Is it, then, empirically verifiable? No again. So the positivists’ criterion of meaning is itself meaningless, and they are hoisted on their own petard!

It seems that Haught aims to do much the same sort of thing in his criticisms of scientific naturalists — hoist them on their own petard. How so? By arguing that scientific naturalists cannot coherently affirm their (or our) *desire* to know, to find the truth, and at the same time explain that desire in purely scientific terms. In short, scientific naturalists should not trust their own longings, or the cognitive apparatus they have available for satisfying them, *if they consistently* adhere to the idea that nature is all there is and that ‘science is the only reliable way to understand it’ (4). As Haught puts it, ‘human intelligence, in spite of all attempts to understand it naturalistically, extends itself beyond the limits of nature in every act of questioning, understanding and judging’ (23). And, ‘[f]ully justifying the obvious acts of faith that we place in our critical intelligence requires that we situate human cognitional life, and along with it the whole universe, in a more spacious environment than the one laid out by scientific naturalism. I believe it [is] essential to call upon theology to accomplish this expansion’ (53).

Why is that? Two reasons are prominent in Haught’s answer. First, while the natural sciences rightly pride themselves in being empirical, they only attend to a limited range of our experience. Religion (and art and music) attend to other equally important aspects that elude scientific analysis. Scientific evidence is not the only kind of evidence. Second, scientific naturalists think that there is only one way of explaining natural phenomena, and so of understanding them, *viz.* the scientific or theoretic way. They are ‘explanatory monists’ (71). But Haught argues that, given the full range of our experience, and the mental imperatives that give rise to and frame critical intelligence, we should instead be ‘explanatory pluralists’, admitting that what we experience can be explained in different ways, at different levels. He defends the integrity of scientific explanation; indeed, he insists on it. But careful attention to the natural world, and our desire to understand

it, reveals dimensions of nature that transcend the world in which we find them. So it's not a matter of nature or God, as if the two were mutually exclusive alternatives; instead, both are needed.

This is a provocative book — just the sort of thing that should engage thoughtful readers. And thoughtful readers are, of course, Haught's audience, since they embody the critical intelligence that he thinks SN cannot adequately explain. Much of the book therefore has a quasi-dialogical structure, with SN giving its account of some phenomenon, such as the emergence of consciousness, Haught offering his critique, SN then being given a chance to reply, and Haught responding to the reply. The format thus appeals explicitly to the critical intelligence that Haught argues, rightly I think, cannot be explained fully in terms of the theoretic categories of science.

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**Polycarp A. Ikuenobe**

*Philosophical Perspectives on Communalism  
and Morality in African Traditions.*

Lanham, MD: Lexington Books 2006.

Pp. xiii + 329.

US\$80.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-7391-1131-4);

US\$27.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-7391-1492-6).

*This book contributes to the debate concerning a problem of considerable importance in contemporary African social and political thought, perhaps best stated in Kwame Gyekye's *Tradition and Modernity* (1997): communalism is advanced in Africa at the expense of civil liberties. Gyekye, in effect, argues that what is at stake is the absence of genuine politics, which is a discursive practice dependent upon the preservation of opposing views. He argues that the aim should not be to get rid of communalism but to modify it, to place limits on it because of the need for politics to offer solutions to political problems. Thus, he advocates a form of moderate communalism.*

Ikuenobe defends communalism by arguing for the formation of moral personhood as a function of communal values. The work is primarily a defense of African communalism, which means he must respond to charges of its collapsing into unanimism and authoritarianism. He argues that authoritarianism is not in itself a bad thing, and advances 'rational authoritarianism', where criteria of evidence and other forms of assessment emerge from the community to adjudicate beliefs. One error of liberal conceptions of the person is its presumption that the individual *can* assess such things.

Ikuenobe's response is to point out individual fallibility and prejudice. It is not that the community cannot be wrong, but that its constant criterion of publicity reduces the likelihood of the advancement of false belief. His main point is that 'rational authoritarianism' depends on 'evidentialism', on its being subject to criteria beyond the individual. From this, Ikuenobe is able to defend a form of 'moderate indoctrinarianism', arguing that evidence requires limitations on indoctrination. It is where indoctrination collapses into 'brainwashing' that it is bad. Finally, he criticizes liberalism as more applicable to Western Europe where its values are already held as dominant (though not always historically so) than it would be in other places with different values. Given his demand for the role of evidence in human social life, Ikuenobe concludes, like Gyekye, with a preference for moderate communitarianism, but unlike Gyekye, insists that it is already a feature of traditional African cultures.

Ikuenobe also argues that there is much that western liberal thought could learn from traditional Africa, to the extent that, at least with the question of moral education, the scale of neurosis and alienation in societies premised upon western individualism suggests more failure than achievement. The kinds of debates connected to community, authority, and politics should be of great interest as we now face an erosion of civil liberties in North America since the inauguration of the 'War on Terror'.

I have no doubt that this book will stimulate much debate in African philosophy, especially among those teaching in the area of philosophy of culture. That said, I do have some criticisms. The first relates to the focus on 'moral philosophy' in the African context. Much confusion emerges in contemporary axiology through a failure to distinguish morals from ethics. The focus of morals is on rules, whereas the focus of ethics is on character. It is no accident that Ikuenobe finds himself referring to Plato and Aristotle in his defense of communitarianism, since they envision a society in which there is a guiding teleology or purpose, an ethos in which virtue may count more than it otherwise would. As both the ancient Egyptians and Greeks argued, such character requires *cultivation* of habit by controlled experiences for the child raised by the proverbial village.

Yet, Ikuenobe works within the framework of modern moral philosophical thought as though there weren't a rupture between that framework and its predecessors. This is very odd, since there is a demonstrated rupture between European and African value systems to begin with. Gyekye, for instance, situates his discussion of Akan values in a context in which what brings value to traditional communities is not the articulation of moral rules but literally a metaphysical system of values from the past that brings value to those rules. Ancestors become valuable because they are older and thus more closely linked to the center from which values emanate. Thus, it is not the rule itself but its *age* that gives it potency. The human community becomes the focus in a form of humanism, but one that is not premised on moral rules by themselves but on the community as older, or at least linked to things older, than the individual. In other words, there is an understanding by the

community that human welfare matters most, but that it matters because of the need to set things right with the past.

Although Ikuenobe is critical of liberalism, his focus on moral rules, epistemic criteria, and moral education in political thought is a quintessential example of liberal political theory. One criticism of liberal political theory is that it focuses on normative rules over and against political practice to the point of leaving genuine politics out of liberal political theory. John Rawls, e.g., developed rules that hardly exemplified an understanding of *politics* but, instead, of administration and distribution. It is as if the political theorist were simply a social engineer. The argument avowed by Ikuenobe seems more suitable for *governing*, in this sense, than politics proper. This is one reason the concern with moral *education* becomes crucial; the book is a theory about what is necessary at the pre-political levels for the political to have a suitable civil society from which to emerge.

This is an important contribution to contemporary African political philosophy in that it goes against the grain of scholarship that now dominates the field. I will bring this text to the debate on communitarianism and individualism in African political thought the next time I teach this subject, as well as to discussions of contemporary liberal political philosophy and its critics.

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**Ian James**

*The Fragmentary Demand: An Introduction  
to the Philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy.*

Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2006.

Pp. xxiii + 272.

US\$50.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8047-5269-5);

US\$19.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-8047-5270-1).

This is a disciplined exposition of both the origins of Jean-Luc Nancy's work and its most recent shifts of emphasis. It introduces this vast philosophy as a 'multiple and fragmented corpus' arising from a fascination with the philosophical power of multiplicity and fragmentation themselves. Identifying Christianity, subjectivity, the body, and art as its chief concerns, James makes an invaluable contribution to the reception of contemporary European philosophy in the English-speaking world. His synthetic skill, in particular his choice of topics and illustrating quotations, is impeccable.

The book is structured by five topical chapters of approximately thirty to fifty pages each: 'Subjectivity', 'Space', 'Body', 'Community', and 'Art'. This structure enables the author to survey an enormous conceptual terrain.

Chapter 1, 'Subjectivity', utilizes early works such as *Logodaedalus* and *Ego Sum* that are rarely cited in commentaries written in English. It situates Nancy's incipient work on subjectivity in a twentieth century philosophical 'rupture' identified by Derrida (11-15). It examines this rupture in terms of Nancy's relation to Nietzsche and Heidegger (15-26) and his revision of Kantian 'foundationalism' (26-48). The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to 'undoing the Lacanian account of the subject', an undoing in which the Cartesian cogito plays a prominent part (49-64).

'Space', Chapter 2 (65-113), opens with a lengthy summary of problems associated with space in the phenomenologies of Husserl and Heidegger (65-89). Here emphasis is placed on Nancy's work in the 1990s, including *Le Sens du monde* and *Etre singulier pluriel*. James explores spatiality in terms of sense, sensing, finitude, appropriation, 'transimmanence', the body, and of course thinking 'singular-plural', in order to demonstrate the extent to which Nancy breaks cautiously with the phenomenological tradition. The chapter concludes with the observation that Nancy's thought is an 'ethics of, and address to, the singular-plural of being' (113).

James' penetrating approach to the body in Chapter 3 (114-51) affords the opportunity to cover an ever-changing aspect of Nancy's thought — his attitude to Christianity (114-21). Appropriately, Merleau-Ponty is used (121-30) as a counterpoise to Nancy's work in *Corpus* on problems associated with embodiment, which are shown to have a specifically Christian significance (131-42): loosely speaking, today even secular appropriations of the body and its sense cannot do without certain valuable incarnational presuppositions, which in themselves deserve deconstruction. Atheism itself, James adds along the way, might reassess its positioning in a Christian spacing of the body. At this stage, there is a sharp transition to a short section on ecotechnics and writing (143-51). The survey of ecotechnics, while very loyal to the text, could be expanded given its relevance to contemporary cultural theory vis-à-vis the concepts of life, world, and globalization.

Chapter 4 addresses what is seemingly the easiest inroad into the philosophical terrain of Nancy's thought, 'Community' (152-201). Initially, it addresses Nancy's political theory as well as his co-founding of the *Centre de recherches philosophiques sur le politique* in 1980. Along the way, in presenting the notion of the 'retreat' of the political (155-73), it explains the distinction between 'empirical' politics (*la politique*) and the dimension of alterity from which politics issues (*le politique*) (165). Thereafter, it offers a succinct appraisal of Nancy's work on the 'inoperative' community in conjunction with death, communication, singularity, interiority, and nostalgia. The chapter concludes with a section on 'literary communism', a conception of community that leads to a 'thinking of literature and a specific notion of writing' (195) as well as the significance of myth in relation to both.

The last chapter, 'Art', may be the most original commentary on Nancy's philosophical aesthetics in the English language (202-30). Anyone familiar with Nancy's exploratory work on art knows of its stylistically-challenging approaches to romantic poetry, sculpture, painting, and film, as well as more conventional aesthetic theories (e.g. Kant, Hegel, Heidegger). But James understands that, despite its fragmentary nature and the abstruseness of such concepts as sense and exscription, it is oriented towards the manner in which 'sensible materiality present[s] to us a world or an experience that makes sense in ways not reducible to any fixed signification or order of the signified' (205). After an examination of Nancy's 'realism' in his work on Hegel's aesthetic theory (206-22), James addresses Nancy's most recent work on the notion of separation and discontinuity in conjunction with the problem of distinctness and the role of the image (223-30). In general terms, James reads Nancy's aesthetics as a demand that we recognize that art both responds to this world and takes responsibility for it (230).

The brief but powerful conclusion of the book (231-7) demonstrates that Nancy strives to 'trace the limit' of thought and to 'expose it to its own excess'. Nancy's philosophical approach is fragmentary precisely because it 'unfolds as a plurality of singular gestures or exposures to/at the limit of thought' (231-2). Ultimately, James concludes, Nancy's thought is a creative struggle for a world, a struggle without any presumed human essence, pre-given realities, or prospective teleologies. A sharing of finitude ... .

Here I think James could have traced the limit of Nancy's engagement with the Gulf Wars, Bosnia, globalization, and the technology of the body in order to illustrate how his philosophical struggle relates responsibly to a world in which finitude should be shared. And perhaps he might have elucidated the contemporary relevance of Nancy's thought somewhat by exploring how his perspectives on these issues relate to those of Badiou, Agamben, and Negri. But I am certain that doing so would have considerably increased the length of the book and perhaps weakened this admirably forceful treatment Nancy's philosophy so obviously deserves.

### **B. C. Hutchens**

James Madison University

**Chris Lawn**

*Gadamer: A Guide for the Perplexed.*

New York: Continuum 2006.

Pp. ix + 164.

US\$89.95 (cloth ISBN-13 978-0-8264-8461-1);

US\$19.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-8462-8).

Chris Lawn, Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Limerick, has written the best introduction to the work and life of Hans-Georg Gadamer so far. It admirably fulfils the task of Continuum's series, *Guides for the Perplexed*, of offering 'clear, concise and accessible introductions to thinkers, writers and subjects that students and readers can find especially challenging — or, indeed, downright bewildering', but it is much more than that. Although ostensibly designed for students, this is an overview of Gadamer and his *œuvre* of a high scholarly standard, culminating in a clear yet profound display of his *magnum opus*, *Truth and Method (T&M; Wahrheit und Methode*, 1960).

It is amazing that Lawn, who apparently never met Gadamer, has such an acute understanding of the man and his thought — something that Gadamer himself, who really disliked the biographical approach, would have very much appreciated. In fact, one of the qualities of the book is that it is truly hermeneutical and indeed Gadamerian, oriented, as such a book should be, towards understanding. Perhaps Lawn's combination of sympathy and distance was ideal for this task. The book is very well written and pedagogically masterful; the *duktus* is dramatic and interest-stimulating, and the style is elegant, non-verbose and pleasant to read. Throughout, Lawn avoids oversimplifications.

This is a commissioned book, and the perspective is completely Anglo-American, as if non-English-speaking countries (where English-language books are also read) did not exist. Nonetheless, this book would, and will, make a wonderful introduction to Gadamer for any, e.g., German, audience as well, especially as analytic philosophy, the supremacy of which Lawn singles out as the main reason for something less than a full Gadamer reception in Anglo-America, is alive and well also on the Continent. The lack of reference to German texts, primary or secondary, is especially strange regarding such a language-based philosopher as Gadamer; it is amazing that it works, but it does, and perhaps it was thought that if one wants to reach an English-only-speaking audience, especially, but not only, a student one, references to German originals would be a turn-off. (In spite of this, the brief bibliography should have not only included Gadamer's translated works as cited, but also the German first and latest editions.)

After the excellent introduction, the description of Gadamer's life in a nutshell is already a major accomplishment, in overall judgment quite superior to Grondin's standard biography (2003), which Lawn praises at length, but which Gadamer did not appreciate at all. The scholarship-free, embarrassing diatribes against Gadamer by Orozco and Wolin, which Lawn

rightly calls a “witch hunt” (21), are dealt with without wasting too much time, although some more concrete references to Gadamer’s *Zivilcourage* during Nazi times — more than can be reasonably expected from anyone, such as in the Werner Krauss case — would have been nice.

Then follows the main accomplishment, the three chapters on *T&M*, a book which ‘question[s] the authority of method by showing how truth, far from being revealed by method, is in fact overshadowed and obscured by it’ (13). The key concepts of tradition, fusion of horizons, and historicism are nowhere better explained than here.

Two almost equally excellent further chapters deal separately with ‘Gadamer on Language and Linguisticity’ — which is not only helpful for the philosophy of language, but also shows the place of language within Gadamer’s philosophy, including ethics — and ‘Gadamer’s Aesthetics’ — it was a very wise decision to deal with these topics separately, rather than in the immediate context of *T&M*.

The chapter after that tackles very well Gadamer on ‘applied hermeneutics’, on subjects such as education and politics — on what can be called, especially for Gadamer, subjects of *phronēsis*, essays which are usually neglected in the secondary literature, although they form a key element of his (later) life and work. This includes a stupendous short segment (113-18) on Gadamer’s *The Enigma of Health* (1993).

A final chapter on ‘Fellow travelers and critics’ nicely juxtaposes Gadamer and Wittgenstein, Habermas, Rorty, and Derrida (although Derrida’s obituary of Gadamer is missing, without which it is rather impossible to judge their relation), among others. Gadamer’s appeal to postmodern thought in general is very nicely analyzed as well.

There are a few elements missing in this book, but seeing the scope and purpose of the book, mentioning them seems almost churlish. Still, for Gadamer, dealing with ancient Greek thought was central; so much so that he usually called his Plato studies (vol. 7 of the collected works) more important than *T&M*. Lawn apologizes several times for not dealing with this aspect sufficiently, but especially since the occasions when he does refer to it shows how well he understands it, as well as Greek philosophy as such (such as recognizing the ‘teasing and ironic Plato’, 7), it is very regrettable that there is no chapter on this. Gadamer’s work on poetry in his ‘later period’ (after *T&M*) is likewise mostly mentioned and not dealt with, yet Heidegger called Gadamer’s commentary to Celan’s *Atemkristall*, ‘*Wer bin ich und wer bist Du?*’ (available in English), the second volume of *T&M*, and Gadamer agreed. Finally, but this is not Lawn’s fault, to have a Gadamer book without his portrait is a real pity, especially given Gadamer’s great interest in what good portraits could tell about a thinker — Gadamer is language-based, but not glottocentric.

One should only read this book after reading Gadamer in the original, although for some, the temptation will be too great to read this book before, or, *horribile dictu*, in place of *T&M* — and I suppose one could travel fairly far with that. Lawn really does succeed in potentially ‘delivering’ Gadamer’s

thought even to an analytically-biased audience (if it is open-minded). His suggestion that ‘the wide gap between analytic and continental philosophy can be bridged through Gadamer’ (16) may still be overly optimistic, but explaining how this could be done (139-46) is a nice finish to this wonderful book.

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**Michael Losonsky**

*Linguistic Turns in Modern Philosophy.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Pp. xvi + 294.

US\$70.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-65256-8);

US\$24.99 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-521-65470-8).

Taking for granted the prominence language played in twentieth-century philosophy, it makes sense to wonder about its origins. Philosophers of language typically slot in Frege at this stage, giving great weight to his descriptivism and his impact on subsequent philosophy. While rightfully granting Frege’s decisive influence, Losonsky in *Linguistic Turns in Modern Philosophy* nonetheless looks even further back in the hope of identifying an even earlier starting point. Losonsky ascribes this privileged position to John Locke.

The book is structured chronologically according to relevant thinkers. Beginning with Locke and proceeding dialogically between two competing conceptions of language, Losonsky analyzes Leibniz, Condillac, Humboldt, Mill, Frege, Wittgenstein, Carnap, Quine, Davidson, and Derrida. Philosophers are organized into a general triad: those who argue for a formal explanation of language (Leibniz through Chomsky), those who think of language as inextricably amorphous (Condillac through Derrida and Davidson), and those who try valiantly for a synthesis (Locke and Humboldt). Even though the emphasis is on modern philosophy, Losonsky provides a useful chapter on pre-modern philosophers like Plato and Peter Abelard who paved the way to Locke. I will constrain myself to philosophers that best present the color of the book.

For Losonsky, Locke occupies the central role in the foundation of the modern philosophy of language. This attribution has to do with the emphasis Locke placed on language and his actual philosophical claims, which accord-

ing to the author engender the twin tracks in the philosophy of language down to the present. According to Losonsky, one track 'begins with the work of Leibniz, who highlights the underlying formal structure of natural language ...' while 'the other begins with Condillac, whose focal point is the empirical appearance of language in human action' (xii). Locke was the first philosopher to link human language with the cognitive limits of human knowledge. The limits of language are the limits of the human mind; this differentiates Locke from his Renaissance contemporaries who conceived of language along Aristotelian lines. Like Aristotle, these thinkers argue that language is 'parasitic on thought' (41). The intimate connection Locke establishes between mind and language causes him to point out that careful attention must be paid to language use, for if we fail to agree on our definitions, we will be inextricably consigned to incongruity.

Like Locke, Wilhelm von Humboldt is another synthesizer in the philosophy of language. In Humboldt's thought, Losonsky identifies both Chomskian strains of linguistic generativism and Wittgensteinian forms of life. For Humboldt, language is an "original talent" talent shared by all humans' (100), but is inextricably imperfect due to historical considerations and the imperfection of its speakers. Correspondingly, Humboldt distinguishes between the language of the individual speaker and the language of his or her nation (i.e., linguistic community). While language is fundamentally a personal enterprise, employing it with other language users generates a unified group language. As Losonsky quickly points out, Humboldt fails to explain how precisely the language of an individual coalesces with other speakers to form a language of the nation. Instead of appealing to universal syntactic structures, Humboldt states that it is a 'mystery that inspires "reverential awe"' (104). This is an unfortunate move on Humboldt's part. Even so, one is impressed with Humboldt's *mélange* of language as action and language as system.

The strongest section of the book is dedicated to the philosophers of language before Frege. Losonsky is successful at highlighting philosophers normally neglected in the usual philosophy of language canon. In the latter half, when Losonsky discusses the fertile crescent of linguistic philosophy, there are no surprises other than the odd connection made to a predecessor. His discussion of the usual heavyweights is too ephemeral for the reader to be truly informed. Notable omissions like Kripke stand out.

Spearheading the book is Losonsky's thesis that the philosophy of language, dividing itself and developing in parallel since Locke's initiation, has repeatedly attempted unification. This unification has not been achieved. Given the historical evidence, Losonsky concludes that language as activity and language as system 'are dual aspects of language that cannot be integrated' (xv). Of course, it is accepted that twentieth-century linguistic philosophy contained these two camps — ideal language philosophy and ordinary language philosophy. In sifting through the tracts of modern philosophy, he successfully shows this division is not wholly a modern development.

Still, I remain perplexed about Losonsky's strong claim that language as system and language as action 'cannot be integrated' (xv). He admits that his conclusion is tentative and historical, but I think, at times, he forces philosophers into an either/or dichotomy, thereby failing to do justice to the finer points of each philosopher. For instance, Losonsky situates Davidson with Derrida and the later Wittgenstein in the language as performance camp. While all three certainly have a great deal in common, there are yet important similarities between Davidson and Chomsky, who is assigned to the opposite camp. Both Davidson, through his passing/prior theory framework, and Chomsky, through his distinction between internal-language and external-language, argue for linguistic individualism. Contrast this with the later Wittgenstein's notion of the linguistic community and Davidson begins to look like he has a foot in both camps.

Successful history of philosophy often demonstrates that ideas formally tied to one historical epoch, in fact, occurred earlier; this is true of *Linguistic Turns* and I find its analysis of linguistic philosophy quite fruitful. The book is necessary reading for all philosophers who take an interest in language, not only due to its prime historical scholarship, but also because it draws conclusions from this scholarship that are both well-grounded and satisfyingly contentious.

## Aaron Landry

### James K. Lyon

*Paul Celan and Martin Heidegger:*

*An Unresolved Conversation, 1951-1970.*

Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press 2006.

Pp. xv + 249.

US\$55.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8018-8302-6).

Heidegger constantly raises poetry up as the type of thinking that will replace the techno-scientifically dominated 'cybernetics' that he sees as modern philosophy and thought. The importance he accords poetry is immense, and of all his encounters with thinkers it is Hölderlin who seems to embody his vision most. But Heidegger was no poet, as his attempts in *Poetry, Language, Thought* make clear. And although etymology and translation are a key concern, he was not a translator or linguist. Lyon's book follows a relationship between this thinker of poetry and language, and Celan, who was not only one of the most gifted poets of his generation, but also a professional translator of German, French, his native Romanian, and even Russian.

Lyon notes that it would be difficult to imagine two more antithetical characters. Celan, a Romanian-born Jew who grew up speaking German but was multilingual, wracked by guilt at having survived the holocaust that took his parents and extended family, geographically and spiritually in exile (living in Paris but feeling *psychologically* homeless), was constantly an outsider and deeply paranoid of an establishment he saw dominated by former Nazis, but at the same time was always trying to gain acceptance — all of Celan's work is a response to the Holocaust. On the other hand we have Heidegger, a German arch-nationalist, defined by 'rootedness in one place', anti-urban, with a history of Nazi involvement, who displayed no signs of guilt or remorse for his past — and remained silent on the holocaust. But one concern was strong enough to draw these two together: their concern with poetic language. This is the story of a gifted poet who felt that much of what Heidegger had to say really spoke to *him*, and resonated with many of his own feelings about poetry.

But this is not only a book about the place of the poet, or a theory of poetry and translation. Celan was not only one of the most gifted poets of his generation, but one whose constant effort was towards voicing his experience as a holocaust survivor. Because Celan knew little of Heidegger when he first became interested in his philosophy, by the time he learned of his involvement in 1933 with the National Socialists Celan himself was already deeply involved in Heidegger's thinking. Lyon moves from their early encounters, through the feeling in Celan of a strong 'connection' to Heidegger's philosophy, to the Heideggerian influence in the themes and metaphors of Celan's poetry. Lyon then considers Celan's growing independence, until he begins to write his own poetics in 1959/60. The most important voicing of his theory of poetry is his 'Meridian' speech to the Darmstadt Academy as recipient of the Büchner prize in October 1960. Lyon discusses the extent to which it is not only an expression of Celan's Heideggerianism, but also an assertion of independence from Heidegger.

Lyon then returns to a theme running through the book, Celan's own difficulty in coming to terms with Germany and Germans (and his own use of the German language in poetry after the holocaust), which was exacerbated by a nasty affair involving a public charge aimed at Celan of plagiarism and fabrication of the account of his parents' death in the concentration camps. Celan read these as symptoms of a re-assertion of anti-Semitism and neo-Nazism in Germany. Certain anecdotes from Pöggeler (a student of Heidegger and an acquaintance of Celan) and others recall that Celan became more and more paranoid and hyper-sensitive, regarding many seemingly innocuous events as threatening or part of an organised character defamation plot, which Lyon refers to as Celan's 'distrust, suspicion, and descent into the night of mental illness' (139). But instead of rejecting Heidegger or ignoring him, we find the poet immersing himself in a personally dedicated volume of Heidegger's Nietzsche lectures (more than 1100 pages); Celan was still clearly enthralled with Heidegger's work. The dia-

logue continued on Heidegger's side with a Pöggeler-instigated three-day reading of Celan's 'meridian' speech.

After a lull where the conversation was kept alive only by each reading the other's books (1961-67), there occurs the 'epoch making encounter' that was Celan's visits to Freiburg and Heidegger's hut in Todtnauberg, the climax of this account. Lyon gives a fascinating account of their meeting in the hut, and succeeds in piecing together all the fragmentary and contradictory evidence available. He considers some recent evidence which appears to contradict the long held view that Celan considered the meeting to be a disaster. Lyon calls his concluding chapter 'a conclusion of sorts', because ultimately, despite Celan's understanding of Heidegger's philosophy, one cannot say for certain how much he really understood of Heidegger's character, or vice versa. Heidegger seemed to be courteous towards Celan personally and displayed some understanding of his personal trouble, but how much did he really understand Celan's poetry? Lyon concludes with a discussion of Celan and Heidegger's relationship as one that reflected the larger dispute between the group he calls 'accusers', those who could not let Germany's Nazi past lie and felt it necessary to call things to account publicly using history as a cautionary tale, and those who were 'accused', who could not face the uncomfortable facts of history or bring themselves to accept responsibility.

Lyon's scholarship throughout is thorough, and well collected in this readable account. Perhaps one could not wish for any more than this as far as the Celan-Heidegger story is concerned. From the perspective of students of Heidegger, it is interesting to read about a poet who was a *contemporary* of, and also aware of, Heidegger (unlike Hölderlin, Rilke et. al.). There is an actual dialogue afoot here, with Heidegger's philosophy informing the poetry, rather than extracting philosophy out of a poet who is from an age long gone. For those interested in Celan, at several points in the book Lyon performs well informed analyses of Celan's theory of poetry in terms of Heidegger's philosophy. Lyon also writes sensitively about Celan's personal difficulties in dealing with Heidegger at all, the thinker who at once symbolised all he found troubling and threatening in the post-holocaust world, but who also allowed him to develop his understanding of poetry.

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**Christia Mercer and Eileen O'Neill, eds.**

*Early Modern Philosophy:*

*Mind, Matter, and Metaphysics.*

Toronto and New York:

Oxford University Press 2005.

Pp. xxii + 298.

Cdn\$71.50/US\$55.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-517760-2).

In this collection of essays students and colleagues of the late Margaret Dauber Wilson, well-known and influential scholars in their own right, engage in sophisticated analyses of early modern European philosophers, analyses which move us beyond the familiar categories of empiricism and rationalism. The issues are all canonical, as, in the main, are the philosophers discussed (e.g., Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, and Kant). The topics cover scepticism, mind-body dualism, moral agency, the nature of matter, causality, and various issues about God (proving God's existence, God in causal explanation, God as the creator of matter). There is an alphabetically organized bibliography, helpful primarily for finding references from the footnotes in the individual articles rather than for guidance to an individual thinker or area. The footnotes to each article are extensive and give the reader a helpful overview of the literature in a relevant area, e.g., Cartesian dualism in Meditation Two or Kant's discussion of causality. The orientation is primarily analytical, but subtly so, and with relevant pointers in other directions. Janet Broughton's article, for example, contextualizes Descartes' madness issue by reference to the debates between Foucault and Derrida.

The overarching theme of the collection is a continuing philosophical dialogue with the history of philosophy on its own terms. There is no explanatory grand narrative of modernity to overshadow the individual thinkers; at times, however, this means that the individual essays only have a loose conceptual connection to each other. Moreover, the absence of a larger framework may explain why many well-known modern philosophers are inexplicably left out, such as Bacon, Hobbes, Gassendi, and Hume, some of whom put in an appearance in the essays, but none of whom is the focus of any one paper. On the plus side, Damaris Masham, who has long been seen as ancillary to the male philosophers in her life, receives some interesting though primarily historical consideration in the article by Sleigh. Likewise, figures less known in the canon, such as Cudworth, Bramhall, and Fontenelle, are discussed in the context of their better known contemporaries, Locke and Malebranche.

The collection opens with a helpful introduction by the editors, who contextualize the general approach of the authors and give a bird's eye view of the development of the study of early modern philosophy. The introduction is so good that it should have been even longer, with more of the editors' synthesizing comments on early modern philosophy generally and on the individual themes and articles. The methodological principle laid out by the editors is

that of understanding the great dead of the history of philosophy and making them, in effect, live colleagues in philosophy: every single article does this, drawing the reader into the details of the arguments as live and engaged debates rather than as museum pieces. This is exemplified in Lisa Downing's article, which places Malebranche, Berkeley, and Fontenelle in a lively engagement over Cartesianism, interactionism, and occasionalism, but it is true even in the case of the most 'historical' of the essays, Robert Sleigh's reflections on the Leibniz-Masham correspondence. And each article places its debates in the context of many other early modern philosophers, thus compensating for the lack of specific articles on certain figures, such as Hobbes and Hume. (A good example is Michael Ayers' article on Meditation Two, which discusses Descartes in connection with Hobbes, Spinoza, and Kant.)

Like Margaret Wilson's now canonical work on Descartes, the articles are all analytical in method, meticulous in textual detail, and filled with scholarly reference, both in the text and, extensively, in the footnotes. However, there is very little socio-historical context provided, though many of its individual authors do provide such context in their *other* work (Catherine Wilson and Daniel Garber are prime examples). We learn through the careful scholarly discussions how different but relevant the early moderns are in their philosophical understandings — but we are not told why they are different.

The first article, which exemplifies the overall approach of the collection, is Janet Broughton's piece on madness in the *Meditations*. This analytical piece looks carefully at the role of madness in Meditation One and argues against received views such as Frankfurt's, which link madness to a loss of reason. In an interesting twist on this, Broughton argues persuasively that madness is more closely linked to difficulties in perception than in reasoning, and that there is much in madness which poses an epistemological challenge to Descartes' project. Broughton's article is one of four on Descartes, appropriate in a collection dedicated to Margaret Wilson. However, while the articles cover canonical issues such as doubt in Meditation One, dualism and identity in Meditation Two, and Descartes' version of the ontological argument in Meditation Five, there is nothing directly on Meditation Three, and, more surprisingly, very little on Meditation Six, surely a major intersection for mind, matter, and metaphysics.

The two articles on Kant exemplify what is most helpful about this collection of essays: they discuss and contextualize difficult topics with an ease appealing to specialist and amateur alike. Béatrice Longuenesse takes one of the most controversial and difficult topics in Kant, his discussion of causality, and makes the main issues very clear even for a reader not well versed in Kant. Michael Friedman then sets Kant's overall theory of experience and knowledge in the context of its relation to science, while making it clear that Kant's overriding concern with morality shapes his general framework in the first Critique. Friedman also discusses Kant's refutation of rational psychology in the Paralogisms, something already discussed briefly in Ayers' article. Similarly, Longuenesse places Kant's discussion in the context of 'Hume's problem'.

Given the range of topics and thinkers in this collection, and given the analytical but historical approach by well-known scholars, the volume will appeal to both specialists and generalists. The specialist will find interesting, substantial, and 'cutting-edge' discussions, with a lot of scholarly context. The generalist will find clear and substantial philosophical discussions that should tempt him or her to continue investigating early modern philosophy well beyond this collection. The volume might also be a nice companion piece to a graduate or advanced undergraduate seminar in early modern philosophy; the footnotes alone are worth the read.

**Suma Rajiva**

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**Tim O'Keefe**

*Epicurus on Freedom.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2005.

Pp. x + 175.

US\$70.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-84696-7);

US\$56.00 (e-book ISBN-13: 978-0-511-12843-1).

O'Keefe's book is, quite simply, an outstanding piece of scholarship. It is clearly written, very tightly presented, conscientiously researched, interesting and well-argued.

O'Keefe's main argumentative strategy is his careful reliance upon the so-called 'Principle of Interpretive Charity' — given a series of more or less equally plausible interpretations of what a philosopher is saying, select that one which is in some sense best to attribute to the philosopher. Receiving the main benefit of the Principle's attention is the 'swerve', an atomic motion which allegedly preserves the freedom of human action. But, as O'Keefe cautions, 'the swerve cannot be studied in isolation; it must be understood in the context of Epicurus' ethics, philosophy of mind, and metaphysics in general' (1). Considered appropriately, the only sort of freedom pertinent to the swerve is a 'rational' sort of freedom and, hence, not the sort of 'libertarian' freedom more familiar to modern debates — a conclusion that distinguishes this work from most others on Epicurus.

The main sources considered by O'Keefe are Epicurus' *On Nature*, Bk. 25 and *Letter to Herodotus*; and the Epicurean Lucretius' *De rerum natura*. Considerable discussion is also afforded to Aristotle's *Ethics* (Bk. 3) and *Metaphysics* (Epsilon, 2 and 3). According to O'Keefe, all of these texts have been largely mishandled by scholars who see in them contributions to a

'libertarian' account of freedom. According to *that* view, human beings are free both to do action-A as well as to not do action-A, and so our actions somehow fall outside the nexus of cause and effect. Normally, this account of freedom is thought to be necessary to any adequate view of moral responsibility. Now, Epicurus, following his Democritean heritage, maintains that the world is composed of atoms, and only of atoms; and on one account of atomic motion, these atoms move straight downward at a uniform rate. But unless at least one atom randomly swerves from its position, there can be no atomic collisions, and so no macro-objects. Clearly there are macro-objects, so there must be swerves. Free human actions *are* such swerves.

According to O'Keefe, not only is such a libertarian conception of freedom incompatible with the balance of Epicurus' philosophy (particularly his egoistic hedonist ethics), but the swerve simply doesn't seem capable of doing the sort of conceptual work that it is allegedly harnessed to do. After all, if free human action is a swerve, then free human action — thought necessary for there being moral responsibility — is the result of 'random and blameless twitches' (21). Moreover, interpreting Epicurus as arguing for a libertarian view of freedom simply isn't a very charitable one. Good philosophy and careful exegetical work culminate in O'Keefe's remarks on this point: 'Why should Epicureans be concerned to try to defend [a libertarian] sort of freedom of choice in the first place? If one has correct beliefs about the workings of the world and the limits of what is required for happiness, and one knows what one needs to do in the present situation to attain a pleasurable life, then having one's actions determined by these psychological states would not be ethically problematic — in fact, it is exactly what one would want to happen. It is hard to see how ... A libertarian freedom of choice would help in the pursuit ... of the happy life' (21).

Instead, O'Keefe argues, the conception of freedom most charitably attributable to Epicurus is a 'rational' freedom; and the swerve is instead used by him to preserve this sort of freedom from fatalism, so that our rational thought processes matter to how the future turns out.

The alternative account of Epicurus that O'Keefe defends is what he calls the 'bivalence interpretation'. The swerve, on this view, prevents the future from always being fixed, thus preserving our 'rational' freedom: free human actions are the (caused) result of a principle of motion that is within us (reason); i.e., our free actions are to be contrasted with motions which are *not* the result of our reason (e.g., being blown to one side by a strong wind). The swerve is *not* deployed by Epicurus to secure moral responsibility (though it does preserve a notion of justified praise and blame).

The book is comprised of six chapters and an epilogue ('Epicurus and the invention of libertarian free will'). The chapter titles indicate the clear, topical, progression of O'Keefe's argument. Chapter 1, 'What sort of an incompatibilist is Epicurus?': since there are a variety of determinist views, as well as a variety of purported human qualities that determinism might threaten, there are a variety of incompatibilisms. O'Keefe here first contends for his 'bivalence' interpretation, establishing that it needs to be given 'a

serious hearing, since it responds directly to the problem Epicurus *should* be worried about, given his ethics and psychology' (25). Chapter 2, 'Lucretius on the swerve and *voluntas*': O'Keefe examines *DRN* 2: 252-93 and 4: 877-96 to show that it 'undercuts the thesis that Epicurus' concerns are much like those of modern libertarians' (26). Chapter 3, 'Aristotle and Epicurus on the origins of character and action': while O'Keefe agrees that Aristotle is worth consulting for illuminating Epicurean thought (in this case, about the person being the origin, or *archē*, of her action), he nevertheless contends that many scholars misconstrue Aristotle's own account of this notion. For O'Keefe, Aristotle's account of the *archē* does *not* require there to be any causal breaks in the determinist chain for either the formation of character or for action. Chapter 4, 'Epicurus' reductionist response to Democritean fatalism': this is the book's biggest and finest chapter. In it, O'Keefe explains how Epicurus is both a reductionist and a determinist (owing to his Democritean atomism), while nevertheless a realist about the mind and its causal efficacy. The writing and argumentation here are particularly lucid and sturdy. Chapter 5, 'The swerve and collisions': Epicurus' atomism includes three principles — weight, collisions and the swerve (unlike Democritus' single principle of collision). Chapter 6, 'The swerve and fate': O'Keefe discusses what he takes to be Epicurus' philosophical mistakes — all of which have substantial textual evidence for being attributed to Epicurus, but none of which include his use of the swerve to secure libertarian freedom.

In addition to a considerable list of references and a suitable index, the book includes, in their original languages, the main passages from Epicurus and Lucretius that O'Keefe discusses.

### **Patrick Mooney**

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### **Graham Priest**

*Towards Non-Being:*

*The Logic and Metaphysics of Intentionality.*

New York: Oxford University Press 2005.

Pp. xvi + 190.

Cdn\$84.00/US\$55.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-926254-0).

This book is a presentation and defense of a version of Meinongianism. More precisely, Priest defends a view he calls, following Richard Routley/Sylvan, 'noneism'. Meinongianism is, roughly, the view that those things that seem to be singular terms of our natural languages really are singular terms, and so denote things. A great virtue of this view is that it allows a straightforward

explanation of the truth or falsity of claims involving these terms: they are true if the thing denoted has the property attributed to it in the claim, and not true otherwise. Of course, this seems a bit problematic for terms such as 'the present king of France', 'the square circle', and 'seven'. The difference between Meinongianism and noneism has to do with the ontological status of the things to which such terms refer: Meinong infamously held that concrete objects exist, abstract objects (such as seven) *subsist*, while contradictory and merely possible objects do not exist. Noneism gives up the embarrassing intermediate status of subsistence; it thus amounts to the claim that concrete objects exist, while other things do not.

Making this seem anything other than crazy requires making sense of quantifying over these non-existent entities. Priest accomplishes this by being clear about what he takes to be the correct interpretation of the quantifiers. What is misleadingly called the *existential* quantifier is no such thing: what we are tempted to read as 'there exists an  $x$  such that' means, instead, 'some  $x$  is such that'. The universal quantifier ranges over *all things*, existent or not. This most un-Quinean account of the quantifiers requires adoption of an *existence predicate*,  $E$ , so we can distinguish between things that exist and those that do not.

Priest argues that the tools needed to make sense of noneism also allow straightforward treatments of many philosophically intricate problems — indeed, he takes this to be a key virtue of the view. Noneism makes natural a sort of fixed-domain possible world semantics: the *domain* at each world includes *all things*, whether they exist there or not. Non-actual objects may exist at non-actual worlds, while *impossible* things may exist at *impossible worlds*. But acceptance of impossible worlds is, arguably, the main cost of accepting a relevance logic treatment of, for instance, conditionals — so the requirements of noneism render the acceptance of relevance logic philosophically less costly. Similarly, if there is to be more than one impossible world, such worlds are not closed under classical logic. Allowing worlds to vary with respect to the rules under which they must be closed, though, makes it possible to offer a semantics for *intentional operators*: If 'O' is such an operator, we treat it like a modal operator: 'O( $P$ )' is true iff  $P$  is true at all accessible worlds. 'Knows that' differs from 'believes that' because the accessibility relevant to each operator is to worlds closed under different rules — perhaps 'belief' worlds don't need to be closed under anything non-trivial. And so on. The book presents a theory of intentionality, a theory of descriptions, a theory of fiction, a fictionalist account of mathematics, and other things.

That's a lot of philosophical territory in 178 easy-to-read pages, which is what makes the book both a pleasure to read and, inevitably, an occasional source of frustration. The philosophical discussions are straightforward, clear, stimulating, and provocative. In places where Priest's theory intersects with a major philosophical industry, such readability is achieved by skipping the detailed consideration of the options and complications a full defense would require. This will probably strike most as a fair price to pay in areas

where one doesn't have a horse in the race, but as less appropriate when a favourite view or argument gets short shrift.

Also, of course, what counts as easy reading depends on who's reading. Twenty-five of these 178 pages are taken up with technical appendices to various chapters, and the first two chapters are devoted to a presentation of the technical essentials of Priest's formal semantics. Many will find these parts neither easy nor pleasurable, but those who spend their time in symbol-heavy parts of philosophy will be impressed by Priest's ability to present this material in a remarkably readable form, and to keep its philosophical point in the forefront. Notation, where used at all, is always in the service of efficient presentation and serves readability. Proofs are replaced by proof sketches, the philosophical point of which should be clear to all. Priest is a master of exposition, so even the technical parts of the book will be accessible to most anyone working in philosophy nowadays.

Priest is the natural heir to David Lewis as the preeminent practitioner of the free-wheeling approach to philosophical logic that seems to result from spending chunks of time in Australia. A simple statement of some of the positions Priest (in)famously advocates — such as *dialetheism*, the view that some contradictory pairs of statements are both true — are more likely to draw an incredulous stare than a counter-argument. Eventually, though, astonishment must be replaced by counter-argument because Priest, like Lewis, offers substantial arguments in support of his views. The catastrophic defects many assume their arguments must contain turn out to be rather hard to articulate, while the need to articulate them becomes more pressing as younger philosophers become willing to accept the reality of merely possible worlds or the truth of contradictions.

Noneism is probably not as outrageous as dialetheism, but it is outrageous enough. Priest starts his preface by agreeing, hilariously, with a claim apparently due to Gilbert Ryle: 'if Meinongianism isn't dead, then nothing is'. Priest concludes that 'nothing in philosophy is ever past its use-by date' (xi). Since Ryle is hardly unique in his view, the book is a vigorous defense of noneism against what are often taken to be devastating attacks. Quine's famous 'On What There Is', if Priest is right, 'is long on rhetoric, but short on argument' (108). Here again we see something characteristic of Priest's writings: whatever the merits his philosophical positions, he points to places where philosophical consensus seems to owe more to the willingness to disdain rival views than to cogent argumentation. The challenge to those attracted by the consensus view is to see whether they can replace disdain and rhetoric with reasons. As well as being good fun, Priest's book should provoke serious reply.

**David DeVidi**

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### **Jarmo Pulkkinen**

*Thought and Logic: The Debates between German-Speaking Philosophers and Symbolic Logicians at the Turn of the Twentieth Century.*  
New York: Peter Lang 2005. Pp. vii + 336.  
US\$62.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-3-631-53866-1).

Pulkkinen's book is devoted to explaining why German philosophers at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth were not more favourably disposed to the new symbolic logic. The book is eccentric in a number of ways — e.g., in its coverage. Pulkkinen says very little, for example, about the German reception of the work of Peano and his school, beyond noting (287-9) Löwenheim's complaints about Peano's notation compared with what he delightfully called the '*Kakulfreudigkeit*' of Schröder's notation. Peirce and MacColl are merely noticed with biographical resumé (53-4) on the ground that a more detailed presentation 'would serve no purpose with regard to the task at hand' (27): presumably their work had very little effect. De Morgan, on the other hand, is left out because including him 'would have enlarged the book considerably' (308), suggesting that he constitutes a significant part of the story. The logicians who are considered at length are Boole, Jevons, and to a lesser extent, Venn (the first wave), Frege, Schröder, Russell, and Couturat (the second).

A second eccentricity is the book's arrangement. After a full introductory chapter on methodology, Pulkkinen describes the work of the first wave logicians in Chapter 2, but postpones describing the reaction of the German philosophers to them until Chapter 4; Chapter 3 covers Schröder and Frege and Chapter 5 the reaction to them. Chapter 6 introduces Russell and Couturat, whose reception by German philosophers in the early twentieth century is then discussed in chapters 8 and 9. The ridiculously brief Chapter 7 covers the Hilbert school (mainly Zermelo) in two pages, the twentieth century logical work of Frege, who (confounded by Russell's paradox) produced little of note, and Schröder, who died in 1902. Karl-Eugen Müller took over the Schröder *Nachlass*, producing an additional volume of the massive *Vorlesungen* as well as a two-volume *Abriss* of Schröder's logic. Müller gets slightly more attention than Zermelo. Pulkkinen's brief treatment of the Hilbert school is one of the book's weaknesses.

Pulkkinen is not a philosopher but a historian working within Bloor's 'strong programme' in the sociology of knowledge. Not surprisingly, therefore, he offers little by way of philosophical critique of any of the positions taken in the multitudinous writings he considers. At most, a later philosopher is occasionally quoted to shore up a beleaguered position, as when (e.g.) Hintikka is brought in to provide a (characteristically idiosyncratic) understanding of Kant's notion of analyticity (247), or Peter Simons is called in to defend Meinong (282). The majority of this book is taken up with brief summaries of scores of articles, reviews, and comments made by German philosophers about the work of the logicians. Herein lies the interest and

importance of the book, for this literature is almost entirely unknown to English-speaking historians of philosophy, though parts of it have been studied by some German scholars (notably Volker Peckhaus). Within the limits he sets himself, Pulkkinen's coverage is, so far as I can tell, absolutely comprehensive so far as published sources are concerned. The encyclopaedic nature of the book makes one regret that it does not come with better finding aids; the only one provided is an unclassified index of names. Some of the material is distinctly odd, as, for example, a 1909 paper by Boris Jakowenko, a Russian philosopher working at Freiburg, who accused Russell of psychologism on the grounds that he was attempting to 'determine ... the structure of pure thought' (257). Russell would have difficulty in recognizing himself in this distorted reflection.

While the first wave of logicians met with some degree of acceptance among German philosophers, the claims of the second wave fell almost completely on deaf ears — even some of those sympathetic to the first wave (e.g. Riehl and Wundt) came to regret their liberality. The first wave, too, met with opposition on account of the alleged artificiality of the logics and the problems they solved. Symbolic logic, it was widely maintained, did not correspond to the 'actual' relations of thought (an objection made by both Lotze and Wundt). This was often linked to the extensionality of the new logics; properly philosophical concerns, it seems to have been held, were irreducibly intensional. The German philosophers found the new logics interesting or not, according to their preference, but they seem to have agreed that they had a (very) limited sphere of application.

This attitude of relatively benign toleration was hardly likely to survive the advent of Russell and Couturat, with their insistence that symbolic logic was the core of philosophy and could actually solve philosophical problems. Couturat had an influence in Germany entirely disproportionate to his originality. It was his *Les principes des mathématiques* (1905), not Russell's *Principles of Mathematics* (1903), that was translated into German (1908), despite the fact that it was, as Couturat asserted, 'only a report' on Russell's book. (Pulkkinen, quotes the passage from the German translation and gives 'representation' as the translation of Couturat's original '*compte rendu*', 192.) It is unfortunate that Couturat thereby became the main source of information about Russell. Russell's position had changed considerably by the time the translation of Couturat's book appeared, so the German philosophers got Russell not only second-hand but in an outdated version. Not all their complaints, moreover, apply equally to Russell and Couturat. A common objection was that logicism left unexamined the primitive ideas from which both logic and mathematics were to be derived, and thus shirked the main philosophical task. While Russell acknowledged the task and admitted that it was left incomplete in Part I of the *Principles*, Couturat's book gave the impression that nothing further was required. Many German philosophers (e.g. Cassirer, Natorp, and Jonas Cohn) thought, with Poincaré, that the logicist definition of number was circular, since they held that the concept of a class presupposes the concept of number. Their grounds for this view,

however, seem to depend upon an unfortunate informal exposition by Couturat (upon which Poincaré, in particular, pounced sarcastically). In his *Autobiography* (Vol. I, p. 134), Russell notes that Couturat was not always very prudent, and that he found it difficult to defend both Couturat and himself against Poincaré's attacks.

With or without Couturat's imprudence, they would have faced opposition from the neo-Kantians who dominated Germany philosophy at the turn of the twentieth century. They were brought to prominence by Bismarck's anti-Catholic *Kulturkampf*, which produced both a liberalization of the universities and a marked growth in their philosophy faculties (116-7). After 1898, Russell had nothing good to say about Kant, and Couturat, in a long, very critical article on Kant's philosophy of mathematics which was reprinted in *Les principes*, described him as 'a brazen colossus with feet of clay' (197). The neo-Kantians, not surprisingly, were among the chief critics of logicism, and their objections take up the bulk of Pulkkinen's Chapter 9 (232-74). Several neo-Kantians (e.g. Cassirer, Natorp, Cohn, and Rickert) seem to have been provoked into attempting their own definitions of number. Pulkkinen gives brief details of their various proposals, but it is difficult to judge from the information he gives how satisfactory any of these might have been.

The antagonism of the neo-Kantians, however, cannot explain the neglect of Frege, who managed to find several nice things to say in his *Grundlagen* about Kant. But Frege did not need anti-Kantianism to make enemies — he had a remarkable talent for it. Moreover, Frege worked at a small, provincial university, had few students (Pulkkinen gives the registration numbers, 166-7), taught poorly, and never held a full professorship. He was thus never able to create the following that the importance of his ideas deserved. The two most important logicians in late nineteenth-century Germany were Frege and Schröder, and neither held a university chair. Schröder spent most of his active career teaching in the technische Hochschule in Karlsruhe. Although Schröder managed to secure some adherents to symbolic logic, all of them were mathematics teachers in Gymnasien, Realschulen, or technischen Hochschulen. In these relatively lowly positions they were looked down upon as mere technicians by the philosophers in the universities.

Given Pulkkinen's concern with social and historical factors, it is surprising that he says so little about the First World War. He mentions it only at the end where he notes the post-war reaction that swept away the neo-Kantians in favour of the 'dark, magical' phenomenology that captured Gadamer's imagination. Yet intellectuals on both sides were easily drawn into thinking of the war as a 'conflict of civilizations', and of themselves as enthusiastic combatants. The lively German debate about Russell and Couturat, which drew in even the young Heidegger in the days when he was planning a thesis in the philosophy of mathematics, ended abruptly in 1914. With the outbreak of war, discussing English and French logicians might be thought unpatriotic. The war put an end to Russell's plans to pay an extended visit to Hilbert at Göttingen — and, indeed, to Russell's academic career. Couturat himself was killed in a traffic accident during the French mobili-

sation. The German debate about logic did not run out of steam, it was ended by the war just as it was starting to get interesting.

**Nicholas Griffin**

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**Joseph Raz**

*The Practice of Value.*

Toronto and New York:

Oxford University Press 2003. Pp. xv + 161.

Cdn\$67.50/US\$45.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-926147-5);

Cdn\$31.50/US\$17.95

(paper ISBN-13: 978-0-19-927846-6).

This book contains Joseph Raz' lectures on the social dependence of value delivered as the Tanner Lectures on Human Values at the University of California, Berkeley, in March of 2001, as well as commentaries by Christine Korsgaard, Robert Pippin, and Bernard Williams. In his lectures, Raz argues that nearly all, though not all, values are socially dependent in one of two ways. According to his 'special social dependence thesis', some values exist only if there are (or were) social practices sustaining them. The second type of dependence, expressed in his 'general social dependence thesis', involves the general dependence of nearly all values on social practices either as being subject to the special dependence thesis or through their dependence on values which are in turn subject to the special dependence thesis. Raz tries to argue that such social dependence does not necessarily entail a reduction of all value to a debilitating form of relativism. The commentaries provide substantial critical reviews of Raz' argument, especially as concerns the question of whether his version of the social dependence of value can avoid falling into axiological relativism.

Raz' lectures themselves are a tough read, especially if one is not already familiar with his work. In this respect, the commentaries by Korsgaard, Pippin, and Williams, as well as the introduction by the editor, Ray Wallace, are very helpful in clarifying the key steps in Raz' argument. The lectures themselves are organized into two sections: 'The Thesis' and 'Implications'. In the first, Raz lays out the basics of his view, including a detailed explication of his two social dependence theses and a response to the relativism charge. In the second section, he considers some implications that the social dependence of value has for our views on value pluralism and the epistemology of value use. This is the more interesting of the two sections, especially Raz' discussion of the central role that genres play in evaluative thought. His

view is that much of our evaluative thinking begins by identifying the genre to which an object or action belongs, and then proceeds to ascertain the extent to which the item or action in question stands as a good or bad instance of the genre. This way of thinking about valuation is not new; Aristotle characterized valuation in roughly this way. However, Raz does move the discussion well beyond its traditional limits to show that our ability to identify objects and actions as properly belonging to one genre rather than another is inextricably bound up with social practices that serve to define the classificatory boundaries of genres, and that once such practices are well established we have at our disposal an 'objective' basis upon which to make value judgments about objects and actions.

Not surprisingly, Korsgaard's commentary comes out of a Kantian metaethic in which evaluative judgments are grounded in a consideration of human nature itself, not in contingent and instrumental social practices. She objects to Raz' social dependence theses because they omit the fundamental relation between the valuing subject and the object of value, a relation governed by a concern for what objects it would be appropriate to value and not by the object's relation to a social practice. Pippin's commentary is more sympathetic to Raz' basic claim about the social dependence of value, and chiefly concerns Raz' contention that his view does not reduce to relativism. If the social practices that provide the foundational parameters for value judgments about objects and actions reflect simply our contingent preferences and interests, then our actual value judgments carry with them the contingency of those foundational preferences. Pippin does not find Raz' account of the origin of social practices as regulators of evaluative thought sufficient to dispel that worry. Williams is more in agreement with Raz than either Korsgaard or Pippin. His commentary focuses on the limits that a social dependence view imposes on our ability to comment on the values that previous societies had or did not have if our own evaluative thought is but a product of those social practices for which we have a preference. This historical and social contingency of value weakens our confidence in our own values, according to Williams, a critical problem which places upon philosophers the burden to provide an account of value consistent with the recognition of the role that social practices play, but yet which gives us sufficient confidence to proceed with our own evaluative thought. The book contains a far-ranging reply to these commentaries by Raz.

*The Practice of Value* is a valuable read for anyone working in the epistemology of value, though I doubt that it will shed any new light on the debate about the social dependency of value. It is a nice, though occasionally quite technical, introduction to, and critical review of, the social dependence view. It could work well in a graduate-level course in axiology, metaethics, or normative epistemology. It is too technical, however, for undergraduate philosophy.

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### W. Teed Rockwell

*Neither Brain Nor Ghost: A Non-Dualist  
Alternative to the Mind/Brain Identity Theory.*  
Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press 2003.

Pp. x + 231.

US\$36.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-262-18247-8);

US\$18.00 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-262-68167-4).

Where does the mind end and the world begin? According to the mind-brain identity theory, the brain is the only piece of physical stuff that embodies or realizes mental phenomena and subjective conscious experience (xii). Given that mental phenomena emerge solely from the brain, the borders of the mind should, according to this theory, be neatly drawn at the skull. Rockwell, adapting a phrase from Dennett (*Consciousness Explained*, Little Brown & Co. 1991), dubs the view that the brain is the unique piece of physical stuff that realizes the mind or mental phenomena 'Cartesian materialism'. However, Rockwell thinks that Cartesian materialism is manifestly false, and that the boundary between the mind and world should be seen as a highly flexible one. He proposes that mental phenomena are realized *not* solely by the brain, as Cartesian materialism asserts, but rather by a single complex interacting nexus consisting of brain, body, *and* external physical world. On his account, thus, the mind is in some important sense *noncranial*. It is realized not simply by neural activity in the brain, but rather by a complex single unified system embracing the brain, the body, and the environment (xv), and should ultimately be viewed as a sort of 'behavioral field' (86) that ripples and fluctuates *within* this brain-body-world nexus.

After briefly outlining the general historical and theoretical contours of the mind-body problem, Rockwell argues in Chapter 1 that the Cartesian materialist's claim that the mind is the brain — 'no matter how natural it may seem to us' (18) — is essentially an *empirical* claim that must be in principle be falsifiable by future scientific discoveries. The claim that the mind exists only in the head is really an *unsupported assumption* that is no longer supported by our best current neuroscience (19). He suggests in Chapter 2 that perhaps we should start looking for the mind where the Churchlands have told us to look: in the brain, using some of the information neuroscience has made available. But, Rockwell continues, when we actually try to understand the mind through neuroscience alone, we soon discover that it is simply *impossible* to isolate the brain from the rest of the nervous system. There is a lot of talk about the hippocampus, the cerebral cortex, the cerebellum, and so on, and about the various functions that these neural structures appear to be responsible for, but 'rarely is there any indication that those neural structures located in the skull have any significant kinship that marks them off from the rest of the nervous system' (22). Accordingly, he says there is nothing in neuroscience which actually supports the

Cartesian materialist's claim that the brain, and the brain *alone*, has the right to be called the mind.

Should we then posit a mind-*nervous system* identity? Rockwell argues in Chapter 3 that, although a mind-nervous system identity is a more accurate description of the available scientific facts, a mind-nervous system identity is *also* problematic, for there are already some interesting data suggesting that certain mental functions are realized by parts of the body *other* than the nervous system, and 'any serious philosophy of mind must be willing to deal with the possibility that there could be more' (37). If this is right, then there might very well be something to the idea that J.J.C. Smart dismissed as unthinkable: that organs other than the nervous system and brain — including the kidneys, cerebral spinal fluid and hormones — have some claim to being partial embodiments of mental phenomena and subjective conscious experience. Rockwell believes that these sorts of considerations support the idea that a strict mind-nervous system identity cannot be maintained. Rather, he claims, current science appears to support the idea of a mind-*body* identity.

In Chapter 4, Rockwell (in addition to an interesting side-discussion of causation) opens the possibility of extending the borders of the mind beyond the skin out into the external physical world. Because there are many crucial things happening in the brain every time we think or feel, neuroscience naturally assumes that brain activity is the *sole* cause of mentality. There is, he points out, no denying that this is a useful assumption for doing neuroscience. He goes on to argue, however, that a robust understanding of mental phenomena must make reference not merely to purely neurological facts, but also to facts *outside* the mind — *extraneurological* facts, as it were — facts such as behavior, language, reference, and so on (55). He argues that since we cannot fully understand the mind without referring to such extra-neurological facts, it is not proper to view mental phenomena as being realized *solely* by the brain, as Cartesian materialism asserts. Rather, it is much more accurate to assert that mental phenomena - and hence *the mind* — emerge from all of the various causal factors in the brain, body, and external world that causally produce mental phenomena (55).

After discussing some of the problems with Kim's supervenience physicalism in Chapter 5, in Chapters 6-9 Rockwell demonstrates how his proposed view of the mind can resolve paradoxes engendered by the mind-brain identity theory in such fields as neuroscience, artificial intelligence, epistemology, and philosophy of language. And lastly, in Chapter 10, he argues that understanding the mind as a behavioral field supports the new cognitive science paradigm of dynamic systems theory.

This is a genuinely interesting book. It will be of interest not only to philosophers of mind, but also to researchers in the cognitive and neurosciences. Rockwell is stimulating, provocative, and has an admirably clear and engaging writing style. This book, perhaps in conjunction with Mark Rowlands' *Externalism: Putting Mind and World Back Together Again*

(McGill-Queen's University Press 2003), would serve nicely as an upper-division topics-course in the philosophy of mind.

**Colin Peter Ruloff**

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**John R. Shook and Joseph Margolis, eds.**

*A Companion to Pragmatism.*

Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing 2006.

Pp. xii + 431.

US\$138.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-1621-3).

A hundred years ago William James compared pragmatism, using Papini's metaphor, to a hotel corridor down which philosophers must walk even though they end up engaging in all manner of activities in their own rooms. This volume is evidence that diversity has not disappeared in the intervening century. Indeed, the recent revival in pragmatist philosophical thought has only added to the variety of views and topics that pragmatists present. Thus, the editors of even a large volume set themselves the heroic task of condensing that cornucopia down to a single tome. Not surprisingly, Shook and Margolis' success is incomplete — their volume is a better presentation of Dewey and his intellectual descendants than of pragmatism as a whole. At the same time, the volume contains a number of articles that are significant individual contributions to pragmatism, be it of Deweyian or other ilk.

The collection of essays is divided into three parts and an introduction. The introduction, though short, does a fine job of presenting the historical interconnectedness of the rich variety of pragmatist thought and bringing us up to the present following the Putnam/Rorty debate that, according to Margolis, revived pragmatism (4-5).

The first part is weakest and is made up of twelve sketches of prominent pragmatists from Peirce to Rorty and, in terms of the choice of pragmatists presented as well as in the manner of presentation, mirrors the difficulties with the whole volume. The individual sketches tend to follow too much the encyclopaedic model of saying a little about everything each philosopher did instead of giving students of pragmatism, the supposed audience, insight into each pragmatist's main thoughts; one example of the insightful overviews that might have been provided is Philip Jackson's sketch of Dewey. Also, the choice of thinkers to include was bound to be contestable — the inclusion of Jane Addams and Alain L. Locke feels particularly unjustifiable given the absence of Robert Brandom, Nicholas Rescher and Susan Haack.

The second part collects articles examining the relationship between pragmatism and other philosophical positions. Necessarily, the various articles have little in common, concentrating as they do upon what pragmatists, to use again Papini's metaphor, do in their own rooms. Regardless, most of the individual articles provide interesting connections, bound to be useful for those dealing with the individual issues or philosophers in question from Hegel and Marxism, through naturalism, to hermeneutics and feminism. One particularly useful article is Douglas Anderson's re-evaluation of the relation between Peirce and his favourite *bête noire*, Descartes, while another is Bjorn Ramberg's moderating reinterpretation of Rorty's significance for analytic philosophy.

The third part is perhaps the strongest. It finally allows pragmatists to fully speak for themselves and to discuss the questions that interest them — undeniably something philosophers are usually best at. The discussion of the ethical and political implications of pragmatism, that includes several connected articles developing Dewey's thoughts on democracy, a paper by Rorty, as well as papers by Hilary and by Ruth Anna Putnam, is perhaps the most important and interesting section of the whole volume. The final four papers in the volume are among the few that deal with the broadly epistemic issues that were important to the early pragmatists but which are rejected by neo-pragmatists. Of the four, the paper by Mark Johnson discussing the relevance of pragmatism to contemporary cognitive science is perhaps the volume's most interesting individual article, casting light as it also does upon Lakoff and Johnson's controversial work centring on metaphor. Nicholas Rescher's and Cheryl Misak's articles build on the discussion of realism and the role pragmatism plays in it.

All in all, the volume appears strongest when discussing Dewey's work. It is apparently the view of the editors that it was with Dewey that pragmatism reached adulthood. While disputable, this view is defensible and, indeed, ably defended by this volume. Unfortunately, this means that other aspects of the pragmatist tradition, particularly the type of naturalising pragmatism that goes back to Peirce and whose best current proponent is Susan Haack, lose out. This is not, given the need for philosophy to have a point of view, so much a criticism as something that a potential reader should be aware of. Still, it seems that this would have been, on the whole, a better volume if it had simply confined itself to Dewey's intellectual inheritance.

Something else that potential readers should be alert to is that the volume is not an introduction, but at most a 'companion', to pragmatism. Not only can it not stand in place of reading the relevant primary sources — a good recent collection of which has been edited by Susan Haack (*Pragmatism, Old and New*, Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2006) — but also the articles contained within the volume tend to assume a level and breadth of competence that is usually achieved only in graduate school. Thus, the volume might be best used by doctoral students studying pragmatism. Even in that role, it would be best to pick and choose the most relevant articles rather than seeing the book as an organic whole. Unfor-

tunately, the editors' argument for the significance of Dewey is less likely to be grasped by such selective readers.

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**Folke Tersman**

*Moral Disagreement.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Pp. xvii + 141.

US\$60.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-85338-5).

On Tersman's view, moral disagreement is sometimes real rather than apparent. Moral concepts by their very nature generate radical disagreement. There is a kind of promiscuity in our moral discourse that distinguishes moral discourse from modes of discourse that are compatible with realism. The explanation for this is that we use, identify, individuate, and attribute moral concepts to other agents in ways which tolerate 'more differences and idiosyncrasy in the moral case than in ... other subject matters' (xvi). Tersman calls this 'the latitude idea' (112) and this idea is central to his assault on moral realism.

The book has six chapters: 1. Realism and Irrrealism; 2. The Case for Radical Moral Disagreement; 3. Explaining and Predicting Disagreement; 4. The Argument from Inaccessibility; 5. The Argument from Ambiguity; and 6. Attributing Moral Judgments. Each focuses on central problems in meta-ethics. In what follows I outline some of Tersman's central claims.

Chapter 1 offers an overview of the debate between realism and anti-realism in ethics. On Tersman's characterization, a moral realist is someone who affirms 'a conjunction of four claims: *cognitivism*, *antinihilism*, *absolutism* (antirelativism), and *objectivism*' (7). For example, objectivism is a claim whose support derives from the alleged continuity of morality, biology, physics and other domains whose purported objectivity is widely accepted. Were one to establish that moral properties are analogous to the natural properties whose status as truth-makers in the sciences is widely accepted, then moral realism might turn out to be a plausible position. Against this view, some critics contend that moral concepts differ from non-moral concepts because moral properties have no causal powers or because moral propositions are not truth-apt.

Throughout the book, Tersman considers a number of arguments for and against each of the positions he considers; and he takes great pains to consider possible rebuttals that a moral realist might marshal against her irrealist critics. Tersman claims that sometimes the moral realist has a satisfactory reply. For example, one familiar argument against moral realism appeals to the fact of moral diversity. This topic is considered in Chapter 2. Anthropological evidence suggests that diversity among cultures is significant, revealing as it does a panoply of practices which include everything from head shrinking to infanticide. Some versions of the argument from moral diversity are clearly unsound; the mere fact of diversity, as Tersman rightly acknowledges, does not entail the falsity of realism in morality or in any other domain.

In Chapter 6 Tersman defends his own argument against moral realism. Here is a brief summary of the central features of the argument. 'Given a realist view, ethics is a discipline on a par with, say, psychology or physics. In the case of those areas, it is reasonable to require that translation manuals preserve cognitive content. That is, if we wonder which term of an alien language (if any) is to be translated with say, "electron", we look for a term that refers to the same phenomena' (109). Moral realists hold that a translation manual succeeds at preserving cognitive content if it can identify which moral beliefs in differing languages have the same truth conditions. Tersman calls this the 'C-constraint' and moral realism presupposes that this constraint is both necessary and sufficient (109-10). However, the 'C-constraint is neither necessary nor sufficient' (110).

Moral realists hold that genuine disagreement involves real conflicts of belief and thus are committed to the claim that the C-constraint is necessary. That the 'C-constraint' isn't necessary follows from the 'latitude idea' that 'helps to explain why we find so much moral diversity ...' (112). This is a serious problem for the moral realist. Two agents can use the same moral concept in radically different ways. Therefore, the 'C-constraint' is not a necessary condition.

That the 'C-constraint' isn't sufficient follows from the fact that a translation manual can succeed in preserving cognitive content even in cases where widely agreed upon assumptions about moral motivation are violated. Internalists and externalists about practical reason disagree about the correct way to characterize the connection between making a moral judgment and being motivated to act on that judgment. However, it is a 'commonly recognized fact that people in general have at least some tendency to act in accordance with their moral convictions' (117). Granted this view about moral motivation, a translation manual that accurately identifies moral judgments in the target language will pick out judgments that motivate. One counter-example that Tersman offers involves the case of a parent who is capable of learning the truth conditions for 'cool' in the idiolect of her teenager without also having a pro-attitude towards those things which are in fact 'cool' (118-19). If there are moral cases analogous to this, then some accurately translated moral concepts violate the motivational constraint on moral

judgment. According to Tersman, 'anthropologists have gathered enough evidence to show that there exist, or have existed, communities whose ways and motivational patterns differ substantially from ours' (123) and in at least some of these cases attempts at translating their concepts into ours are successful.

Tersman advances an ambitious argument; if sound, moral realism is unsalvageable. At times, however, he is too quick on the draw. For example, in a two page (28-9) discussion he cites an experiment using functional resonance imaging that attempts to correlate causes of moral emotions with brain activity. Subjects are asked to deliberate about a moral dilemma (e.g. the trolley problem) while their brain activity is monitored by scientists. Whether or not this kind of research can illuminate debates about moral realism is surely controversial and Tersman needs to do more to show why this kind of empirical study is relevant to debates in meta-ethics. It is also worth noting that the versions of moral realism under assault in *Moral Disagreement* do not include virtue theory or constructivist attempts to defend moral realism. Instead, Tersman's objections are directed at the variety of realism defended by those such as Brink, Railton, and Sturgeon.

**Jon Mahoney**

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**Christopher Heath Wellman and  
A. John Simmons.**

*Is There a Duty to Obey the Law?*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2005.

Pp. xiii + 200.

US\$50.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-83097-3);

(paper ISBN-13: 978-0-521-53784-1).

This thought-provoking book extends the polemics of classical social contract theorists. Like the earliest social contract theorists, the authors' debate centers on the right of a state to command uncontested obedience to its laws and the political obligations of residents (both citizens and non-citizens) to obey such laws. Although neither Wellman nor Simmons may like to be cast in the philosophical mold of social contract theorists, their arguments are rooted in the sociological supposition that the modern state plays some vital roles in the lives of its citizens. However, their contention stems from fundamental disagreement as to whether these roles entitle a

state to automatic obedience to its laws or empower it to coerce such obedience.

Wellman bases his argument on what he calls the principle of samaritanism. According to him, allegiance to the state is predicated on three principal claims: (a) that political states supply benefits which are crucial to the survival of their residents, (b) that without the existence of states, these benefits would not be available, and (c) that states can justifiably coerce people to perform critical functions on behalf of their compatriots; however, they can provide benefits to all 'without imposing unreasonable costs upon those they coerce' (5-6). Wellman's position is that without the crucial existence of the political state and the security which it provides, human relationship will be chaotic. He aptly uses Hobbes' analogy of the perpetual state of war in the 'state of nature' to reiterate the crucial role of the states and their laws in maintaining social order. Wellman claims that in the absence of the crucial legislative, executive, and judicial functions performed by the state, there will be chaos; thus 'the only way to ensure that everyone will in fact defer to such an ultimate authority is if this authority imposes itself with irresistible force upon everyone within the territorial limits' (16). He posits that the state performs the important function of coordinating the samaritan duties required from its residents to help their compatriots in danger, and argues that these duties do not necessarily need the consent of individuals involved. The state can justifiably coerce them. In other words, Wellman opines that the dangers that others may face in the state of nature limit the moral rights of their compatriots and compel a duty for all individuals to support and obey the political establishment.

Simmons critiques this claim of a general duty to obey the law, arguing that 'even in reasonably just political societies' (101) such a presumption is morally unjustifiable. According to him, 'actual consent is the only possible ground of a moral duty to obey the law' (120) and very few citizens have actually given such consent. Dismissing different philosophical arguments (especially the Natural Duty account) justifying moral obligation to obey the law, Simmons contends that 'the mere fact that an action is legally required or that a stable government holds power within a reasonably just state' is not sufficient to presume a moral obligation 'in favor of legal compliance' (101). While acknowledging the '*legal* duty' to comply with 'the system of norms' necessary for the organizational survival of institutions, he distinguished this legal duty from a '*moral* duty' to obey such laws, by laying emphasis on the 'moral weight' of such presumed obligation (93). He describes the 'normative force' of a moral duty as deriving from 'independent moral principles beyond any conventional or institutional "force" that might be thought generated by the simple empirical facts of institutional requirement (according to existing rules) or widespread social expectations for conduct' (94). Simmons suggests that a compelled obedience to legal command is tantamount to the 'surrender of judgment' (95) and argues that 'individuals could differ in their duties simply because of quite personal and idiosyncratic moral relationships into which they might have entered' (96).

For instance, he posits that 'not only are vile and deeply unjust systems of law not owed even a prima facie moral duty of obedience', but also individuals who have 'suffered disproportionately the burdens imposed by unjust law ... or [have] been denied the enjoyment of the benefits law provides' may feel less obligated to the law than those 'in more normal and happier circumstances' (96). So, advocating what he calls 'philosophical anarchism', Simmons affirms that 'there is (for most persons in most states) no moral duty to obey the law' (190).

Unlike Wellman, Simmons couches his position in a labyrinth of arcane philosophical polemics, which makes his arguments less accessible. Wellman, however, in proffering subservience to the law treats laws as public goods without which life will be miserable. I take issue with Wellman's treatment of laws as neutral, objective, and fair instruments of regulation devoid of the parochial considerations of the lawmakers. Contrary to this utopian construction of legalism, history has shown that laws often reflect the values of those who design them and are sometimes used to achieve domination, marginalisation, exclusion or repression. This truism is typified in the Jim Crow laws of the United States, the apartheid laws of South Africa and the laws of colonial and military occupations. To suggest, therefore, that the state can justifiably coerce people to obey the law is to ignore the fact that laws are vital tools often used by groups privileged by class, race, gender, etc., to impose their values on the rest of the population. On the other hand, despite convincing arguments made by Simmons against the 'moral duty to obey the law' and his recognition that the 'moral record' of the modern state 'is far from exemplary' (193), his resort to 'philosophical anarchism' offers no concrete suggestion about how to build a better society. In opposing 'political anarchism', while at the same time sympathizing with the circumstances that may give rise to such actions, Simmons' entire effort in this project appears to me self-serving — i.e., achieving an intellectual fame at the expense of building a better society.

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**Bernard Williams**

*The Sense of the Past:*

*Essays in the History of Philosophy.*

Myles Burnyeat, ed. Princeton, NJ:

Princeton University Press 2006.

Pp. xxii + 393.

US\$39.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-691-12477-3).

As famous philosophers so often do, Bernard Williams (1929-2003) has managed a prolific burst of posthumous literary activity. *The Sense of the Past* is the third edited work published by Princeton University Press (the others being *In the Beginning Was the Deed: Realism and Moralism in Political Argument* and *Philosophy as a Humanistic Discipline*, both 2005). Williams has also produced a work *On Opera* (Yale, 2006) for good measure. To judge by the current volume, all will be essential. As Burnyeat, the editor, emphasizes in his introduction, Williams had the rare quality of being able to combine the rigorous argument and mastery of formal logic associated with the best Anglo-American analytic philosophy with a historical sensitivity and breadth of interests more generally characteristic of continental European approaches to the discipline. His ability to add to this already formidable combination a deep knowledge of ancient thought made him almost unique amongst his contemporaries.

Although Williams modestly disclaimed the title of a classical scholar, over half of this volume, fourteen of the twenty-five essays it contains, is devoted to Greek philosophy. It begins with some reflections on the lasting significance of Greek philosophy ('The Legacy of Greek Philosophy'), on the purpose of tragedy ('The Women of Trachis'), and on Homer ('Understanding Homer'), before engaging more closely first with Plato and Socrates, and then with Aristotle. For Williams, ancient thought provided an invaluable foil for the criticism of modern thought, and of modern moral ideas in particular. He quoted with approval Nietzsche's remark that 'among the greatest characteristics of the Hellenes is their inability to turn the best into reflection' (46), and was also in agreement with him as to why the Greek tragedies remained important. These classical dramatists appreciated that art can enable us to contemplate 'cosmic awfulness ... without being crushed' (58).

Williams' conception of the qualities required in a truly great philosopher — 'intellectual power and depth; a grasp of the sciences; a sense of the political, and of human destructiveness as well as creativity; a broad range and a fertile imagination; an unwillingness to settle for the superficially reassuring; and, in an unusually lucky case, the gifts of a great writer' (180) — lead him in the end to prefer Plato to Aristotle. But his engagement with Aristotle was no less profound, though it is no coincidence that the most technical of the essays in the volume ('Aristotle on the Good: A Formal Sketch', 1962) is also the earliest.

In it, Williams set out to apply first-order predicate calculus to the arguments of the *Ethics*. By contrast, the later essays abandoned the use of

formal notation altogether. In the essay on 'Descartes and the Historiography of Philosophy' (1994), Williams observed that a common criticism of the analytical approach to the history of philosophy was that 'it neglects the literary dimension of philosophical works, so that ... it misses a good deal of what can be got from them even philosophically'. It is difficult not to take this, and his observation of the 'condescension with which earlier writers are treated to instruction by current philosophical methods, and are reproved for their errors' (258), as implicit criticisms of his own earlier work.

As one might expect from someone who increasingly took Nietzsche seriously, the later Williams paid much closer attention to questions of style, and was prepared to entertain a catholic view of what counted as philosophy. Nietzsche himself receives the most attention of any of the modern philosophers discussed in the volume; he is made the subject of four essays, Descartes (the first philosopher after Aristotle to figure in the book) of three, and Hume, Sidgwick, Collingwood, and Wittgenstein of one each. That Collingwood should have come to William's attention is particularly noteworthy, because Collingwood's major philosophical contribution was to the philosophy of the human sciences.

Collingwood, reflecting on his experience of practicing archaeology and ancient history, became convinced that history constituted a distinctive way of coming to know and understand the world, and Williams increasingly concurred. A theme that repeatedly crops up in this collection is the distinction between the history of ideas and the history of philosophy. The force of the distinction, according to Williams, is that 'the history of ideas yields something that is history before it is philosophy, while with the history of philosophy it is the other way round' (257). He appears to have come more and more to think of himself as engaged in the latter enterprise, which he hoped would 'make from the philosophy of the past a philosophical structure that will be strange enough to help us to question our present situation' (264).

What Williams thought needed questioning was the way in which 'philosophy, and in particular moral philosophy, is still deeply attached to giving good news' (49). This attachment had been there from the first; in his introductory discussion of Greek philosophy Williams observed that 'from its beginnings two motives were brought to Western philosophy which have been active ... ever since, the desire for salvation and the desire to find out how things work' (16). Only the latter, of course, was an authentically philosophical motivation.

Williams seems to be suggesting in the final two essays on Wittgenstein and Collingwood that insofar as Western philosophy has begun to emancipate itself from its attachment to the desire for salvation, some kind of hermeneutic and historicist perspectivalism is responsible. Here again, Nietzsche played his part, and it is striking that Williams, who acknowledges at several points that he owed many of his own ideas on the nature of interpretation to Donald Davidson, should have said that 'a Nietzschean genealogy can be seen now as starting from Davidson plus history' (308). The one serious complaint regarding this otherwise excellent collection is the

absence of an index, an increasingly common fault, but nevertheless an inexcusable one that severely damages the utility of the volume.

**Luke O'Sullivan**

**Slavoj Žižek**

*The Parallax View.*

Cambridge MA: The MIT Press 2006.

Pp. xciii + 434.

US\$24.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-262-24051-2).

It is true that Žižek's thirtieth English-language book, undoubtedly intended as a summary of his career to date, allows a kind of 'parallax view' on to his work as a whole. By this I mean that it enables us to look at it awry, see it from somewhere else, understand that something else was always at stake in it. And what is it that *The Parallax View* allows us to see for the first time in Žižek's work? What is that new understanding it provides? We see something of what Žižek will call 'parallax' as early as *For They Know Not What They Do* (1991), in the example he gives of the relationship of Night to Day (22). As Žižek puts it there, Night is not the opposite of Day, the two coming together to form some harmonious whole. Rather, Night is that 'void' which allows Day to be inscribed. It is not so much some positive principle as the very fact there is Day. Day is henceforth divided, separated from itself, by what makes it Day. And we see the same fundamental logic in Žižek's discussions of the relationship between Law and Crime in *For They Know Not, Good and Evil* in *The Indivisible Remainder*, and symbolic *reduplicatio* in *The Puppet and the Dwarf*.

The phenomenon of 'parallax' is set out by Žižek in *The Parallax View* in several clearly defined stages. First, close to the common philosophical doctrine of perspectivism, parallax is understood as the necessity to see an object through two closely related points of view (5). Then, it is thought that the object we are trying to look at lies outside both of these points of view (18). Finally, it is realised that the perspectival distortion that comes between us and the object is in fact the object. As Žižek writes, 'The truth is not the "real" state of things, that is, the "direct" view of the object without perspectival distortion, but the very Real of the antagonism that causes perspectival distortion' (281). In other words, parallax refers both to what cannot be seen and what prevents us from seeing it. Or, to put this the other way around, parallax might be what prevents us from seeing clearly, but it is this

distortion itself that *is* the object we are looking for. What we see stands in for our failure to see it, for the failure to see precisely Nothing.

This leads, in a first 'negative' moment, to the whole argument in *The Parallax View* for the necessity of accepting one's fate. It comes from the idea, taken from Hegel, that the causal order would not be possible without some subjective positing of it. Freedom thus is not a matter of breaking with any pre-existing necessity, but is what allows this necessity in the first place (203). Necessity does not exist without the subject first agreeing to it. And it is this that produces a new conception of the act, indebted to Melville's character Bartleby, who simply says 'I would prefer not to' in response to any demand, as the withdrawal of this positing. This has the effect of revealing that the symbolic order stands in for this withdrawal. It is not some opposition to the symbolic that Žižek is calling for here (such resistance, he has recently begun to think, is merely an 'inherent transgression' that keeps it going), but rather the realization of it as an effect of its positing, standing in for the possibility it could have been otherwise. As Žižek writes towards the end of *The Parallax View*, 'The very frantic and engaged activity of constituting a new order is sustained by an underlying "I would prefer not to" which forever reverberates in it' (382).

In a second, more 'positive' tonality — although, of course, in parallax it is not a matter of separating them — parallax also refers to the act of introducing distinctions. As Žižek writes, for example, of Christianity, 'Christian love is a violent passion to introduce a Difference, a gap into the order of Being' (282). And this applies as well to theory: '[Philosophical] prescription is divisive and simultaneously universal' (322). But in each case the distinction drawn is not so much external as internal, not so much between the same and the other as between the same and itself. It is a distinction that each time, to go back to what I began by saying here, stands in for that between the void and what takes its place. This is why, if parallax gives the impression of being a distinction between two, it is not in the form of any alternative between which we might choose. Because what parallax implies is that at once we must make a choice and this choice is always the wrong one. It is what means that any unity (even that of one of the supposed halves of the parallax) is always incomplete, always in the process of dividing again. This is why there is for Žižek an absolutely crucial connection between parallax and the death drive, for this move from one perspective to another must keep on being repeated. And hence also the work of interpretation, like that of Christian love, is never-ending. It is a task that must be defined as the fundamental attempt to think Nothing, a Nothing that is lost as soon as it is formulated as something, and hence is to be undertaken again (62).

This is the real thrill of reading Žižek: to witness the incessant split being played out between Žižek and himself. None of his critics or commentators, to my knowledge, has done this yet, but there would be no more valuable an exercise than to trace how Žižek's work, like Lacan's, proceeds as an ongoing argument against itself. What is constantly being questioned here, what is constantly being looked at from a different angle, what is constantly having

new distinctions drawn within it, is Žižek's own work. We might think here, for example, of his characterization of the unnameable Act as 'absolutely inherent' (64) to the symbolic, whereas earlier in *Ticklish Subject* it is the 'Real of an "object" preceding naming' (167). Or we might think of the distance he now takes on Hardt and Negri's notion of capitalism as already being socialist so that all we need to do is 'formally convert it' (263), whereas earlier in *Revolution at the Gates* he supported it. Self-rebuttal and self-contradiction are obviously the wrong words to use here, insofar as they imply some consistent underlying doctrine. Rather, as Žižek argues in *The Parallax View*, philosophy itself is this self-splitting, this homelessness, this perpetual difference from itself (7-8). It is, from the beginning, already in a relationship with its frame, its outside, its other. It can only be looked at awry. It is self-splitting and introduces a kind of split into the world. Or, as Žižek writes of class struggle (strictly speaking, the only equivalent to philosophy), 'In relating to its otherness (other antagonisms), it relates to itself' (362). And this can even be reversed: it is because class struggle first of all relates to itself that it is able to relate to (over-determine) all else.

This, finally, is the miracle of thought as the 'appearance of appearance' (29). It just *is* its conditions; it is nothing but contingency, errancy, the world as it is. Thought is not, as it was imagined to be in the Enlightenment, any form of exception, standing outside of the world. But what the existence of thought proves — and what thought itself is ceaselessly pledged to think — is that the world itself is not possible without thought. As Žižek defines the problem in *The Parallax View*, 'How, from within the flat order of positive being, the very gap between thought and being, the negativity of thought emerges' (6). Hence perhaps the most profound parallax in the book: that between thought and being, which we might even restate as that between thought and capitalism. We can never have the two together, each opens up a split in the world, but each is fundamentally the same.

In the central section of *The Parallax View*, Žižek seeks to explain how human consciousness arises out of the inert meat of the brain. This is perhaps no different from how thought still persists in today's conditions of capitalism. However, in spectacular fashion, Žižek does not merely attempt to answer this question, but performatively plays it out. In his own break with himself in a kind of 'short circuit' (226) or 'feedback loop' (199), he continues to stay one step ahead of both his critics and his exegetes. Paradoxically — and this again says something of the relation of Žižek's thought to capitalism — he remains at once one of the most recognizable and sought-after brand names in the global intellectual market and one of the thinkers closest to saying Nothing.

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