

# Philosophy in Review/Comptes rendus philosophiques

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**Sara Ahbel-Rappe and  
Rachana Kamtekar, eds.**

*A Companion to Socrates.*

Malden, MA: Blackwell 2006.

Pp. xxiv + 533.

US\$149.95 (cloth: ISBN 1-4051-0863-0).

A vital fact about this book is that its series title (Blackwell Companions to Philosophy) is likely to inadvertently mislead prospective readers. The book is certainly a 'companion' to Socrates no matter how that term is construed, but it is a companion to philosophy only in the very general sense of being about a philosopher. It is not a companion in the sense of being a 'guide' to philosophy, or a 'how to do' philosophy. This is perhaps even more unexpected in light of its shared dedication to Gregory Vlastos, that scholar perhaps most responsible for the view that a uniquely Socratic philosophy can be located within the larger Platonic corpus. Those wanting a volume of philosophy — even broadly construed — will find their expectation perhaps only a little more than half-met. Those willing to have their study of Socrates stretched beyond the typical boundaries of philosophical and classical scholarship may, on the other hand, regard this volume as something of a treasure. Besides there being some new scholarship on Socratic philosophy, there are pieces which, so to speak, fill in some of the interstices of Socrates' influence, perhaps offering to philosophers new angles and historical considerations which might inspire novel philosophical approaches or help to polish established ones.

But the aim of the book is not to be a collection of recent scholarship on Socratic philosophy by philosophers. Instead, it aspires to study the range and breadth of Socrates' influence upon particular figures, whole epochs, and movements throughout history. Thus, there are also pieces in art history (Kenneth Lapatin's 'Picturing Socrates', a lengthy, detailed, illustrated account of how Socrates has been presented in sculptures, paintings, and illustrations), education (Avi Mintz' account of how the so-called 'Socratic method' has been variously conceived pedagogically, both in grade schools and law schools), biography (first, Debra Nails' detailed account of the charges brought against Socrates and their socio-political background — events intriguingly narrated under the premise that Socrates had run up against a wave of religious fundamentalism; and second, Richard Janko's 'Socrates as Freethinker', which, relying largely upon the Derveni Papyrus of 1962, examines Socrates' condemnation in light of his role in a larger intellectual movement in fundamentalist Athens) and psychoanalysis (first, Jonathan Lear's essay which presents a unique account of Socratic irony and its relationship to Freudian therapy; and second, Mark Buchan's essay which explains how Lacan can be deployed to interpret some of Plato's dialogues, especially with regard to the relationship between desire and knowledge).

The book is comprised of a remarkable thirty articles, with tremendously varied styles of writing. Readers will find philosophical pieces written in the



so-called 'analytical' style, as well as in the so-called 'continental' style; papers written at a largely brisk, 'discussive' level, as well as ones featuring painstaking scholarship woven through a veritable catalogue of references and citations; some are documentary and others revisionary.

An effort is made to arrange articles according to historical periods: Socrates as presented by Plato, Socrates as seen by or as influential upon the Hellenistic philosophers, the middle ages to modernity, and then the modern era. Preceding these groupings is a section entitled 'Biography and Sources', featuring, for instance, the Nails biography and the Lapatin art history, as well as a masterful piece by Louis-André Dorion devoted to Xenophon's Socrates. Dorion makes the case that the historical Socrates will be found in neither Xenophon nor Plato. Unique to Socratic anthologies is the piece contributed by Susan Prince, which advocates for Antisthenes, the cynic, to be included among our central sources on Socratic thought and its historical situation. It is not always clear how or why some of the articles in this group fall under their heading (e.g., A. A. Long's 'How Does Socrates' Divine Sign Communicate with Him?' is a very thoughtful philosophical examination of the tension between Socrates' intellectualism and his obedience to his apotreptic daimonion, or divine sign).

The book's overall effect, when read cover-to-cover, is to unveil a figure far more monumental than can perhaps be grasped from within one discipline. It treats the reader to a panoramic view of the sheer density of Socrates' impact and its seemingly limitless radiation upon subsequent cultures and eras.

There are several pieces devoted to Socratic philosophy, as such. John Bussanich contends that, contrary to what is normally supposed, 'Socrates' philosophical activity is not directed towards the justification of religious beliefs, but rather that his faith and religious experiences provide dialectical starting-points ...' (200). Christopher Rowe argues that Socratic scholarship has been unduly hasty in supposing that the Socrates of Plato's middle and late dialogues (normally thought to be a largely non-Socratic Plato) is a substantially different Socrates than the one presented by Plato in the early dialogues (normally thought to be the 'real', historical Socrates). Rachana Kamtekar challenges the all-but-standard account of Socrates as an apolitical transformer of individual lives, by arguing that the early dialogues demonstrate a genuine interest in the question, 'Who should rule?'. Thus, according to Kamtekar, Socrates introduces the view that ruling is a profession, and vindicates Leo Strauss' contention that Socrates was the 'founder of political philosophy' (215). George Rudebusch defends Socrates' 'shocking', unconventional account of love in the *Lysis*, an account according to which, as both ancient and contemporary views of the matter might have it, 'the good will of loved ones was worthless if they did not have the expertise to produce a pay-off' (186). Heda Segvic defends the Socratic claim, 'No one errs willingly', against the standard criticisms that Socrates 'vastly underestimates the importance of the emotional, desiderative, and volitional sides of human nature', and that, when he does pay attention to these, he gives an 'overly intellectualist account of them' (171). Roslyn Weiss challenges the

well-known view that Socrates is in search of answers to questions of the type, 'What is X?' After all, Weiss observes, the *Apology*, Socrates' ultimate defense of himself and of his activities, gives no 'position of prominence' (213) to his alleged search for such answers. Perhaps, then, answering 'What is X?' questions is not Socrates' real aim, but revealing the human condition as one of ignorance is. Harold Tarrant examines the way in which Socrates' method of individual inquiry might actually lead to virtue (where 'virtue' is here understood by Tarrant as moral excellence rather than, as is sometimes done, epistemological progress).

Other papers aim to identify Socrates' philosophical influence upon other thinkers and eras, and to examine the comparisons and contrasts that inevitably result. Ilai Alon introduces us to Socrates' rich influence upon Arab poetry and hadith scholarship. Richard Bett examines the 'withdrawal from definite belief' (298) characteristic of both Socrates and the skeptics, but finds that the skeptics' reactions to Socrates range from that of kindred spirit to opponent. In order to deepen our understanding of each, Tad Brennan recounts the almost uncanny similarities between Socrates and Epictetus (as well as their students and biographers). Eric Brown presses Diogenes' reported philosophical lineage between Socrates and the Stoa by identifying the specific philosophical connections between Socrates' way of life and Cicero's list of six paradoxes. Francisco J. Gonzalez details how even otherwise 'anti-Socratic' philosophers, in this case Heidegger and Gadamer, are wont to appropriate the figure of Socrates — though not always in a positive light — to help expound their own revolutionary approaches to philosophy. James Hankins describes the wealth of Socratic scholarship and anti-sophistic activity in Renaissance Italy, especially the work of Marsilio Ficino. Daniel R. McLean nearly regales us with an aspect of Socrates undoubtedly foreign to most Socratic scholars: Socrates at home, as portrayed in satirical literature of early modern France — a buffoonish creature mired in two explosive marriages. Paul Muench's approach in 'Kierkegaard's Socratic Point of View' is to examine the former's claim that 'his refusal to call himself a Christian ... is methodologically analogous to Socrates' stance of ignorance' (389). James I. Porter offers a thorough discussion of Nietzsche's renowned, antithetical attitudes towards Socrates and his most famous pupil. Hegel is the primary focus of Nicholas White. White, who also considers Moore and Wittgenstein, observes that, for Hegel, Socrates' reflective, critical philosophizing signals the historical emergence of self-conscious Spirit. Socrates was intellectually engaged with his contemporary, Euripides, according to the offering by Christian Wildberg (e.g., on the matter of *akrasia*, vis-à-vis the *Medea*, 1078-1080). Paul Woodruff reconsiders Socrates' philosophical connection with the sophists, maintaining that the difference between them is rather more fine grained than is customarily supposed. Hayden Ausland concludes the volume by examining the interplay of two interpretive constraints that scholars in the past two centuries have placed upon Socratic dialogues, namely, that Socrates is political only in the sense of improving the characters of individual interlocutors, and that Socrates' interest in



'What is X?' questions are supposed to be understood as not 'introducing novel metaphysical entities' (494).

The volume includes a preface by the editors, notes and references compiled at the end of each paper (some of which include a 'further reading' section), and a common index.

**Patrick Mooney**

John Carroll University

**Kwame Anthony Appiah**

*The Ethics of Identity.*

Princeton, NJ:

Princeton University Press 2005.

Pp. xviii + 358.

US\$32.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-691-12036-6).

Philosophers have by now come to expect eloquence and insight from Appiah, whose books on questions of culture, race, and justice are models of philosophical literacy. He began his career as a philosopher of language, but his credentials as an erudite, highly intelligent, and liberal African philosopher — and moreover one prepared to stand away from the crowd and offer gentle criticism of identity politics — were irresistible to the world of African American Studies. He held a prestigious chair in Afro-American Studies at Harvard and is now a Professor of Philosophy at the Princeton Center for Human Values. Philosophers of language might lament Appiah's shift in interest, but moral and political philosophy have been much the richer for Appiah's contribution.

This book exemplifies the virtues of Appiah's ethical corpus. It is a wide-ranging and masterly inquiry into the individual's relation to a cultural identity in light of principles of liberty and cosmopolitanism. John Stuart Mill provides the book's guiding spirit, and Appiah perceptively draws our attention to the man as well as the ideas, deftly weaving Mill's upbringing and his relation to his wife, Harriet Taylor, into the discussion. Moreover, Appiah gives us a more complex and nuanced understanding of Mill's ethical position than the hackneyed harm principle version to which we are so accustomed. According to Appiah, Mill's emphasis on freedom cannot be reduced to a 'my-freedom-ends-at-your-nose antipaternalism' marshaled by libertarians bent on protecting individuals from government interference. For Mill also claimed, as Appiah quotes him, 'What more or better can be said of any condition of human affairs, than that it brings human beings



themselves nearer to the best thing they can be? Or what worse can be said of any obstruction to good, than that it prevents this?' (27). Thus Appiah presents a 'soul-making' approach to individual liberty, a 'project of intervening in the process of interpretation through which each citizen develops an identity — and doing so with the aim of increasing her chances of living an ethically successful life'(164).

Appiah's breadth and flair might remind some readers of the style of Charles Taylor. Moreover, Appiah's concern for authenticity and valuable choices, rather than mere choice itself, suggest Taylor's preoccupations. However, Appiah clearly does not share Taylor's communitarian politics of recognition. For Appiah, to identify a culture as good and in need of preservation simply in virtue of some people belonging to it indicates narcissism, or worse, a violation of respect for individual freedom. As an openly gay man, he would know this all too well, and in the context of homosexual politics he warns against a 'Medusa Syndrome' where the gaze of recognition restricts one's freedom to be oneself (110). Moreover, the affirmation of cultural identity risks distracting us from pressing questions of justice and equality. Appiah puts it commonsensically: 'what makes it so easy to sign on to the ideal of cultural membership is simply that the alternative seems to be the condition of abject friendlessness. At bottom, the case for membership is just the case against being a hermit. And precious little of the misfortune in our world has to do with that uncommon condition' (127).

Appiah thus rejects the cosmopolitanism of a 'dialogue among static closed cultures' or 'a celebration of a collection of closed boxes'(256). Cosmopolitanism values human variety for the way it enables human agency, but some cultures 'constrain more than they enable'. More basic, then, is that every society should respect human dignity and personal autonomy: 'it is the autonomy that variety enables that is its fundamental justification' (268).

Appiah shares some autobiographical anecdotes with his readers to amplify the book's theme, and to good effect. Appiah has done this before, most notably in his *In My Father's House*, but here we learn how a 'rooted cosmopolitanism' follows from his experience. The son of an English mother and Ghanaian father, educated in Britain, but resident in America, Appiah seems well-placed to argue that the world is a 'shared hometown' (217). It seems ironic that Appiah should have been ascribed the identity of 'African American' at Harvard, given his resolute insistence on a global view. Of course, we might say that Appiah is indeed an African American if only in the way some might call themselves Polish Canadians — he is an American with an immigrant background. It seems a sad fact that black Americans, whose long history in the U.S. qualifies them for unhyphenated American status as much as anyone, should prefer the curious quasi-immigrant ascription of African-American. Appiah casts doubt on the wisdom of such identity-pursuits, noting the paradox of how the pursuit of cultural identity is taken up by a black middle class in more racially egalitarian times, but was virtually absent from the civil rights movement's struggle for desegregation (118).

Appiah's turns of phrase seem both old-fashioned and trendy, a curious blend of the discourse of the Oxbridge don and the rap of the awesome dude. For example, he uses the quaint (and patriarchal!) expression of living together as 'man and wife' (3) to refer to the marriage of Mill and Taylor — perhaps a deliberate anachronism to capture the sensibility of the time, but odd, nonetheless. On the other hand, Appiah obviously has some facility with pop culture, drawing on the Mike Myers' Austin Powers films to conceive the brilliant idea of a 'Maxi-me', a version of the person with full information and unimpaired reason (175). The ease with which Appiah moves from one world to another is unsurprising, given his genuinely cosmopolitan background. And it is one of the many wonderful things about this book — it is truly cultured, in the full, low- and high-brow senses, and thus able to communicate very effectively at many levels.

But Appiah the polymath can also tend to the non-committal when it comes to the real forks in the road for his ethical position. This might be the price paid for his languid and easy prose: a glossing over of the difficult and vexing dilemmas that a perfectionist, cosmopolitan liberalism might entail. How much of a role should political communities play in the affairs of the individual in order to help foster the 'Maxi-me' model of the person? How does the principle of national sovereignty fare in Appiah's 'rooted cosmopolitanism'? What do we do about illiberal cultures if cultural identity is also an important human good? Appiah seems a little cagey on the hard choices that his position inevitably entails.

Nonetheless, in a book so full of perceptive and compelling ideas, and indeed just plain good sense, the inconclusive nature of some aspects of Appiah's position seems a small price to pay. This is a thick tome of ethical philosophy that I'm tempted to call a page-turner — something that cannot be said, alas, of many books in the discipline.

**Christine Sypnowich**

Queen's University

**Thomas Aquinas**

*Disputed Questions on the Virtues.*

E. M. Atkins and Thomas Williams, eds.

Trans. E. M. Atkins.

New York: Cambridge University Press 2005.

Pp. xl + 301.

US\$75.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-77225-7);

US\$27.99 (paper: ISBN 0-521-77661-9).

All of the early catalogues of Aquinas' works indicate he disputed a series of related questions on virtue during his second regency at Paris, 1269-72. Thomas then was also working on his masterful treatment of moral psychology and human happiness in the second part of the *Summa Theologica*, and was thus deeply engaged in the study of virtue. Whether these questions on virtue were actually publicly disputed is uncertain. The text does present them in a somewhat finished manner that shows the editorial hand of a reporter. Nonetheless they retain something of the flavor of oral disputations that may have been held over several days. Rather than one contiguous series of questions, *De virtutibus* is really five related sets of questions. The first thirteen questions concern the virtues in general, followed by thirteen more on charity, two on fraternal correction, four on hope and, finally, four on the cardinal virtues.

At first glance, this might seem like a rather disparate collection of topics, combining as it does treatment of moral virtues alongside theological virtues, as well as jumping from general treatment to specific application and back to general account. Yet, as Thomas Williams points out in his introduction, Aquinas' approach is so systematic that a multitude of connections between various elements of ethical theory confront the reader at every turn. Indeed, argues Williams, one cannot properly consider Aquinas' treatment of virtues in the absence of his account of human happiness, his analysis of the human act, or his theory of natural law. Much the same can be said for topics within the theory of virtue, and the integral nature of Aquinas' studies of virtue becomes evident when these disputations are read side by side.

Williams' introduction is largely devoted to demonstrating the unity of Aquinas' moral thought through a discussion of the relation of virtue to natural law, two elements of classical ethics that are often viewed as the least proximate. This approach is quite effective and allows Williams to treat a wide range of important aspects of ethical theory including action, affectivity, *synderesis*, and practical wisdom. It also allows him to show how the various topics of the disputed questions on virtues tie together. For example, Williams considers Aquinas' two questions on brotherly correction as a cogent application of his theoretical understanding of virtue to a concrete and specific situation. This makes Williams' introduction quite useful as an introduction both to this text as well as to Aquinas' ethics in general.

Margaret Atkins' translation is quite readable. By avoiding the periodic morphology typical of Latin, she has produced an English version that is not



stilted but nevertheless generally accurate. Some of her specific terminological decisions, however, are less successful. That she is aware of possible controversy in this regard is evident in the fact that, following her translation, she adds a note explaining why she has departed from some traditional renderings. Moreover, her glossary is, in the case of certain terms, given over to a justification of her choice of English equivalents.

A case in point is her translation of *habitus* by 'disposition'. It has become quite common among contemporary philosophers to render *habitus* this way, but it is unclear just why this is to be preferred to 'habit.' It is certainly true that the English 'habit' is often used to refer to a behavioral tendency that is not as stable and established as the Latin *habitus* indicates. Yet, it is not at all clear that the contemporary meaning of 'habit' no longer includes anything of the scholastic meaning of *habitus*. Like most words in the language there is, of course, a range of overlapping usages. Thus, while it is true that 'habit' might refer to a thoughtless action or even a mere tendency, it is still used to refer to a fixed disposition that is characteristic of a settled manner of living. This is confirmed by any use of 'habit' and 'disposition' in close proximity, where English speakers would most often understand the former as a more stable specific type of the more general latter kind, just as *habitus* is a species of the genus *dispositio* in scholastic terminology. Moreover, avoiding the use of 'habit' because of its contemporary use in reference to addiction raises the question of the relationship of physical addiction to moral *habitus*. While Atkins is right to prefer 'disposition' to 'tendency' or 'inclination' in rendering *habitus*, it is not clear that 'disposition' represents a real improvement over the older 'habit', and it insufficiently acknowledges the survival of the Latin meaning in modern English.

A related problem in using 'disposition' for *habitus* is that it obscures the unity of Aquinas' moral philosophy and his natural philosophy. As one of the least understood of the Aristotelian categories, *habitus* is often difficult to identify in nature. Yet one can make sense of the *habitus* of a natural body if one considers the environment required for its proper functioning. The body is, to borrow an example from Benedict Ashley, like the oceanic fish whose proper functioning requires a salt-water environment. This is quite distinct from *locus* or *positio*, for the location and orientation of the natural object may change without removing it from its proper environment. Thus, virtue provides the proper environment for human flourishing insofar as it produces action vested in the *habitus* of rationality. Atkins rightly points out that *habitus* and *dispositio* are both found in the category of quality and are distinguished by degree of stability and fixity. Yet her decision to indicate this fixity by the English 'disposition' obscures the connection *habitus* has with the notion of a required environment for proper function, a meaning better captured by 'habit.'

Despite this and a few other translation decisions, this volume is well done and quite valuable to students of Aquinas' moral philosophy. In addition to the glossary of technical terms, indices to scriptural, classical, patristic, and medieval citations are included, as well as a general index. Especially useful

is a table of parallel questions on virtues to be found in Aquinas' other works. Together with the fine introduction and readable translation, these features make this work worthy of its subject.

**Michael W. Tkacz**  
Gonzaga University

**Jan Assmann**

*Religion and Cultural Memory. Ten Studies.*

Trans. R. Livingstone.

Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2006.

Pp. x + 222.

US\$ 60.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8047-4522-6);

US\$ 21.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8047-4523-4).

In these excellent translations of ten carefully selected essays, Germany's most famous present-day Egyptologist, Jan Assmann, shows us an unexpected perspective on how ancient religious traditions shape our cultural identity and how they determine our way of thinking. Improving on Maurice Halbwachs' insight that memory is a social phenomenon, Assmann contends that 'cultural memory', which stores normative information in texts rather than in the brains of individuals, forms our cultural identity. For Assmann, knowledge of one's own tradition, like knowledge of ancient cultures, is shared by the whole people as a cultural unit. The aim of this book is not to investigate and reconstruct the historical facts connected with the genesis and reception of normative texts, but rather the reconstruction of the collective memory we share. Culturally significant texts are treated as a manifestation of our collective memory. Furthermore, Assmann is a constructivist to the extent that he investigates memory content as a factor that shapes human reality. His new volume focuses on religion because it is one of the dominant spheres of human activity that produce an evolving 'cultural memory'.

All ten essays analyze tendencies in the history of religion. The introductory contribution defines 'cultural memory' and presents it as a new tool to analyze historical developments. The second text is a historical study of the progressive unification of religion as a system of belief, particularly in ancient Egypt. The third and fourth essays deal with the development and dynamism inherent in monotheist religion. Essays Five to Eight are contributions to a general theory of religion. A further essay is concerned with Thomas Mann's literary reception of mythical thinking. The last contribution holds that contrary to the development of historical identity in the eighteenth and



nineteenth centuries, contemporary Western 'cultural memory' goes back all the way to ancient Egypt. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe thought that our identification with the past reaches back three thousand years, but this, Assmann says, is no longer true today: 'The Western horizon of memory is gradually beginning to expand to include its Oriental roots and to extend beyond Goethe's three thousand years to around five thousand years' (189). Surely we must doubt that we live in an age that is inclined to strengthen cultural identity through a deepening of historical understanding, and yet I can only agree that, particularly with Sigmund Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* and Thomas Mann's *Joseph* novels, the twentieth-century reception of ancient Egypt is no longer only an academic specialty.

Although there might be good reasons for talking about entities bigger than individuals, a critical assessment of *Religion and Cultural Memory* reminds us that talk about the dispositions of whole cultures can be suspect when it becomes the primary method of explanation. But Assmann puts this method of studying the dynamism of cultures in perspective. His analysis admirably manages to synthesize general observations with the historically significant detail. Furthermore, he is well aware of the repressive function that culturally remembered texts have for the free individual. He reminds us that Friedrich Nietzsche was the first to be aware that memory-making is a violent process by means of which independent individuals are bred into fellow human beings (88). It is true that this taming of the modern individual finds its ancient parallel in the Egyptian conception of *maat* (justice). Ancient grave inscriptions illustrate and confirm what Nietzsche observed. *Maat* promises survival beyond death, but only to the virtuous man. To be remembered after death involves an obligation to the community, i.e., adequate behaviour as a social agent while alive.

Although Assmann cannot accept Gerardus van der Leeuw's phenomenologist view that the essential meaning of a particular religious tradition can be translated into other traditions (nor that all religions share a universal meaning), he nevertheless investigates interesting connections between different religions: he links the heritage of ancient Egypt with Israelite history. In his earlier book, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (1997), our author elaborated in detail that Egypt is not only the negative counterexample to monotheist religion, but also serves Israel as a source of inspiration. For monotheist religion Egypt represents the paradigm of otherness. This perceived otherness makes Moses, who bridges the two cultures, distinguish between true and false religion, a differentiation that later became important for Jewish, Muslim, and Christian self-understanding. In contrast to this earlier work, the focus of *Religion and Cultural Memory* is on developing a *theory* of memory that is not based on Freud's *Kulturtheorie*. The latter obscures conscious awareness of remembered content in favour of an archaeology of the human subconsciousness: 'Perhaps Freud's mistake lay simply in his insistence on approaching the biblical text as if it were a heap of ruins, whereas in reality it was an inhabited city, and in tackling it with "picks, shovels, and spades," when we would have been



better advised to take a careful look around in the crypts and book stacks' (62). It must be noted that although he certainly disagrees with Freudian method, Assmann finds many psychoanalytical concepts like that of repressed memory quite useful. Monotheism, he contends, was an Egyptian invention that was repressed for a long time.

*Religion and Cultural Memory* is not only an excellent book for scholars who want to develop a timely understanding of theoretical key concepts like memory, text, myth, and ritual, but is also a stimulating introduction for anyone interested in the genesis of our cultural self-understanding. Moreover, the book aims at an interdisciplinary treatment of 'cultural memory' and stimulates discussion in a broad spectrum of disciplines like philosophy, theology, and history.

**Aaron Fellbaum**

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**Lynda Burns, ed.**

*Feminist Alliances.*

New York: Rodopi 2006.

Pp. vii + 195.

US\$48.00 (paper: ISBN 90-420-1728-7).

The feminist movement has been instrumental to social change and to promotion of social justice. Here Lynda Burns brings together a collection of essays by established feminist theorists grappling with the nature and future of feminism in its current configuration, as well as with the prospects for alliances between feminism and other leftist political movements.

Burns' introduction, in which she outlines various types of alliance, lays the foundation for the ensuing discussions (3-7). First, there are short-term working coalitions that enable feminist activists and theorists to merge their effort with others in order to effect possible strategic gains. A second type of alliance, considered more genuine on some levels, entails commitment to common goals or theoretical foundations. Third, there are alliances enabling feminists to apply some specific notions drawn from non-feminist theories, such as Foucault's power/knowledge or Nietzsche's social power, to women's everyday experiences. However, these feminist appropriations involve maintaining a critical distance from any possible source of bias in the non-feminist theory. A final variety of alliance is the short-term coalition, application of non-feminist theory to women, or appropriation, or more narrowly the appropriation of theoretical conceptions from non-feminist theories. Accord-

ing to Burns these alliances critically examine, rework, and revise theory from within and transform it into feminist thought (7).

Each contributor examines, interrogates, and engages with various feminist alliances. The collection's tone is set by the highly influential and recently deceased Iris Marion Young. In her piece, Young provides incisive commentary on the feminist movement's role in achieving social justice. Rather than engaging in the first type of alliance, she urges the feminist movement to forge alliances that are mindful and respectful of differences along various axes of disadvantage (12). This entails centering the experiences of particularly oppressed groups (single mothers, indigenous people, migrant workers, people with disabilities, for instance). She argues that this will enable a more meaningful understanding of inequality, and allow feminists to develop more effective strategies and tactics for achieving social justice (18). Other contributors raise the following questions: How should we go about tracing the contours of what feminism 'is' (Beasley)? Can women's lack of social power be understood through Derridean theories of meaning (Broad, Green & Prosser)? What difference would it make if women were full participants in political life (Thompson)? Is the pro-sex feminist understanding of sex work — which is arguably rooted in Nietzschean power theories — useful for feminist purposes (Lydeamore)? Can Liberal attempts to address difference serve as a foundation to feminist theorizing (La Caze)?

Contributors are critical of attempts to align the feminist movement with other non-feminist political and social theories (the second type of alliance), and make arguments in favour of the third and fourth variety of alliance. Thompson, for instance, is mindful of the masculinist bias in liberal theory, but she maintains nonetheless that we ought not to discard liberal ideals. Rather, we should reconsider and rework these ideals from a feminist perspective that takes into account our dependence on one another and our responsibilities as participants in intergenerational communities (74). Featherstone argues that feminist history can appropriate Foucauldian analysis (even though Foucault himself did not identify gender as a site of power) so long as it is combined with gender specific theorizing that deconstructs systems of masculine privilege.

This collection of essays is broad in its scope and is an exemplary instance of Western feminist theorizing, with digestible pieces of philosophical analysis as well as more complex, mind-bending contributions that formulate issues in ways that will no doubt guide future discussions on feminist alliances. It is an excellent introduction for feminist students and other interested researchers to the interplay between feminist theorizing and political theory, sociology, and philosophy. Moreover, it lays the foundation for future research in the critical evaluation of the meaning and vitality of the feminist movement.

However rich the texts in this book are, there is a glaring absence of engagement with transnational or global feminisms. Indeed, contributors write primarily from Australian and American perspectives. While this does not occlude global understanding and analysis, without doubt the essays

presented in this collection would have been enriched with contributions from the global South. Readers who share concerns about the nature and potential of global feminist alliances might find the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) and Chandra T. Mohanty (1991) to be of some assistance.

Despite its Western focus, this is an important collection of essays that will generate discussion and debate on the nature, setbacks, and possibilities of complex feminist coalitions.

**Suzanne Bouclin**

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**Stephen Carden**

*Virtue Ethics: Dewey and MacIntyre.*

New York: Continuum 2006.

Pp. 147.

US\$110.00 (cloth: ISBN 0826489001).

Carden's book is a welcome addition to the discipline of ethics, contributing to the growing scholarship on Dewey's moral theory. It brings Dewey into conversation with virtue ethics and the work of Alasdair MacIntyre. According to Carden, Dewey offers a more comprehensive theory thanks to an account of moral deliberation that is more realistic and better suited to the plural needs and projects of moral agents.

While Dewey is not typically associated with virtue ethics, Carden argues that he has a great deal in common with MacIntyre. Both emphasize the importance of habit and character to morality, and reject the attempt to discern universal principles that act as the foundation for any just act. While Dewey does not focus on the virtues, Carden maintains that Dewey's account of moral deliberation provides a better framework for their understanding. Interestingly, Carden spends very little time discussing specific virtues, instead focusing his attention on the grounds for virtue. This strategy facilitates a stronger comparison between the two and recognizes a key insight for both thinkers: the *aretai* cannot stand alone because they require *phronēsis*. It is in this notion of *phronēsis*, a form of reasonableness that resists generalization insofar as it is a measured response to a particular situation, that Carden demonstrates the strongest kinship between Dewey and MacIntyre.

Carden begins with an insightful overview of both theories. First, he focuses on MacIntyre's central notion of tradition providing us with the common values necessary for ethical discourse. Given the impossibility of a



purely objective and neutral standpoint, MacIntyre turns to our shared customs and history to discern what is valuable. Like Dewey, MacIntyre does not see morality as the pure concern of autonomous moral agents, because our quest for the good is a communal effort. Only from this standpoint can we seek a properly human *telos*. However, MacIntyre's notion of *telos* differs from a modernist conception insofar as the end toward which we all strive is not some fixed end-state; it is the *activity* of seeking out the best balance for a particular life, invoking the classical concept of 'the good' as 'the right mixture'. This search for a harmonious existence in relation to one's environment, community, culture, history, and experience (understood through narrative) comprises our sense of 'the good'.

While Dewey would assent to MacIntyre's critique of objectivist ethics, Carden attempts to demonstrate Dewey's superiority by focusing on a number of differences. This approach of pitting the two thinkers against one another limits Carden's reading of each. For example, Carden makes too much of Dewey's insistence upon innovation in opposition to MacIntyre's desire to justify existing norms. While a clear difference in emphasis, it does not invalidate MacIntyre's critique of liberalism as Carden claims. MacIntyre would never suggest we propagate a harmful custom; instead, we must transform it such that it can better realize what was truly valuable in the first place. Still, this caricature does illustrate a key Deweyan insight that MacIntyre does not address: the moral imagination. Carden only takes up the imagination through Dewey's defence of individualism, claiming that individual creativity is the root of progressive change.

Carden also misconstrues tradition in MacIntyre, claiming it serves to provide a common ground through which a community can engage in moral deliberation. Carden seems to assume that we have a choice in how we engage our tradition. For MacIntyre, a tradition is not something that can be made an object of knowledge and studied as we would any other phenomenon. Rather, it is a horizon of meaning, something that informs and orients the sense and character of our experience. We find experience already rife with value and significance, though why we are given over to our particular values is not entirely clear. It is for this reason that MacIntyre insists upon a *critical* engagement with one's tradition, for only then can we gain a sense of whether something is truly valuable.

This leads into Carden's problematic approach to Dewey. Carden claims MacIntyre is not attuned to the biological origins of morality, whereas Dewey's ethics is based upon Darwin's evolutionary biology. Carden correctly demonstrates that Darwin's theory led Dewey to recognize that natural beings do not have fixed essences, but are perpetually changing and developing. While our animal nature clearly disposes us toward certain ends, it is not the case that evolutionary biology grounds Dewey's moral theory. Similar to the sense of tradition in MacIntyre, our embodied nature provides another horizon that discloses the world, but as a horizon we do not have any ultimate access to how it grounds morality. For Dewey, one cannot give priority to tradition or biology, for how we understand our bodies is influenced by our

tradition, just as the character of our tradition emerges in response to our biological needs.

Carden's major criticism of MacIntyre concerns Dewey's denial of teleology. According to Carden, Dewey asserts that there are plural goods; what is best can only be determined in reference to the situation, so that there is no univocal sense to what we deem good. Thus Carden repeatedly discusses value in terms of our ability to control a situation or satisfy a need. This distorts Dewey's view, failing to pull him out from the dark shadow of base instrumentalism. Nevertheless, Carden has the resources to go beyond this reading and demonstrate a greater affinity between Dewey and MacIntyre than he allows. Carden's analysis of growth is rather lucid, but he is unable to acknowledge its kinship with MacIntyre's sense of the 'right mixture'.

Carden's project is tremendously fecund and will hopefully open up further avenues of research into these two figures. But in his effort to assert the authority of Dewey, Carden fails to enrich our sense of either philosopher. Carden's project thus calls for a further comparison, perhaps one that begins with a more comprehensive examination of their common root in Aristotle.

**Alain Beauclair**

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**Richard Crouter**

*Friedrich Schleiermacher: Between  
Enlightenment and Romanticism.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2005.

Pp. xi + 277.

US\$80.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-80590-2).

Schleiermacher is chiefly known for his work in theology and the philosophy of religion. His 1799 work, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, is the classic apology for a romantic approach to religion. Since the publication of Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (1960), however, philosophical interest in Schleiermacher has extended to his hermeneutics as well. Schleiermacher argues for a historical interpretation of texts: to understand a text we need to grasp what the author intended to communicate to his or her original audience. Gadamer had criticized Schleiermacher's hermeneutics as an empathetic reconstruction of an author's subjective state of mind, but with the publication of Schleiermacher's own handwritten lecture notes on hermeneutics (Kimmerle, 1959), it has become clear that he was not interested in the private subjectivity of the author but rather in the author's *communi-*



cative intent which, as he insists in an anticipation of Donald Davidson, can only include what the author's original audience could reasonably have been expected to have understood by his words — hence the need for a reconstruction of a work's historical context.

Crouter has been a longtime student of both Schleiermacher's philosophy of religion and his hermeneutics. He translated the original 1799 edition of *On Religion* for Cambridge University Press in 1988. In the essays collected in this volume, Crouter applies Schleiermacher's hermeneutics to Schleiermacher's own works. The collection is broken into three parts. Part 1 begins with an essay defending the importance of historical context in understanding a text. He then proceeds in subsequent essays to recount the historical and cultural context of Schleiermacher's own life and work vis-à-vis Moses Mendelssohn, Hegel, and Kierkegaard. Part 2 consists of three essays on Schleiermacher's work as a public theologian addressing contemporary issues in Berlin society. The first studies his writings on the Jewish question, in which he argues that Jews should not be required to convert to Christianity in order to be full citizens of the state. A second essay details the context of his vision for a new university in Berlin. The final essay defends him against the charge common in neo-orthodox circles, that his theology mirrors his cultural context too closely, accommodating Christianity too much to bourgeois society.

Part 3 turns to Schleiermacher's most influential works, *On Religion*, *The Christian Faith*, and his *Brief Outline for the Study of Theology*. Here again Crouter provides a rich historical reconstruction of both their original setting and of revisions in subsequent editions. Crouter points out that Schleiermacher was a chronic reviser, publishing new editions to take account of criticisms, as well as to clarify and further develop arguments to better communicate his original intention. The book ends with an essay in which Crouter takes Schleiermacher's hermeneutics a step beyond the master, studying the reception of *On Religion* over the last two centuries. He raises the question whether the meaning of a text can be determined by its original intent alone without also including its effect upon subsequent generations of readers. He asks why a work's meaning must not also include what it communicates to the present reader. Here he seeks to draw Schleiermacher into constructive dialogue with Gadamer, suggesting that the two may be more complementary than opposed.

The title of this book comes from Crouter's conviction that Schleiermacher shares both Enlightenment and romantic sensibilities. Some interpreters have argued that while Schleiermacher began as a romantic, over time he matured, becoming more analytically rigorous and more doctrinally orthodox. Others dismiss him as an incurable romantic. Crouter takes a middle view, arguing that Schleiermacher's romanticism always remained in harmony with Enlightenment ideals. His was a distinctive liberal romanticism which, Crouter argues, is still relevant for today.

Due to its immersion in the details of Schleiermacher's historical context, this book will be of greatest value to Schleiermacher scholars and those

interested in the historical relationship between Enlightenment, romantic, and idealist philosophers in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Berlin. As the relationship between romanticism and idealism is apt to be of most interest to philosophers generally, I will close with Crouter's remarks on this topic gleaned from a couple of his essays.

Romanticism and idealism share what is often called 'historical consciousness', but Schleiermacher (like Crouter) is more interested in the empirical contingencies of time and place that serve to inspire authors, and shape the understanding of their audiences, than in a dialectical teleology of ideal types. Crouter points out that in Schleiermacher's outline for theology he rejects the usual term, 'systematic theology', in favor of 'dogmatics'. Dogmatics, for Schleiermacher, is the study of particular historical confessions defining the self-understanding of concrete Christian communities. This, rather than the theoretical study of abstract, albeit transcendental, ideas, is what is important in the training of pastors and preachers.

Crouter argues that Schleiermacher saw idealism as an inherently totalizing philosophy. His resistance to the admission of Hegel into the Berlin Academy of Sciences (both symptom and catalyst for the acrimonious relationship between them) stemmed from the fear that, once admitted, Hegel would inevitably seek hegemony for his school of thought, subsuming all other disciplines and other schools of philosophy as mere moments of his transcendental dialectic. Fichte's earlier 'deduction' of a plan for the university of Berlin, in which his own form of transcendental idealism would govern all other disciplines, only fed Schleiermacher's cynicism. (Crouter notes that Schleiermacher's reference to his own proposal as 'occasional thoughts' was in deliberate opposition to Fichte.)

While Crouter does not want to reduce the differences between Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Fichte to 'temperament', I believe that romanticism and idealism do ultimately amount to two distinct orientations, or philosophical temperaments, towards reality. Idealism adopts a first-person point of view, understanding reality as the expression of spirit. Romanticism adopts a relational, second-person orientation in which all exists as interrelated and interdependent parts of an encompassing organic whole. Schleiermacher thus identifies the essence of religion, and self-consciousness, with a feeling of utter dependence, while Hegel locates these in the consciousness of ultimate freedom. Hegel infamously derided Schleiermacher's religiosity as the devotion of a dog. Schleiermacher on the other hand saw in Hegel and Fichte a totalizing effort to force reality into an ultimately solipsistic system.

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**Michael Devitt and Richard Hanley, eds.**  
*The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of  
Language.*  
Malden, MA: Blackwell 2006.  
Pp. x + 446.  
US\$89.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-631-23141-2);  
US\$39.95 (paper: ISBN 0-631-23142-0).

As with other books in this Blackwell series, this book contains a selection of new essays on old topics, contributed by a panel of international scholars. It opens with an introduction by Devitt and Hanley, followed by twenty essays divided into three sections: Foundational Issues, Meaning, and Reference. Again, as part of the Blackwell Guide series, the aim of the volume is to introduce relatively novice readers (in this case, upper-level undergraduates) to core issues in the subject. This volume also aims to provide a text for graduate survey courses and a resource for professional philosophers. This might be felt a somewhat tricky set of aims to satisfy and, despite finding much of value in the book, I wasn't always entirely sure that the volume as a whole was clear on who its intended audience was.

The editors' introduction sets the stage for the volume, primarily by providing a synopsis of the essays to follow. While extremely clearly written and highly accessible to a student audience, it does not go very far beyond the content of the essays themselves (for instance, it does not really seek to give a historical framework for discussion nor to draw connections between the disparate topics), and this might be thought a missed opportunity in a student guide. However the first essay, by Martin Davies (which is the only entry in the section on 'Foundational Issues'), will clearly appeal to novice readers and professionals alike. Davies is concerned primarily with the nature of any investigation of linguistic meaning: is it to be subsumed under a more general scientific project (a branch of cognitive science which finds itself entirely answerable to empirical discoveries), or is it independent of science (an *a priori*, armchair investigation of the first-personal aspects of meaning)? Davies argues for a midway position whereby 'our personal-level descriptions of ourselves as having knowledge of linguistic meaning are neither reducible to, nor independent from, descriptions of the structures and processes investigated by cognitive science' (31). This proposal seems eminently reasonable, however (as is perhaps to be expected from an introductory article) it also seems seriously underspecified in this essay. However there is no doubt that Davies succeeds both in highlighting an issue which is crucial for the student new to the area and in stimulating thought in the more professional reader.

Another essay that clearly fulfils the joint aims of the collection is John Perry's very readable entry on 'Using Indexicals'. As well as providing the student with an introduction to the key topic of context-sensitive terms, Perry also takes the reader into one of the currently controversial issues within the topic, namely the problem of devising rules of use for these expressions which

cover not only standard uses (like Kaplan's character rule that the referent of 'I' is always the speaker) but also more attenuated or less-standard uses (like recorded messages on answer phones, or the use of a post-it note saying 'I am not here now', written originally by  $a$  at location  $l$  and time  $t$ , but which is now deployed by  $a^*$  at place  $l^*$  and time  $t^*$ ). Perry sketches his own solution to these kinds of cases, and also somewhat revises his previously expressed opinion on the role of speaker intentions here. Clearly, then, this entry will not only be of use to a student audience but will also prove extremely interesting for those currently working on the nature of indexicals.

Other entries to be recommended to students include Paul Horwich's overview of some central points of dispute in philosophy of language (including compositionality, normativity, and externalism), Alexander Miller's entry on meaning scepticism, Kent Bach's entry on speech acts and pragmatics, and Peter Ludlow and Stephen Neale's entry on descriptions. These essays provide both excellent introductions to, and instructive arguments about, the issues to hand. However, the collection also contains some work that would, I think (either because of the content covered or because of the style or level of abstraction of the discussion), stretch the average undergraduate (even in the final year of study). Reading the collection as a whole, this variation in pitch across different entries can make the volume seem somewhat uneven in nature, and this impression is reinforced by considering other areas where a somewhat stronger editorial hand, imposing a greater degree of uniformity, might have been welcome. For instance, some entries are followed by very useful discursive lists of further reading, while many others are not. Yet to support the claim that this is a guide for students, one might expect every entry to include such a list. There are also a great many points of contact between themes and points raised across the different essays, yet, while a few of these connections are marked in either the text or footnotes, most go unreported. For the novice reader, however, clear indications in the text of where to look to pursue points, or to gain a different perspective on a topic, would no doubt have been helpful.

Finally, then, we might ask how this book compares to rival editions in the field, specifically Blackwell's *Companion to the Philosophy of Language* (Bob Hale and Crispin Wright, eds., 1999). These two volumes cover much of the same ground, and both have a stellar list of contributors (in two cases we find the same author writing on the same topic: Mark Richard in the case of propositional attitudes and John Perry in the case of indexicals). Indeed, even at the level of stated aims we find a high degree of similarity, with the jacket on the *Guide* claiming the volume offers 'an invaluable resource for students and professional philosophers alike', while the *Companion* claims to offer a survey of contemporary philosophy of language where 'as well as providing a synoptic view of the key issues, figures, concepts and debates, each essay makes new and original contributions to ongoing debate'. Given this broad similarity in range and aims, one might question the need for the current guide — it perhaps falls somewhat uncomfortably between the existing *Companion* and entirely student-orientated works such as Jennifer Hornsby



and Guy Longworth's *Reading Philosophy of Language* (Blackwell 2005). However, despite this slight reservation about the nature of this *Guide*, still it contains much of worth and will no doubt prove a useful addition to the burgeoning market for survey volumes in philosophy of language.

**Emma Borg**

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**Andrea Falcon**

*Aristotle and the Science of Nature: Unity without Uniformity.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2005.

Pp. xvii +139.

US\$75.00 (cloth: 0-521-85439-3);

US\$69.00 (ebook: 978-0-511-13122-6).

The plot of Falcon's argument is given in the subtitle, '*...Unity without Uniformity*'. His project is to demonstrate that Aristotle's practice of natural science is conducted according to principles that allow logical and methodological integrity, and unity of insight, without imposing uniformity on its subject. This is a specialized book; but, whatever their level or area of expertise, students of philosophy can and should read it both for its topicality and in order to explore the versatile and powerful heuristic analysis that Falcon uses.

*Topicality:* The work focuses on the *Meteorology* and the *De Caelo*, Aristotle's studies of the movements and changes of celestial bodies. Falcon treats the text with the respect due to live arguments. The scholarship is scrupulous, and the careful philosophical analysis is informed by questions arising no less urgently in the 21<sup>st</sup> than in preceding centuries. Philosophical questions about change remain topical today because they remain largely unresolved. So, too, do questions of scientific method on which Falcon concentrates attention. Falcon seeks both to explore nature-as-change in Aristotle's understanding of it, and to assess the adequacy of Aristotle's scientific method in coming to that understanding. The work is divided into four chapters and an epilogue.

Chapter 1 provides an account of what Aristotle understood a unified science to be and do, and within what boundaries. Falcon distances himself from some received wisdom on these questions, and provides a picture that wisely takes account of more than just the formalistic logical considerations that have dominated interpretations of Aristotle's practice. While he counts himself among the 'the sober readers of Aristotle' who find 'the temptation

to think of the natural world as a teleological system that exists for the sake of the sublunary creatures resistible ...', and claims the work 'is an indirect argument against (such) an interpretation of Aristotle's cosmology,' (13, and note 31), he provides a valuable basis for a fresh appreciation of Aristotle's teleology. He looks to dialogue, refutation, and the dialectical constraints (particularly 25-7), that structure the teaching and learning environment that is just as essential to science now as it was in Aristotle's day. Falcon's object in this chapter is to establish that Aristotle 'conceives of (the natural world) as a causally unified system'. This grounds his later argument that Aristotle, nonetheless, does not require a uniformity of celestial and sublunary natures. Aristotle does not teach *uniformity* in nature. Falcon sets up the issue like a good mystery writer. What articulates this non-uniformity so that the causal system remains intact as a causal system? 'Aristotle', he says, 'is not primarily interested in the unity of the natural world'. What, then, is his primary interest? In natural bodies, celestial and sublunary? In their motions?

Chapter 2 reflects on Aristotle's treatment of bodies and magnitudes, and the ambiguities and traditional disputes associated with working where both bodies and magnitudes must be accommodated. Absence of uniformity lurks in the background, but only just. The plot thickens.

Chapter 3 succeeds in unsettling our natural intuitions about motion, and in particular intuitions about what Aristotle challengingly calls the 'voluntary motion' of celestial bodies, whose teleology is distinct from what we may encounter in the sublunary region. It is here that questions crystallize about soul as 'first actuality of a body' — 'In the DA, Aristotle famously argues that the soul is the first actuality of a body which is not only natural but also organic (411 b 5-6)' (39). And, again, the plot thickens.

Chapter 4 draws the plot lines together; the limits of science and of bodies in various kinds of motion are juxtaposed. Human science originates in sense perception and the 'desire to know': '... in the study of the celestial world we should neither go beyond what we can say nor stop making an effort to provide an account, but state what appears to be the case to us, human beings with a limited access to the celestial world' (101). But science can engage problematically with a kind of natural motion that originates from and orients itself by reference to what does not respond to sense perception. The distinct teleology involved remains an open field to be explored.

The epilogue tidies up issues that arose in the opening chapter about the character and number of simple bodies as understood by Aristotle and others in the ancient period. The mystery remains, of course; but the plot lines are intriguingly surveyed for our consideration.

*The heuristic analysis:* Falcon uses a careful, line-by-line analysis of key Aristotelian texts, and asks us to join him in patiently considering what is implicit in each line and in the argument as a whole. We are invited to remember the considerations that govern our assent to, or dissent from, each line in the argument as a whole. And we are invited to explore alternate views that Aristotle might have chosen to adopt. In this way we integrate the issues



for ourselves and engage with them critically and philosophically. I find this approach compellingly invitational. I am pretty sure both Plato and Aristotle would approve this use of their texts and this example of their method in practice as it pushes back the limits of science.

*The Presentation:* I looked for a little more detailed exploration of the *Physics* than is provided and, in particular, for at least some reference to the *De Motu*, on which Falcon is silent. I suspect there is much there that is congenial to his approach. These are not, however, complaints about a work that is as sharply and intelligently focussed as it is. I just found myself wanting more.

The book has been edited as carefully as it was written. I found no typos. My one minor complaint is that the 'general index' is simply too selective and not quite general enough to be as useful as it might be.

**John A. Scott**

Memorial University

**Bernard Flynn**

*The Philosophy of Claude Lefort: Interpreting the Political.*

Evanston, IL:

Northwestern University Press 2005.

Pp. xxxvi + 288.

US\$79.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8101-2105-0);

US\$26.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8101-2106-9).

A leading political philosopher in France, Lefort is still best known in the Anglophone world as a student of Merleau-Ponty. Although his philosophical debt to Merleau-Ponty is considerable, Lefort is an important thinker in his own right. This is attested to by a number of books recently devoted to his work: a 1993 *Festschrift* edited by Claude Habib and Claude Mouchard (*La démocratie à l'œuvre*), Hugues Poltier's *La passion du politique* (1998), and Esteban Molina's *Le défi du politique* (2005). As the first book-length study on Lefort to appear in English, this is a significant and welcome contribution.

Flynn is one of the foremost exponents of Lefort's thought, and this new book bears the impress of a long apprenticeship. Those familiar with Flynn's earlier work will appreciate his latest contribution as a systematic expansion of the final chapter of his first book, *Political Philosophy at the Closure of Metaphysics* (1992). There, having argued that Merleau-Ponty's unfinished ontology of 'the flesh' has the potential to support a discursive space for political thinking beyond traditional metaphysics, Flynn claimed that Lefort

had largely actualized this. Thus, for Flynn, '*the flesh of the political*' emerges as the central concept of Lefort's project; it is on this basis that he is able to think the political *from within*, that is, without metaphysical recourse to any origin or *telos* — what Merleau-Ponty called 'hyper-reflection'. For Lefort, the political as such pertains to modernity: Flynn's subtitle, *Interpreting the Political*, is thus shorthand for 'interpreting the political life of modern society'. This task provides the organizational principle for his four-part presentation of Lefort's potentially unwieldy corpus.

Part 1 deals with Lefort's account of Machiavelli as 'the quintessential thinker of modernity'. Here Flynn sketches the hermeneutics that guide Lefort's project, while also broaching its major ontological themes. According to Lefort, Machiavelli bears witness to the constitution of the political as an autonomous domain. Although tied to the recognition of the permanence and ubiquity of social conflict, and the decentring of political subjectivity and sovereignty, the key for Lefort lies in the disentanglement of the symbolic from the imaginary, and hence in the advent of *society's non-identity with itself*. Like Merleau-Ponty, who saw Machiavelli as a misunderstood humanist, Lefort embraces the Florentine's 'radical anti-utopianism' for its openness to the indeterminacy of modern historicity.

Lefort's central concern is the mutation in the symbolic structure of society that institutes this indeterminacy. In Part 2 Flynn approaches this by way of 'premodernity': first as the *opposite* of modernity, the societal condition in which, subsuming the symbolic, a supersensible imaginary maintains an effective refusal of history; and secondly as the *precursor* of modernity — for Lefort, the European *ancien régime*. Building on Kantorowicz's account of 'the king's two bodies', Lefort argues that the symbolic structure of premodern Europe already reflected an ontological excess beyond its imaginary self-coincidence. Democratic revolution thus instituted modernity through *the disincarnation of the political* — the place of legitimate power remained, but with no determinate figure. It was now an '*empty place*'.

In Part 3, Flynn explores Lefort's account of modernity in terms of the interrogative sensibility that this indeterminate emptiness enjoins. At issue is the subject of democratic power. For Lefort, modern democracy lives in irresolvable contestation over the empty place, dying when it succumbs to the temptation to collapse society onto itself by filling the empty place with a determinate figure of 'the people' — that is, to positively *reincarnate* society.

For Lefort, such is the aim of totalitarianism. Flynn explores Lefort's critical analysis of this in Part 4, maintaining the latter's own emphasis on *Communist* totalitarianism. Unlike many leftists, Lefort is unapologetic about Communism. He does not treat it as a failed utopia, but as a *counter-revolution against democracy*, the limited success of which has an ontological basis in the regime's symbolic efficacy. Nor does Lefort see totalitarianism as a historical relic. This is also emphasized by Flynn, for it dovetails with his concern about the eclipse of political philosophy in favour of '*politicized philosophy*', the illicit extension of abstract philosophical concepts to politics. Flynn is particularly concerned about the continental tradition, which he



claims has been blind to the 'defining experience of modern democracy', or at least insensitive to 'the virtues of a *functioning democracy*'.

A dose of Lefort might help here, and Flynn's book can be recommended as an informative yet accessible introduction to a long career of wide-ranging political reflection on democracy. Yet the balance of Flynn's discussion leaves something to be desired — nothing is said, for example, about colonialism or gender oppression. Flynn's effort is largely limited to formally locating democracy between premodernity and totalitarianism, a vast space within which an unlimited array of possibilities can materialize. This vagueness is reflected in the uncertainty we are left with concerning just how the 'flesh of the political' squares with the 'disincarnation' of the modern democratic body politic (which Flynn insists is not a metaphor). Here it is not always clear whether the ontological notions borrowed from Merleau-Ponty are deployed in ways that are fully consistent with the 'hyper-reflective' methodology that Flynn attributes to Lefort, even though it is on such consistency that the numerous contrasts drawn with Lefort's main interlocutors primarily depend.

Despite itself, Flynn's book thus remains disappointingly abstract. For the 'defining experience of modern democracy', we are referred to its revolutionary advent — there is no assessment of how well 'functioning' democracies function. Rather, just as he did in 1992, Flynn concludes by invoking an indeterminate notion of 'humanity'. And once again he ties this to the following spectacle: 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' written in Chinese in Paris following Tiananmen Square. As a climax, this is seriously underwhelming. The idea is to illustrate the inscription of human rights in the flesh of the political. Ironically, though, it suggests the end of history: championing the export of Western liberal democracy is hardly to engage in the 'politics of risk' that make Machiavelli our intellectual ally. Flynn's conclusion, geared to the American context, should perhaps be taken with a grain of salt. Fortunately, the book as a whole offers sufficient indications of the potential relevance of Lefort's work to current global politics as to invite further interrogation of his work.

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**Jerry A. Fodor**

*Hume Variations.*

Toronto and New York:

Oxford University Press 2003.

Pp. x + 165.

Cdn\$48.00/US\$39.95

(cloth: ISBN 0-19-926405-8);

Cdn\$41.50/US\$19.95

(paper: ISBN 0-19-928733-3).

In this adventurous and delightful volume, Fodor offers an interpretation of Hume as the most important forerunner of the modern Representational Theory of Mind. Fodor indicates at the outset, with an engaging modesty, that he has approached this project without knowing anything about Hume. I will approach my task as a reviewer even more diffidently; but in responding to Fodor's occasional criticisms of Hume, I hope to show that Hume's theories might be even more interesting to contemporary cognitive scientists than Fodor himself has suggested.

Fodor's central focus is the Theory of Ideas, or Representational Theory of Mind, which he also calls in this context 'the Cartesian theory of concepts'. Fodor describes Hume's attempt to construct an empirical psychology based on this theory as the most striking historical antecedent of contemporary cognitive science (2-3, 7-8, 16-17, 26-7, 134).

According to Fodor, the Cartesian theory holds that concepts are mental objects that function as representations. Since the proponents of this view, including Descartes and Hume, have differed in their views concerning the etiology and phenomenology of concepts, Fodor provides a neutral characterization of the concept of C as 'whatever it is with which the mind represents in thought the property of being C *as such*' (15-16). He then defends the Cartesian theory, in its view that the possession of concepts must be prior to their use in propositions, against what he calls the pragmatist theory of concepts, which has been the more popular of the two since the mid-twentieth century, and which holds that concepts are defined by their use in propositions.

Next, Fodor argues that Hume's version of this theory is distinctive, and also anticipates contemporary cognitive science, in combining an account of the compositionality of complex concepts (84-8, 135), an emphasis on the role of experience in cognition (42-3, 54), and an endorsement of mental faculties or processes (29n3, 83, 132). Fodor maintains, however, that cognitive scientists can and should reject Hume's reduction of concepts to images, his extreme empiricism, and his specific appeal to association and/or imagination to explain the composition of concepts (42, 55, 88-9, 95-6, 112-16).

Fodor's discussion of Hume is thus a further and valuable contribution to the elucidation of his own Representational and Computational Theory of Mind (cf. 115-16). However, a bold critic might argue that Fodor's interpretation of Hume is mistaken in a number of respects, while adding that these



mistakes are interesting and instructive, and also indicative of further resources in the history of philosophy for Fodor's own project.

First, our critic might argue that Fodor has mistakenly conflated Hume's theory of ideas with the separate but related theory of concepts that Hume provides in his discussion of abstract ideas and distinctions of reason. Hume specifically characterizes ideas as *images* of impressions: that is, as mental pictures that copy impressions, either directly and completely, or by a novel rearrangement of parts. Hume never presents this image theory of ideas as an account of concepts in Fodor's sense. However, in *Treatise* 1.1.7 he argues that the mind can use a particular image to represent a type or quality by associating it with a set of resembling images and a general term. In thinking of a general idea, the mind contemplates an image, attends to these resemblances, and holds itself ready to recall other images from that resemblance class. Fodor occasionally refers to this section of the *Treatise* (10n3, 44n21, 86-7, 108n29, 121n11, 146-9) — usually to dismiss its arguments as notoriously inadequate. However, his treatment of Hume's theory of concepts is misleading insofar as he equates 'ideas' with 'concepts', and does not attempt a separate and sympathetic analysis of Hume's arguments in section 1.1.7 of the *Treatise*.

Second, our critic might argue that Hume's account of complex ideas applies to images rather than concepts. In response to Hume's claim that simple ideas resemble simple impressions, Fodor argues that a complex idea has a unique or 'canonical' decomposition into simple ideas, while a complex impression can be divided into parts in many ways. Thus, in Fodor's example, while the complex concept 'BROWN COW' can only be reduced to the simple concepts 'BROWN' and 'COW,' the impression of a brown cow can be chopped up in any number of ways (29, 33-6). However, our critic might maintain that complex *images* can also be chopped up in many ways, and that Hume never explicitly examines the composition of *concepts*, although we might look for an implicit account of compositionality in his theory of abstract ideas.

Finally, our critic might agree that Hume's initial account of association and imagination, however they are related to each other (Fodor considers two construals) is inadequate to explain the composition of complex images, or indeed the composition of concepts. However, our critic might maintain that Fodor, along with many others, has overlooked the richness and complexity in Hume's account of mental processes. Hume actually describes many different activities of the imagination: such as separating and combining images; associating ideas according to the natural relations of resemblance, contiguity and succession; recalling similar images when thinking of an abstract idea; enlivening ideas; producing fictional scenes or narratives; positing standards of equality; and supposing the continued existence of external objects. Hume also distinguishes imaginative associations from 'philosophical' judgments of relation (*Treatise* 1.1.5), though notoriously without providing a very clear account of judging or judgments as such (13n6). Hume also describes various ways that the mind may conceive images, from perceiving them as having different degrees of force and vivacity, to different 'manners' of conceiving ideas, to considering a given

image from a resemblance class as representing a type or quality. Hume's references to these different cognitive activities might be inadequate, and even maddeningly chaotic — but like Mount Everest, they are there.

Our bold critic might conclude that Fodor's variations on Hume are rather free in style, while conceding that much of Hume's original composition seems rather baroque. Considering Fodor's composition from a more classical standpoint, however, I am intrigued to notice the Kantian motifs in his treatment of the compositionality of concepts, his approach to combining empiricism and nativism, his interest in cognitive architecture, and his investigation of different cognitive activities (13, 42-3, 70, 129-30). Accordingly, we may hope that Fodor's variations on Hume will also serve as the prelude to a symphony on Kant.

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**Michael Allen Fox**

*The Accessible Hegel.*

New York: Humanity Books 2005.

Pp. 184.

US\$24.00 (paper: ISBN 1-59102-258-4).

This book attempts to make 'Hegel's philosophy more accessible without oversimplifying it' (145). Fox succeeds in providing a general account of Hegel's philosophy, explaining difficult points, and dispelling misconceptions. But Fox sometimes slides into superficial views of Hegel, and his pencil drawings are simplistic. Furthermore, Fox's 'accessible Hegel' is, controversially, a Christian version of Hegel.

Chapter 1 deals with Hegel's view of the 'evolution of philosophical thought itself toward an ever-increasing and more unified comprehension of human reality and the natural world' (17). His philosophy is a coherent, circular system, a 'metaphilosophy' that combines empiricism and rationalism (25-31). Fox does not 'attempt to reach a definitive verdict on [Hegel's] success' (32). His reflections can therefore be vague and closed, e.g., 'there is hope that [thought] may be able to conceptually assimilate all of reality' (22). His analogy of the closed system in language, 'semantic holism' (30), is interesting, but many good readers have interpreted the dialectic as more open-ended.

Chapter 2 provides a helpful account of Hegelian dialectic (though Fox equates 'dialectic' with 'fluid', 37-8). He denounces erroneous thesis/antithesis/synthesis caricatures, providing a good account of synthesis out of opposition and of *aufheben*. Fox shows how 'Hegel neither affirmed contradictory statements nor denied the law of contradiction' (51). He compares Hegel's think-



ing with Eastern thought. But if 'there is considerable interest in Hegel in China, India, and Japan' (48), then at least one bibliographical reference is called for. The notes provide helpful connections with Marx, but other connections (Inuit, Navajo, Yiddish, Freudian, and Eastern thought) are too general or misleading.

Chapter 3 begins with Hegel's celebration of metaphysics in the light of Kant's rejection of metaphysics and ends with an account of Hegel's revision of the Kantian categories: rather than Kant's 'arbitrary and incomplete set of concepts ... Hegel believed that concepts have to be produced out of the mind's own self-development and vindicated by it' (81). Two examples of dialectic from the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (sense-certainty and perception, 68-9) are elucidated, and Fox explains the identity of Logic and Metaphysics (73-4). The rational structure of the real is such that 'in each subject of inquiry an inner necessity exhibits itself' (73). Fox makes this inner necessity into God, talking of a 'theodicy' (82). His justifications for this (74) are not convincing; for example, Hegel's 'Unhappy Consciousness' can be the condition of an atheist Marxist as well as a theist (see J. Burbidge's article, 'Man, God, and Death in Hegel's *Phenomenology*') and Hegel's treatment of the proofs of God's existence must be seen in the light of Hegel's system.

Chapter 4 concerns Hegel's Absolute. Fox: 'I believe he was deeply committed to a religious outlook' (87) despite his being a 'maverick or eccentric religious thinker' (88). The goal of the absolute is '*to know itself in the act of knowing*' (91). Fox mentions Aristotle, Freud, and Maslow's ascending hierarchy of needs which '[Hegel] enriches ... by overlaying it with a complex interpretation of the cosmic significance of the achievement' (91-2). Hegel's human self-actualization includes 'aesthetic, religious, social, ethical, political, intellectual, and historical dimensions' (93). In Hegel's 'concrete universals', the antagonism between thought and thing disappears and 'closure is secured' (94). This is the destiny of knowledge (94), 'the Absolute, the infinite energy coursing through the finite realm' (95). Fox's Hegel 'fuse[s] panentheistic [yes, panentheistic] Christianity with the ancient wisdom that Logos (or an immanent rational principle) governs the world ... [this] yields a powerful cosmic drama' (100). Fox's Hegel is Schellingian, so we need to keep in mind Hegel's Fichteanism.

But it seems at times that Fox's Hegel is *inaccessible* to non-Christians: when discussing Hegel's 'Revealed Religion' Fox writes that 'Each of us has to undergo identification with Jesus, personal sacrifice, and finally rebirth as a full-fledged member of the religious community in order to enact this unification' (99).

Chapter 5 concerns truth as development: Spirit is divided against itself and must overcome the alienation through struggle (108). (Here, Fox's appeal to slogans from around the world detract our attention from Hegel's dialectic.) He rightly argues that Hegel's truth relies on an unusual sense of coherence because Hegel was also 'an empiricist' (110) and 'the three traditional theories of truth [correspondence, pragmatism, and coherence] are arguably interdependent' (110). Hegel has a holistic, developmental, mem-

ory-based notion of truth (111). Fox defends Hegel against Kierkegaard's charge that one cannot be omniscient (Hegel never claims we can) (113) and Nietzsche's charge that all is relative (114).

Chapter 6 considers Hegel's social Self through the Master/Slave dialectic (*Phenomenology of Spirit*), the *Philosophy of Right*, and *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (119). The first develops the recognition that 'I' is 'we' (120-1). Fox invokes Sartre, Descartes, Hume, Hinduism, Hesse, Pirandello, deep ecology, structuralism, and the post-modern self (120-1), strangely omitting the slave's stoicism. The second claims the 'highest level of self-actualization occurs in political society ... within the state' (127). Freedom is a 'dialectical construct' (127) 'that exists within a structure of rights, privileges, rules, expectations, trust, and cooperation' (128). Fox's Hegel was 'no mere idolater of ... the repressive, militaristic Prussian state' (134) — he saw the importance of constitution (135). The third text concerns whether Hegel's individual is subsumed by world history.

Among the issues discussed in Chapter 7 are the 'not particularly reliable' left-wing vs. right-wing Hegelian distinction, and whether Hegel's philosophy is after-the-fact explanation or pragmatic. Fox suggests that maybe 'Absolute Idealism is *both* the owl of Minerva taking off into the dusk *and* a dynamic achievement that resonates with special significance for humankind as a whole' (148). Fox addresses 'whether a philosophical system such as Hegel's is possible at all' (153), citing and countering criticisms by Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Hamlyn, and Schopenhauer (154-57); some philosophers believe the system is faulty, others that Hegel hasn't finished (Bradley, McTaggart, 156).

Regarding the alleged impenetrability of Hegel's language (158), Fox replies: 'I would be the first to concede that he [Hegel] did not [write clearly enough], otherwise the need for the book you are reading would not be so urgent' (158).

This Canadian's bibliography is missing references to important books by internationally famous Canadian Hegelian scholars Henry S. Harris and John Burbidge.

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**Eve Gaudet**

*Quine on Meaning: The Indeterminacy of Translation.*

New York: Continuum 2006.

Pp. x + 145.

US\$120.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8264-8720-3).

Quine's notorious claim that translation (and so meaning) is indeterminate is accepted as self-evident gospel and vehemently rejected as obviously false in equal measure. But it is not uncommon to find that the respective parties have in view different formulations of the thesis and the arguments in its favour. It is Gaudet's aim to provide a definitive statement, and partial reconstruction, of how Quine intends the indeterminacy thesis to be understood. More specifically, the stated intention is to clarify and defend Quine's claim that indeterminacy of translation is distinct from, and additional to, underdetermination of theory by evidence. As Gaudet repeatedly stresses, indeterminacy 'is an ontological claim about what there is', whereas underdetermination 'is an epistemological claim about the relation between observation and theory' (6).

In clarifying Quine's position, Gaudet elucidates certain pivotal notions. Quine's talk of there being a *fact of the matter* is not, Gaudet insists, epistemological, but is instead connected to his physicalism. To say that a matter is factual is to say that it is determined by the physical, that there is no change in it without a physical change. Gaudet connects this to Quine's theory of truth, according to which the truth-predicate is a device of disquotation. While 'is true' applies to sentences, and talk of factuality typically concerns extra-linguistic reality, there is a link between the two. Since predicating truth of a sentence is disquoting it, it is equivalent to asserting the sentence itself. As Gaudet felicitously says, 'Talking about the truth of a statement is only a detour' to talking about reality (29). This is the innocuous kernel of the correspondence theory. Hence, one can say that if a sentence is true, it is made true by the facts. For Quine, Gaudet claims, this link between a sentence and reality is explained by 'the conditioning process' (34); correspondence is 'a relation of [verbally] responding to the world' (40). In virtue of that relation, our sentences acquire whatever semantic significance they possess — and thereby their disquotational truth-conditions — and our theories involving them acquire evidential support.

Having surveyed Quine's uses of the notions of fact, truth, and physicalism, Gaudet returns to the distinction between indeterminacy and underdetermination. According to Quine, when faced with two incompatible translation manuals, the facts do not determine that one is true rather than the other. This ('ontological') issue is distinct from the epistemological matter of whether the available evidence is consonant with two incompatible theories. It is, however, not clear that Gaudet succeeds in distinguishing the epistemological from the ontological. For Quine, Gaudet states, the facts determine the truth of sentences via speakers' conditioned responses to the

environment, which is precisely the route via which theories gain evidential support. Thus, 'the concept of correspondence is explained by an analysis of the conditions in which our talk about the world is warranted' (34). The extent to which the facts determine the truth of a sentence coincides, it appears, with the extent to which its acceptance is warranted. Of course, the failure in this instance to distinguish the epistemological from the ontological might be due to Quine, rather than Gaudet's exegesis.

For Quine, it is specifically *behavioral* facts that fail to determine a unique translation manual. Some commentators complain that this neglects other possible factors, say physiological or neurological. But, as Gaudet astutely points out, Quine (qua physicalist) does not deny the legitimacy of appealing to such facts, but nonetheless insists (give the 'publicity' of meaning) that only the behavioral facts are relevant determinates of meaning. Relatedly, Quine does not deny that facts about language-use can be (causally) explained by underlying neurological and physiological facts. Nonetheless, Gaudet claims, this does not license cognitive science to postulate 'meanings' (or states bearing semantic content) to explain behavior. Either cognitive science has no distinct subject-matter to investigate, Gaudet argues, or the entities it posits lack criteria of identity.

This swift discussion, forming the penultimate chapter, is (overly) ambitious; points remain under-discussed and the argumentation relatively superficial. For example, Gaudet dismisses the 'Token Identity Theory', of which functionalism might be an instance, in a single, pregnant sentence: 'It can be argued that we no more have identity criteria for causal roles in mentalistic systems than we have identity criteria for mental states' (126). Nonetheless, the chapter might provide stimulation for those new to such debates, presumably the intended audience.

One might agree that there are no 'meanings' *as conceived by cognitive science* but still be reluctant to follow Quine in rejecting the vocabulary of intentional psychology in general. Indeed, many challenge whether such an eliminativist stance is even feasible or coherent, and it is a shame that Gaudet does not respond to that charge. In Gaudet's view, Quine 'does not intend to ... dismiss our meaning talk' (69). However, even if Quine does not renounce talk of meaning, there remains an issue of whether any form of anti-realism regarding that region of discourse is tenable. Moreover, there are plenty of passages in Quine that strongly suggest eliminativism. For example, 'the canonical scheme for us is the austere scheme that knows ... no propositional attitudes' (*Word and Object* 221).

It seems a further omission not to include any discussion of those, such as Glock or Stroud, who challenge Quine's physicalism and his views as to what counts as the legitimate factual basis of translation. Perhaps the semantic and intentional are *sui generis*; that they are left indeterminate by the behavioral does not show that they lack factual status altogether. Gaudet certainly does not present Quine's physicalism as unmotivated (15ff), but it would have been worth responding to those who explicitly question it (perhaps, in part, just because it cannot account for semantic and intentional



phenomena). It is, of course, inevitable in a short monograph that certain issues are neglected for the sake of others, and Gaudet does critically contrast her interpretation with those of Chomsky, Føllesdal, Friedman, Gibson, and Rorty, whose respective shortcomings are convincingly highlighted. On the whole, Gaudet shows great attention to exegetical detail and displays an impressive familiarity of Quine's texts, constantly comparing different formulations of a given view and adjudicating as to which is authoritative.

This book certainly constitutes an accessible overview of Quine's indeterminacy thesis and will no doubt be extremely useful for those coming to his philosophy, and in particular this most important and controversial claim, for the first time.

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### **Raymond Geuss**

*Outside Ethics.*

Princeton, NJ:

Princeton University Press 2005.

Pp. viii + 257.

US\$59.50 (cloth ISBN 0-691-12341-7);

US\$24.95 (paper: ISBN 0-691-12342-4).

Raymond Geuss' latest book is reminiscent of his previous work, *Morality, Culture, and History*, insofar as it is a collection of essays on German philosophy, ethics, and cultural studies. But this latest effort is not a mere rehash of previous work. The essays that comprise it may have been previously published (many in a shortened form or in German), but the underlying thread connecting the essays provides a framework in which one can glean new insights from familiar ideas. So although many of the themes will be familiar to those acquainted with Geuss' work, understanding this collection as bound by a single underlying thread allows it to be read more as an expression of a complete and coherent project than simply a disparate or disjointed collection of essays.

Geuss understands his book in the way described above. 'One of the things that holds the essays in this collection together most closely is their shared skepticism about a particular way of thinking about what is important in human life' (1). This particular way of thinking is a modern way of thinking; although 'modern' may be a misnomer since at points Geuss traces the trend back not only to Kant but all the way to Plato. Geuss describes this tradition as transfixed on three questions taken to exhaust the realm of possible, relevant experience or knowledge: What do I want? What do I know? And

what restrictions are there on my actions? As Geuss sees it, modern thinking considers three things as definitive of a good or worthwhile existence: the satisfaction of personal preferences, the acquisition of useful knowledge (useful insofar as it assists with satisfying personal preferences), and negative rights that delineate a limited sphere of activity in which you can do as you please so long as you do not interfere with others' capacity to satisfy their own personal preferences. Insofar as Geuss phrases the problem in this way, the reader gets a foreshadow of the coming critique of instrumental reason, reminiscent of the early Frankfurt School.

Geuss' skepticism regarding mainstream ethical thought and the ethical tradition as a whole is reflected in each essay. It is his goal to think ethics outside of this paradigm. In order to do so, Geuss looks to representatives of traditions outside of ethics, from Thucydides to Foucault. He approaches the ethical tradition from all sides, addressing political philosophy through engagement with Rawls and political liberalism, ethics through virtue and happiness, living and the good life through Adorno, and the limits of knowledge through art and aesthetics.

Perhaps the most helpful illustration of Geuss' methodology is in Chapter 13, 'Thucydides, Nietzsche, and Williams', where he poses the question, 'Who is a better guide to human life, Plato or Thucydides?' (219). This question is a challenge to Western philosophy. Why is Plato taken as the paradigmatic philosopher, the poser of questions to whom we must still respond according to the guidelines he set forth? What if Thucydides had been given pre-eminence in the tradition? That is, what if one proceeded genealogically, or to be anachronistic, what if philosophy had followed Thucydides' archaeological method? How would philosophy look? Arguably, it would look a lot like postmodernity, or Foucault. This thought echoes the tenor of the book as a whole. We must insert a healthy skepticism into our philosophy.

Geuss' project is fruitful for several reasons. With respect to liberalism, Geuss sees its benefits in its resistance to totalitarianism and theocracy, but finds its failing in its limited project of negative liberty, in effect arguing that Rawls and liberalism may be able to maintain the status quo but fail to inspire true social change. With respect to ethics, Geuss finds the question itself, 'What ought I to do?' to be flawed. It cannot get beyond assessments of individual acts, and thus lacks an appreciation of life as a continuous project of self-realization. Geuss' recounting of Adorno's notion of suffering and failure is illuminating on this point. When it comes to knowledge, like a good critical theorist, Geuss turns to art and aesthetic experience, not as a way of acquiring privileged access to otherwise inaccessible truths, but as a way of understanding knowledge beyond the acquisition of useful facts. What makes art valuable is its 'uselessness', and perhaps life ought to be viewed similarly.

Thus, *Outside Ethics* is ultimately a negative project. It is Adorno without Benjamin. Insightful and learned, it presents a skeptical challenge to modernity. Yet, at the end of it all the reader is left feeling de-centered or unbalanced. But perhaps this is the intention and the benefit of the book. The area outside ethics is just that: outside. Geuss says it best, so I will quote



him in full: 'I have described reservations about the possibility of a specifically philosophical ethics, objections to the assumptions made by the ethical question, doubts about the significance of choice and about the coherence or importance of individual action, and objections to a fully immanent approach to human life. That this is no coherent countertradition is, I think, no objection. Rather it is a conclusion I welcome' (63).

And this is where we are left: with reservations and no countertradition. It is this lack of a tradition or ground that can be disconcerting — but perhaps that is the point. Any sense of agoraphobia upon going outside ethics is engendered by the demand for answers to questions philosophy has taken as central but that Geuss dismisses. We are left wondering, how do I decide what to do without my traditional ethics? Or, what is freedom if not negative liberty? But these questions are unsettling only if we presume that there must be clear answers to them. Geuss is a needed shock to the system of traditional ethics.

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**Gary Gutting, ed.**

*The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*,  
2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

New York: Cambridge University Press 2005.

Pp. xix + 465.

US\$70.00 (cloth: 0-521-84082-1);

US\$28.99 (paper: 0-521-60053-7).

The second edition contains thirteen contributions, of which five are new (Han, Sluga, May, Bruns, and Whitebrook) and four revised (Rouse, Bernauer and Mahon, Ingram, and Sawicki). The volume also contains a useful updated bibliographic entry on works by, and on, Foucault. The focus in this review is on the new and revised chapters.

The volume begins with a helpful introduction by Gutting. Readers will benefit from his discussion of Foucault's approach to history, much influenced by the work of Georges Canguilhem, as a history of concepts. In contrast to the approach taken by Kuhn and the positivists, Canguilhem does not hold that concepts are determined by theories, but rather that concepts provide a preliminary reading of the data from which questions can be formulated to explain the data as conceptualized. Foucault adapts and extends this approach in his work. By showing the linkage between concepts and theories, Foucault aims to highlight the contingency of the frameworks within which we think, say, and do. Critics may object that Foucault's

genealogical analyses of concepts, e.g. 'madness', are guilty of committing the genetic fallacy. But not all genetic arguments are fallacious; and it is not clear that Foucault's histories are irrelevant to the truth or falsity of the claims informed by these beliefs.

Gutting's introduction is interesting also because of his caution against overarching interpretations of Foucault which provide 'the real meaning or significance of his achievement ... because Foucault's work is at root *ad hoc*, fragmentary and incomplete' (2). Sluga's contribution can be read as an illustration of Gutting's worry. His chapter is an erudite account of the inherent complexities involved in one such enterprise, namely determining exactly the influence of Heidegger and Nietzsche on Foucault's thought. Against interpreters who assert confidently that Heidegger's influence on Foucault's early works is overwhelming, Sluga points out that in several passages Foucault's discussion, though couched in Heideggerian language, is hardly Heideggerian in content (218, 219). This is not to say that Foucault did not follow the lead of others, from Kant to Nietzsche to Canguilhem. Readers will benefit from May's discussion of how Foucault came to reject phenomenology because of his reading of Nietzsche and Canguilhem. But it does suggest a more cautious approach to interpreting Foucault be adopted. Nonetheless, as Gutting notes, his warning against grand interpretations is ignored by some of the contributors to the volume.

For instance, Beatrice Han contends that in his later work in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault is exercised by issues raised in the analysis of finitude, specifically man as an empirical/transcendental doublet, introduced much earlier in *The Order of Things*. On her interpretation, Foucault argues only that a return to 'philosophy's original spiritual vocation [the idea that access to truth must be accompanied by a transformation of the subject through *askesis*] can save it from the Analytic of Finitude' (201-2). Foucault's proposed solution hinges on recovering the *adequatio* between the 'subject who speaks the truth and the subject who behaves in accordance with this truth' at the centre of spirituality in ancient philosophy (190). However, Han finds Foucault's proposal, though seductive, wanting because the conceptions of 'truth' in the ancient accounts Foucault cites are incommensurable with those in modern philosophy. For her, the primacy of epistemology in modern philosophy has severed spirituality from philosophy.

Han's interpretation is undoubtedly ambitious. Readers, however, will be interested by the differences between her analyses of Foucault's account of spirituality and Rouse's discussion of epistemic sovereignty. According to Rouse, in contrast to a sovereign model of knowledge, 'knowledge as the unified (or consistently unifiable) network of truths ... [which] are legitimated as truths by the precepts of rational method' (106), Foucault sought to develop a 'dynamic account of knowledge' (115). On Rouse's rendering, knowledge is established 'not only in relation to a field of statements but also to objects ... and institutions. The configuration of knowledge requires that these heterogeneous elements be adequately adapted to one another and that their mutual alignment be sustained over time' (113). On the dynamic model,



to make a truth claim is 'to try to strengthen some epistemic alignments and to challenge, undermine or evade others' (115). A knowledge claim is then likened to a situated pragmatic response to a particular epistemic configuration. The claimant does not adopt an Archimedean position to settle the truth. A possible solution to the problem of the Analytic of Finitude from Rouse's discussion is the adoption of a dynamic approach to truth rather than one based on epistemic sovereignty. Rouse adds that Foucault is not alone in rejecting epistemic sovereignty. He cites Robert Brandom as an ally. Now that continental/analytic doublet *is* interesting.

The chapter by Bernauer and Mahon offers an account of Foucault's idea of an aesthetics of existence in his interrogation of ethics in his later works. While the account is generally clear, readers may challenge the implications of some of their ideas. For example, Bernauer and Mahon rightly note that Foucault's proposal for an aesthetics of existence is a counterbalance to a science of life. They write 'to think human existence in aesthetic categories releases us from the realm of scientific knowledge. It liberates us from endless self-decipherment and from subjecting ourselves to psychological norms' (163). They add further that 'Foucault's genealogy of the desiring subject is an act of transgression against the life and death struggle that bio-power has made the horizon of human existence. Foucault's ethics, then, is not Nietzsche's "beyond good and evil" but is beyond life and death' (163). Readers may be mystified by the claim made in the last two sentences. Foucault wanted to keep the registers of science, the human sciences in particular, and ethics separate because he sees the dangers of deepening normalization. While it is one thing to argue that one ought not to live one's life dictated by the norms of psychology and medicine, does it follow that there is no room for the knowledge of those domains in our relations with our selves and with others? Try telling that to anxious parents of a newborn who is suffering from some malady.

While Bernauer and Mahon paint Foucault's 'political ethic' on a grand canvas (154), Bruns' and Ingram's chapters take a different tack. Bruns interrogates what place 'modernism' plays in Foucault's thought. Readers will find Bruns' distinction between 'freedom' (as an ethical relation of self to itself) and liberation (as the emancipation of a human nature underlying the forms of subjectivation) helpful in understanding Foucault's response to the political question of emancipation. Yet they may find the claim that for Foucault freedom is 'not autonomy, but heteronomy, not self-possession, but self-escape' (371) puzzling, especially in light of Foucault's insistence that the ascetic exercises that the ethical subject undertakes are intended precisely to achieve the mastery of oneself necessary for autonomous agency.

Ingram provides a close reading of Foucault and Habermas to demonstrate that, despite their differences, the distance between the two philosophers may not be great with regard to their diagnosis of modern enlightenment. The difference between the two, for Ingram, lies in where they place the balance between the projects of self-realization and mutual fulfillment, with society serving as the locus of such projects (270). While

some readers may yearn for a happier ending, nonetheless all readers will benefit from Ingram's effort to clear away mutual misunderstandings by Foucault and Habermas, for instance, Foucault on Habermas' idea of constraint-free mutual understanding and Habermas on Foucault's use of the language of strategic gaming (261ff).

Finally, Jana Sawicki's contribution assesses two strands of feminist reception of Foucault: criticisms by feminist critical theorists, and Judith Butler's and other post-structuralist theorists' attempt to go beyond Foucault's account of subjection. She criticizes both for failing to take Foucault's toolkit metaphor seriously (393) and failing to use his work as tools to resist particular forms of subjection as he did. For example, rather than using Foucault's ideas as tools for possible work, the one persistent question asked of Foucault by his feminist critical theory critics is: why resist? Sawicki, however, does not offer a direct answer to these critics; rather she contends that they fail 'to appreciate the "queerness" of Foucault's project' (385). By 'queerness', perhaps Sawicki is referring to Foucault's method of 'problematization', the goal of which is not to come up with a definitive solution but rather to pose problems and to shake our confidence in perceived necessities (Michel Foucault, 'Polemics, Politics and Problematizations,' in *The Essential Foucault*, Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose, eds., New York: The New Press 2003, p. 20). While it is important to stress that Foucault does *not* provide 'answers' in his genealogies, it is nonetheless just as important to highlight that one can glean from his work resources that a sympathetic yet critical reader may deploy to answer challenges raised by his critics, as demonstrated in Ingram's chapter.

The quibbles I have with some of the contributions aside, I highly recommend the volume to readers of Foucault, beginner and scholar.

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**Paul Guyer**

*Values of Beauty: Historical Essays in Aesthetics.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2005.

Pp. xxvi + 359.

US\$75.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-84490-8);

US\$27.99 (paper: ISBN 0-521-60669-1).

Guyer's latest collection of essays should really be sub-titled *Essays on Kant (and Others)*, as, unsurprisingly, it is the sage of Königsberg who takes centre stage. But with so many other books to his credit with Kant's name in the



title, he may perhaps be excused this somewhat disingenuous attempt to indicate a wider range in this one. For what in fact we have here is a collection of essays that for the most part follows on from and develops Guyer's account of Kant's aesthetic theory as presented in his earlier and very well-regarded works *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (1979, 1997) and *Kant and the Experience of Freedom* (1993).

There are thirteen essays in all, in three parts, 'Mostly Before Kant', 'Mostly Kant', and 'Mostly After Kant'. Ten of the thirteen essays have been published previously, and of the three that have not, two are due to appear elsewhere. The three so far unpublished pieces are all on Kant, and indeed the other essays in Part 2 are all much more recent than nearly all of the 'before' and 'after' ones, suggesting that Kant continues to engage Guyer in a major way and that the more 'historical' ambit of this collection does not indicate any diminution in this regard.

Part 1 contains just two chapters. The first is a very deft depiction, from a Kantian perspective, of the development of aesthetics between 1711 and 1735. In this Guyer emphasizes the different senses in which thinkers during that period construed the idea of the freedom of the imagination, which he takes to be the most significant theme in their writings. Nearly all the figures discussed here reappear later in the book. The second chapter is a thorough account of Hume's theory of art, covering a wide range of his writings, in which Guyer examines why Hume is more concerned to identify good critics than to promote aesthetic self-improvement.

Part 2, 'Mostly Kant', is the core of the book. Guyer is excellent at showing both how Kant's texts sustain different interpretations and the degree to which these interpretations are themselves compatible. In this he follows Kant, whose 'general position', Guyer tells us, 'is to try to resolve the differences between competing positions, while presenting the truth in each' (119). This is particularly evident in the first of the pieces on Kant, 'The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited', which is perhaps the most impressive (and previously unpublished). In this chapter, Guyer outlines three interpretations of the idea of the harmony of the faculties, the central concept in Kant's account of the experience of beauty. These he labels precognitive, multicognitive, and metacognitive. With the first of these, the idea is that the harmony of faculties is an experiential state which stops short of the application of a concept. The multicognitive approach, by contrast, sees the harmony as one involving a profusion of concepts. The metacognitive interpretation takes the harmony of the faculties to be one which incorporates, yet goes beyond, the simpler unities afforded by ordinary conceptualization. Guyer argues convincingly that although support for the alternatives can be found in the texts, only the latter construal makes sense of all of Kant's assumptions. In a neat final move, he then shows how the metacognitive interpretation can incorporate aspects of the precognitive and multicognitive positions. This chapter constitutes an important revision of Guyer's account of Kant's aesthetic theory, as he himself previously was, as he makes clear here, a proponent of the precognitive approach (though

there are also clear anticipations of the metacognitive interpretation in his earlier work, for example *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, second edition, 87). The clarification Guyer achieves here is put to good use in some of the subsequent essays.

In the following seven chapters on Kant, Guyer considers topics such as beauty and utility, free and adherent beauty, ugliness, the various connections between aesthetics and morality, the development of Kant's aesthetic theory, and genius and art. (The Introduction suggests some interesting parallels and connections between these discussions.) Many of these essays elegantly relate Kant to his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors. In addition to all the usual figures, we are treated to some less familiar ones as well, such as Archibald Alison and Alexander Gerard, both of whom were new to me. It is in this respect that the book most fully lives up to its 'historical' ambition.

The third and final part, 'Mostly after Kant', has three chapters. The first is a straightforward and helpful account of Schopenhauer's 'aesthetic cognitivism'. The second and third chapters engage with three recent aestheticians, Monroe Beardsley, Arthur Danto, and Mary Mothersill, all of whom are shown to remain within and even to require support from the Kantian framework. (The piece on Beardsley and Danto includes an excellent sixteen-page exposition of Kant's theory of art, and so only just about makes it into Part 3.) These chapters confirm the suspicions that for Guyer 'historical' effectively means 'historically related to Kant', and that for him thinking about aesthetics hasn't advanced much beyond Kant. True, we are presented with Schopenhauer, but get little sense of what motivates his aesthetic theory and whether it amounts to an improvement on or addition to Kant's. Beardsley and Danto may still operate with a Kantian concept of art, but what about harder cases, such as Noël Carroll?

Guyer himself provides a nice reflection on the kind of conservatism represented in this collection: we should not suppose, he says, following J. S. Mill, that innovation is important only in generating new truths and practices; it is just as valuable in retrieving, testing, and reaffirming truths and practices from the past (260). *Values of Beauty* is itself an exemplary contribution to this latter project and is strongly recommended to all those interested in modern aesthetics.

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**Brian G. Henning**

*The Ethics of Creativity: Beauty, Morality, and Nature in a Processive Cosmos.*

Pittsburgh:

University of Pittsburgh Press 2005. Pp. 250.

US\$30.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8229-4271-2).

The principal aim of *The Ethics of Creativity* 'is to develop and defend a holistic, organic ethical theory grounded firmly in Whitehead's aesthetico-metaphysics of process' (3). In developing his organic ethical theory, Henning also hopes to both 'reclaim the central role of metaphysics for moral theory' (3), and 'to show the value of Whitehead's complex process metaphysics for moral and environmental philosophy by presenting it in language that strives for clarity and seeks to do justice to the richness and nuances of his thought' (8).

Henning divides his work into two parts: 'Part 1 establishes the critical and substantive grounds for developing the ethics of creativity, which is the task of part 2' (3). Part 1 is a critique of 'axiological dualism' (i.e., any division between actualities that have intrinsic value and others that are devoid of such value) and 'invidious axiological anthropocentrism' (i.e., positions that restrict intrinsic value to human beings, 12f). In Chapter 1, Henning summarizes Whitehead's basic critique of modern mechanistic cosmology, and then introduces the reader to the axiological pluralism (or monism, depending on how one interprets this) suggested in the work of James and Dewey and more fully developed in the organic cosmology of Whitehead.

Chapter 2 is a defense of what Henning calls the 'ecstatic interpretation' of Whitehead's metaphysics. Much of the discussion here is motivated by the so-called 'problem of subjectivism', the accusation that Whitehead's metaphysics repeats the very problem it was designed to overcome, namely, 'a universe of independent subjects selfishly seeking their own ends' (4). Much of the discussion here is very specialized, fairly technical, and seems to be directed particularly towards 'classical' Whitehead scholars rather than anyone else.

Chapter 3 includes a summary of Whitehead's organic metaphysics of individuality, with the aim of demonstrating not only the 'adequacy of Whitehead's metaphysics, but also the possibility of constructing an ethical theory based upon it' (67). Here we see the beginning of Henning's own interpretation of Whitehead. Not only does he present the reader with a more comprehensive and detailed summary of Whitehead's account of individual actual occasions or entities, but he adds a very useful outline of the various kinds of entities that can be said to exist as centers of intrinsic value and objects of direct moral concern within his speculative scheme. A central feature of Henning's own 'pluralistic axiology' is his claim that all actual occasions or entities should be regarded as 'moral patients' regardless of level or type (74).

In Chapter 4 Henning examines and defends what he calls 'one of the more novel (and for some, troubling) elements of a Whiteheadian moral philosophy', namely the ontological, teleological aim at beauty (6). Henning defends and develops this kalogenic, or beauty-generating, ontology by showing how

it gives rise to an account of value that depends both upon the complexity or level of organization of the individual as well as the broader social environment within which that individual is situated. This helps to set the stage for Part 2 and Henning's account of 'A Genuine Ethical Universe'.

Part 2 opens with Henning's attempt to show, in Chapter 5, how Whitehead's kalogenic account of reality can serve 'as the source and foundation of moral obligation' (6). It is here that Henning tries to make the connection between metaphysics and ethics, between his kalogenic ontology and the moral obligations to which it gives rise. Central to his discussion is what he calls 'the obligation of beauty: the obligation to always act in such a way as to bring about the greatest possible universe of beauty, value, and importance that in each situation is possible' (6f), as an expression of his claim that 'the complex conditions of a beautiful experience are also the conditions of a moral experience' (125f). Henning concludes with the seemingly unwieldy claim that every relation that human beings enter (or find themselves in) 'is a moral relation' with the consequence that 'the scope of our direct moral concern may exclude nothing from its reach'. In making this claim Henning goes well beyond what Whitehead himself was willing to claim, and unfortunately ends up opening the door to the criticism that such a conclusion is itself a *reductio* of the very metaphysics upon which it is based.

In Chapter 6 Henning attempts to demonstrate the adequacy and applicability of his ethical theory by applying it to particular moral conflicts. What starts out as a promising idea ends up being one of the more disappointing sections of his book. Though Henning's examples are well intended, his analyses appear simplistic and narrowly selective in terms of the type and level of complexity they engage. One doesn't get the feeling that Henning's conclusions about the ethics of food and other issues are the product of a careful and thorough negotiation between the 'simplicity and complexity' and the 'diversity and unity' of all the individuals and relations that constitute the beauty both of the parts as well as of the whole. One feels instead that the elements Henning has chosen to highlight support conclusions that he has already accepted or toward which he is aesthetically and morally drawn. Given the importance Henning attaches to properly situating ethical issues within the larger complex of relations that make up the whole, his conclusions seem far too hasty and artificially conceived.

Henning ends his book in Chapter 7 by trying to situate his own ethics of creativity within the framework of more traditional moral theories. Henning does a good job showing how a Whiteheadian-based ethics overlaps with traditional moral theories in important and valuable ways, and also how it goes beyond them both in its comprehensiveness and in its overall promise. It is in his suggestions regarding the ethical *promise* of a Whiteheadian, kalogenic world view that Henning's work is most noteworthy — and hence deserving of considered attention by anyone interested in rethinking the dominant world views.

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**Vladimir Jankélévitch**

*Forgiveness.*

Trans. Andrew Kelley.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2005.

Pp. xxvii + 175.

US\$29.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-226-39213-9)

Vladimir Jankélévitch (1903-85) held the chair in Moral Philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris (1951-78) and authored more than twenty books on philosophy and music. This book was originally published in French in 1967. Though Jankélévitch did not work within the analytic tradition, the book can profitably be read by analytic philosophers. It treats a topic that they (we) have inexcusably neglected, and it does so in a way that is accessible to them (us).

Jankélévitch holds that forgiveness is an unmotivated and unjustifiable 'gracious gift' (5) in which the forgiver acts as if the wrong did not occur. He carefully distinguishes forgiving from neighboring phenomena with which it might be confused — excusing and forgetting. Forgiveness can be part of no moral system because that would place it within the matrix of obligation or justification, and it necessarily lacks both. Thus, one cannot say that so-and-so *should* forgive such-and-such. And just as Kant considers it possible that no actual action has ever had moral worth because of the difficulty of separating out self-interest, Jankélévitch considers it possible that no act has ever constituted 'true forgiveness' (5) — it may be more of an ideal or limiting case.

Though Jankélévitch was a contemporary of Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-80), he apparently had nothing to do with Sartre. Nevertheless the book reads somewhat like *Being and Nothingness*. Though Sartre never considered forgiveness (but probably should have), their phenomenological approaches are a mixture of psychology and metaphysics. There is a good deal of unfamiliar terminology and a lot of repetition. And the books move in the same dialectical fashion. Instead of beginning with a precise definition, as a book in analytic philosophy might, a term is introduced and then developed as the argument proceeds. We feel a movement of thought — not unlike a piece of music, with repetition, development, return. And there is the advantage that Jankélévitch's book is much shorter than Sartre's, as are his sentences.

However, what makes Sartre's book engaging, despite its length and convoluted sentences, are its delightful vignettes — seeking, but failing to find, Pierre in the café; refraining from throwing yourself off the precipice; pretending not to notice his hand on yours; deciding whether to stop during a long hike. Sartre was a good writer, and it shows (sometimes) in his book. Unfortunately, there are no vignettes in Jankélévitch's book. There is no relief from his admittedly interesting, but abstract, theorizing. As a result, Jankélévitch's somewhat simplistic assumptions never get questioned. For example, he supposes it is a clear matter that someone is a wrong-doer, and someone else is in the right and in a position to forgive. This rather Manichean approach makes sense as far as it goes, but has little to offer in the concrete world of relationships in which epistemology is problematic. In

many concrete cases — the unfaithful partner, the irresponsible professor, the abusive parent — characterizing the people involved and their actions already is controversial: What exactly happened? And why? Was it wrong? How wrong was it? The point is not to criticize Jankélévitch for not doing epistemology, but to register the feeling that what he discusses, as ideal, abstract cases, feels too far removed from reality. It works fine for reflection on World War II. But what does it mean for reflection on 9/11?

The lack of concrete cases is a special disappointment because only two years before publishing this book, Jankélévitch himself had published a very controversial article on whether the French should forgive Germany and the German people for Nazi war crimes — arguing that they should not. Though this is just one concrete case, it is exactly the kind of case (we can't call it a 'vignette!') that would have livened up the book, and brought it down to reality. The failure to discuss this particular case in the book is even *more* of a disappointment (and completely unexplained), because in the book Jankélévitch has *changed his mind* (without saying so) from his earlier position. He now holds that it is simply impossible to say anything ultimate about the relative phenomena of forgiveness and wickedness — neither is stronger than the other (165).

Since Jankélévitch makes such a good start at philosophizing about forgiveness, a start that should be equally provocative to analytic and phenomenological philosophers, I end with some questions that he does not address, questions that are provoked by his approach, but which would keep our future investigations closer to the ground of concrete cases. Jankélévitch views forgiveness as all-or-nothing (96). But suppose someone has harmed several people. What does it mean to be forgiven by some but not by others? Jankélévitch values forgiveness for the sake of the wrong-doer, but he is suspicious of forgiveness for the sake of the forgiver (102). Suppose the wrong-doer is now dead or does not admit any guilt. Is there still any role for forgiveness? Jankélévitch sees forgiveness as an isolated, unjustified, unmotivated act of grace. Yet every Sunday millions of Christians ask God to 'forgive us' our sins 'as we forgive' those who sin against us. Isn't it possible to cultivate a habit of forgiving, or a trait of forgivingness, and to have incentives for doing so? Jankélévitch supposes forgiveness is a sudden, final, definitive act (104). But can't you backslide? Or change your mind?

The translator has done those without French a fine service by making this work accessible. And even those with French probably needed to be reminded of its existence. There is a plethora of self-help books on forgiveness, but a dearth of philosophical books. Let us hope that this book is the beginning of real philosophical work, and that its author would have forgiven us for having taken for so long.

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**Theodore W. Jennings, Jr.**

*Reading Derrida / Thinking Paul: On Justice.*

Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2006.

Pp. xiii + 219.

US\$55.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8047-5267-2);

US\$19.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8047-5268-0).

Is there an inner interweaving between St. Paul's theology and Derrida's reflections on justice and law, gift and grace, debt, duty, love, hospitality, and forgiveness?

This is the question T. W. Jennings asks himself in this readable and absorbing book confronting some of Paul's letters, above all the letter to the Romans, and the numerous writings of Derrida. As he himself announces, 'This essay, or thought-experiment, is an effort to suggest a certain relationship between the attempt to understand Paul's texts (most especially *Romans*) and the ways in which Derrida pursues certain themes integral to what I take to be some of Paul's central concerns' (xi). And in fact he is successful in transporting the reader to a kind of imaginary philosophical/theological conversation or dialogue in company with Derrida and Paul.

The premise of the Jennings' thought-experiment is that Derrida isn't nihilistic, given that his last essays, many of them involved in urgent ethical and political matters, are not as disseminative as his earlier works, and given that in his last writings he attempted to pay much attention to the ethical and political significance of deconstruction.

The first theme at stake is justice, the aporetic, dialectical relation or tension between the claim of justice and the demands of law, as well as the possibility or necessity of justice 'outside the law'. For Paul (see *Galatians*), 'the execution of the messiah is what places him irrevocably outside the law in the strong sense of accused by the law' (65). For Derrida, 'Even as it is necessary to recognize the heterogeneity of law and justice, it is also necessary that justice come to expression, come into being, as law, as a concrete form of law or legal order, that this claim or call is made effective or actual in the concrete context of inter-humanity. However much we may and must insist on a certain heterogeneity, we must also insist on the becoming law of justice and so the "legitimizing" of law relative to justice' (74-5). Derrida's thesis is that justice transcends the law, but if justice must somehow be expected on the basis of grace, that is, as a gift, then we cannot ignore the fact that this gift interrupts the economy, or falls outside the laws of fair (or just) exchange. Although semantically different, in Paul's theology gift and grace are identified, but, on the contrary and frequently, Paul prefers to underline the difference between law and grace. On the other hand Derrida lingers on gift and economy as grounded on the principle that economy must be understood 'as operating within the domain of law, the nomy of economy. And the law of economy is precisely that of exchange, of debt, of payment, and so on' (87). If the giver rewards himself, is the awareness itself of one's own generosity repayment? And what about the recipient? Surely he will feel

obliged. In fact, when we receive a gift, don't we say 'much obliged'? However, this kind of relation or gift is very different from a gift in the Christian sense.

The theme of hospitality, linked to that of justice, is also very important for Derrida. In his last works he writes extensively on it. In *The Other Heading*, dealing with European political culture, he writes 'The same duty also dictated welcoming foreigners in order not only to integrate them but to recognize and accept their alterity' (109); in *Of Hospitality*, he maintains that hospitality is not only an ethical duty but also a fundamental principle of culture, affirming that 'Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic amongst others' (110). We are not surprised to read that 'true hospitality is heterogeneous to hospitality by rights, but it can set and maintain it in a perpetual progressive movement; but it is strangely heterogeneous to it as justice is heterogeneous to the law to which it is yet so close, from which in truth it is indissociable' (110-11). In respectful and polite disagreement with Kant, Derrida claims that the law of absolute hospitality commands a break with hospitality by right, with law or justice by right. The problem, then, is how to transform and improve the law, and how this improvement is possible 'within a historical space which takes place between the Law of an unconditional hospitality, offered apriori to every other, to all newcomers, whoever they may be, and the constitutional laws of a right to hospitality, without which the unconditional law of hospitality would be in danger of remaining a pious and irresponsible desire' (111). The ethical and political concepts, in sum, are necessarily beset by aporias that require any responsible decision to pass through an ordeal of *undecidability*.

In the final chapter Jennings discusses the theme of pardon. In his letters, Paul does not use the term 'pardon'; nevertheless many of his readers have implicitly found it everywhere. In order to de-construct the word 'pardon', Derrida begins playing with *don* (gift) and *par-don*, so that 'pardon' appears similar to 'the gift'. Derrida understands that the hyperbolic ethical conception of forgiveness on one hand, and the reality of a society at work on the other hand, are absolutely two heterogeneous poles, irreducible to one another; but they are at the same time indissociable. Their relation stays in the movement of unconditional forgiveness and the inner exigency of becoming effective, manifest, determined.

Is it possible to read Paul as a thinker of our time (beyond the religious label) who is involved with issues that may be of concern to anyone who thinks seriously and deeply about the actual human condition? Reading closely and widely Derridean texts on ethics and politics which allow one to see its multifaceted, cross-pollinating richness, as well as its perpetually rearticulated structures, Jennings is well disposed to say 'yes'. And it seems to me that such a new encounter between philosophers, theologians, and politicians can be a fruitful premise for further exploration, research, and study.

**Francesco Tampoia**



**John P. Lizza**

*Persons, Humanity, and the Definition of Death.*

Baltimore:

Johns Hopkins University Press 2006.

Pp. xii + 212.

US\$45.00 (cloth: 0-8018-8250-8).

In speaking of our burial practices after a death there are two sorts of expression that might be uttered: 1) 'Yesterday we buried Ethel'; and 2) 'Yesterday we buried Ethel's body'.

These two expressions reflect ambiguities about the nature of death, who or what dies, and the relationship between an individual and her body. Such ambiguities had little pragmatic significance when, in the absence of technological life-support mechanisms, the cessation of circulation and respiration could definitively stand as criteria for the end of life. But with the growing technological capacity to prolong respiration and circulation, and provide artificial nourishment, even in the absence of any capacity on the part of the individual to act, communicate, or even have sensations, questions about just what death is and how to determine when it occurs have acquired a new urgency. As John P. Lizza puts it, 'Just as technological advances enable persons to live in ways that previously were impossible, they enable us to die in ways that were previously impossible' (178).

In this rich and well-argued book, Lizza probes both the meanings of death and the criteria for determining it. His assumption is that death is not an objective event, independent of culture, but rather a process imbued with social meanings. The task of defining death is not merely a matter of empirical investigation, and the nature of death cannot adequately be expressed only in terms of biological criteria. Instead, 'the definition and criteria of death are ... as much matters involving metaphysical reflection, moral choice, and cultural acceptance as they are biological facts to be discovered' (4).

In particular, our understanding of human death is dependent on our concept of person. Lizza evaluates three general meanings of personhood: a 'species meaning', according to which the person is merely a 'human organism', a member of the species *homo sapiens*; a 'qualitative' or 'functionalist' meaning, according to which the person is not a substance but a quality or phase of the human organism; and a 'substantive' meaning, according to which the person is a substantial entity with a mind and the capacity for psychological states and functions.

Lizza opts for the third. How, then, are persons related to their bodies? Lizza rejects Cartesian dualism but argues that he need not adopt a reductive materialism. Instead, there is 'a nonreductive and supervenient, constitutive relation between the person and human organism' (123). Persons are not identical to, but are constituted by, their bodies. This approach, he thinks, recognizes that persons are embodied, biological beings, yet are much more

than their bodies. Persons are also inherently relational beings whose nature is a function of 'the social-cultural-historical context in which persons appear' (49).

Adopting the substantial meaning of 'person' means that the word 'death' is not univocal across animal species; the death of a person is different from the death of a cat or a dolphin (assuming that cats and dolphins are not persons). It also has the implication that Ethel may die before and quite independently of Ethel's body's death. Lizza writes, 'Instead of a person's death resulting in remains in the form of an inanimate corpse, a person's remains can now take the form of a living being devoid of the capacity for consciousness and any other mental function' (15). Individuals who have lost all brain function are, according to Lizza, 'mere material beings. Sympathy, compassion, and social recognition are no longer appropriate responses. This, of course, does not mean that these individuals should not be treated with some respect, but the respect accorded to them should be more in line with the respect we accord to corpses' (91).

Lizza's view may be problematic. Most people, sitting by the bed of a family member who is brain dead, feel compassion and social recognition for that individual. Lizza might say that such feelings are for the person who once existed but is now dead. Yet it would be hard to divorce that person from the body that is still alive and lying in front of family members.

Lizza admits there could be uncertainty about whether such an individual is 'one of us', but claims the uncertainty concerns whether the individual has any 'potential for consciousness' (98). But people's reactions to a living human body may also have other sources. Lizza himself emphasizes that human beings are constituted by their bodies and that they are essentially relational beings. So, even if Ethel is dead, there is something powerful and important about Ethel's living body, and our moral and social connections to it are stronger and more complex than they are to a corpse.

It is unlikely, for example, that Ethel's beneficiaries would collect insurance or inherit property from a person who has died while her 'remains' are still alive. There are also questions about the treatment and disposition of living 'remains' that are different from those for a corpse. By separating the death of the person from the death of the body, and regarding the living human organism as of negligible significance in the absence of the person, Lizza opens the door to two possible dangers.

First, there is the possibility of promoting 'postmortem pregnancies': cases in which 'whole-brain-dead pregnant women have been sustained for several hours to several months' (1) in order to enable the fetus to develop and be born alive. Various additional ways of exploiting women's bodies — as sources of eggs or as incubators after insemination or in vitro fertilization of their eggs — could well be possible if 'postmortem pregnancies' continue to be countenanced, especially if they can be justified as happening to something that is a mere quasi-corpse. Second, there is the possibility that the organs of a living organism could be routinely 'harvested' for use and sale by others, regardless of what the person herself might have wanted.



Thus, there is more to human death than the death of the person. If the death of the person is morally and conceptually distinct from the death of the organism, we still need a definition of death for the human organism, along with careful thought about how to treat the living organism once personhood is gone.

**Christine Overall**

Queen's University

**Robert M. Martin**

*Philosophical Conversations.*

Peterborough, ON and Orchard Park, NY:

Broadview Press 2006.

Pp. 351.

Cdn\$24.95/US\$22.95

(paper: ISBN 1-55111-649-9).

Martin skillfully employs the dialogue format to produce an engaging and accessible — but rigorous — introductory text. *Philosophical Conversations* is composed of seven chapters, or 'conversations': (I) Philosophy of Religion, (II) Social Philosophy, (III) Ethics, (IV) Mind and Body, (V) Determinism, Freewill, and Punishment, (VI) Knowledge, and (VII) Identity and Meaning. Each conversation involves several characters and is divided into a dozen or more numbered sections of two to four pages. The chapter on philosophy of religion, for example, has fourteen sections that cover the standard positions ranging from the teleological, cosmological, and ontological arguments to the problem of evil to fideism and mysticism. With a relative minimum of jargon, the characters lay out their arguments in clear, informal, and lively language. Cross-examination of opposing views is thorough, entertaining, and, at times, even humorous.

In a concise introduction, Martin outlines what students can expect from a philosophy course and how to most profitably use the book. The introduction also very briefly treats the basics of argumentation and comments on the 'Suggested Readings' at the end of each chapter. There is an 'Epilogue' composed of several quotes from Bertrand Russell about the nature and value of philosophy and, perhaps most notably, a 'Glossary Workbook'. The workbook consists of fifteen pages of terms with space for the student to write definitions. All of the glossary terms are italicized in the main text with the accompanying definitions embedded in the mouths of characters. The workbook at the back lists these terms — by chapter and section number — in the same order they appear in the conversations. The workbook is intended to

facilitate active reading and aid students in test preparation. The book has no index, but the detailed table of contents compensates for this omission.

Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of Martin's text is the way it handles terminology. Philosophical newcomers are often bewildered by terminology, and much of an introductory course can be devoted to getting a handle on it. Martin's use of dialogue facilitates this task, because the characters ask the very questions a novice reader is likely to pose at crucial places in the discussion. For example, about two thirds of the way into the chapter on social philosophy, SCEPTIC asks COMMUNIST, "Is socialism the same as communism?" (90). This is a typical student question, and it allows Martin to clarify several terms he has introduced to this point. He has COMMUNIST respond thus: "Communism" and "socialism" are sometimes words used interchangeably, though communism usually refers to a more extreme and rigorous form of socialism, the kind practiced during part of the last century in the Soviet countries and China' (90). COMMUNIST then goes on to describe several features of 'moderate socialism', and notes that 'Marxism is more or less synonymous with "socialism"' (91). Students can unprofitably puzzle over such terminology when left on their own, and Martin anticipates such difficulties. Students can also stumble over terms such as 'libertarianism', which have distinct meanings in differing contexts. In the conversation dealing with free will, for example, INDETERMINIST introduces the term 'libertarian'. DETERMINIST says: 'Wait a minute. One of the participants in the discussion about political philosophy was called LIBERTARIAN' (217). Again, this is a typical — and philosophically uninteresting — student concern that Martin dispenses with quickly.

Another merit of the book is that it presents each position as a living option. Here, *Philosophical Conversations* surpasses many more conventional textbooks that can perhaps too often give the impression that the positions are of historical interest only. Instead, the dialogue format forces the student to engage with the reasons — and the rejoinders to criticisms — for holding a position. The reader thus sees philosophy as an ongoing attempt to justify, analyze, and critique arguments. The book, in short, superbly models the activity of philosophy. The chapter on ethics, for example, begins with SCEPTIC wondering whether a friend should keep a promise to a dying uncle that his millions go to a gambling drunkard girlfriend (108). The reader first sees compelling and lengthy answers from UTILITARIAN and DEONTOLOGIST, as well as their criticisms of one another. This allows Martin to launch into a variety of issues in moral psychology and meta-ethics. The hook and guiding thread for the student throughout the ethics chapter is this concrete case of the dying uncle.

Martin also shows that philosophy is not divorced from science or other fields of human endeavor. The chapter on mind and body, and the chapter on free will, are exemplary in this regard. The mind-body chapter, for example, treats the Turing Test and Searle's Chinese Room Argument in the context of Kasparov's famous chess match with Deep Blue. Martin also has characters refer to some recent studies in biology (e.g., 187). In the freewill-



determinism chapter, Quantum Mechanics is discussed at a level readily comprehensible to the non-specialist. The toughest chapters for an introductory student are likely the final two chapters. However, Martin has been preparing the reader. The easier chapters are at the beginning of the book, and the arguments have been getting progressively more involved. The chapter on knowledge begins with the problem of defining knowledge, fallibilism, and Gettier paradoxes. It moves on to rationalism, empiricism, skepticism, and the synthetic a priori. Martin covers a lot of ground here, but the discussion is clear and concise. The final chapter treats two issues: personal identity and theories of meaning in philosophy of language. These also make use of examples from outside philosophy, such as linguistics. And here Martin offers perhaps one of the clearest introductory expositions of Frege on sense and reference and Austin's speech-act theory.

*Philosophical Conversations* is perhaps best suited for a one semester course like 'Introduction to Philosophy' or 'Knowledge and Reality.' It would also make a good main text for a two semester introductory course if it were supplemented with a short logic book or custom courseware. For instructors willing to forgo the more traditional introductory syllabus of primary texts, Martin's book would provide students with a wide-ranging conceptual map of the current philosophical terrain.

### **Jeff Lawrence**

(Humanities)

North Island College

### **William A. Mathews**

*Lonergan's Quest: A Study of Desire in the  
Authoring of Insight.*

Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2005.

Pp. ix + 564.

Cdn/US\$100.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8020-3875-1).

The publication of Mathews' much anticipated book is a significant event in Lonergan scholarship. Taking full advantage of the extensive archival material now assembled at the Lonergan Research Institute in Toronto, Mathews has produced a persuasive account of how Lonergan's masterwork was written, and in the process has given us an excellent interpretation of the book itself.

When *Insight* was published in 1957, *Time Magazine* hailed it as one of the great philosophical works of the twentieth century. The work catapulted Lonergan to the front ranks of Catholic philosophers and fostered a movement dedicated to the advance and application of his method. Now, almost fifty

years later, outside of this still flourishing circle of Lonergan enthusiasts, *Insight* is virtually ignored in mainstream philosophy. In this respect, Lonergan's work resembles that of two of his contemporaries, Eric Voegelin and Karl Jaspers, whose work has been perhaps unjustly overshadowed by Heidegger's and Sartre's. In Lonergan's case, despite the existence of an extensive secondary literature, his influence has seldom penetrated beyond Catholic circles. Is the problem that his philosophy is too explicitly Catholic? Does his work as a theologian prejudice its consideration by secular philosophy? In any case, as Mathews argues, Lonergan's work has much to recommend it as an approach to many long-standing philosophical issues. One of the central claims of Mathews' book is that Lonergan's epistemology, rooted in an account of human cognition, overcomes the Kantian divide of thought and reality.

Organized under the theme of 'intellectual desire', a central Lonergan notion, the book is a study of Lonergan's own intellectual desire to overcome the Kantian divide, his steady intellectual development in this quest, and its ultimate success in the completion of *Insight*. While it owes a debt to the previous efforts of Richard Liddy (*Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan*) and Frederick Crowe (*Lonergan*), Mathews' study is a much expanded account. Nearly half the volume is devoted to Lonergan's intellectual growth prior to the writing of *Insight*. It was during this extensive period of preparation that Lonergan grappled with key issues in the philosophy of mind, epistemology, and metaphysics that would inform *Insight*. Mathews examines the early influence of Newman and J. S. Mill, which predated by some years Lonergan's interest in Aristotle and Aquinas. He highlights Lonergan's self-conscious efforts to open up the scholastic tradition to the advances of empirical science and historical scholarship. He examines Lonergan's early efforts to develop, as an alternative to liberal capitalism and to Marxism, a philosophy of history and an economic theory. He examines in detail Lonergan's two interpretive studies of Aquinas, *Grace and Freedom* and *Verbum*. Especially welcome is Mathews' examination of the well-known lectures at the Thomas More Institute in the 1940s, where Lonergan tried out many of the ideas central to the argument of *Insight*.

The heart of Mathews' book, however, is his account of the writing of *Insight*. Based on the archival evidence, Mathews convincingly establishes the order of composition, and effectively details the steps in the development of the work. He argues that Lonergan's discussion of the notions of judgment, self-affirmation, being, and objectivity (chapters 9-13) was written first. It was here that Lonergan established his basic position that knowledge of reality is a matter of correctly understanding what is experienced, a position that, Mathews argues, meets the problem of the divide of thought and reality in Kant. For Lonergan the dynamics of thought and reality are isomorphic. Because of the central significance of the problem of the Kantian bridge in contemporary western philosophy, Lonergan's subtle argument here deserves serious consideration. Mathews does an excellent job of presenting Lonergan's case.



*Insight* is centrally a study of human understanding in its various forms. Mathews lays out Lonergan's considerable effort to differentiate scientific and common sense generalized empirical method, and provide a method for integrating the two. He then shows how Lonergan's basic positions on knowing, being, and objectivity ground the metaphysics, theory of interpretation, ethics, and philosophy of religion that form the last half of the volume. Worthy of special mention is Mathews' account of emergent probability. The theory is an impressive advance from Darwin's theory of evolution, that affirms the evolutionary fact but avoids its materialist foundations. Mathews also raises interesting questions about Lonergan's lack of attention to the role of memory in cognition, an observation that should interest Lonergan scholars.

The Catholic Lonergan went to great pains in *Insight* to address contemporary scientific and humanist culture on its own terms. He argues that the values of secular humanism find their adequate justification in acknowledging a reality that transcends the human. The last two chapters of *Insight* explore the philosophical foundations of this controversial claim. However, it is only in the epilogue that Lonergan addresses his own Catholic context. His sustained effort to meet the humanist on his or her own grounds must, at this writing, be judged a failure. This is not to say that his argument fails as philosophy, only that the argument has failed to persuade. Socrates also had a good point, even if his fellow Athenians, for the most part, were not impressed with it.

Mathews has done an excellent job of telling the story of *Insight*. The work is rich in biographical detail and nuanced analysis. It brings to life the man who argued for self-appropriation as a philosophical method, yet remained himself strangely hidden in his orderly and often impersonal writing style. It shows us the daring and the sacrifice involved in Lonergan's efforts to realize his dream of an integrated philosophical vision. Perhaps this book will provide the spark for relocating Lonergan's work into the mainstream of contemporary philosophy.

**Michael Shute**

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**Mohan Matthen**

*Seeing, Doing, Knowing: A Philosophical  
Theory of Sense Perception.*

Toronto and New York:

Oxford University Press 2005.

Pp. 384.

Cdn\$108.00/US\$74.00

(cloth: ISBN 0-19-926850-9);

US\$35.00 (paper: ISBN 0-19-920428-4).

In this book Matthen sets out and defends a complex theory of sense-perception, and more specifically, of visual perception. The theory is radical in that it challenges key assumptions and orthodoxies found not only in traditional philosophical approaches to perception but in many contemporary approaches in psychology, cognitive science, and philosophy. The book is very complex: it covers a wide range of topics and a lot of ground in each. His theory of colour vision forms a large part of the book, and the work, we should note, draws heavily and illuminatingly on much recent experimental and theoretical work in the neurosciences. His work is notable in the challenges it presents to a wide range of philosophers, including Gareth Evans, F. Dretske, and J. McDowell, as well as colour theorists such as A. Byrne, C. L. Hardin, and B. McLaughlin.

As Matthen points out, classical theories of perception assumed that sensation is 'innocent, that is, untainted by assumptions about the world'. It has been a dominant position, not only in classical philosophy, but in much of psychology and cognitive science as well, that conscious sensation is 'a passive record of energy patterns incident on sensory receptors' (13), and more particularly, that sensation is to be contrasted with perception of objects and their properties. In the tradition, we come by the latter when we impose concepts, innate or learned, on the materials presented by sensation. This view, Matthen points out, conflicts with the phenomenology of sensation, but the most compelling reason for rejecting this view is that 'it misconstrues the nature of visual processing in sense-organs and the brain'. (I should point out in passing that the weakest part of the book is its attributions to historical figures such as Descartes and empiricist philosophers. The distinction between sensation and perception owes more to Thomas Reid, who was a sharp critic of Descartes and the famous empiricists.)

There are two crucial aspects to Matthen's account of conscious visual experience (that is, sensation). The first relates to the process of sensory classification and sensory ordering, and is captured in what he calls 'The Sensory Classification Thesis': the sensory system, it is claimed, categorizes distal stimuli (objects) and in so doing, creates orders of similarities and differences, whereby groups of objects can be classified together. The process culminates in, say, an experience of blue, which is a 'label' signifying that the object has been classified in a certain way, that is, as blue. Matthen bases



his thesis of sensory classification on an analogue used initially by F. A. Hayek: the sensory system modelled on a machine that automatically sorts different balls into different receptacles and then attaches an arbitrary label to each receptacle so we can keep a record.

The second crucial aspect involves what is done by the organism with the label. Matthen's account of this is that the content of the visual state is relevant to the perceiver's actions, but more crucially to her epistemic actions. Matthen makes a crucial distinction between motor-guiding vision and descriptive vision, types of vision which are linked to different kinds of action, motor and epistemic. Motor-guiding vision is involved in controlling our limbs, and seems to locate objects in space in agent-centred terms: it is directly connected with bodily orientation with respect to environmental objects, with reaching, grasping, and physical manipulation, of objects. Descriptive vision, on the other hand, is connected with scene-centred representations of the world: it makes us aware of qualities that objects possess independently of perceivers. Our conscious visual states, it is held, present us with an assembled message, a message that has a descriptive element as well as a referential one. Motor-guiding vision is responsible for the latter: the referential element of visual states 'constitutes a kind of direct connection between perceiver and distal object and creates a feeling of reality of presence'.

Matthen has much to say about the details of sensory classification and sensory ordering, especially about the details of neuroscience, that is stimulating, highly informative, and persuasive. What is hard to see, however, is why he draws some of his major philosophical conclusions. At this level, there seem to be unresolved difficulties. Some critics would be sceptical that the senses deliver any message at all. Matthen's claim is, 'Our grasp of the relationship between such labels and the sense-features with which they are associated is intuitive and innate: we don't have to learn that the sensation of something's looking blue means that it has been assigned to blue rather than to orange. This connection is innate, not empirically discovered' (147). However, this claim raises the question: what is the sense of 'blue' involved? If the relevant epistemic actions involve *linguistic* concepts, e.g., inferences using the colour terms of natural language, 'blue', 'yellow', and 'colour' itself, then the message delivered by the sensory system will have to have the same, or a closely linked, sense. But then it is highly unlikely that this is the sense of 'blue' which the sensory system is categorizing stimuli as having. And it is surely not the linguistic sense that we innately and intuitively know. On the other hand, it is possible that the relevant epistemic actions Matthen has in mind are of a different sort, ones that involve *non-linguistic* concepts. For example, the epistemic practices may be ones in which one discriminates an object from its background, or matches two different objects, or acts with respect to an object, on the basis of having the visual state. But for such epistemic practices, it is hard to see why we need a message at all. Surely the perceiver can use the 'label' itself, i.e., the visual state.

Matthen has responded, implicitly, to these kinds of objections. He emphasises that the 'labels' — the sensations of blue — are arbitrary: he calls

them 'conventional signals' and likens them to words in a language. He argues that those who think that the labels have similarities and differences that match the similarities and differences of the sensed features (the categories assigned to the classes of objects) are confused. They forget that the labels for a range of features do not have to share the relationships that hold among the features themselves. However, Matthen also forgets something: that while the labels do not have to match what they represent, it is possible, nevertheless, that they do match — and moreover, there may be good reason why they should do so. Indeed conventional signals may be chosen so that they do match. When I, a resident of a smallish Australian city, visit New York, I find it very helpful to discover that the street I am walking along has the label '44<sup>th</sup> street', especially if I am heading for 88<sup>th</sup> Street, and my hotel is on 32<sup>nd</sup> Street. I know that the good people of New York could have arranged the street names differently. They could have put 5th Avenue between 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and 109<sup>th</sup> Street — but they didn't, and I know that they wouldn't. Likewise, natural selection might have found it very beneficial to favour labels that match the properties represented, and for the matching to facilitate the representing.

This point raises problems for another argument that Matthen uses. Many philosophers claim, for example, that sense-features are "response-dependent", meaning thereby that it is constitutive of *red* that it evokes a certain sensation in us' (26). He points out, in criticism, that if the Sensory Classification Thesis is correct, then this is an inversion: 'things are not classified as red because they look red (under normal circumstances); instead they look red because the visual system has determined that they are so'. Surely, however, these philosophers could reply that the Sensory Classification thesis is compatible with their view. The two theories are addressing different concepts of red, and different properties. If the Sensory Classification Thesis is correct, then the distal objects which the sensory system classifies together will share an important property in common: the disposition to produce the red-indicating label. Perhaps it is different from the attribute which the sensory system treats as *red*. So be it. It is still an important property. At best, this will mean there are two interesting kinds of colour. In any case, if the sensed feature is defined as what 'is shared by members of the class of stimuli' classified by the label, there is an extra feature besides the one Matthen claims to be identified, namely, the disposition to produce a certain distinctive label, the one characteristic to that class.

Matthen has produced a highly informed and informative book, and even if his most radical philosophical theses are not established, the work is very impressive.

**Barry Maund**

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**Georg Meggle, ed.**

*Ethics of Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism.*

Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag 2005. Pp. 345.

US\$98.95 (cloth: ISBN 3-937202-68-4).

This very useful book is a long anthology of twenty-two essays from a conference in Bielefeld, Germany in October 2002. It appears to have been motivated by the 9/11 attacks on the United States. The main topics are the definition of terrorism, its evaluation under just war theory, and how it may be legitimately resisted. There are also useful discussions of the rhetoric of terrorism; distinctions between terrorism, political assassination, and guerilla warfare; and the implications of the fight against terrorism for civil liberties, executive power, and international law. There is a lot of analysis — and a lot of outrage.

I can only summarize its main lessons in this brief review. One lesson concerns the definition of 'terrorism'. It is often thought to be a merely rhetorical term — one person's terrorist is another's freedom fighter. This is a mistake. A core definition emerges from these essays, albeit with some disagreement about secondary issues. The authors agree that terrorism: 1) involves violence against people who are morally or legally immune to violence (non-combatants, innocents, people who have not forfeited their basic rights to life and security), 2) has political ends (distinguishing it from crime), 3) aims to achieve these ends by terrifying ordinary citizens so their governments will take political action, and 4) is *prima facie* morally unjustified because of 1). Even so, questions remain.

Who is immune from attack (munitions makers, political leaders, soldiers not currently engaged in conflict, etc.)? Can a state engage in terrorism? The United States officially defines terrorism as the actions of sub-national groups, but states can and do engage in actions which fit the core definition. Why confine terrorism to non-state actors? First, the word is in fact used that way. Second, according to the *Jus ad Bellum* account of just war only legitimate authorities may wage war, which can be taken to imply that the actions of legitimate states cannot be terrorist. These arguments can be challenged, but in the long run the semantics do not matter. If a state intentionally targets innocent people, it commits a great evil, a war crime, a crime against humanity. Refusing to label the fire-bombing of Dresden terrorism makes it no less evil. Whether or not state terrorism exists, the more important question concerns what is morally wrong in the conduct of war.

How can we fight terrorism? Consider tracking down terrorists and attacking them militarily, especially through air power. Since non-state terrorists often live among civilians, such tactics are likely to kill non-combatants too. *Jus in Bello* allows the unintended deaths of non-combatants (so called 'collateral damage'), so long as proportionality is respected: the number of non-combatant deaths must be small enough to be justified by the benefits of the attack. Counter-terrorist military attacks greatly risk violating proportionality and thus becoming terrorism. Israeli attacks on alleged Palestinian terrorists have frequently violated proportionality; U.S. military

strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan faces the same problem. Countries fighting terrorism may declare that they target only military objectives, but if they kill large numbers of civilians they will not be believed, and this will only strengthen the terrorists. This common theme of the anthology is — unfortunately — neglected by western governments claiming to fight terrorism.

Another important theme is the rhetoric of terrorism. Should the current fight against terrorists like Al Qaeda be considered a war? This rhetorical move, taken by the U.S., permits acts that would not be justified if they were police actions against criminals. Thomas Kapitan argues with great passion that Western powers use the rhetoric of terrorism to justify their own military terrorism. They have falsely labeled actions of enemies terrorist while excusing friends from terrorist accusations for similar actions. U.S. policy after 9/11 stipulates that that all countries must either stand with it or against it. This has allowed the U.S. to make deals with unjust authoritarian regimes that label those who rebel against them as terrorists. Many contributors argue that military assaults on terrorists and resulting civilian casualties have done much to increase terrorism, rather than curtail it. The war on terrorism has also led to restrictions on civil and political liberties, and to the weakening of the Geneva convention prohibitions against torture and degrading treatment. Good discussions of these problems can be found in the papers by Tomas Kapitan, Igor Primoratz, Rudiger Bittner, Carolyn Emcke, Ralf Groetker, Laurence Lustgarten, Thomas Mertens, Filimon Peonidis, and Veronique Zanetti.

Finally: Can terrorism ever be justified? Terrorism is *prima facie* unjustified because it violates the *Jus in Bello*, which prohibits attacks on non-combatants. Good discussions of this issue are provided by Meggle, Kapitan, Primoratz, Per Bauhn, Tony Coady, Haig Khatchadourian, Peter Simpson, and Uwe Steinhoff. Alesksander Pavkovic and Olaf Mueller try to describe situations that might justify it, but these situations are very improbable in real life. Seumas Miller criticizes the tendency of terrorists to hold those against whom they are acting collectively responsible for injustices against their own group, and Marcelo Dascal criticizes the claim that terrorists are engaged in a form of communication. Charles Webel gives a good account of the effects of terrorism on those terrorized. Daniel Messelken gives a workable account of the distinction between terrorism and guerilla warfare.

I repeat: this is a very useful anthology. Nevertheless, I have two reservations. Only some of the contributors have taken advantage of the three years since the conference to update their essays by including the war in Iraq, a crucial case, especially for issues concerning counter-terrorism. The book is also very expensive, so only some libraries are likely to buy it. Further, since it is a book, not a journal, the articles will likely not be available for download through electronic data-bases. Few people will thus come to know about the book or the papers in it. This is unfortunate. I suggest a smaller volume of selected essays at a lower price would have been even more useful.

**Bruce Landesman**

University of Utah



**Heinrich Meier**

*Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem.*

Trans. Marcus Brainard.

New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Pp. xv + 183.

US\$60.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-85647-7);

US\$24.99 (paper: ISBN 0-521-69945-2).

This book identifies what, Meier claims, is the unity of Leo Strauss' work: exploration of the conditions under which philosophy itself may or may not be possible. In light of historicism, Strauss discovered that philosophy, as a self-critical enterprise, was no longer possible, and it was his intention to recover political philosophy as the only means by which to defend the philosophic life against the claims of theology and political theology. To buttress his argument about Strauss' intention, Meier includes in the book two unpublished lectures given by Strauss: 'The Living Issues in German Postwar Philosophy' (1940) and 'Reason and Revelation' (1948).

In his 'Preface to the American Edition' Meier reflects on recent political criticisms of Strauss' influence on contemporary politics, and critically examines Strauss' purposeful founding of a 'school', which he characterizes as a risky political decision. While students of Strauss' 'school' engage in actions that exert a 'salutary influence on behalf of philosophy in the commonwealth', they risk transforming his true teaching into a doctrine that suppresses philosophic questioning. Worse, in accommodating philosophy to a particular regime they make philosophy the handmaiden of that regime.

Meier divides the rest of the book into four chapters, the first of which, 'The Theologico-Political Problem: on the Theme of Leo Strauss' has three separate sub-chapters: 'The Theologico-Political Problem', 'On the Genealogy of Faith in Revelation', and 'Death as God: A Note on Martin Heidegger'. The second chapter is 'The History of Philosophy and the Intention of the Philosopher: Reflections on Leo Strauss'. The third chapter is titled 'What is Political Theology?' and the last is 'Why Political Philosophy?' While Chapters 1 and 2 constitute commentaries on writings of Strauss, Chapters 3 and 4 reflect Meier's own thinking. Like Strauss, he uses commentaries on the works of another to present his own philosophy.

Meier's three-part first chapter is a 'history' of Strauss' 'discovery' of the theologico-political 'problem'. Strauss' studies of the medieval Arabic and Jewish philosophers led him to an epiphany: these philosophers, confronting the political force of theology and divine law, engaged in the art of esoteric writing, simultaneously philosophizing and defending philosophy against suppression by theology and the laws of the theocracies. Meier demonstrates how uniquely Strauss defended philosophy against revelation. He strengthened philosophy's claim to being the right way of life by making its opponent as strong as it was philosophically possible, and then constructing a genealogy of faith in divine revelation. In doing so, however, Strauss discovered

that philosophy cannot refute, on philosophic grounds, the truth claims of revelation, particularly God's unfathomability. Further, while defending philosophy against revelation, Strauss unexpectedly discovered that the experience of the philosopher is not entirely other than the experience of 'revelation' of the prophet or lawgiver. Each, in his way, experiences 'revelation', the philosopher by means of a *daimonic* intuition. The true nature of the difference between philosophy and revelation therefore had to be re-examined.

Central to this enterprise is Strauss' critique of Heidegger's transformation of the idea of conscience and, thus, our humanity. The modern critique of revealed religion led to the transformation of conscience grounded on 'sin' to conscience grounded in the will to probity, which seeks to negate all form of security provided by religion. Heidegger's deconstruction of the philosophic tradition radicalized the will to probity, and led him to redefine our humanity as 'being-towards-death'. After Heidegger, morality was no longer based on knowledge but on fortitude in the face of what is most painful and the negation of anything that provides security. Strauss saw that this change rendered philosophy incapable of demonstrating its own rightness and necessity.

Heidegger's deconstruction also led him to conclude that philosophers of the past could not be understood as they understood themselves, but only 'creatively' — that is, historically. Meier's second chapter demonstrates how Strauss answered Heidegger. By focusing on the philosopher's dual intentions, he argues, Strauss saw that it is possible to discern both their exoteric and esoteric thoughts, and, in examining both, understand them as they understood themselves and discern that all philosophers share a common 'nature', one that moves them to live a philosophic life.

To demonstrate that in our time the philosophic life remains threatened, Meier devotes the final two chapters to political theology and political philosophy. In Chapter 3, he demonstrates how Carl Schmitt, in defending political theology against Bakunin's critique of it, transformed all political theories, including atheistic ones, into forms of political theology. This transformation, along with a characterization of all other political theologies as enemies worthy of destruction, forced philosophy to turn, once again, to political philosophy as the only way to defend the security of the philosophic life. Meier's defense of political philosophy is grounded on Aristophanes' critique of the pre-Socratic Socrates, the philosopher of nature and language. Socrates, in the face of the critique, 'turned' to political philosophy. After his 'turn' to political philosophy, Socrates became the Socrates portrayed in the Platonic dialogues. His 'turn' towards ideas constituted his second 'turn', and reveals that the life of Platonic Socrates involves two separate and contradictory elements that are never resolved.

When Nietzsche criticized the Platonic Socrates as the 'theoretical man', he turned the Platonic Socrates back into the pre-Socratic Socrates, leaving intact the belief that the political can be elucidated only in light of 'first principles', that is, metaphysics. Such an understanding of Platonism denies



the dignity of the knowledge which grows out of human sufferings revealed in the Greek tragedies. Strauss saw it was necessary to recover that knowledge as part of the philosophic quest. In recovering it, he concluded that 'true Platonists' are philosophers who recognize the necessity of engaging in political philosophy as part of the philosophic life.

Because of its radical questioning of much of contemporary philosophy, this book is very worthy of being read and philosophically questioned.

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**Stephen Mulhall**

*Philosophical Myths of the Fall.*

Princeton, NJ:

Princeton University Press 2005.

160 Pp.

US\$29.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-691-12220-2).

One would expect a book entitled *Philosophical Myths of the Fall* to focus, at least in part, on philosophical understandings of the fall, like that of Paul Tillich in his *Systematic Theology*. Mulhall, however, is not interested in such interpretations of Christian doctrine, for they remain, despite explicit philosophical commitments (in Tillich's case, for example, to existentialism), primarily theological in nature. Instead, he concerns himself almost exclusively with post-Enlightenment *secular* myths of the fall, and in particular, those he wishes to attribute to Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein. Mulhall's contention is that all three of the aforementioned (atheist) philosophers want 'to preserve a recognizable descendent of the Christian conception of human nature as always already averting us from the relation to truth, comprehension, and clarity that is nevertheless our birthright ... and yet redeemable from that fallen state' while also 'refusing to accept that such redemption is attainable only from a transcendent or divine source' (11). There's just one catch: none of them ever wrote anything about the fall!

Much of this intriguing book is therefore devoted to establishing the credibility of the reading in question. Yet as Elizabeth S. Goodstein noted in her perceptive review of the book in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (18 January 2006), Mulhall's arguments 'tend to move by suggestions, allusions, and metaphoric extensions and inversions and to end in rhetorically open questions rather than absolute claims.' Consequently, I think it would be best to avoid reading the book as an attempt to prove that the picture on offer amounts to *the* correct way to read Friedrich, Martin, and Ludwig, despite

the fact that Mulhall's tone is often authoritative rather than merely suggestive. (For example, at the end of his exegetical chapter on Heidegger he concludes firmly that 'this conception of the enigmatically perverse animality of the human is plainly a concise reading of the Christian myth of the Fall' (84).) I would suggest, instead, that as with his 2001 book *On Film*, in which he ingeniously relates several philosophical concerns to various themes explored by the numerous writers, directors, and producers of the *Alien* *Quadrilogy*, we might do well to view Mulhall's efforts here as a creative exercise which successfully manages to walk a very fine line between exegesis and projection. During this process, Mulhall reveals illuminating threads and connections that will keep the reader on her toes, not least because of the freshness he brings to texts whose interpretations are in danger of going stale.

Mulhall also devotes considerable space to exploring the extent to which the views which he attributes to his subjects can enjoy a coherent survival while remaining detached from their deistic origins. His overall answer is a negative one, for despite painting a picture in which Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein each reproduce their own unique secular variation of the fall, there is a strong sense in which this effort is coupled with the suggestion that their philosophies are thus perhaps best comprehended in the light of a Christian (or at the very least a quasi-Christian) framework. So understood, these secular visions of the fall are in danger of sooner or later lapsing into forms of crypto-Christianity. Certainly in the case of Nietzsche the verdict appears to be that the philosophy of this self-professed 'anti-Christ' ultimately requires us to adopt modes of thinking that are Christian, all too Christian.

There is also a more general question: 'can one say what the Christian has to say about the human condition as fallen, and yet mean it otherwise?' (13). But there is no one thing that 'the Christian' has to say about the human condition. I find it at best awkward — and at worst perverse — that one should attempt to answer such a question without touching on any of the theological disputes surrounding the doctrine of the fall. To be sure there are references to Augustine, Aquinas, and Kierkegaard here and there, and even one to St. Paul, but little attempt to engage with centuries of literature and debate, between churches and individuals alike, about how to understand the Christian doctrine of the fall.

Mulhall is not unaware of these debates that he, nevertheless, largely ignores. In the chapter on Nietzsche, while discussing the notion of Godforsakenness, he writes that an orthodox way of understanding it (and the meaning of words typically associated with it in Christianity) 'is not always as current, or as dominating, in the Church's present self-understanding as it might be. In fact one might argue that the recovery of this aspect of Christian faith by theologians over the course of the twentieth century — a project whose main stages might be associated with Barth, Moltmann, and Jungel — was itself in large part a response to Nietzsche's critique of Christianity, and to its impact on thinkers such as Heidegger and Sartre'



(31). This is a perceptive suggestion which may well harbour much truth, but the issue at hand, while significant to the doctrine of the atonement, is only peripheral to the myth of the fall. No doubt original sin and atonement are interrelated, but this simply raises the question of whether Nietzsche et. al might not be equally — if not more — interested in atonement. For example, one can easily accept the old news that ‘Christianity is in possession of at least some of the right words for what Wittgenstein has it at heart to say’ (cf. Norman Malcolm’s *Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?*, p. 117, which the author does not discuss), without attributing to him the view that all human beings stand — by virtue of being human — in need of redemption.

Nevertheless, I think that Mulhall is right that *if*, as he maintains, ‘these philosophers find that we are flawed in our very structure and constitution — not only naturally capable, or even disposed, to act in ways that go against our best interests and deepest nature, but always already turned against ourselves by virtue of what makes us human’ (118), then they cannot do so without their vision losing its secularity. For unless we give the notion of our ‘deepest nature’ a theological interpretation, it is unclear how we can sensibly contrast this with the thing that ‘makes us human’ that is claimed to oppose it. All in all, however, this remains an impressive book that raises important new questions about the thought of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein, and does an admirable job of trying to answer them.

### **Constantine Sandis**

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### **Jean-Luc Nancy**

*Multiple Arts: The Muses II.*

Simon Sparks, ed. Trans. Leslie Hill et al.

Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2006.

Pp. xvii + 270.

US\$65.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8047-3953-6);

US\$24.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8047-3954-4).

*Multiple Arts* gathers together in one volume a range of previously untranslated essays by Nancy on the question of art and artistic production. These include essays on poetry and literature more generally, on photography, painting, and sculpture. As in the first volume of *The Muses* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1996), and as the title of this volume makes clear, Nancy is concerned above all to elaborate a philosophical account of art that stresses its irreducible plurality. For Nancy art has no assumptive unity. Indeed he affirms that ‘There is no such thing as art as such; there is always

art as the plurality of arts' (107). Nancy addresses this plurality of the arts from the perspective of his wider philosophical concerns, namely his ontology of sense, his thinking of the singular plurality of being, of spatiality, temporality, and what might be termed 'originary technicity'.

Throughout his meditations on the arts Nancy is interested in untying the existence of the artwork from any logic of representation according to which the images or forms of art could be said to copy or mirror an external reality that would be secure in its self-identity or presence. To this extent his thinking may appear to be no different from the large body of French critical and philosophical writing which can be associated with anti-realism and the critique of representation in the latter half of the twentieth century, a body which would include, amongst many others, the work of Blanchot, Derrida, Barthes, the *nouveaux romanciers*, and the *Tel Quel* group. Yet the interest and originality of Nancy's work in this area lies in the way in which he continues to think the relation between objects of art and the world of sense and meaning within which they are produced. He does this by emphasizing the technical dimension of artistic production and the status of the artwork as production, that is, as artefact, or as something that is made. In this context Nancy returns to the Greek term, *technē poietikē*. Art here is '*Technē poietikē*' productive technique. This technique, this art, this calculated operation, this procedure, this artifice, produces something not with a view to something else or to a use, but with a view to its production alone, its exposition. The production of the thing brings it forth, presents and exposes it' (191). Nancy's thinking here can be associated with a long line of artists, critics, and philosophers in France who, from the first part of the nineteenth-century onwards, sought to dissociate the artwork from utility or use-value, whether of rigid moral codes or of specific projects of political engagement. Its originality, though, lies in the manner in which he articulates the production of art as a form of 'exposition', of presentation or exposure. For Nancy the works of art are not representational, but they do present or expose something in a manner which modes of production tied to utility or instrumentality do not.

In his important essay on the Japanese artist, On Kawara, he aligns the presentation of the work of art with the mode of presentation by which the world itself comes to present itself to us: 'Poetic technique is geared towards presenting this present, toward "re-presenting" it. Not, however, in the sense of a copying or a recopying, since there is nothing here that could be copied, but in the sense of a bringing forth, a putting forward. On Kawara's art — and perhaps this is true of all art — is geared towards bringing forth what remains buried, towards setting what is outside the world in the world' (200). In this difficult sentence Nancy both distances his understanding of artistic presentation from any traditional logic of representation, and yet at the same time he reaffirms an operation by which art presents an image or form which is deeply implicated in worldly existence, an image or form which touches on something outside the world as it presents itself in the world. Yet what is this something?



The answer for Nancy is always the sense of the world itself, the singular and plural opening of sense which is, or makes, a world. Nancy here is drawing on the ontology of sense which he developed in the 1990s, according to which we can think the multiplicity of being and of worldly existence only as the always already givenness of sense. It is as sense that the world is made manifest for, or available to, us as an intelligible environment of things, activities, and possible interactions. Yet for Nancy sense is always presupposed by conscious intentionality or cognition, and is therefore in each instance withdrawn within the appearance of things, is an ungraspable excess, is that which exceeds the phenomenon in the phenomenon itself, or as he puts it here, 'Sense is a surplus, an excess, the excess of being in relation to being itself' (7). In this context the multiplicity of sense exists prior to signification (seen as a function of language or as the relation of a signifier to a signified), but as such it is also the truth of the world, that which the world *is*.

For Nancy the question posed, here and elsewhere, is 'How sense is measured' (21) or 'how to accede to this excess' (7). It is here that the technical production of art finds its privilege. These essays engage with both 'an ontology of sense and a technology of the arts' (21) in order to highlight the manner in which the presentation of artistic forms and images are disengaged from signification and representation, but, at the same time, are necessarily engaged with the excess of sense. Just as the forms and things of the world present themselves in the withdrawal of the sense that they are, so the forms of art appear also in the presentation and withdrawal of sense, the sense that is or makes a world. Art here does not copy but rather is: 'the strict observance of the thing, its presence, without the slightest approximation. The thing is not approached, nor is it approximated to anything else: it remains in its elsewhere, the distance of its being, its passing' (99).

These essays are a welcome contribution to the body of Nancy's work that now exists in English. They demonstrate with clarity and rigor the manner in which, for Nancy, the multiplicity of the arts never ceases to touch on, or to expose, the multiplicity of finite worldly existence.

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**Christopher Norris**

*Epistemology: Key Concepts in Philosophy.*

New York: Continuum 2005.

Pp. viii + 210.

US\$89.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8264-7732-1);

US\$16.95 (paper: ISBN 0-252-07265-0).

The distinctive feature of this introduction to epistemology is that it is designed, 'not so much to work on a straightforward coverage principle with the various concepts, that is to say, the various schools or movements of epistemological enquiry, laid out for inspection in a style of judiciously neutral or non-partisan treatment. Rather it is to flag the salient issues as and when they arise in the course of an argument that engages those issues from a definite and clearly articulated critical viewpoint' (17). The central issue around which the book is structured is the debate between realism and anti-realism about truth: the question of 'how far statements of a certain type, mathematical, scientific, ethical, historical, etc., should be thought of as possessing an objective truth-value (perhaps unbeknown to us) or rather as subject to varying kinds or degrees of 'warranted assertibility' (4). Over the course of discussing this question, Norris aims to defend the objective 'realist' answer — the claim that the truth value a particular statement has is determined by 'the way things stand in reality' (25).

Chapter 1 focuses on the realism/anti-realism debate from a Dummettian point of view. Here, Norris both criticizes the anti-realist position, rehearsing considerations about the kinds of counter-intuitive claim the anti-realist ends up making, and indicates the direction that his defence of realism will take. Chapter 2 then goes over the debate from a philosophy of science perspective, and further develops the defence of realism. The remainder of the book then takes up related issues. In Chapter 3, Norris turns to the work of 'continental' philosophers, such as Husserl, Duhem, Koyré, and Bachelard, arguing that not only have these philosophers been discussing the same issues as 'analytic' epistemologists and philosophers of science, but that analytic philosophers could learn a lot by studying the work of such figures. Interestingly, whilst welcoming the recent moves by philosophers like McDowell and Brandom to pay more attention to figures such as Kant and Hegel, Norris also displays a certain impatience with what he finds to be their failure to pay adequate attention to the work of those 'continental' philosophers who followed them. Chapter 4 then discusses and rejects a purported 'third way' alternative to both realism and anti-realism, the response-dependence theories of Crispin Wright and others, and Chapter 5 takes a similar attitude towards virtue-based approaches to epistemology.

Norris' defence of realism begins with the claim that the anti-realist argument against the thesis rests on a false dilemma: that 'one can *either* have the notion of objective, verification-transcendent truths (in which case, by very definition, they cannot be known), *or* a scaled-down epistemic conception that redefines 'truth' in keeping with the scope and limits of



knowability, but surely not both' (34). In this light, a defence of realism would therefore require a reconciliation of realism about truth with the very possibility of knowledge. Very briefly, and as I understand it (it is a far from simple doctrine), Norris' attempt to provide such a resolution begins with a broadly transcendental argument that takes, as its starting point, consideration of 'the very possibility of scientific knowledge and progress in general', and contends that, through this, we can come to know both that knowledge aims at truth, conceived of in a fully realist sense, and also that truth, so understood, nevertheless 'might always — now as to heretofore — transcend or surpass our utmost epistemic powers' (64). Then, to show how we could nonetheless be said to have knowledge of the mind-independent reality this transcendental argument furnishes us with, Norris draws our attention to the 'dynamic reciprocity between physical processes, laws of nature and the various ways in which these become manifest through experiment, observation and theory' (64) claiming that, once this is taken into account, we can see that, whilst our epistemic access to reality is conditioned by the kinds of experiments we perform and observations we make, it is nonetheless that very mind-independent reality that we thereby gain epistemic access to.

As this brief overview of the book suggests, and as Norris acknowledges, 'the entire debate [is] viewed as a range of positions taken up with regard to the basic issue between realism and scepticism concerning the existence of an 'external' (objective or mind-independent) world' (166). Now the advantage of this focus on realism and anti-realism is that the text does a useful job in bringing out the extent to which issues in epistemology are importantly connected to issues in metaphysics and ontology and in particular, highlighting the fact that questions about the status of truth are important questions for epistemology. It is also a nice feature to have one's attention drawn to some of the work done on these topics by philosophers from the continental tradition.

On the other hand, I found that this focus, together with the complexity of the positive thesis Norris defends, led to the book's being very challenging — probably more so than it ought to be for a series that is, according to the jacket blurb, aimed at meeting 'the needs of students and those with little prior knowledge of the subject'. In addition, the concentration on realism and anti-realism leads to a somewhat idiosyncratic coverage of the issues, such that a number of the topics that one might expect to find in an epistemology book aimed at beginners — topics such as Gettier counter-examples, foundationalism and coherentism, internalism and externalism, and so on — are not covered in any great detail. For these reasons I felt that whilst the text could possibly be a useful addition to a reading list for a higher level course on epistemology, its challenging nature together with the somewhat non-standard coverage means that I would be hesitant to set it for a more introductory course.

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**Nicholas Rescher**

*Philosophical Dialectics:*

*An Essay on Metaphilosophy.*

Albany:

State University of New York Press 2006.

Pp. vii + 107.

US\$40.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-7914-6745-7).

Nicholas Rescher correctly claims early on in this book that the philosophy of philosophy has been neglected in the current craze of 'philosophy of inquiries'. Rescher intends to remedy at least part of this neglect. The book contains not only an introduction to some principal themes specific to metaphilosophy, but also his distinct position. In the end one is presented with the rough brushstrokes of a theory of metaphilosophy.

Familiar philosophical concepts are discussed at length: distinctions, consistency, Occam's Razor. In combining all these concepts together, Rescher posits the metaphilosophical concept of apory, which is 'a group of contentions that are individually plausible but collectively inconsistent' (17). According to Rescher, framing philosophy in the apory is the best way to conceive of its development. Rescher's fundamental metaphilosophical point is that philosophy progresses dialectically. This, briefly, is how Rescher views the philosophical process: the philosopher has a position; it is extended and critically evaluated until finally the position is faced with an inconsistency (i.e., an apory) that needs to be resolved; the apory forces the philosopher to take up a position — a forced choice. Many enlightening examples of apory appear throughout the book. Consider the following:

1. All knowledge is 'grounded in observation' (19).
2. From empirical facts we cannot get at values.
3. Real knowledge about values is possible.

From this undeveloped recognition of an apory, and in want of consistency, the philosopher has but two choices.

First, one of the contradictory claims can be abandoned. The philosopher can reject 3, the claim that knowledge of values is possible, and fall in line with Positivism and value skepticism. The philosopher may instead choose to reject 1, that all knowledge is grounded in observation, or 2, that from observation we cannot get at any sort of values. Depending on which point the philosopher abandons, a distinct philosophical position will emerge.

Secondly, the philosopher can instead (or also) introduce a helpful distinction, thereby generating consistency by adding another, more fastidious, contention or two. For instance, consider the following apory:

1. All events are caused.
2. If an action issues from free choice, then it is causally unconstrained.
3. Free will exists — people can and do make and act upon free choices.

How can we achieve consistency? As Rescher points out, we can simply reject 2. However, we can also divide it into two separate claims, accepting one and rejecting the other to alleviate the inconsistency. For instance, we



could distinguish between internal and external causes, so that our new theses would look like this:

2.1. Actions based on free choice are unconstrained by external causes.

2.2. Actions based on free choice are unconstrained by internal causes.

After distinguishing between these two claims, we can reject 2.2, keep 2.1, and achieve consistency.

Much of Rescher's reflection on the nature of contradictory claims and the usefulness of distinctions is deeply intuitive to anyone familiar with philosophy. At times, some of Rescher's claims seem to saddle up next to concepts thrown around in a practical logic class. Indeed, Rescher dedicates an entire chapter to examining a set of metaphilosophical fallacies. One of the most important is the Fallacy of Respect Neglect, which is 'treating as a single uniform unit something that in fact involves a diversified plurality of diversified issues' (45). An example is the concept of equality. Equality, as Rescher points out, can be formulated in different guises, which means appeals to equality always need to be contextualized.

Before reading this book, I was unfamiliar with the notion of apory, but I think it is a fruitful way to conceive of philosophical development. Rescher is exceptional in his presentation of certain apories, especially in showing how rejecting different contentions yields markedly different philosophical positions. For Rescher, philosophy is inexorably engaged in critique and re-evaluation. With the weight of philosophical law, he states, 'Any given philosophical position, at any particular stage in its development will, if developed further, encounter inconsistencies' (81). If one assents to this principle, the efficacy of apory becomes palpable. Furthermore, the principle challenges the metaphilosophical claim that philosophy has now, or can at some future junction, come to a finish.

At the outset I stated that the book presents a well-defined metaphilosophical position. This is true, though the compactness of the book precludes Rescher from fully explicating and defending his more controversial theses. This is somewhat perplexing given that chapters 1, 2, and 4 are identical to, or extended versions of, articles previously published. That said, keep in mind that there is an explicit pragmatic slant to the ascertainment and application of metaphilosophical principles. This, coupled with his repeated appeal to simplicity and Occam's Razor, is in line with Rescher's cognitive pragmatism. The upshot of this recognition is that other ways of doing philosophy, continental philosophy for instance, are not always adequately explained under Rescher's rubric. Indeed, there is a serious lack of rival metaphilosophical positions presented in the book. To be fair, this was probably not Rescher's intention. However, for someone who claims philosophy progresses dialectically, an examination of viable competitors is expected.

A final note: while it is true that the philosophy of philosophy has been neglected, this may not merit the alarm Rescher expresses. Philosophy, more than any other discipline, is notoriously bound up in itself and its underlying assumptions. Consequently, a lot of metaphilosophical positions arise out the

same old machinery of metaphysics and epistemology. Metaphilosophical prescriptions, such as Quine's naturalized epistemology or Wittgenstein's forms of life, confirm the strong ties between a philosophy and its metaphilosophy. Nevertheless, the text is very accessible and the pithy nature of the controversial claims allows readers ample room to explore their own metaphilosophical convictions.

**Aaron Landry**

**David Roberts**

*Kierkegaard's Analysis of Radical Evil.*

New York: Continuum 2006.

Pp. xii + 162.

US\$120.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8264-8682-7).

As its title indicates, this book uses Kierkegaard to examine a specific dimension of the problem of evil — not the problem of 'natural' evils like disasters and disease, but the evil that arises freely and deliberately from a self-determined will. Roberts eschews the traditional solutions to this problem, which typically locate such evils 1) in a weakness of the will, or 2) in a lack of knowledge. Instead, Roberts argues that evil is 'something rather than nothing'. His point is not that evil is a substance, but rather that it occurs when the self posits evil in rebellion against God and/or the Good. As such, radical evil is a *position* rather than a negation or privation.

But if radical evil is neither the result of ignorance nor incontinence, how can we account for it as the deliberate positing of evil *qua* evil? Roberts contends that Kierkegaard's analysis of the self best accounts for this possibility. According to Kierkegaard, the self becomes itself in developing toward self-consciousness and freedom. Roberts extracts Kierkegaard's analysis primarily from *The Sickness Unto Death*, and grafts it onto the existence spheres (aesthetic, ethical, religious) as they appear in Kierkegaard's other pseudonymous writings. He then charts the development of the self through the various levels of despair, showing how the varieties of despair are ultimately different ways in which the self fails to become itself. As the self becomes more conscious of itself as a self, the attendant despair intensifies. When despair reaches its apex, the self turns against God, refuses to accept its given self as a task, and insists on being its own creator and master. Roberts proposes that the possibility of radical evil resides in this advanced state of selfhood. The reason this evil is not a privation or negation is that the self freely chooses to take a position in defiance of God.



According to Anti-Climacus, the pseudonymous author of *The Sickness Unto Death*, this intensification continues until despair is rooted out, and the self becomes itself in Christian faith. The faithful self is healed of the sickness unto death (i.e. despair), but Roberts never ventures into this territory, which is more overtly theological in nature. In one respect this decision is understandable, since Roberts' discussion focuses on the theme of radical evil rather than redemption. But this neglect is also somewhat perplexing, given Roberts' claim that Kierkegaard's 'only message' regarding defiance 'is that it must humble itself under its suffering, have faith in the goodness of God, and hold onto the hope that is against hope — the Paradox of the Incarnation' (149). Granted, neither Anti-Climacus nor Kierkegaard 'possess or control the clarifying word the defiant person needs' (149). But here Roberts does not discuss Part Two of the *Sickness* ... nor its companion piece, *Practice in Christianity*, where Anti-Climacus offers more robust reflections than Roberts suggests.

This book is probably best understood as an application of Kierkegaardian resources to a problem in the philosophy of religion, i.e., the problem of evil. The majority of the book is expository, which will be helpful for those who are interested in the problem of evil but are unfamiliar with Kierkegaard's writings. On this level Robert's exposition is good, since he expounds on the text with clarity and insight. Readers who are already versed in Kierkegaard, however, might find themselves inclined to skim large sections. As a contribution to Kierkegaard scholarship, Roberts could likely make the same basic moves in the form of an article rather than a book.

Two fundamental issues remain after reading this book: First, it is still not clear that Kierkegaard's texts support the claim that the self can attain 'authentic' selfhood, yet remain in despair (128). Roberts suggests that defiance and faith are both directions that authentic selfhood can take (125), but Anti-Climacus does not recognize the defiant self as truly being a self. On the contrary, it is precisely the defiant self's refusal to accept its given self that prevents its selfhood. Despite its efforts to be its own creator and master, it remains a king without a country. Here Roberts challenges Anti-Climacus, contending that the authentic, defiant self is in fact able to be 'a king *with* a country'. Roberts avers that Nietzsche is more insightful than Kierkegaard on this point, since he recognizes the reality of the 'great man' who strives to establish dominion not only over himself, but 'over the entire world' (135). No doubt there are strong, dominant, self-assured personalities that wield this sort of power and commit radically evil deeds. Yet surely this is Anti-Climacus' point: despite the undeniable existence of individuals like this, they are nevertheless in despair. The self-overcoming of the Nietzschean man is a prime example of the sort of self-making that Anti-Climacus precludes. Such 'selves' are not true selves, since they are not their own, given selves.

Secondly, one wonders about the scope of 'radical evil' as Roberts presents it. What qualifies as radical evil? Roberts rightly attends to the deliberate evil of defiant individuals, especially those responsible for genocide, serial

killings, and other atrocities. But his analysis gives the impression that radical evil might be limited to those who are at a relatively high level of self-development. 'Spiritless', inauthentic selves may commit evil, but their motives are pleasure, comfort, and security, which is why they are often highly suggestible, and willing to obey despots and other powerful persons (135). This is also true, but without wanting to minimize the shocking banality of evil, we should also ask whether these 'inauthentic' selves also initiate radical evil. It would be a mistake to underestimate the capacity for evil in even the most unimpressive of human beings. Thus it also strikes me as a mistake to identify radical evil with Anti-Climacus' definition of defiance. If Roberts errs in this regard, it is because his attempt to isolate the conditions of evil's possibility in this way does not account for the breadth of radical evil.

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**Yvonne Sherratt**

*Continental Philosophy of Social Science:  
Hermeneutics, Genealogy, and Critical Theory  
from Greece to the Twenty-First Century.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Pp. xii + 242.

US\$70.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-85469-5);

US\$24.99 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-67098-5).

With this book, Oxford philosopher Sherratt proposes to address a lacuna in the literature on the philosophy of the social sciences (PSS), by supplying the putatively first English-language book dedicated to the continental tradition in PSS. The book should be distinctive, she claims, in providing an overall study of what the continental tradition can uniquely bring to PSS, and accordingly, the book's three parts cover hermeneutics, Nietzsche's and Foucault's genealogical methods, and critical theory. The approach is historical, tracing the development of these areas through representative thinkers in each tradition. Brief summaries of key ideas are given for most, with a couple of more extended treatments for major figures. The first section traces the development of the notion of interpretation from Greek sources, through mediaeval Christianity, into eighteenth-, nineteenth- and twentieth-century hermeneutists such as Schleiermacher, Dilthey, and Gadamer. The historicism of Foucault's and Nietzsche's genealogical approach is the subject of a



reasonably detailed study in the second part. And finally, of course, the stars of critical theory, Adorno, Horkheimer, and Habermas, are covered in the final section. Mixed among the major figures is a nice selection of minor and more obscure figures. Overall, the book aims to provide an introductory text for a PSS course.

The feature that distinguishes continental PSS, according to Sherratt, is that it 'emerges from humanism' (8). Acknowledging this to be rather broad, she offers three points 'central to any definition of humanism': i) that it entails being in touch with our ancient ancestors, the Greeks and Romans; ii) that it holds that knowledge works through transmission, the accumulation of voices handed down over the centuries; iii) and that it holds a distinct notion of meaning, regarding society as intrinsically purposeful and meaning as a human creation (8-10). This humanism characterizes continental thought in giving it a distinct style of analysis (historical and textual), a distinct canon of texts, and an autonomous set of concerns (10-11). Sherratt proposes to illustrate the importance of a continental approach to PSS through these features.

However, despite the conclusion's assurances of a job accomplished, these stated objectives seem to have been quietly dropped in the body of the text, for as a brief glance at the index confirms, the references to humanism are confined to the introduction and conclusion. Perhaps this is just as well, for the three points in which humanism is cashed out seem to improve little on the vagaries of the term 'humanism'. Why, for example, awareness of the ancients (i) is crucial to, or distinctive of, humanism is unclear. The possible contrast with Christian theology is undermined by the suggestion that with proper attention to the Greeks, Christian thinkers too can claim humanist leanings (9). In any case, the only significant discussion of the Ancients turns out to be a review of secondary sources — a commentary on commentary, hardly adequate treatment for one of the three pillars of humanism. In Chapter 1, 'Knowledge by transmission' (ii) is rather unhelpfully contrasted with science's critical view of past knowledge, which is characterized as a 'creative destruction' of false meanings, leaving us presumably with humanism's indiscriminate accumulation of such (9). Further, it is difficult to say whether the notion of meaning presented is 'distinct' or not (iii), as neither the contrast with science as purely technical nor the characterization of humanism as regarding society as purposeful is given enough content to know when either claim is satisfied (9-10). Some contrast with the natural sciences is intended here, surely, but this is sustained primarily by studious inattention to what science actually does, as it so often is in such contexts.

One must also wonder how humanism so described distinguishes continental PSS from any other PSS. Are we to take seriously the suggestion that non-continental PSS does not regard society as intrinsically purposeful and meaningful, or that it rejects the importance of accumulating knowledge from the past (assuming some clear meaning to these claims)? That meaning is a human creation is not an unfamiliar theme in social theory, and neither can continental philosophy claim an exclusive relation to our Ancient ancestors. One

has to ask in what way non-continental PSS is lacking treatment of the approaches examined here. Hermeneutics and issues of interpretation are not in the least foreign to non-continental PSS, Foucault's genealogy has been little short of done-to-death in social theory circles, and critical theory has been connected to social science from its very inception. Such reflections leave one to question whether there is any genuine absence that could be filled by the book.

More disconcerting still is the absence of any direct or substantial discussion of issues in PSS. As mentioned, the book consists in summaries of the ideas of various thinkers in the three traditions examined here — but there is no apparent application of these ideas to any issue in PSS. Clifford Geertz is the only practicing social scientist mentioned. As it stands, the book appears less to be a work in PSS than to be a study of a cross-section of continental philosophy, and in these terms, it is one of many very like itself and far from the best of them. To make a credible claim to define continental PSS, surely one must be required to clearly identify recognized issues in PSS and account for what distinctive contribution continental philosophy may make to them, or at minimum, to indicate in what way continental philosophy re-construes the project of PSS. Perhaps this could help organize the approach of historical overview taken here in a more meaningful way.

Lastly, and given the above considerations, less importantly, the book reads like a poor translation of a better-written text in some other language. It would seem that it went to print before the final revisions were done, as there are numerous dubious word choices and overall awkward, limp prose. On the whole, the book comes off as sloppy, superficial, and ill-suited to accomplish its stated purpose.

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**Mark S. Stein**

*Distributive Justice and Disability:*

*Utilitarianism against Egalitarianism.*

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2006.

Pp. x + 304.

US\$50.00 (paper: ISBN: 0-300-10057-4).

This book is intelligent, thought-provoking, and a serious challenge to egalitarians who think it relatively easy to dismiss utilitarian arguments concerning distributive justice. Stein begins by defending his intuitionist approach to political philosophy, inviting the reader to share his own intuitions about what is just, and arguing that these are consistent with utilitarianism, as related to hedonic welfare interpersonal comparisons.

Stein then applies the above methodology to disability issues. He examines key contemporary Anglo-American egalitarian political philosophers, including, Rawls, Dworkin, Ackerman, Sen, and Scanlon. One of the main premises of Stein's position is that disabled people should not be seen as 'inefficient' converters of resources to welfare. Instead, what counts are conversion levels 'on the margins' — i.e., the often, but not always, relatively high increases of welfare experienced by disabled people (compared with non-disabled people) when re-distributions are implemented in the former's favour. Given this, Stein provides a detailed critique of welfare and resource egalitarianism, concluding that the former can give far too much to disabled people, as an extremely large amount of resources would have to be spent on some worst-off disabled people who experience immovably low levels of welfare, whilst the latter insufficiently caters for disabled people, as an equal distribution of resources does not track the differences between people, including their different abilities. He acknowledges that many attempts have been made by egalitarians to accommodate these problems, but, argues Stein, in the process utilitarian considerations are implicitly evoked to make these various forms of egalitarianism more palatable.

Stein then tackles some difficult questions for utilitarianism, including how 'welfarism' might be weighted against other values, problems of aggregating welfare which might lead to the better-off being prioritised, and most particularly the disturbing conclusions of utilitarians such as Singer, who seems to place a lower value on disabled people's lives compared with non-disabled people. Stein distances himself from the latter, arguing that not only would Singer's recommendations likely lead to less overall welfare, given the resentment, anger, fear and diminished sense of self-worth that would be experienced by disabled people, as well as by non-disabled people who might realistically anticipate being disabled at some time in their lives. These utilitarians also do not take account of a principle Stein sees as morally significant in utilitarian calculations: that it is more important to make existing people happy than to preserve in existence those who are happiest. Stein argues in conclusion that, once this distinction is made, utilitarian

theory and our moral intuitions relating to our re-distributive impulses more happily coincide.

Despite the book's strengths, there are a number of problems with Stein's position that would trouble non-utilitarians, even if their moral intuitions were similar to his. First, and notoriously, utilitarians are unable to argue against implementing empirical realities that promote welfare enhancement when promoting these realities contradicts our moral intuitions. In his discussion of welfare aggregation (207-21), Stein critiques Scanlon's anti-utilitarian arguments by doubting that the relatively small annoyance of billions of people would be greater than the acute suffering of one person, supposedly undermining Scanlon's argument that, when the circumstances are right, utilitarianism must sacrifice the one for the many (212-13). Now Stein can describe many realistic scenarios when this point has not been reached, but this does not detract from the utilitarian fact that it must exist somewhere. In short, there must be *a* point when the balance is tipped in the billions' favour, otherwise the central tenet of utilitarianism, that welfare levels can be compared and measured, is rendered incoherent.

Second, just as Stein shows that egalitarianism must 'smuggle in' utilitarian considerations to make it more plausible, so non-utilitarian values must also be allowed within utilitarianism to alleviate the above inconsistencies with our moral intuitions. For example, as with John Stuart Mill before him, there are various Kantian undertones to Stein's work (e.g., 91-2, 218-19, 222-65), but perhaps the most revealing non-utilitarian move is found in his critique of Singer (223-38). To recall, according to Stein it is more important to make existing people happy than to preserve in existence those who are happiest. For Stein 'This distinction between kinds of utility ... is the most fundamental solution I would offer to the paradox that utilitarianism seems to strike the right balance in the distribution of non-life saving resources, but seems to strike the wrong balance in the distribution of life' (238). But here Stein is making a distinction not so much between kinds of utility, as between which welfare recipients should be targeted. His choice may reflect the right intuition, in that he wants to target all people rather than a well-off, select few, but it is not a utilitarian intuition, and one that Stein should own up to if he seeks to dissociate himself from Singer's more consistently utilitarian — but wholly implausible — morality in respect to disabled people.

Third, there are other problems concerning utilitarian understandings of personal identity. For example, it is noticeable that many of the examples Stein uses in critiquing anti-utilitarian arguments cite pain and suffering (physical and mental), which, although experienced by some disabled people, are certainly not experienced by all (e.g. 24-5, 47-54, 91-101, 191-206, 212-15). Consequently, a number of the more difficult questions addressed by the Disability Rights Movement around disability identity are ducked by Stein — most particularly, those relating to how the life of a disabled person might be enhanced, not just because she has 'adapted her preferences' in



response to her impairment (174-8, 223-4), but because having the impairment *itself* generates an experience which enriches the person in some way.

Finally, even experiencing pain and suffering is not straightforwardly 'bad' for people, for reasons concerning the complex and paradoxical way human beings value their lives. For example, a person often learns and is enriched by all her experiences, which may (even necessarily) include *some* level of pain and suffering. Stein, and utilitarianism more generally, are silent, or at least very muted, with respect to these questions of human identity, and consequently have a rather one-dimensional view of human existence. The problem is that when utilitarians are more multi-dimensional and nuanced about these matters, they then start to abandon their utilitarian credentials, a difficulty that Stein, for all his powers of persuasion, is unable to solve.

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### **Laurence Tancredi**

*Hardwired Behavior:*

*What Neuroscience Reveals About Morality.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2005.

Pp xiii + 226.

US\$28.99 (cloth: 0-521-86001-6).

Some philosophers, and a rather larger proportion of neuroscientists, believe that the sciences of the mind will revolutionize, or even render obsolete, large swathes of philosophy. Tancredi's short book aims to show how neuroscientific developments will force a rethinking of many of our fundamental assumptions about the mind and about persons. Unfortunately, he is clear neither about what these assumptions actually are, nor about how neuroscience might lead us to revise them. Though his book is useful as an introduction to neuroscientific work on volition and cognition, its value is severely limited by its many confusions.

One of Tancredi's recurrent themes is that neuroscience will force us to give up on the notion of 'free will' (the inverted commas are his, adopted throughout the book). Now as a matter of fact there are a number of interesting neuroscientific developments that are relevant to free will. But though Tancredi sometimes refers to some of these developments, he runs these types of finding together with many others that show nothing more

than that the brain is a set of mechanisms. It will come as little surprise to philosophers to learn of such evidence. By 'free will', Tancredi plainly means some kind of contra-causal ability. The news that we (almost certainly) have no such ability was not delivered by recent neuroscience, however, but is a legacy of Enlightenment science. It is true that many laypeople apparently continue to believe that we have such an ability, but it is very debatable whether our legal and moral practices either require or presuppose it.

Tancredi's other major claim about how neuroscience revolutionizes our self-conception is even more confused. At many points throughout the book he delivers what he clearly thinks we shall regard as shocking news: it is not the mind which produces decisions and drives behavior, but the brain. Most philosophers will, like me, find this not so much shocking as deeply puzzling. The mind is not, as Tancredi seems to think, something independent of the brain; instead, it is constituted by the brain (perhaps *inter alia*). When the mind is engaged in cognition, the brain is. The operations of brain mechanisms are *how* the mind works, not an alternative to it.

The subject of Tancredi's book is supposed to be how morality is illuminated by neuroscience. Oddly, then, his chapters on morality are the weakest in the book. He begins by defining morality, but in contradictory ways. Morality, he tells us, is a 'social construct'. It is also 'hardwired'. To the extent that either of these terms are meaningful — a limited extent, to be sure — they are surely contradictory. Tancredi never seems to resolve, or indeed to notice, the conflict. Naturally, from this unpromising beginning he is unable to shed much light on morality. He does review some of the relevant neuroscientific literature, for instance Josh Greene's well-known work on the brain regions involved in processing moral dilemmas. But he ignores the growing literature on how this kind of work should be understood, on whether, and how, it will require us to rethink normative ethics.

Tancredi is better on topics that are somewhat orthogonal to morality. His chapters on love are well-done, combining case studies and neuroscience illuminatingly. He does not strive, here, to make any deep points, but the material provides ample food for philosophical reflection. The same can be said, perhaps to a lesser extent, for his chapter on deception. It is when he turns to the ostensible subject of the book, and when he cannot resist the urge to reflect upon the deep meaning of the science he reports, that the work becomes confused.

If neuroscience has lessons, one of the most important should be that substance dualism is well and truly dead. This is a lesson that Tancredi has not learnt. He urges that we ought to be 'physicalists' rather than mentalists, by which he means that we ought to understand human behaviour, decision-making and thought as produced by the brain *rather than* the mind. But the dichotomy between mind and brain ought to be the very first thing to go when we reject dualism. Once we learn the lesson that mind is realized in the brain, the discovery that for every mental process there is a physical correlate is hardly news. Moreover, once we learn that lesson it becomes harder to see



how discoveries that conscious events such as the formation of intentions are preceded by nonconscious brain events are supposed to threaten our free will.

There are by now many books on the market popularizing neuroscientific research and attempting to draw morals from its findings. Tancredi's contribution does not stand out amongst them. It is neither clear enough in communicating the science, nor coherent enough in interpreting the results, to add anything, either to popular understanding of the sciences of the mind or to philosophical reflection concerning neuroscience.

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