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**William J. Abraham**

*Crossing the Threshold of Divine Revelation.*

Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. Eerdmans 2006.

Pp. 212.

US\$20.00

(paper: ISBN-13: 978-0-8028-2958-0).

Claims to divine revelation are many and diverse. Abraham is interested not in adjudicating between competing claims, but in the epistemological impact of accepting a claim to divine revelation. He argues that appeals to divine revelation have certain epistemic features that have been mostly overlooked by contemporary philosophers, and that a proper recognition of these features could go a long way towards assuaging common objections to claims of revelation. The book is thus, broadly speaking, a work in the epistemology of religion.

Abraham's thesis can be summed up by one statement made about half way through: once 'revelation is accepted, one enters a whole new world where everything is liable to be seen in a whole new light' (85-6). In short, Abraham sees acceptance of divine revelation as a world-constituting experience that, once crossed (to use the threshold metaphor), opens one up to the re-evaluation of nearly everything.

Abraham contends that this threshold concept has largely been overlooked in contemporary discussions of religious epistemology. The standard strategy is first to develop a theory of what it means to be rational, justified, and to constitute valid claims to knowledge, warrant and so on (7-8). Once a theory of knowledge is formulated, it is then typically applied to the questions that arise in the philosophy of religion. Finding this strategy riddled with problems, Abraham proposes an alternative strategy: 'Rather than securing a method and then seeing what results it gives us, let us identify a particular brand of theism and then ask what would be the appropriate way to adjudicate its intellectual status' (13).

This raises the question of which brand of theism (and there are many) one should adopt. Since the mid-1980s, Abraham has been articulating a vision of Christianity called canonical theism, a theism 'adopted publicly, intentionally, and explicitly by the church as it was initially driven to articulate, celebrate, and live out its fundamental convictions on the other side of conversion and the gospel ... . [I]t was the theism, the beliefs about God, listed and officially adopted by the church prior to the schism between East and West' (xii). Those who are looking for a full defense of why this brand of theism has been set as the launching point for this book's thesis will have to look elsewhere. This project is still being developed, but a good place to start is Abraham's *Canon and Criterion in Christian Theology: From the Fathers to Feminism* (OUP 1998). While that work centers on the thesis that the canonical heritage of the church has never been and should not be an epistemology, a more direct account is on the way in *Canonical Theism*,



edited by Abraham, Natalie B. Van Kirk, and Jason E. Vickers (forthcoming from Eerdmans).

In this book the reader is asked to assume canonical theism and think through what sort of epistemology it might require. This is a theme that resounds throughout the book. Inquirers 'have first-order discourse about God, creation, the human situation, redemption, and the like' (16). They do not have an epistemology. Rather they are asked to investigate what the first order discourse implies for one's epistemology. Canonical theists assert 'that the church offers no formal theory as to how it knows that it possesses the truth about God, the human situation, the activity and purposes of God, and the like' (17). This is ultimately for the good of the church and for the good of epistemology. 'To put the matter grandly, we can and do make good judgements about the world, about the quality of deeds wrought in history, and about the beauty of this or that object, without having a theory of truth, goodness, or beauty. Further, we can give all sorts of persuasive and telling reasons for our judgements and our beliefs without having a theory of why these constitute good reasons for them' (17). Abraham clarifies that he is not saying that the canonical theist's beliefs are above criticism. Nor does he feel his position precludes critical study of the diverse claims to divine revelation, including the claim of canonical theists.

After arguing that the acceptance of divine revelation is a threshold or world-constituting experience, Abraham unravels how that notion bears on the rationality of accepting the canonical heritage of the church. Once one crosses the threshold, the 'mere theism' of much natural theology gives way to a more particular form of theism. In Abraham's view that theism is Canonical Theism.

Abraham recognizes the strong aversion many will have towards appeals to divine revelation, and he attempts to alleviate that aversion by drawing on the work of reformed epistemologists. He contends that 'in the absence of good arguments the contrary, we recognize straight off God's general revelatory activity in the world and within ourselves' (67). A particular affinity for Reformed Epistemology is evidenced by Abraham's appeal to the *oculus contemplationis* (or, if you wish, the *sensus divinitatis* [Plantinga]), a spiritually discerning eye (66). This eye can be sullied and sometimes function improperly, but people's default position is a recognition of God's revelatory activity in the world — so says Abraham — and we have to be argued out of these beliefs to become atheists.

This book is no work of mere assertion, and is quite philosophically interesting. Abraham enters the conversation in the 'cracks and tensions between philosophy and theology,' and by his own admission, 'will come across as too theological for philosophers and too philosophical for theologians' (xi). Nevertheless, there is much material here that will likely interest students of both fields. While philosophers may at places be looking for a more robust form of argumentation, most will find in Abraham a worthy dialogue partner. Those interested in religious epistemology and the nature of theology will also find in the book a wealth of material with which they

may interact. This would definitely be a great addition to the collections of both philosophers of religion and theologians.

**Brian L. Goard**

*(Department of Theology)*

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

**Mark Addis**

*Wittgenstein : A Guide for the Perplexed.*

New York: Continuum International

Publishing Group 2006.

Pp. ????

US\$109.54 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-8495-6);

US\$19.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-8496-3).

This book covers the development of Wittgenstein's philosophy and the relevance of his later thought to different areas of philosophy.

Chapter 1 consists of a short overview, a biography of Wittgenstein, and a discussion of Wittgenstein's philosophical influence up to the present day. Chapters 2 and 3 present central themes in Wittgenstein's early philosophy as expressed in the *Tractatus*. In 'Charting the Bounds of Sense' Addis shows that most of Wittgenstein's concerns can be understood as responding to issues raised by the development of logic by Frege and Russell. Wittgenstein's idea was that representation, and more specifically propositions, can be seen as pictures of states of affairs, which sets the limits for language and philosophy. In 'Metaphysics of the *Tractatus*', Addis discusses some of the central ideas in the *Tractatus*. He presents some of the differences between the philosophical interpretations of formal logic of Frege, Russell, and Wittgenstein, and mentions some of the significant philosophical differences between the *Tractatus* and Wittgenstein's later philosophy.

In Chapter 4, 'The Middle Period', Addis examines Wittgenstein's own critique of the *Tractatus*, and his dismantling of its logical atomism from 1929 onwards. Wittgenstein began to emphasize the relation between propositions more than their independent status, became skeptical towards the universalistic approach in the *Tractatus*, and criticized his own earlier understanding of universal and existential quantification in relation to the idea of infinity it implied. Addis presents a detailed analysis of these changes and Wittgenstein's critiques of his own earlier positions regarding, for example, the idea of determinacy of sense, and his move from the notion of logical syntax to the idea of philosophical grammar. He shows how the *Blue Book* and *Brown Book* anticipated much of Wittgenstein's later work by developing

the ideas of language games as an alternative to calculus model of language, and by developing family resemblance as an alternative to definition. Finally, Addis discusses the distinction between criteria and symptoms, and the issue of solipsism understood as not a metaphysical, but a grammatical, problem.

In 'Aims and Methods of Philosophical Therapy', Addis gets deeper into methodological issues about the nature of philosophy. Philosophical errors are resolved by disclosing the confusions that have arisen by misunderstandings of philosophical grammar governed by arbitrary rules. Addis distinguishes between surface and depth grammar, and gives several examples of concrete methodologies arising from this idea of philosophy as therapy. The scope of Wittgenstein's philosophical therapy is well discussed, including treatment of both its general and specific usefulness. Addis claims that philosophical therapy appears to be more suited as a philosophical methodology in some areas than others (95).

The last three chapters follow naturally from the discussions that ended Chapter 5, as Addis examines how Wittgenstein's later philosophy can be related to different areas of philosophy. In Chapter 6, 'Philosophy of Language and Mathematics', Addis examines the relation between Wittgenstein's idea of grammar and traditional linguistic concepts. The arbitrary nature of philosophical grammar is explained in depth, as is the notion of necessity: necessary propositions are arbitrary grammatical rules. This raises the question of what it means to 'objectively' adhere to a rule, and Addis explains the difference between being in accord with and following a rule. He briefly discusses how 'forms of life', and 'the very general facts of nature' are related to culture, the biological aspect of human life, and rules of grammar, but otherwise dedicates the rest of the chapter to a presentation of how the notions of grammar and rules can be related to problems in the philosophy of mathematics.

In Chapter 7, 'Philosophy of Mind', Addis presents the relevance of Wittgenstein's ideas of grammar and rule-following in relation to psychological concepts. Psychological words cannot be explained through the observation of the mind via introspection, but should instead be analyzed according to the grammatical rules for their use. Addis shows how this idea has implications both in relation to Wittgenstein's rejection of conceptual connections between brain states and mental phenomena, his repudiation of mind-body dualism, his classification of mental concepts, and his analysis of grammatical asymmetry between first- and third-person present tense psychological sentences. This naturally leads Addis into a detailed discussion of some interpretations of Wittgenstein's private language argument and its consequences, particularly as a refutation of Cartesian and empiricist epistemologies.

In Chapter 8, 'Epistemology, Religion and Aesthetics', Addis shows how Moore's reflections on certainty inspired Wittgenstein to develop ideas regarding the differences in grammar for the concepts of knowledge, doubt and certainty, along with the idea of core propositions as founding elements for world-pictures. Addis considers the fideistic and grammatical interpreta-



tions of Wittgenstein's remarks on religion, the role of world-pictures in religion, and the idea of religious belief as a passionate commitment to a system of reference. Finally, he presents a balanced analysis of Wittgenstein's idea of aesthetics, shows the connection between aesthetic appreciation and forms of life, and shows that aesthetical judgment therefore might not be totally independent of other forms of values (151). Addis finishes up with an interesting discussion of Wittgenstein's idea of art via the concept of 'the miracle of nature', in which he notices the recognition of the connections between the aesthetic, religious and ethical in Wittgenstein's thinking (154).

This is a clear, balanced, and very recommendable book that gives a good idea of the complexity of Wittgenstein's philosophy and the many questions it raises. It is useful not only as introduction for newcomers to Wittgenstein, but also for people who want to compare Wittgenstein's reflections on philosophical issues with alternative non-analytical philosophical views, such as, for example, the notions of proposition and judgment as found in Hegel. The introduction to Wittgenstein's middle and later philosophy is lucid, and Addis' discussions, especially in Chapter 8, allow the possibility of a thorough interaction of his philosophy not only with Continental philosophy, but also with intercultural philosophy.

**Jesper Garsdal**

University of Aarhus

**Linda Martín Alcoff**

*Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self.*

Toronto and New York: Oxford

University Press 2006.

Pp. 344.

US\$74.00

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Alcoff argues that better articulation of identity allows 'more precise and realistic social theories of oppression and strategies of liberation' (85). She begins by defending identity politics. Schlesinger's argument, that ethnicity disrupts universal humanism, privileges European identity. Arguments that identities derail democracy conceal a 'disinclination to accept political leadership' (20) from 'minorities'. Political critiques that identity politics leads to separatism, race reification, or compromised objectivity assume respectively that identities are exclusive (37), the highest value is individual freedom (38),

and strength of identity is inversely proportional to rationality (36). That identity politics undermines the left uses an 'outdated view of class' (26): the real challenge 'is the need to articulate its precise relation to class' (19) because 'recognition of the political relevance of identities is *required* for ... effective class struggle' (46). Philosophical critique, grounded in 'modern Western treatments of the Other developed in ... European colonialism' (49), makes identity a problem of one's relations to group categories and public interpellation. Alcoff's tightly woven analyses from Plato to postmodernism uncover rather how self-Other relations are 'fundamental to the concept of rationality' (49). Historically, autonomy and identity have been understood antithetically, so 'Freedom in any sense must be a move away from identity' (80). This conclusion hides a 'fear of the power of the Other' (81) to constitute the self. Relational theory, however, makes identity too Other-dependent: identity requires self-recognition. The real test of antiracism is 'not what one might *do* for the Other, but whether one can contemplate *being* the Other' (83).

Alcoff treats race and gender (non-reductively and with insightful attention to differences) because both are 'fundamental ... to the self' and 'operate through visual markers' (6). Visibility submits the self to interpretations 'both individual and social' (127), so identities are fluid and malleable, yet concrete and lived. Identity is therefore 'compatible with a plausible concept of autonomy ... [so] strongly felt identities can coexist with democratic politics and solidarity across difference' (87). The account is hermeneutic: identity is an open 'horizon of agency' (42). And phenomenological: identity is a 'corporeal being in the world' (109), an 'operative' (45) and 'generative source of meaning' (40) in which public identity is in 'constant [though not always consonant] interplay and even mutually constitutive relations' (93) with lived subjectivity.

Concerning gender, feminists have responded to 'overdeterminations of male supremacy' (133) that make woman 'an essential *something* inevitably accessible to direct intuited apprehension by males' (134), by seeking more accurate descriptions that re-value femaleness or by rejecting any definition of woman. The latter strategy colludes 'with classical liberalism's view that human particularities are irrelevant' (143), and the former essentializes by promoting 'unrealistic expectations about "normal" female behavior' (138). Alcoff's 'third course' construes woman as 'a position from which a feminist politics can emerge' (149). Gender identity and difference are metaphysically real horizons of embodiment, not universal characteristics. These chapters are so clear, thorough and persuasive that they have the feel of putting to rest debates about the metaphysics of gender that have occupied feminists for decades, and are brilliant teaching resources as well as provocative engagements for experts.

On racial identity, Alcoff uses her hermeneutic-phenomenological framework and feminist conceptual tools for theorizing biology, constructivism, embodiment, autonomy, and the politics of the private to really get her argument going. She argues that mixed race is an especially useful locus for

reconceiving identity. Pursuing 'a subjectivist ... nonfoundationalist account of lived experience' (185), she shows how tacit knowledge about racial embodiment can become explicit, e.g. when whites fail to 'feel white', defends racial identity against charges of fetishization and naturalization, and makes sense of tensions between racial identity and felt subjectivity. Acknowledging risks of reactivating racist perception, she argues that analysis of how meanings are located on the body has 'the potential to disrupt the current racializing practices' (194). Color-blindness is 'a form of white solipsism' (209) that covertly empowers white identity. The 'whiteness question' can be deeply threatening for white, liberal academics, because avoiding essentialism means looking to shared history, and 'the history of white identity ... is coterminous with European colonialism' (222). Alcoff asks: 'what are the real possibilities of reducing race visibility?' (201). Better understanding of vision's function in cognition is needed to develop 'new domain-specific competences within which to practice our sight' (204).

Mixed race identity is just such a place to 'learn to see better' (204) in order to meet 'the need for a decolonized version of humanism that can ensure universal rights while conceptualizing justice across difference' (19). Latino identity has hybridity at its foundation, and thus is especially useful for posing 'authentically new questions' (227) about racial identity. Alcoff's innovative, astute analysis explores, among other things, how Latino identity challenges black/white binary thinking, and how hybridity does not threaten identity but demonstrates that it need not assume uniformity.

This book is a brilliant, densely packed, playful, must-read that prompts further questions. How does gender bear 'a deeper relation to truly significant human difference' (201) than race? If class struggle requires 'understanding ... the relationship between identity and oppression' (287), and Alcoff's 'careful exploration of identity' (5) brings such understanding, then the class question now looms, especially since critiques of capital and consumerism pervade the book. Evidence is drawn from international, most often Latin American, contexts, but outcomes stick closer to home — what of identity in failures of distributive and other justices between North and South? Moreover, can analysis that takes embodiment as its first principle afford to neglect nature? Since Alcoff has thought past naïve commitments to the naturalness of race and gender, it appears now possible to ask as a political question how nature figures in human identity, toward better understanding of being human and conceptualization of justice across human/non-human difference. Though this concern may seem extraneous, environmental justice theorists have argued that environmental identity is constitutively, significantly and especially a component of Latino identity. Finally, Alcoff's book empowers through its deepening of theoretical understanding of oppression. But now I *really* want more on 'strategies of liberation'. How can policy-makers, state leaders, and big-money hegemony learn to see better?

**Trish Glazebrook**  
Dalhousie University



**Hanne Andersen, Peter Barker,  
and Xiang Chen**

*The Cognitive Structure of Scientific  
Revolutions.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Pp. 220.

US\$70.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-85575-4).

The title is deliberately similar to Kuhn's famous work: the stated aim in the first chapter is to restore Kuhn's notion of incommensurability to a central place in history and philosophy of science. Kuhn's original thesis was that revolutionary changes in science (the notorious 'paradigm shifts' that passed into the vocabulary of social science but were largely rejected by scientists and philosophers of science) occur when an existing conceptual structure can no longer accommodate the available evidence and is replaced by one discontinuous with it. However, the second chapter does not defend Kuhn's original *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*; it takes full account of Kuhn's later changes to his original views, including his abandonment of the notion of a gestalt switch in favour of the metaphor of translatability as a way of characterising the phenomenon of incommensurability.

The authors approve of this linguistic approach, and it is therefore unsurprising that they reject the kind of ahistorical philosophical realism about science espoused by Hilary Putnam in the 1970s. Nevertheless, their linguistic approach has strict limits; it is explicit that although the 'phenomenal' world studied by science consists ultimately of relationships, it is not simply whatever one says it is. Indeed, they describe their position as a 'new realist' one (17) that can account for a problem that has always embarrassed earlier realist approaches to the history and philosophy of science, namely that fundamental changes in scientific thought always involve the disappearance of a whole class or classes of objects the existence of which was previously unquestioned.

A 'paradigm case' of this is the disappearance of the celestial spheres that until the sixteenth century were firmly accepted features of geocentric cosmology and astronomy. The gradual shift commonly referred to as the 'Copernican revolution' (it is part of the thesis that scientific revolutions, although they involve fundamental conceptual change, need not actually be sudden) involved not simply a new astronomy, but a new cosmology. Not only did what were previously seen as paths of planetary movement as observed from the earth become orbits around the sun, the very stuff that things were made of shifted irreversibly. Such a change, *The Cognitive Structure* argues, cannot be faithfully represented, either historically or philosophically, as an uncomplicated movement from nonsense to rationality, as conventional realism would have it. Its 'frame theory' follows the general principle that in 'historical work, true and false beliefs are equally amenable to historical explanation', and their truth or falsity is 'irrelevant to the conceptual structures presented in frame analysis' (177).

The third chapter introduces the basis of frame theory in empirical research done in cognitive psychology; hence the adjective 'cognitive' in the title. It explains how frames can represent the uses made by individuals and cultures of concepts to group objects into categories. The concept 'bird', for example, can be represented as a frame composed of various attributes (beak, wings, and the like), each of which may be assigned one or more values (round/pointed, flying/flightless, etc.). But frame theory departs from the classical view of concepts that the authors believe has held sway from Plato onwards, because it abandons the idea that the necessary and sufficient conditions of a concept must be completely specified to be successfully applied to the world and yield knowledge both of its regularities and of the kinds of things it contains.

Like the later Wittgenstein, frame theory ascribes to concepts an 'open texture' (7); they make use of family resemblances the rules of which simply cannot be exhaustively defined. For frame theory, scientific thinking is a particular case of this approach, 'a classification system that divides objects into groups according to similarity relations'. So, for example, Newton's second law,  $f=ma$ , 'transforms into different but similar forms for different kinds of situations' depending on whether we are dealing with free fall, a pendulum, or harmonic oscillators (20, 23).

Using commendably clear diagrams, the following three chapters apply frame theory to detailed discussions of specific examples of scientific change, arguing that in each case the situation can be represented as one in which an attribute and/or a value of a frame was altered. Not all such changes in the structure of a frame are revolutionary (frame theory accommodates conceptual revision in what Kuhn called 'normal science'), and even where changes are revolutionary, they need not involve complete communication failure between users of the old and the new concepts.

But an example from the 1930s illustrates how revolutionary change can sometimes involve such failures; the chemist Ida Noddack's suggestion that the production of light elements through radioactive decay was the result of nuclear fission was silently ignored, even though the hypothesis was accepted a few years later following Bohr's work. Similarly, contemporaries received Copernicanism as simply an improvement to the Ptolemaic astronomical system rather than its overthrow, and 'simply disregarded the cosmology (as obviously wrong on physical and scriptural grounds)' until the quite separate work of Kepler forced a reconsideration (146).

Henderson et al. conclude that they have successfully used frame theory to exemplify how the components of historic changes in scientific thinking may be identified precisely and thoroughly. But the work can also be taken as a major contribution to the philosophical attempt to show that the inescapable historicity of all thought subjects it to conditionality but not to mere relativity, and that such historicity is no bar to — indeed, is even a condition of — truth and knowledge (scientific or otherwise). This imaginative and carefully argued book should succeed in making historians and

philosophers of science take a fresh look at the Kuhnian approach in the light of cognitive psychology; it also deserves a wider readership.

**Luke O'Sullivan**

**Roger Berkowitz**

*The Gift of Science:*

*Leibniz and the Modern Legal Tradition.*

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University

Press 2005.

Pp. 234.

US\$49.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-674-01873-0).

This is a book about Leibniz' foundational role in the development of modern German legal thought. The first three chapters deal with the evolution of Leibniz' theory of law, starting with his early *New Method for Learning and Teaching Jurisprudence* and tracing its development through his *Elements of Natural Law* and *Elements of Civil Law* to the drafts of the *Tabula iuris* and of the *Systema iuris*, which latter constitute his final attempt to complete the recodification of Germanic law. Berkowitz shows how Leibniz' legal thought was integrally related to his project of an *ars combinatoria*, and was governed by his methodological adherence to the supremacy of logic and the principle of sufficient reason. The remaining chapters sketch the development of German jurisprudence after Leibniz' death. Chapters 4 and 5 deal with the Prussian *Allgemeines Landrecht* of 1794, which was a first attempt at legal systematization, and Chapters 5-7 deal with the German *Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch* of 1900, which still forms the foundation of modern German law. In the course of his discussion, Berkowitz explains and evaluates the contributions of jurists like Suarez and Savigny and indicates how they, and German jurisprudence in general, were influenced by Leibniz.

Berkowitz argues that but for Leibniz, German legal thought (and, indeed, jurisprudence in general) would have remained an Aristotelian enterprise rooted in the concept of *phronēsis*, i.e. of practical wisdom that merely deals with what in fact is promulgated as law. Because of Leibniz, it became an *epistēmē*-oriented discipline that seeks internal coherence among laws by relating them to fundamental principles, and looks beyond mere historicity for juridical validation.

Leibniz, of course, lived at a time when natural law theory was dominant. Natural law theory maintains that law finds its basis in some feature of the world that is independent of human decision-making and can be discovered by reasoning and analytical thought. By contrast, positive law theory main-



tains that law is a creature of the human will. By and large, most contemporary legal theorists are positivists. Berkowitz argues that even though contemporary legal positivism differs in its orientation from Leibniz' naturalism, it depends on the scientific, analytical methodology that he developed.

Berkowitz diagnoses the historical attractiveness of Leibniz' scientific approach as centring in his question of what justifies the rules and regulations that are promulgated. As Berkowitz puts it, 'positive laws are precisely those laws most in need of reasons; in other words, positive laws must be justified' (xiii). He goes on to show how, in response to Leibniz, successive legal theorists and reformers such as Suarez and Savigny replaced the concept of law as a system of justice inherent in the nature of things with a concept of law as an integrated system of logically interconnected rules and regulations derivable from a series of fundamental principles. It is this attempt to structure laws as of instantiations of general principles by the application of particular types of facts that Berkowitz characterizes as Leibniz' 'gift of science'.

Is this a good book? There are several ways of answering this question. Considered from the perspective of historical accuracy, the answer is 'yes, but'. More detail about Leibniz' philosophy and about subsequent developments in Germany and Europe would have been useful, and would have provided the reader with a broader canvas against which to evaluate Berkowitz' claims. However, within its limits and as an introductory (and provocative) work in the history of the philosophy of law, the book succeeds.

Another way of answering the question is to consider whether the book succeeds in introducing the non-specialist to an aspect of Leibniz' work that has remained essentially unknown in the English-speaking world. From that perspective, it is an unqualified success. Most English-speaking philosophers know Leibniz only as the author of the *Monadology* and as the (in)famous disputant with Newton over the invention of the calculus and the nature of space and time. And yet, Leibniz was perhaps the most universal genius of the modern world. He wrote hundreds of treatises and fragments touching almost every branch of knowledge. By the age of twenty he had received a doctorate in law, invented symbolic logic (published in *Ars combinatoria*), invented the differential and integral calculus (his notation is still the one that is used today), founded the study of linguistics with his work on definitions and the nature of language, developed the idea of a universal encyclopaedia based on the notion of an ideal language that was both a *lingua characterica* and a *calculus ratiocinator*, designed in outline the science of statistics, contributed to probability theory, conceived of calculating machines a hundred years before Babbage and had one built that actually could do multiplications. His work in the logic of the concepts that allegedly underlie all 'natural languages' was foundational to Chomsky's idea of depth grammar; his notion of possible worlds predates Feynman diagrams; and his project of universal peace as a *rapprochement* among global nations foreshadowed the efforts of the United Nations.

A lot of this is unknown even to philosophers. What Berkowitz has done is contribute to a fuller appreciation of Leibniz' astounding genius by illuminating this other unknown area of his endeavour: the philosophy of law. It would have been nice if Berkowitz had gone a bit further and shown how Leibniz' project to develop a method of translating and coordinating the laws of different jurisdictions underlies the Estrella Project of the European Union (Standardized Transparent Representations in order to Extend Legal Accessibility: Estrella, IST-2004-027655). Its purpose is to develop and validate an open, standards-based platform allowing public administrations to develop and deploy comprehensive legal knowledge management solutions. It would have completed the picture of Leibniz as a legal philosopher of foundational importance. Nevertheless, within its limits, it is a good book. I recommend it highly.

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**Jacques Derrida**

*H. C. for Life, That Is to Say ...*

Trans. Laurent Milesi and Stefan Herbbrechter.

Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2006.

Pp. 192.

US\$55.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8047-5401-9);

US\$21.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-8047-5402-6).

In the obituary 'Jacques Derrida, Abstruse Theorist, Dies in Paris at 74' in *The New York Times* (October 10, 2004), Jonathan Kandell via a journalistic sound-bite gave us a superficial and distorted evaluation of Derrida's work, misunderstanding the famous expression 'Philosophy is first and foremost writing', judging it only as rhetorical and linguistic field, and preferring to resurrect an old, bitter dispute over Derrida's influence and legacy among American intellectuals.

Hence the question: Is Jacques Derrida a great philosopher, the greatest philosopher since Heidegger, or is Derrida overall a rhetorician, a literary critic of philosophical narratives, a writer of dramatic, autobiographical and historical essays?

At glance, this book seems a further confirmation of these doubts and perplexities, and a mirror-like example that shows why many readers of Derrida perceive in his writing a sort of complexity bordering on the unintelligible. But, on the contrary, Derrida is a true philosopher, reminding us from the beginning that philosophy is the *laying-open of a relation*: 'Philosophy

begins with *there* [*commence par là*] — see the first dawn of any phenomenology of the mind: thinking begins by taking account of the fact that, as soon as I say *here*, and especially if I write it, *here* is no longer *here*, around *here* [*par ici*], but already *there* [*là*], around *there* [*par là-bas*], elsewhere, on the *other side*, and *I is another*, another I, me and wholly other I' (14-15).

The title of the book, as the same author says, is an unpublished title, an equivocal and provocative title in which we understand, after reading a few pages, that *H* corresponds to Hélène, *C* to Cixous, the first name and the patronymic name of the poet friend of Derrida, and *for Life* the philosophical and literary position of Hélène. In the first place the title represents a philosophical long volley, within frequent issues and provocations, between two sides supported by two friends: Hélène stands for life, life promised to life, Jacques admits always feeling drawn to the side of death. Derrida himself writes that surely Hélène prefers the *Elementa*, the elements; whereas he thinks of the events (*événement*). She goes fast to proceed from station to station, from digression to digression; he finds no other solution than to go slowly. She is the author of many books, he the reader who discusses her books. She is the daughter of a dead father, he is the son of a living mother.

Later on Derrida refers to the Cixous writings, remarking that each of her books is a beginning, obviously including the one called *Les Commencements* in which uncle Freud, like an author-character-member of the family, permanently and insistently appears and disappears. He is the Freud of *Introduction to Narcissism*, of the Oedipus question and the issue of double personality. Could there be in this book an echo of the scene of *La Carte Postale, de Socrate à Freud et au-delà* — the famous postcard featuring Plato dictating behind Socrates back?

In the novel *OR, les lettres de mon père*, Hélène evokes the spectre of her father George. With her poetical composition and writing she analyzes the problems of communication, of being in touch with each other, of presence and absence, life and death. But, Hélène more precisely questions: What does the finitude of time and the resurrectional power mean? The reply is, 'That in all this, which comes and comes back, it is a question of life and not death, of a differential power of finite life over life that stays alive, keeps itself alive, comes back to life'.

And thinking it over, isn't perhaps the word, 'life', the only word that carries enough weight to be face to face with *being* as we see from Plato to Descartes, from Nietzsche to Husserl, from Bergson to Heidegger? The only big question whose stakes remain undecided is whether it is necessary to think being [*l'être*] before life, entity [*l'étant*] before the living, or the reverse? It is certain that 'the word "life" would not be thinkable in its meaning, it would not announce itself before what, grammatically, gives itself as a proposition, namely "for" (87).

In the central part of the book Derrida presents Hélène lingering and musing on her personal life and thought, her pulling apart two times: the time to make love and the time to analyze it, to make and to interpret, to



interpret interpretation, to 'do psychoanalysis', while Uncle Freud who has always been there, close to her in the corner, appears and disappears with the pages of *Totem and Taboo*.

For Hélène death is neither unknown, nor denied, nor avoided. She remembers once more the Freudian words, 'the acknowledgement of *Ananké*, of what is effective, takes place in the same gesture through which the first man seems to deny it. He does not deny, since he acknowledges, but he seems to deny; it is *as if* he denied what he acknowledges. This same gesture comes to the same thing without doing so, and it is in the direction of this "as if" that we should have the courage to continue' (118). It deals with the same oppositions: relation/no relation, magic/technique, faith/knowledge, life/death, and so on.

In the epilogue, Derrida, echoing in his subconscious the Epicurean opposition between life and death, goes back to underline the main figure of 'taking sides', the kernel of the entire book, by means of these last words: 'The thing is, I just cannot believe her, as far as life death is concerned, from one side to the other. I just cannot believe her, that is to say: I can only manage to believe her, I can only manage to believe her when she speaks in the subjunctive' (159).

### Francesco Tampoia

**Michael Friedman and  
Alfred Nordmann, eds.**  
*The Kantian Legacy in Nineteenth-Century  
Science.*  
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2006.  
Pp. 384.  
US\$45.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-262-06254-1).

The papers in this volume consider the effects of Kant's philosophy on five different strands of scientific thought in the nineteenth century: the scientific writing of the *Naturphilosophs*, particularly their organic conception of nature; the development of Fries' philosophy of science as an attempt to carry on the Kantian project, given new scientific developments; Helmholtz' research in visual perception in order to address the question of the given in intuition; the academic neo-Kantianism of Cohen and Riehl in its return to Kant's critical project; and Poincaré's views in philosophy of science and mathematics, specifically his views about the nature of space and the role of intuition. One of the best things they do in their discussions is bring out the (easily neglected) close connection between Kantian philosophy and scientific

practice. This connection is due to the fact that Kant did attempt to account for the actual scientific and mathematical research of his time; but given the progress of science since then, several interesting questions about his views arise, and the essays in this volume show us how they were addressed by nineteenth-century thinkers.

One question is the extent to which Kantian philosophy can be updated to account for subsequent scientific developments. It was clear to nineteenth-century thinkers such as Fries that Kant's philosophy of science needed to be extended in order to be brought in line with the current state of science. One way in which Fries attempted to do this was to broaden Kant's account of the boundaries of science in order to encompass current scientific work. For example, Kant's view of chemistry was that it would never become a science, since it is incapable of being given an a priori foundation analogous to the foundation for physics outlined in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. Helmut Pulte's paper describes Fries' attempt to give a foundation for chemistry along Kantian lines — admittedly still insufficient according to Kantian standards, but acceptable as a science according to Fries' broader conception, and more closely connected to nineteenth-century scientific practice.

A different source of impetus for the development of a foundation for chemistry was the idea, important to the *Naturphilosophs*, though unknown to Kant, that chemical forces are electrical in nature. This led to the thought that the dynamical theory of matter could be extended to account for sciences other than physics. Friedman outlines the influences of both Kantian philosophy and *Naturphilosophie* on Oersted's philosophy of nature, particularly as it relates to Oersted's important discovery of electromagnetism. Other papers in the collection explain how the attempts of the *Naturphilosophs* to work out tensions in Kant's views, such as the distinction between constitutive and regulative principles, were influential in the philosophy of science.

Further mathematical developments relating to geometry and space also call Kant's views into question. Kant's philosophy of mathematics takes classical Euclidean geometry as its paradigm case of mathematical practice; and he takes space really to be Euclidean (understandably so, since there were no alternative geometries then). But the development of consistent non-Euclidean geometries in the nineteenth century makes this problematic. Euclidean geometry, as taught during Kant's time, proceeds by construction using diagrams, so construction in pure intuition is central to his philosophy of mathematics. But in the nineteenth century, diagrams no longer play such an integral proof-theoretic role, given the development of more abstract and general mathematical techniques. This raises questions about the nature of intuition and its role in mathematics.

Janet Folina's paper about Poincaré discusses the relationship between his and Kant's views on intuition, leading her to conclude that for Poincaré, arithmetic is, in fact, synthetic a priori, and is not derived from logic. Poincaré even agrees with Kant in considering the Euclidean model to be the right theory of space, but in Jeremy Gray's and Jesper Lützen's papers, we see why

this is a matter of convention and simplicity, rather than a priori principles. As Gray points out, without alternative arithmetics, the question of conventionalism does not arise, while Poincaré's research in the newly developed non-Euclidean geometries led him to reject Kantian apriorism about space in favour of a conventionalist view.

A more basic question about the nature of intuition is taken up in Helmholtz' research in spatial perception. Timothy Lenoir's detailed description of Helmholtz's work in this area highlights the Kantian nature of the problem under consideration: what is the connection between sensation and our intuition of space: that is, to what extent are the contents of intuition given immediately in sensation? Helmholtz' eventual conclusion is not very Kantian, however, and his research leads him to develop an empiricist theory of perception, in which there are many elements of intuition which are not immediately given and must be constructed by our sense-organs.

But whether or not these nineteenth-century thinkers ultimately agree with Kant (as many of them do not), Kantian ideas and problems certainly influenced them. The essays here provide insightful discussions of the impact of Kant's philosophy on scientific thought, in a way which is accessible even to those less familiar with the relevant figures and their work (though probably not to those unfamiliar with Kant). We can also see a deeper theme, though, about the relationship between problems of philosophy and scientific practice. This is clearly seen in Alan Richardson's paper, which describes how the close connection between science and philosophy is preserved in neo-Kantian methodology as well. And as he points out, when we consider their influence on twentieth century philosophy of science, and the fact that many of the issues they raised can be traced to problems we find in Kant, we might suspect that contemporary philosophy of science owes more to Kant than we think.

### **Audrey Yap**

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### **Carlos E. Garcia**

*Popper's Theory of Science: An Apologia.*

New York: Continuum, 2006.

Pp. 166.

US\$110.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-9026-1).

This book is, as its subtitle indicates, an apologia. Readers of Plato know that what is certainly his best known dialogue, usually translated as *The Apology*, is a work in which Socrates does not apologize for what he has done, but defends it. Indeed, 'defense', not 'apology', is the correct translation of



'apologia', and what Garcia offers readers is a forthright and detailed, if rather turgid and sometimes tedious, defense of Popper's theory of science.

In mounting his defense, Garcia is selective; he does not try to address everything that Popper has written on the nature of science and its proper methods. Instead, he focuses on four themes: Popper's alleged solution to the problem of induction, falsifiability as a criterion of demarcation between science and non-science, corroboration as a substitute for inductivist verification, and verisimilitude as a realist indication of progress in science and its approach to truth. The choices are apt, since all four themes are central to Popper's theory of science. In successive chapters (Chs. 2-5), Garcia traces Popper's developmental presentation of them, the major objections of his critics, and Popper's replies. Much of this is very useful, especially for readers unfamiliar with Popper's ideas and the controversies in the philosophy of science they have provoked. Less useful, because often unconvincing, are Garcia's own efforts to adjudicate these controversies, mostly in Popper's favor.

To begin with, Garcia tends to interpret Popper as a strict deductivist and defends him as such. But Kuhn is surely right to say (51-7) that Popper does not provide a logic of discovery (or of knowledge), since he does not give methodological rules that are effective procedures (in the technical sense) for obtaining right answers and avoiding wrong ones. Naïve falsificationism with infallible test-results would do that, but Popper denied that he was a naïve falsificationist, and thought that test-statements are themselves always fallible, so that conclusive disproof is impossible. But if so, he needs a non-logical (or not purely logical) way of determining when *potential* falsifiers are to be regarded as *actual* falsifiers (i.e., as *real falsifications*), and that requires recourse to the sort of pragmatic, procedural maxims that are included in what Kuhn calls the psychology of research. Put differently, Popper can hold (rightly) that all knowledge is fallible and conjectural; but when he says that 'Nevertheless we learn by refutations, i.e., by the elimination of errors' (55), he needs to specify what counts as a 'refutation' and how we *know* when we have detected an 'error'. If everything is fallible, as Popper repeatedly asserts, the simple (falsificationist) logic of *modus tollens* doesn't settle matters. One still has to face the problem of where and when to direct the arrow of a *modus tollens*.

The degree of verisimilitude of a theory is a qualitative (and relational) measure of how far it is from the truth. Crudely, a theory is better than its genuine rival(s) if it is less far from the truth, and scientific progress consists in the replacement of theories farther from the truth with theories less far from it. Is a better theory more likely to be true than the one it replaced? No. Degree of verisimilitude does not equal degree of probability (127), since no theory is any more likely to be true than any other (87). In fact, all current and future theories are almost certainly false. Is a successor theory nevertheless more 'truthlike'? Yes. Meaning what? That it is less far from the truth than its predecessor. Does that mean that it is closer to the truth than its overthrown rival? Yes, but no more likely to be true than its rival.

This is puzzling at best, but Garcia defends Popper. Indeed, he thinks that for Popper verisimilitude is a relation between false (or falsified) theories, with some falsehoods being less false (but no more likely to be true) than other falsehoods (121, 128-30, 149 n. 18). This is why corroboration, although a virtue of a theory, is not a 'sign', 'indicator', or 'measure' of its truth (111, 131). To say that a theory is highly corroborated is just to say that it has passed one or more severe tests and that it invites additional severe tests. 'Popper has explained tirelessly that corroboration does not provide any information about the future' (112); it is not 'a device by which Popper can smuggle induction into his theory through the back door' (118 n. 36; also 101-2). But then Garcia muddies the waters when he compares two theories,  $t_1$  and  $t_2$ , which are genuine rivals, where the first has failed a severe test that the second has passed, and where the second has more 'truth content' and less 'falsity content' (both technical notions; see 124, 127), commenting: 'There is no doubt in this case: we have good reasons to prefer  $t_2$  over  $t_1$  and to consider  $t_2$  as a better approximation to the truth than its rival *because* it exceeds  $t_1$  in corroboration and [verisimilitude] while having more [epistemic value]' (146, our italics).

If verisimilitude is a factor justifying rational preference, we also need to ask whether for practical, decision-making purposes it doesn't simply collapse into corroboration, i.e., into *just* a matter of being *as yet* unrefuted. If so, then we have no reason for thinking that  $t_2$  is any more truthlike (likely to be true) than  $t_1$ . Why not? Because if there are infinitely many potential competing hypotheses, then  $t_2$  has the same probability of being true as  $t_1$ , namely 0. And if there are only two competitors and one has been refuted, that's a reason for practically preferring the unrefuted one, since we have nothing better; but we have no reason to think that the second is more 'truthlike' than the first, other than the possibility that the second *might* be true. But so might an indefinite number of unrecognized competitors (27-8, 34). Garcia's elaborate revisions of Popper's (formal) notions of the 'truth' and 'falsity' contents of a hypothesis in Chapter 5 do nothing to resolve this problem. Indeed, a purely formal account of verisimilitude looks at least as implausible as a purely deductive account of falsification.

**Robert Deltete**

**Aaron Stricker**

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**Scott Gelfand and John R. Shook, eds.**

*Ectogenesis: Artificial Womb Technology and the Future of Human Reproduction.*

New York: Rodopi 2006.

Pp. 210.

US\$55.00 (paper ISBN-13: 978-90-420-2081-8).

The feminist author Shulamith Firestone once argued that giving birth was a barbaric experience, akin to 'shitting a pumpkin'; and that women would benefit from avoiding the barbarity of natural reproduction, since a woman's capacity to reproduce underlay the circumstances of patriarchal oppression. The dependence of women on men could be traced back, she argued, to the unequal burden women bear in reproductive labour during pregnancy, child-birth and in child-care. According to Firestone, women could be made more free if they could access an artificial means of reproduction that would not require them to undergo a protracted pregnancy and the unpleasantness of birth. If fetuses could be gestated in machines, rather than in women's bodies, this would free women from a principal source of their inequality.

This is a collection of essays that consider the ethical prospects of developing the artificial womb technology that Firestone thought would help advance the feminist cause, and her arguments are a common jumping off point for many of the contributors. Some of the essays, those by Peter Singer and Deane Wells, Julien S. Murphy, and Leslie Cannold, have appeared previously in other journals or books, but most are new.

All of the contributors to the volume describe ectogenetic technology as an inevitability that will be available in ten to thirty years. Research teams in Japan and the US are developing prototypes using animal models or human tissue. Furthermore, due to efforts to delay the implantation of IVF embryos, and to the efforts of neonatologists to save extremely premature infants at earlier and earlier stages of gestation, the period during which a fetus must reside in the womb is shrinking at both ends.

There is a good distribution of voices for and against the development of artificial womb technology in this volume. Interestingly, the conversation between these camps often takes on a character similar to other debates about the ethics of scientific innovation in genetics, neuroscience, or reproduction. In this conversation, liberal arguments touting individual choice are pitted against a discourse that defends core values that are perceived to be threatened by scientific advances. The debates over genetic enhancement and pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, for instance, are similar in structure and strategy to the debate over the ethics of artificial womb technology in this compilation.

On the one hand are the techno-optimists, represented here by Singer and Wells, Gregory Pence, and Dien Ho, who take up liberal or libertarian positions to defend the autonomous choices of those who would want to use ectogenetic technology. Some feminists, such as Firestone, also belong in the camp of the techno-optimists. The most common argument one finds ex-



pressed by the optimists is that artificial womb technology would be a great benefit to infertile couples who wish to have their own genetic child, but do not want to engage a surrogate.

On the other hand are those who are less welcoming of artificial womb technology. Call them the 'techno-skeptics'. The techno-skeptics are well represented in this compilation by Murphy, Maureen Sander-Staudt, and Joan Woolfrey. Interestingly, all three approach the issue from a feminist perspective, and dispute Firestone's assertion that ectogenesis would be a liberating technology. The techno-skeptics try out a number of arguments in opposition to artificial womb research, of which I will recount three examples. First, some feminists perceive that this kind of technology sends the message that a woman's contribution to reproductive labour is simply a mechanical process, or that women's bodies are simply biological machines. Messages like this contribute to the devaluing of women's labour, and the objectification of women's bodies. Second, some of the techno-skeptics point out that artificial gestation will have an unknown effect on the development of children born from this process. In utero attachment may be necessary for good development. If psychological attachment is important for postnatal development, we have reason to suspect that future children will be developmentally disadvantaged by giving them the very opposite of an attached prenatal life, as with ectogenesis. Third, the techno-skeptics point out that ectogenetic technology might lead us to view our children as products of manufacture rather than as persons — an alarming prospect.

Because of the valorization of personal autonomy in our culture, the techno-optimist argument in favour of individual choice in the use of ectogenetic technology sounds strong and impartial. In contrast, the techno-skeptic arguments appear speculative and one-sided. These objections to the technology are based on dire predictions that are, in the end, probable only. The fact is, children might not be harmed, we might not come to view them as manufactured products, and women's bodies might not come to be thought of as machines. The liberal techno-optimist response to the concerns of the techno-skeptics is to contest their dire predictions, and point out that if ectogenesis becomes a reality, infertile women will have a powerful new tool at their disposal to realize their reproductive goals. The optimist claims that this tangible benefit outweighs the techno-skeptic's dystopian speculations.

Nonetheless, some of the techno-skeptics' predictions are worrying. Several of the authors point out that the effect of ectogenetic technology, liberating or oppressive, will depend on the nature of the society in which it is used. A society oppressive towards women will be likely to use ectogenetic technology as an oppressive tool. As Woolfrey points out, Firestone herself recognized in 1970 that this technology would be unlikely to liberate anyone if its use was controlled by male scientists in her contemporary patriarchal society (136). We should also be concerned that artificial womb technology, which could stand to benefit only the few who are infertile, will require large amounts of money and effort for its development — money and effort that could be directed towards rectifying the gross inequality of wealth and

opportunity in North American society, or towards improving the resource-scarce healthcare system. Instead of waiting for technology to liberate us, we could be more effective in trying to make our social structures more equitable. The dystopian predictions would be less likely to come true in a just society.

**Chris Kaposy**

*(Ethics of Health Research and Policy)*

Dalhousie University

**Steven Gimbel and Anke Walz, eds.**

*Defending Einstein: Hans Reichenbach's  
Writings on Space, Time, and Motion.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Pp. 222.

US\$80.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-85958-5).

This compact book contains a collection of Hans Reichenbach's early work on Einstein's special and general theories of relativity, all written in the 1920s and in *his* thirties. The chapters contain English translations of works that have previously only appeared in Reichenbach's native tongue (and one in French). There are essays, reports, reply papers, and book reviews spanning some fourteen chapters. An introduction by the editors attempts to put these various academic forms in their historical context: Kantianism and neo-Kantianism, the deluge of scientifically uninformed philosophy, the transition from anti-conventionalism to conventionalism, and the bad vibes between Reichenbach and Weyl (in evidence in Chapter 12).

The editors see their book as providing 'contemporary scholars of logical empiricism' access to the development of Reichenbach's later views, and as being of relevance to the development of scientific and analytic philosophy (12). I'm sure it will indeed serve these purposes very well. However, the book is of obvious importance beyond this: the views expressed in these chapters are of significance quite aside from their position in the evolution of Reichenbach's thinking and the rise of logical empiricism. Reichenbach appears in these papers as a model philosopher of physics, seamlessly integrating the formal and the conceptual, and always with exceptional clarity and simplicity. The chapters have high *intrinsic* value, and (most) are still well able to stand on their own in the present day. It is curious that the editors do not make mention of this, and do not engage with the material beyond its historical aspects.

The book reviews (Chapters 1 and 9) are of Schlick's *General Theory of Knowledge* and Muller's *The Philosophical Problems with Einstein's Theory of Relativity*. In the former, Reichenbach applauds Schlick's anti-metaphysical style of philosophy and his clear-headedness, but criticizes what he views as his avoidance of difficult problems, which is often the compromise for Schlick's clear presentation. Muller's book is left looking like a real pig's ear of a work! The reply papers (Chapters 3, 5, 8, and 14) to various critiques of relativity (and to his own axiomatization of relativity), are by Dingler, Wulf, Anderson, and Mellin. These replies constitute an extensive demolition job and clarificatory cleanup of what he calls 'the incessant misunderstanding of the theory of relativity' (87) that was very much in full swing at the time.

Reichenbach's own anti-metaphysical stance comes across in Chapter 2, 'Einstein's Theory of Space'. Here Reichenbach defends a relationist position according to which temporal and spatial orderings only make sense when confronted with '*real processes*' (23). This conclusion is based on, and solidified by, a discussion of thought experiments involving underdetermination (the empirical undetectability of uniformly shrinking forces, and so on). We find the verification principle in full flow here too, but it is used with great care, and leads into a surprisingly modern-sounding discussion of the objective, physical content of spacetime theories: do away with kinematical geometric quantities, like distance, that hold in virtue of the nature of some independent 'container' (spacetime), and deal in *physical* concepts that gain meaning through physical objects and their properties — this is a clear ancestor of the view defended by Harvey Brown in his recent book *Physical Relativity*. Thus, I repeat, the views espoused in this chapter are still clearly germane to the contemporary debate.

The central focus of the book, not surprisingly, is Reichenbach's axiomatization of special relativity and the 'epsilon-definition' of distant (i.e., spacelike separated) simultaneity (the editors refer to spacelike separated events as 'non-local', a term which to me signifies something quite different). In Chapter 4 one finds many of the central tenets of logical empiricism, as per the editors' claims, in Reichenbach's 'Report on the Axiomatization of Einstein's Theory of Space-Time': the axioms involve only *empirical* propositions (or propositions whose truth-value could be experimentally determined in ideal circumstances). The piece opens with the claim that an axiomatization is necessary for the clarification of the fundamental concepts: this will allow for the splitting of the empirical from the definitional (and *arbitrary*). The major claim is that a 'complete theory of space and time' can be constructed using only axioms concerning the physical properties of light (46); this '*lichtgeometrie*' was the source of Weyl's disagreement with Reichenbach. On this and the epsilon-definition material one might have liked a word from the editors on their contemporary relevance, rather than having them occur in a vacuum without knowing why they were and *are* of importance. For example, though Reichenbach (and Einstein) defended the view that the issue of whether distant events are simultaneous (relative to a frame of reference) or not is a *conventional* matter, David Malament has



defended an anti-conventionalist position: 'Causal Theories of Time and the Conventionality of Simultaneity' (*Nous* 11(1977): 293-300). This is nowhere mentioned.

The bulk of the book is constituted by an essay on 'The Philosophical Significance of the Theory of Relativity' (Chapter 10). This is an extended investigation that covers in greater depth any of the topics in the other chapters. Of particular interest here is Reichenbach's 'confrontation with Kant' (146). We also find an espousal of *experimental philosophy* (an attitude now associated with Abner Shimony), the view that all manner of philosophical concepts can be influenced by the sciences: 'In our times, it has been the physicists and mathematicians who make the philosophy, not the official philosophers' (160).

To sum up, I think the editors do the *content* of the book a disservice in focusing purely on its relevance for understanding the evolution of logical empiricism: there are many portions that have immediate relevance to several ongoing debates in the philosophy of physics and the philosophy of science. Given the recent appearance of several books that deal with historical and philosophical aspects of relativity, from a contemporary point of view, such as Ryckman's book (OUP 2003), DiSalle's (CUP 2006), and Brown's *Physical Relativity* (OUP 2006), the translations are clearly timely. On this basis, any philosopher interested in foundational issues (both historical and philosophical) on space, time, and spacetime (especially those who can't read French and German!) will want to have a copy of this book.

**Dean Rickles**

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**Suzanne Guerlac**

*Thinking in Time:*

*An Introduction to Henri Bergson.*

Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2006.

Pp. 248.

US\$ 49.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8014-4421-0);

US\$ 18.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-8014-7300-5).

This book offer what the title says: an introduction to Bergson and to 'thinking in time'. It does this by both thoroughly situating his thought in its context then and now and through a sustained close reading of his two major works, *Time and Free Will* and *Matter and Memory*. Guerlac's exposition is clear, concise yet thorough and original in a refreshing way. She did not come to Bergson via Deleuze but through her interest in Bataille and Valéry with

their critical stances towards modernity. Thus there is little talk of the virtual and much more of how Bergson can help us open up thought anew — to relearn how to think — in time.

Why think in time? Chapter 2 lays out the developments in science contemporaneous to Bergson. It shows us the dramatic changes from the 1850s when it was widely believed that science had nearly solved the problem of the universe to the 1930s when uncertainty and relativity were all but triumphant. The enormous expansion of the sciences created both a sense of wonder at its efficacy, a shaking off of the old and the redundant, and a sense of crisis due to the uprooting of traditions and customs. We see here how Bergson's thought previsions many of the insights of science. This was in large part due to his great knowledge of the sciences.

Chapter 3 is a close reading of *Time and Free Will* (TFW), Bergson's first work. It offers a solid depiction of it, using many lengthy quotes that are generally carefully explained. In TFW Bergson formulates many of the concepts and dualisms that will concern him throughout his life. A book on the 'immediate data of consciousness' it asks whether the then current school of psychometrics is right in attempting to measure psychic states. Of what does measurement consist? This brings up space as the underlying assumption of all measurement. Space implies juxtaposition. Guerlac shows us Bergson's method of appealing to concrete examples in making his point. In our immediate self-experience do we ever find juxtaposition? Are our states not rather successive? The distinction between reciprocally penetrating states in time and simultaneous juxtaposition in space becomes one of the central axes of his thought.

Guerlac points to Bergson's appeal to immediate experience to show the non-discursive nature of freedom. She writes: 'Freedom is something we can't talk about at all! ... The moment we try to explain freedom — we eradicate it' (85). Freedom is a matter of the passions (104). In many ways this is correct and perhaps not even Bergson was aware of the full extent of the tension between discursivity and duration/freedom. Yet Bergson's point surely was not that we cannot talk about it. A pure intuition of duration can only be through experience. In *An Introduction to Metaphysics* Bergson emphasizes that philosophy is the effort to constantly return to this intuition — without ever attaining full completion.

Luckily Guerlac amends these points in the discussion of *Matter and Memory* (MM). MM is Bergson's most complex book and she rightly stresses the strategies involved in it (168). She takes us through its successive stages, from the 'purely hypothetical theory' of Pure Perception, to the complementary theory of Pure Memory, via the different levels of memory that link up the body and the mind, to the discussion of 'real movement' and 'concrete extension' and the final opposition of necessity versus freedom. As with TFW, Guerlac has to balance the close attention to each stage with the 'dynamic progress' of Bergson's thought. MM in many ways reconfigures the strict oppositions of TFW and at numerous points she is able to indicate this.

Equally, *MM* is supplemented by later works and here and there references are made to these. Her patient exposition of these would be much welcomed.

Unfortunately the method of close reading limits one to the precise wording of the author. In the section 'The Body' (113-114), Guerlac would have done well to either criticise or supplement Bergson's exposition. She writes how the growing complexity of the senses requires their coordination. Some senses 'perceive at a distance' which introduces a delay between perception and the organism's 'actual movement'. This would create time for the organism to coordinate its movements. Thus voluntary action would become possible, and this would introduce novelty into the world. Although at points Bergson does appear to saying this, in fact, it does not work. This complexity as such does not explain anything. Rather, stress should be laid on the temporal quality of life, with its tendency to coordination and contraction. The elemental contractile tendency is memory and this is rooted in the capacity to recognise whatever fills the need of the organism. This recognition is facilitated by the erection of habits. Perception or consciousness signals the inadequacy of the habit and the need to attentively amend it. This is why Bergson calls perception 'virtual action'. The inadequacy necessitates a detour via consciousness until a new habit has been formed. Novelty thus lies at the heart of life's temporal nature, and is not its consequence.

The remainder of the book concerns contemporary interests. It is especially interesting to see how Bergson has withstood the successive waves of humanism, anti-humanism and post-humanism. Because his emphasis has always been on action and processes, not representation and cognition, Bergson offers new perspectives on the relation of man and machine, and man and nature. Guerlac's exposition is clear and thought provoking.

It requires a certain distance to see how the dualities are never static. This is naturally at odds with a close reading. Nevertheless, the benefits of a close reading are fortunately plentiful. Guerlac has certainly filled a need in the English literature, and this book serves its role as introduction well. It should be required reading for courses on Bergson.

**Michael Kolkman**

University of Warwick



**Paul Guyer, ed.**

*The Cambridge Companion to Kant  
and Modern Philosophy.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Pp. 736.

US\$75.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-82303-6);

US\$29.99 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-521-52995-2).

Guyer here assembles insightful essays by leading scholars in what is certain to become a standard reference work for Kant studies. He prefaces the collection with a synopsis of Kant's entire philosophical career that is impressive for its compactness and clarity. The papers that follow cover every aspect of Kant's philosophy, and can be read individually or as a set. This welcome addition to the Companion series maintains the high standards set by the original companion to Kant in 1992. The title may mislead, however, since there are no papers on modern philosophy in general, nor on any modern philosopher other than Kant: the only real difference between this book and its predecessor is greater emphasis on the historical context of Kant's thinking.

Roughly the first half of the book is devoted to Kant's theoretical philosophy. In the first paper, Philip Kitcher argues that there are two notions of the a priori in Kant that are often conflated at critical points in the argumentation of the first *Critique*. Unlike the other contributions, this paper is heavy on philosophical reflection, light on exposition and interpretation. Gary Hatfield's 'Kant on the perception of space (and time)' presents the historical background to Kant's views in Descartes, Leibniz, Wolff, and Crusius, and then traces the development of Kant's mature position. In 'Kant's philosophy of mathematics', Lisa Shabel offers a detailed exposition of Kant's arguments for the syntheticity and a priority of mathematical propositions (taking account of the main arguments in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' and the 'Discipline of Pure Reason'). She also considers the role that the synthetic a priori status of mathematics plays in Kant's transcendental philosophy more generally. The establishment of the table of categories is the topic of an illuminating paper by Béatrice Longuenesse. She examines early formulations of the problems Kant would eventually address in the metaphysical deduction of the categories, and gives a helpful (and unusually sympathetic) analysis of the table of the logical forms of judgement. Her account of the subsequent history of Kant's metaphysical deduction in relation to the philosophies of Hegel, Cohen, Heidegger and Frege makes an interesting conclusion.

New papers on familiar themes are offered. Highlights are Patricia Kitcher's pellucid account of the highest principle in Kant's theory of cognition — that it must be possible to understand all the representations involved in cognition as belonging to a single subject of experience; Arthur Melnick's 'causal theory of time'; Karl Ameriks' entire analysis of the Dialectic; and Michael Friedman's attempt to show that Kant's philosophy of natural

science is of enduring significance. More questionable are Melnick's equation of appearances with 'proper reactions', and an implicit (and obviously fallacious) inference made by Ralph C. S. Walker, who seems to think that because something would be a *bad* argument (for idealism), it cannot be *Kant's* argument (for idealism).

Various aspects of Kant's practical philosophy are treated individually in the second half of the book. In 'The Supreme Principle of Morality', Allen W. Wood exposes a common misunderstanding of the categorical imperative, according to which all moral questions can be answered simply by checking their maxim against the formula of universal law. He also shows that comparisons of Kant's *Groundwork* with Cicero's *On Duties* (as, for example, by Klaus Reich) are philosophically unhelpful. Henry E. Allison looks at the relationship between freedom as spontaneity (negative freedom) and freedom as autonomy (positive freedom), and the relationship of both to Kant's transcendental idealism. Robert B. Pippin argues that the authority of the state derives from its ability to secure property rights, and that private property is the fundamental institution in modern society. He characterises Kant as a sort of proto-Fichtean or proto-Hegelian insofar as rational individuality is not an ultimate given, but a socially dependent, achieved status. Pippin admits that this claim is open to historical as well as philosophical objections, but he does analyse the text very closely and with good judgement. Jane Kneller begins her paper, 'Kant on sex and marriage right', with a fascinating look at the historical background to Kant's views, focusing on the writings (and possible influence) of Kant's friend, Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel. She argues that Kant's account of marriage is grounded in a *metaphysics* of a priori principles, cognitive as well as moral. Reconciling two competing interpretations of Kant's theory of peace, Pauline Kleingeld argues that the founding of a voluntary league of (democratic) nations is a step *on the way to* a federation of states with real (and possibly coercive) power. Lara Denis paints a thoughtful and sympathetic picture of Kant's ideas on virtue, which shows how the various virtues are ultimately grounded in the imperative to respect rationality in oneself and others.

Kant's thinking about aesthetics and teleology is made remarkably clear in a long but engaging paper by Paul Guyer. He argues that the third critique should be read as an extended argument with Hume, an attempt to reassert the a priori legitimacy of aesthetic and teleological judgements against Hume's empiricism, while at the same time discrediting the rationalist metaphysics, aesthetics and teleology of Kant's German contemporaries. Frederick Beiser explains one central concept in Kant's philosophy of religion, arguing that moral faith is *necessary to* Kant's basic aims and principles (some commentators hold that it is merely *consistent with*, others that it is *contrary to*, the basic thrust of the system). Beiser's first concern is historical accuracy. He thus opposes those whose main aim is to make Kant relevant to current issues and fashionable programmes in philosophy. The upshot is that Kant's conception of the highest good is ultimately derived from Augustine.

In the final piece, Manfred Kuehn argues that Kant's thinking in the 1780s was shaped largely by the reactions of his contemporaries. Specifically, Kant's works between 1781 and 1786 were partly motivated by reviews of his publications.

For its comprehensiveness and quality, this volume should find a place in the library of every historian.

**Scott Stapleford**

University of the Witwatersrand

**Peter Hallward**

*Out of this World:*

*Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation.*

New York: Verso Books 2006.

Pp. 166.

US\$90.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-1-84467-079-6);

US\$25.00 (paper ISBN-13: 978-1-84467-555-5).

This book extends Hallward's exceptional studies of French philosophy with a provocative treatment of Deleuze. He presents a compelling and nuanced study, exhaustive in its integration of the considerably diverse subject range that is the Deleuzian corpus. This is not only a good example of Deleuzian scholarship, but an exposition of Deleuzian philosophy put to work. Hallward adopts the Deleuzian mechanism of providing a creative reading, this time applied to Deleuze himself. Hallward stringently argues that Deleuze is an 'immaterialist' and a 'spiritual' philosopher concerned with defining the 'redemptive' component of Being, which is *out of this world*. While this is hardly polemical, one gets the impression that it proceeds with the peculiar combination of a sympathetic reading imbued with a sense of resigned disappointment.

The book comprises five chapters incorporating much from Deleuze's edifice to demonstrate his immaterialist orientation. Chapter 1, 'The Conditions of Creation', sets the tone in describing Deleuze's ontological and univocal commitments. Hallward situates his thesis within Deleuze's heritage of Bergsonian temporality, whereby every given moment of actual time expresses variable degrees of 'compression' or 'impoverishment' of virtual time. For Deleuze, being and differing are one and the same, thus defining what ontologically produces the difference between actuality and virtuality. For Hallward's Deleuze, there is no mediation or intermediary affects, only the activity where what is created is a facet of an indivisible, immaterial creative whole. Consequently, pure creation must be immaterial by defini-



tion; it must necessarily be comprised of a 'spiritual force' that surpasses the given finite constraints of the material world.

Chapter 2, 'Actual Creatures, Virtual Creatings', progresses to give a more detailed account of how distinct 'creatings' give rise to a certain kind of existent creature or created actualization. Creatures are not presentable as creation, but only as a repercussion of creation; they must necessarily be actualized as a minimal confinement of absolute creation. The true destiny of the actual thus becomes its dissolution in overcoming the confinement of the actual creature. Release from confinement within their creatural coordinates is the very liberation immaterial virtuality offers. This illustrates Deleuze's strangely Platonic motifs, whereby the created are understood as points of '... contingency rather than rational autonomy and necessity. They suffer the effects of their passions. They live in a state of incomprehension and "bondage"' (31).

Chapter 3, 'Creatural Confinement', provides useful information on the connections between Deleuze's early philosophy and later themes such as 'infinite speed', 'lines of flight', 'deterritorialization', and the 'Body-without-Organs'. These mark the precise point where the virtuality of absolute creation necessitates disorganization, i.e. the point where a body is denuded of creatural purity in favor of an unlimited affirmation of pure 'transformation' and 'potential'. Here Hallward succinctly defines the Deleuzian ethico-political impulse. Creatural confinement has wide application in terms of 'molar' constellations, such as the law, state and family. The downside of such forms is the preservation of 'bio-cultural distinction' at the cost of 'creative sterility'. This is interesting in terms of defining the intensity of our investment in such molar forms and the manner of social defense they inculcate, but ultimately provides Hallward with only further evidence of the attempt to transcend the finitude of the human condition towards immaterialist escape.

Chapter 4, 'Creative Subtraction', deals with the means we hold of overcoming creatural constraints. Hallward provides fascinating evidence, especially in relation to Spinoza and Sufi mystic Shihab al Suhrawarddi, that Deleuze is a spiritual philosopher concerned with constructing a radical theosophy. 'Subtraction', a term more at home in Badiou's work, is typical of Deleuze for Hallward. It advocates the active subtraction of our own creaturalty vis-à-vis the fact that the creatural *qua* creatural is unredeemable. Ethico-political vitality comes from the creatural actively subtracting itself from its confinement in the actual through forms of experimentation and innovation which tear the subject from its localized captivity aiming towards spiritual disembodiment rather than embodiment.

Chapters 5 and 6, 'Creation Mediated-Art and Literature' and 'Creation Unmediated: Philosophy', designate the functions of art and philosophy. Art holds the secondary but important function of making creation perceptible. Rather than considering art as limited representation, it enables the radical spiritualization and dematerialization of life. Art is an intermediary between the actual and the virtual which lets in the 'windy chaos of the virtual'.

Philosophy is privileged as it allows the most 'becoming' expression of being. Philosophy, in itself, is pure and immediate 'thought' which brings expression to the realization that we are utterly immaterial and virtually disembodied. Liberated from materiality, philosophy is devoted to the creation of concepts which actualize our own becoming.

While Hallward is acute on what he finds unsatisfying in Deleuze, the narrative proceeds with an uncritical voice. It would have helped the reader had he engaged critically with some consequences of Deleuze's position. Also the text is remarkably self-contained. There is, if adequate reference, little dialogue with much of contemporary Deleuzian scholarship. An extended discussion of Hardt and Negri's Deleuzian multitude would have been most fruitful given Hallward's misgiving over Deleuze's political relevance. Overall, however, this is a book that continues to demonstrate Hallward's mercurial ability to distill the complexity of twentieth century French philosophy. He provides a unique contribution to Deleuze studies, valuable in its own right as a materialist critique of a materialist philosopher which ultimately demonstrates Hallward's disappointment. Deleuze is ultimately portrayed as a philosopher indifferent towards, and uncommitted to, the predicaments of this world. He allows no place for 'incremental transformation' or 'antagonistic counter-movements to oppression', and lacks the capacity to define 'resilient forms of cohesion', 'integrated forms of commitment' and 'more resistant forms of defense'. That Deleuze offers a redemptive logic where no world is the best of all possible worlds is precisely why Hallward's interpretation of Deleuze demands immediate response.

**Patrick O'Connor**

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**John Henderson**

*Morals and Villas in Seneca's Letters:*

*Places to Dwell.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2004.

Pp. 198.

US\$75.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-82944-1);

US\$34.99 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-521-03622-1).

John Henderson's book is a literary commentary on Seneca's *Moral Epistles*, with texts and his own translations of three of them that are of particular interest because they focus on three different villas. Henderson's concern is with literary criticism of Latin *epistolary* writing as a genre, and with Seneca's 'epistoliterarity', in particular with placing Seneca's philosophical

epistles in their own 'nichette' within this genre. The audience for this text is the Latin literary scholar. Although there is mention of Stoicism, of Epicurus and Heraclitus, there is no philosophy here. There are no arguments either in the three Latin texts and translations of Seneca that Henderson provides, nor in Henderson's commentary, nor are there descriptions of Stoicism as a philosophy, no ethics or even casuistry, no explanations that could be said to pertain to philosophy, ancient or modern.

The book consists of a quick summary survey of twenty books consisting of 124 letters, with the Latin texts and his translations of *Letters* 12, 55, and 86, accompanied by more extended commentary. The connection between morals and villas suggested by the title is one of literary metaphor, apparently on many levels, none of them having directly to do with philosophy. For example, in reflecting on Seneca's letter following a visit to Scipio's estate, Henderson states, 'Reading between Seneca's lines to see how they arise from the rewriting of the Scipionic legend shows us how he is transforming the "Villa + Garden" complex by reconfiguring its story as the product of a "legend + experience" synthesis: behind the scenes, he is remoulding a "tradition + experience" hendiadys'(163). And commenting on Seneca's letter about Vatia's estate, Henderson says, 'just visiting Vatia's presses home the philosophical-epistolary truth that calibration between show house and inspected alterity exposes the adjudicating letter-writer's self to the inspection of the correspondent'(71). Exposed indeed!

**Mark Starr**

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**Philip Hugly and Charles Sayward**

*Arithmetic and Ontology:*

*A Non-Realist Philosophy of Arithmetic.*

New York: Rodopi 2006.

Pp. 393.

US\$111.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-90-420-2047-4).

**Graham Oppy**

*Philosophical Perspectives on Infinity.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Pp. 334.

US\$75.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-86076-3).

Two of the central questions of the philosophy of mathematics are: What are numbers? What is the infinite? Hugly and Sayward take on the first question, Oppy the second.

*Arithmetic and Ontology* is divided into five parts, four by Hugly and Sayward presenting and defending their thesis, and a fifth part containing three commentaries, by Colin Cheyne, Sanford Shieh, and Jean Paul van Bendegem, along with the authors' replies. The presence of the comments is not surprising, since the thesis put forth by Hugly and Sayward is controversial, to say the least: that there are *no* numbers!

The first part looks back at Frege's work on numbers and his central claim that equations like ' $7 =$  the number of apples on my desk' speak about numbers as objective entities. Whereas one may read such an equation as introducing objective numbers by relating them to reports on counting, Hugly and Sayward want to read such equations the other way round: there is no more to a number expression (like ' $7$ ' in the example above) than to be part of, or to be equivalent to, non-referring sentence parts like 'the number of' prefixed to the referential expression (like 'apples on my desk' in the example above). The second part looks at axiomatizations of arithmetic, and explores whether the whole content of arithmetic could not be captured by framing it without universal quantification over a domain of numbers, by using schematic representations (to be filled in by numerals), instead of quantifications which (supposedly) have to be instantiated to numbers. The third part tries to use Wittgenstein's analysis of rule-following to consider the status of pure arithmetic statements like ' $7 = 3 + 4$ '. These are seen as inference tickets, not as statements of mathematical fact. Such equations are used to infer, say, 'The number of objects on the table is 7' from 'The number of apples on the table is 3', 'The number of peaches on the table is 4', and 'No peach is an apple'.

Part 4 brings together these ideas and states three central theses (215): 'In statements of number, arithmetical expressions do not function as referential expressions', 'The meanings of the signs of arithmetic are fixed not merely by their systematic interconnections as constructed in that theory, but only by that combined with their *application* in statements of number',

'Only referential quantifications are ontologically committal'. With these three theses Hugly and Sayward take on some central ideas of current philosophy of mathematics and meta-logic. They not only deny the objective existence of numbers, and so contradict the mathematical realist, but also deny a merely formalist account of mathematics by claiming (with the second thesis) that mathematics — or at least number theory — is meaningful only inasmuch as it can be applied in empirical statements of number. Further on they attack the orthodox view that to be is to be the value of a bound variable. This Quinean view of quantification is put into question by distinguishing referential quantifications like the more or the less uncontroversial 'There is a cat on my bed' from non-referential quantifications. Candidates are not restricted to surface structures like 'There is a lot I have to learn'. More specifically they claim that existential quantifications that are equivalent to (infinite) disjunctions can be no more committal than these disjunctions. These disjunctions, however, being built from statements of number, are not referentially committal (by thesis one). So their claims, controversial as they are, are not bizarre. They try to base their first fundamental thesis (that statements of number are not referential with respect to numbers) also on considerations of language use and equivalent formulations of number statements.

Although they deny the existence of numbers while maintaining the meaningfulness of mathematical talk, Hugly and Sayward see themselves as neither nominalists nor anti-realists, but rather as 'non-realists'. The distinctive feature of their theory is that while nominalists, according to their view, see mathematical discourse as referential but failing to refer (to abstract entities), Hugly and Sayward deny that arithmetical discourse is referential discourse in the first place. (This obviously is a matter of how one wants to use 'nominalism').

The commentators partly agree with Hugly and Sayward, and partly criticize their arguments. Shieh, for example, shows that the linguistic evidence for the first thesis may not be that convincing. One may take issue, furthermore, with the whole argument of the second part. Even if the word 'number' does not occur in axiomatizations of arithmetic, one has either to use a domain of discourse consisting of numbers, or restrict the variables to be substituted only by numerical expressions — but then what makes an expression a numerical expression? Focussing on the typical examples given by Hugly and Sayward (like 'There are 3 apples on the table') one may think that there has to be some structure of reality that ensures the applicability of this sentence rather than another (say 'There are 5 apples on the table'), and such structural features are candidates for referents of numerals. The more theoretical parts of number theory (like the Goldbach Conjecture) or statements of logic and set theory (like the axiom of replacement) are certainly more than inference tickets, it seems. So a lot might be replied to the arguments and claims of *Arithmetic and Ontology*, but it surely expresses a view that requires attention and justifiably challenges the standard objectivist view on numbers.



Van Bendegem's comment is interesting because although he supports Hugly and Sayward's criticism of standard objectivism he believes that there are numbers — but only finitely many! Strict finitism of this kind shows that an ontological commitment to numbers (in some sense) does not commit one to infinitely many of them.

This leads us to Oppy's book, which, despite what its title may suggest, is not a survey of the positions on the infinite in the philosophical (or mathematical) tradition (for which see A. W. Moore, *The Infinite*, 1993). Nor does the book centre on set theoretical foundational issues in the context of the axiom of infinity, the powerset axiom, and Cantor's paradise of ever larger cardinalities. (For a fascinating account of the varying views on these issues of the founding fathers of set theory, and Hilbert's idea of finitism, see rather S. Lavine, *Understanding the Infinite*, 1998, a book that Oppy uses extensively.)

One main issue of Oppy's book is, rather, whether the concept of infinity faces difficulties not only in the light of the more or the less well-known paradoxes of infinity, but especially when applied to, or considered in relation to, physical infinities, questions of space-time, and (de-)composition. In these parts his book supplements those by Moore and Lavine. Oppy outlines a bunch of well-known and not so well-known paradoxes of infinity (like Hilbert's Hotel and several versions of super-tasks with unbounded acceleration). In detailed discussions he goes through several problems that infinity may pose for theories of space-time (like singularities with infinitely hot temperatures) and the way infinite or unbounded amounts may be treated (e.g. by renormalization of such infinite amounts in quantum mechanics). He comes to the conclusion that there is nothing in our theories of the universe and in our conceptions of the infinite that excludes meaningful talk of possibly infinite universes, but also nothing that commits us to believe in the existence of unbounded qualities.

A second main issue of Oppy's book is the difficulty of treating infinite values in decision theory. This is supposedly of interest to Oppy because his starting point in writing the book was a consideration of presupposed concepts in the philosophy of religion, infinity being certainly one of these. With respect to our arrival and stay in heaven or hell we are confronted with infinite utility streams (since eternal life can be considered as a series of utility deal-outs). Given such infinite utility streams, new paradoxes of infinite utility occur (like choosing between staying in heaven on all days and staying in heaven on even numbered days only, both sets being equinumerous). Oppy is pessimistic about solving these paradoxes, which may either be bad news for decision theory's applicability to religious questions — or bad news for ideas of eternal bliss or damnation.

A shortcoming of the book is its indecision concerning whether to use formal or informal presentation. A lot of formalisms are introduced, but then often only to claim that they lead to this or that result or theorem. Those who know the results will not need these reminders, those that do not will not see their



purpose. So either more formalism, or adherence to careful informal examination of arguments, may have been better.

**Manuel Bremer**

Universität Düsseldorf

**Fernando Inciarte**

*First Principles, Substance and Action:  
Studies in Aristotle and Aristotelianism.*

Lourdes Flamarique, ed. Hildesheim:

Georg Olms Verlag 2005.

Pp. 510.

US\$105.60 (paper ISBN-13: 978-3-487-12987-7).

The late Professor Fernando Inciarte Armiñan cut an idiosyncratic figure in the landscape of twentieth-century Aristotelian studies. Steeped in the Thomist reading of Aristotle, Inciarte nevertheless had less than kind things to say about the way the neoscholastic tradition pursued its harmonization of Aristotle and Aquinas. In place of this reading Inciarte brought to bear on the subject the full weight of the German philosophical tradition. The monograph under review consists of Aristotelian essays compiled (in some cases translated) and readied for publication by the author. Though posthumously published, it should be considered Inciarte's final statement on several cherished themes.

Roughly half the essays collected here seek to establish how the principles of non-contradiction and excluded third (hereafter PNC and PET) constitute first principles. Together with Alan Code and others but against, e.g., Russell Dancy and Christopher Kirwan, Inciarte defends the interpretation of PNC and PET as principles for first philosophy. It is the ordered and differentiated nature of reality that is ultimately at stake in Aristotle's defense of PNC in the *Metaphysics*, even if this defense is couched in pragmatic terms. Chapter 2, which treats the arguments in book Gamma, is among the volume's strongest.

But Inciarte goes much further than Code, or indeed any modern interpreter, in maintaining that PNC and PET ground Aristotle's entire metaphysical enterprise; to Inciarte, their inviolability is fundamental to Aristotle's substance metaphysics, but also to Aristotelian theology, Thomistically interpreted. The division between being and non-being overlaps with Avicenna's distinctions between essence and existence, contingency and necessity. Inciarte's essay on Schelling (222) puts the matter thus: 'Only something like activity can be a candidate for that actuality of being that,

not being mingled with any mere possibility or capability, *is*, without wavering between being and not being, actuality and possibility, and so can unconditionally satisfy that complete separation between being and not-being required by the unconditionality of the truth of PNC'. Referring to Kant's critical philosophy, Inciarte contends that without the assumption of such an *actus purus*, 'what one might call the decisiveness of metaphysics, i.e. its purely rational decision to separate in an unconditional way being from not-being is ... given up.'

These remarks reveal both the interest in Inciarte's remarks and their deeply problematic nature. Inciarte not only is a committed Thomist; he also views the entire question of interpreting Aristotle through the legacy of German philosophy. In order to vindicate Aristotle, Inciarte therefore has to show that Aquinas' Aristotle not only anticipates, but also escapes the problems raised by, the post-Kantian tradition. Inciarte accordingly calls Aristotle's arrival at substance 'a genuine transcendental deduction' (130); and his Münster inaugural lecture on 'Metaphysics as Reification' (Ch. 5) spells out his conviction that Aquinas' doctrine of the analogy of being holds the key to unlocking twentieth-century philosophical problems. For the philosopher this kind of approach can yield interesting results: for instance the middle chapters (Chs. 7-9), which examine Aristotle through the looking glass of Schelling, Hegel, and Heidegger, are full of intriguing detail. But the scholar and historian will rightfully protest the speculation and sheer anachronism.

Part of the problem is that for all the sweep of Inciarte's vision, it remains highly selective. For Inciarte, *Metaphysics Lambda*, often pitted against the 'substance' books, instead develops organically out of the central theme of the work as a whole, namely being and primary being: 'Aristotelian metaphysics begins thus as ontology and reaches its culmination in theology, with which, however, it need not cease as at the end of a process. Nevertheless it remains throughout ... a theory of substance (*ousia*) qua being as such' (157). This was Aquinas' position, but before him it was Averroës', and Inciarte's refusal to acknowledge this compromises the quality of his results. Aquinas' peculiar solution to Aristotle's metaphysical puzzle emerges out of an attempt to mediate between the opposing positions of Avicenna and Averroës; picking out these conflicting strands would add clarity on precisely those points that most vex Inciarte. The distinction between essence and existence, central to Avicenna and crucial to Inciarte's arguments from contingency, did not gain Averroës' approval. Conversely, the snubness of Socrates' nose was of much interest to Averroës, but bothered Avicenna little. It is the latter ideas that Inciarte explores in his important discussion of how only substances are truly beings and how accidents are predicated of substances (Chs. 1, 6).

The final third of the book is dedicated to what Inciarte calls 'practical truth'. For Inciarte, right action requires 'truth in action' — the functional equivalent of PNC on the level of deliberation (Chs. 10-11). This strange formulation, for which I can find but one precedent (al-Kindī in his treatise

*On First Philosophy* says something similar), does not prevent Inciarte from presenting valuable observations, e.g., on the transformation of Aristotelian ethics with the Franciscans' emphasis on the autonomy of the will (Chs. 12-13). But the author's preoccupations — Inciarte barely conceals his distaste for the turn that Western thought took beginning with Scotus and culminating with Kant — again obscure some of the subtler developments surrounding the tradition according to which the will is directed equally towards opposites.

Inciarte's book is not meant for beginners, nor is it geared towards the impatient. The prose is dense and at times forbidding. Few professional Aristotle scholars are likely to swallow Inciarte's interpretations whole; many will find his arguments strange and his conclusions repugnant. All of this, I suspect, is as the author would have liked it. For the judicious scholar there is much to value in this volume: but — and here I move against the author's intentions — I do not believe the volume's best fruits lie in any interpretation of Aristotle. Rather, the collection as a whole testifies to the spirit of a one-of-a-kind scholar, with a unique set of capabilities and preoccupations. As epitaphs go, it is very suitable.

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**Anthony Kenny**  
*A New History of Western Philosophy*  
*Volume II - Medieval Philosophy.*  
Toronto and New York: Oxford University  
Press 2005 (cloth), 2007 (paper).  
Pp. 352.  
Cdn\$44.95/US\$34.95  
(cloth ISBN-13: 0-19-875275-2);  
Cdn\$24.95/US\$19.95  
(paper ISBN-13: 0-19-875274-5).

This is the second volume in Kenny's *New History*. The first volume, on ancient philosophy, was received with great acclaim, and this second volume, covering the period from Augustine to roughly the end of the fourteenth century, will no doubt make its mark in a similar fashion. Kenny writes with both a breadth of knowledge of the period and a very immediate engagement with the problems and questions he chooses to focus upon. Though less comprehensive than the monumental work of Frederic Copleston, Kenny does more to show the relevance of the great medieval debates to contempo-



rary philosophy. His very earliest philosophical work was on some philosophical questions arising in the work of St. Thomas Aquinas, and although his interest shortly moved forward to the then contemporary Oxford debates, he has retained a vital and enlightened interest in the work of the schoolmen.

The book consists of two main parts. The first is a relatively brief overview of the history and development of mainly scholastic philosophy that provides the reader with a context for the discussion of a number of central themes in the medieval debates. This takes up roughly a third of the book and consists of two chapters: one, 'Philosophy and Faith', on late antiquity and the early medieval forerunners of scholasticism, and a second on 'The Schoolmen'. From there Kenny turns to seven more specific discussions of themes ranging from logic and language through knowledge, physics, metaphysics, mind and soul, ethics, and a concluding section on God. These discussions again pick up the historical threads, but now with an emphasis on the thinkers who contributed most significantly to them. The audience he is primarily aiming at is second or third year undergraduates, but with a view to interesting more than just those in philosophy. However, his remarkable erudition and his ability to bring these medieval debates to life assure this work a much wider readership — including professionals who specialise in these matters. The clear and straightforward style presents few difficulties. An acquaintance with English philosophical work since the mid-twentieth century will help reveal the significant continuities between otherwise very different philosophical milieus.

As Kenny recognises, one of the formidable questions facing anyone interested in the philosophical legacy of medieval scholastic thought concerns the intermingling of rational argument with principles derived from revealed religion. Indeed, the great *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas confronts this question head on in its first introductory question, in which Aquinas asks whether theology can be a science. His answer is, Yes and no. If a science is possible only where principles are self-evident, then, No; but if there can be a science whose principles are indubitable, then the answer is, Yes. Although to the contemporary mind this answer and its reasons may seem highly fanciful, it is fully in accord with the medieval understanding of theology as faith seeking understanding. In this, Aquinas is firmly in the tradition from Augustine, through Eriugena, Anselm and Abelard. If one fillets out what, to the contemporary reader, appears to be the more properly philosophical material from the theological argument, there is some danger of suggesting positions which the original author would surely not have recognised. Kenny treats questions relating directly to God as more or less purely philosophical argumentation. But it could be argued that to present Aquinas' defence of certain divine attributes, such as omniscience and omnipotence, as though he understood these somehow in isolation from the founding trinitarian and incarnational doctrines as well as the notion of divine creation, is simply to misunderstand them. A similar point might be made about the supposed 'proofs' of the existence of God, whether in Anselm or Aquinas. Kenny's approach also leads to a neglect of their masterly treatment of the divine

nature, not simply in terms of abstract attributes but in terms of processions and relations, and the distinction of essential and relational properties — work of extraordinary philosophical refinement. All of this undoubtedly plays back upon the central question as to the nature of divine existence.

It has to be admitted at once that a treatment in light of the trinitarian and incarnational doctrines would hardly have been possible within the limits of space within which, no doubt, Kenny is working — not to mention the limits of ‘philosophy’ as understood by most contemporary readers. But it would be sad if the legacy of the medieval theologies to the later philosophical speculation of metaphysicians, from Hegel to Peirce and Heidegger, were thought to be little more than weak arguments for the existence of God and attempts to reconcile human experience with divine foreknowledge and omnipotence.

One final reservation of the perceptive reader might concern the neglect in the bibliographical material of more or less all ‘continental’ contributions to the study of medieval speculation. This is a distinctively Oxbridge production. Even the important and still relevant ‘native’ pioneering work of Callus, Knowles, Powicke, Sharp, Emden, Hunt and so on get no mention in the very contemporary bibliography. No doubt these omissions should not all be laid at the door of the author, but charged in part to the requirements of modern, market-driven publishing.

Those reservations having been stated, it is difficult not to recognise this as a history of medieval philosophy of outstanding brilliance from an author who continues to astound his readers by the volume of well-informed and deeply perceptive philosophical commentary that continues to flow from his prolific pen. He once again deserves our thanks and admiration for this work. It is required reading for every serious student of medieval thought.

### **Peter Harris**

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### **Jay Lampert**

*Deleuze and Guattari's Philosophy of History.*

New York: Continuum 2006.

Pp. 208.

US\$130.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-8680-6).

History, traditionally construed, constitutes the occurrence of events through time. Often, these events are thought to play out in a linear fashion and to exert causal pressure, such that an event or events that happened at Time X will, or may, influence the way in which later events play out. Alternatively, we might reject the dominant construal of Time X and attempt to reconstitute



it: this leads us down a road of competing interpretations. This interpretive process can be engaged in by historians — and by philosophers, whose philosophies of history may function in sync with the hastily-sketched picture of history just offered, or may reject it in favor of some alternative. As Jay Lampert indicates in his difficult and fascinating book, *Deleuze and Guattari* opt for the latter approach.

This is not to say that the pair deny the existence of something like the traditional view. Yet a key problem with this view is its attitude towards *events*, understood as teleological, unaffected by chance, and essentially fixed entities. For these reasons, the traditional understanding of history constitutes ‘the reactive force ... that paranoiacally keeps itself from engaging with the living past’ (7; cf. 120). Reactive history, bound up with ‘reactive force’, is history which cannot affirm or fully embrace the past, where that embrace signifies a precondition to engaging in free and *active* creation in the future (cf. 152).

As Lampert tells us, rendering history active will mean, for Deleuze and Guattari, recognizing historical change as a process of *becoming*. Part of what is involved in this shift in historical understanding is a re-appraisal of what is meant by the term, ‘event’: Deleuze and Guattari stress that co-existence is a function, not of how events get remembered, but of *events themselves*. So understood, an event is not a self-contained, unified entity. Rather, it is an embodiment of a multiplicity, lacking at its core any singular embodiment of power that can control and direct it.

This conception of events can be better understood in conjunction with Deleuze’s Bergsonian theory of time. Crucially, Deleuze (and Guattari) want to offer a conception of time that will undergird a view of history-as-becoming, a view which allows for the traditional philosophical subject (subjectivity) to be radically de-centered. Time, so understood, constitutes three syntheses. The first, that of the present, ‘already includes features we normally attribute to past and future, and vice versa’ (27). For this reason, Lampert can write that the present makes use of ‘the past within it as a kind of energy reserve to dip into in order to motivate continued contractions’ (26), where a contraction entails the folding of ‘a multiplicity into a singular presence’ (17). But what is meant by ‘past’, the second synthesis of time in this schema? Significantly, it is the past into which the present necessarily passes. As Lampert puts it, the present must get ‘released from its contracted state into a relaxed state of belonging with other possibilities’ (50). So while there is a sense in which the past is included in the present, there is also a sense in which the present is swallowed up by the past.

Present and past status co-exist for a given event. This co-existence, in turn, is universalizable across all those pasts existing in virtuality, with its all-encompassing past within which all pasts co-exist alongside presents, and which preserves levels that ultimately contract into novel presents. As such, relations of simultaneity and succession constitute the past as well as relations between past and present. The past therefore encompasses (as noted) an aspect of the present. Crucially, however, aspects of that present



have now been redescribed in accordance with the past's logic. The past has taken precedence.

What is the upshot of all this for the third synthesis of time, that of the future? According to Lampert, for the past to be anything more than the present in reified form, it must be searchable, livable. Indeed, 'the pasts that the future searches for are not former presents,' but rather 'the virtual events that have insisted without necessarily having been represented in empirical fact, and that hence belong to innovation' (55).

Temporality allows for, among other things, a consideration of historical events not just as successive, but also as co-existent: that is, it allows us to detach 'the event from its original chronological territory, in order to place it on the fluid plane of contemporaneous availability' — a move that is both psychological *and* ontological (71). Moreover, this understanding of the temporal has a bearing on causality and on the way events are causally related to one another through history (97-9).

To so construe history is both innovative and problematic. Indeed, one might contend that Deleuze and Guattari go too far in seeking to undermine the traditional subject, who is also the traditional historical actor; after all, it is precisely this figure who is reflected in and through the majority of people, people who are content with a conception of history which falls short of the radicalized becoming envisioned above. Furthermore, this majority might ask: what is the value of this revised conception of the historical — what is its *truth*?

In all fairness (and as Lampert seems to suggest), concerns regarding 'truth' are no doubt best left at the front door, insofar as our aim is to fully grasp what Deleuze and Guattari are saying. Though, even if such a point be granted, we are still left wondering, with respect to historical becoming and future innovation: who (or *what*) is it that determines whether reactivity has been overcome — whether the future has been *actively* realized? That this is a difficult question to answer does not detract from the overall merits of Lampert's highly engaging work.

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**Béatrice Longuenesse**

*Kant on the Human Standpoint.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2005.

Pp. 316.

US\$80.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-83478-0).

In her new book, Longuenesse investigates not only the role Kant attributes to our capacity to judge in cognition, but also considers this capacity's role in moral philosophy and aesthetic evaluation. She says that we must differentiate the distinctly human standpoint (characterized by this capacity) from both the divine and the non-rational animal standpoints. She maintains that for Kant the activity of the intellect as a whole (consisting of concept formation, combining concepts in judgments, combining judgments in inferences, and the constitution of systems of knowledge) is essentially reducible to making judgments. This basic activity of the intellect, she suggests, is a common theme which unites all parts of the critical system.

Already in her *Kant and the Capacity to Judge* (1998), Longuenesse rehabilitated Kant's conception of synthesis. P. F. Strawson once discredited this conception as belonging to the 'imaginary subject of transcendental psychology'. Longuenesse rightly replied that synthesis is the most vital function of human cognition. Rather than belonging to the sphere of transcendental psychology, synthesis determines the objects of cognition themselves.

The first part of her new book is devoted to the role of synthesis in the process of cognition: while it is true that the categories guide the synthesis of the sensibly given, it is also true that the categories *emerge* as a priori rules from this synthesis (42). With this focus on synthetic activity, Michel Fichant's criticism didn't come as a surprise: he contended that Longuenesse's radical interpretation of sensibility is close to Fichte's. It is reasonable to think that Fichant's criticism is unjustified because we have to differentiate clearly between the *generation* of sensibility by spontaneity (Fichte) and the *affection* of sensibility by spontaneity (Longuenesse). In this book there is no doubt that impressions trigger our cognitive powers (29). Thus Kant was not only right to insist on the distinction between receptivity and spontaneity, but right also to deny that imagination is the 'common root' of sensibility and understanding, a view we tend to associate with Heidegger. Longuenesse's only intention is to challenge the myth of the given, and she shows convincingly that for Kant even space, the form of outer intuition, is not already given but is an *ens imaginarium*, a being of imagination (73).

A major topic of the second part of this volume is the conception of causality. This systematic study of the most important contemporary interpretations of Kant's texts is comprehensive and well written. The decisive move of the first *Critique*, we are reminded, was the departure from Hume, who thought that the psychological derivation of the concept of cause accounts for the idea of a necessary connection between cause and effect. For Kant, this explanation was not good enough. For him the necessary connection consisted in the strict universality of a hypothetical judgment ('If A is B,

then C is D'). We must decide on how to interpret this universality. Basically Longuenesse agrees with Strawson: causality is concerned with judgments about ordinary objects of our perceptual experience rather than with judgments about scientifically interpreted objects. Her argument deviates from Strawson's, however, because Kant couldn't possibly have made the mistake of taking the necessary subjective succession as the *perception* of a necessary, i.e. causally determined, objective succession. Our author rightly contends that such a view would presuppose the concept of cause rather than explain it (165).

The book's third and last part deals with the capacity to judge as an element which unifies the three *Critiques*, interpreting the unity of reality as a reality of form. The conception of reality as a whole in space and time lead Kant to postulate an *ens realissimum*, God as a purely rational idea. Longuenesse says that only if we realize the primacy of form over matter in Kant's thought can we truly understand that this idea is nothing more than a mere thought without an object.

Furthermore, the last part connects aesthetic with moral judgment, and both with the motto of eighteenth-century enlightenment '... to think by putting oneself in the position of all other human beings' (289). With the judgment of taste, we are told, Kant doesn't indicate interest in the *objects* of judgment, but rather in the very fact of the universal communicability of judgment. The universal sharing of aesthetic pleasure is the aim of aesthetic evaluation and thus this sharing becomes '... a normative necessity, an obligation made to all human beings to take their part in the common effort to constitute humanity as a community of judging subjects' (290). The imperative of universality — that judgments are shared by all human beings — really is an essential feature of all three *Critiques*, and Longuenesse skillfully explicates Kant's idea that we must promote this universal sharing.

The scholarly approach of this book consists in a combination of systematic and historical aspects. We are reminded that the views of the initial German reception of Kant were not completely wrong, but were too extreme to be tenable. Moreover, Longuenesse shows how Kant reworked the ideas of his predecessors, e.g. Leibniz's idea that concepts alone allow us to analyze reality (225).

At times this book contains detailed discussions of contemporary Kant scholarship. Thus the prospective reader must be acquainted with the basic ideas of the critical system. On this basis, however, this volume is a well-written and thoughtful contribution that certainly will attract many students of the history of modern philosophy as well as Kant specialists. It is a significant contribution to the project of exploring Kant's holistic and anti-foundationalist epistemology on the basis of a detailed textual analysis, a timely project undoubtedly inspired by the pioneering views of Michael Friedman.

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**William McNeill**

*The Time of Life.*

Albany: State of New York University  
Press 2006.

Pp. 226.

US\$70.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-7914-6783-1).

McNeill is an established Heidegger translator, scholar and philosopher. In addition to editing *Pathmarks* (1998), the now canonical collection of Heidegger's early and late papers, he has translated numerous lectures and writings including *The Concept of Time* (1992), *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1995), and *Hölderlin's Hymn 'Der Ister'* (1996). He has also written extensively on Heidegger, most notably *The Glance of the Eye* (1999), his book-length study of the *Augenblick*, in which he sought a non-reifying phronetic vision that escapes the hegemony and temporal homogeneity of techno-vision. More recent papers have sought to show the significance of tragedy for developing a sight other than that of technological enframing.

This book is described by McNeill as the sequel to *The Glance of the Eye* (xviii). In terms of the thematic focus on the *Augenblick* this is correct. But it also provides a further development of our understanding of the place and time of tragedy, a sustained engagement with the question of animality, and an analysis of the importance of Foucault for an emancipatory understanding of care. The book can be seen as an extended commentary on Heidegger's enigmatic comment in the 1946 'Letter on Humanism' that ontology 'is in itself originary ethics' which 'ponders the abode ( $\hat{\eta}\theta\omicron\varsigma$ ) of the human being' (187). This dwelling is a temporal openness to the otherness that escapes finite vision at any moment, today threatened by 'the global mediation of the technological Absolute' that seeks to be 'binding in advance for all human action and self-presentation' (66).

The first chapter clarifies the earlier Heideggerian phenomenology of the world though a discussion of life. The difference between human and animal life lies in the ecstatic temporality of the *Augenblick*, in the moment of vision when one has 'a futural opening for one's ownmost having-been' which, removing one from captivated absorption in beings, allows one to 'catch sight of beings as a whole' (47-8). This finite catching sight of the whole is an ethical surpassing; it is the 'happening of historical freedom' as 'the opening of the ongoing and never completeable task of our ethical responsibility' (51). This chapter also contains a detailed discussion of the impossibility of transposing oneself into the animal other. Heidegger's supposed anthropocentrism is not the reinscription of the traditional metaphysical priority of man but the retrieval and rethinking of this distinction in terms man's worldly ground. It is nothing more than a denial of the historicity of animal existence (51).

It is the essentially responsive nature of the *Augenblick*'s openness that McNeill develops in the following six chapters. Chapter 2 examines the practice of worldly freedom. McNeill draws on the historical analyses of Foucault to show the 'how' of emancipatory care for the self. In Foucault we

find 'an existing relation to possibility, or to human life as *bios*, as ethico-political life' (62), to one's life and body as critically constituted by practices such as sexuality which are open to transformative possibilities (64). Again the relationship of *Dasein* to its possibilities is not one of possession and domination, but of a free and responsive dependence (62).

Chapter 3 turns from self-cultivation to the cultivation of one's abode or ethos. McNeill draws on Heidegger's appropriation of the Aristotelean *kairos*, bringing together action with a concern for ethical virtue. This sight of action escapes the dominance of a present-at-hand or theoretical ontology. Chapters 4 and 5 turn from the temporal to the historical constitution of the *ethos*. This move corresponds to the turning in Heidegger's thought where the emphasis on human action is displaced, to the world that exceeds and makes possible such action (96). This shift is responsive to the time of scientific modernity that in 'living for the moment' seeks to make what is present binding for all future possibilities (114). This binding metaphysics is an increasing danger to the ekstastic *ethos*, the futural temporality distinctive of the human being. McNeill examines the possibility of a thinking that neglects neither memory nor futurity. Responsible thinking and acting draw upon the possibility of an 'other beginning' which is not yet recognized, both other and same to the now of the *Augenblick*. Historical responsibility emerges as a thoughtful responsiveness (131-2).

Chapters 6 and 7 examine Heidegger's thinking with this other beginning. Poetry and tragedy, of which Sophocles and Hölderlin provided paradigms, are a call to an understanding of the precedence of Being that does not render the human being's ekstastic temporality homeless (137). The complexities of Heidegger's later thought are placed in the context of the temporality of otherness and excess. The gods of Hölderlin refer to a time that is not that of 'prediction or expectation', but is the unknown and inaugural time of a world that will transpire (148). The final chapter treats the tragedies of Sophocles as a fitting saying of ekstastic dwelling. Antigone, a figure who unable to read the edicts of the gods, knows neither her own end nor that of her actions. She accomplishes a poetic relation to her ethos: an uncanny dwelling through a finite engagement that remains faithful to the transformative possibilities of temporality that is other in a world that remains excessive (194-7).

McNeill's study is to be welcomed as a serious attempt to engage with the ethics of Heidegger's vision. Unlike other commentators, he does not seek to downplay the solitude of the *Augenblick* in the name of a facile and textually suspect humanism. Nor does he, in the manner of critics such as Löwith, Ricouer and Levinas, understand Heidegger as the instigator of an essentially solipsistic and nihilistic ontology of action. The Heidegger that emerges from McNeill's study, not fatalist, humanist or decisionist, is one that needs to be more closely considered: the thinker of singular and finite responsibility.

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**Sharon M. Meagher and  
Patrice Diquinzio, eds.**

*Women and Children First:*

*Feminism, Rhetoric and Public Policy.*

Albany: State University of New York  
Press 2005.

Pp. 263.

US\$81.50 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-7914-6539-4);

US\$24.95 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-7914-6539-4).

Third-wave feminism can perhaps best be described as the attempt to identify and articulate the ways in which the former two waves both operated within, and essentially helped create, a rather nasty double bind for women, a sort of damned if we do, damned if we don't scenario. By emphasizing women's similarities to men, first-wave feminists fought to secure for women all the civil rights and liberties that men enjoyed by virtue of their rationality and autonomy. Subsequently, second-wave feminists realized that women were having a difficult time taking advantage of the rights they had won through emphasizing their similarities to men, precisely because women are different. Having gained access to the public sphere, women were confronted with the fact that this sphere was designed to accommodate male needs, and realized that in order to flourish in this sphere they would have to assert that their needs differed from those who had come to define rational and autonomous agency. Thus the double bind, which has come to be known as the dilemma of difference, and which Diquinzio, in her contribution, defines as follows: 'Liberal Individualism insists that rational autonomy constitutes the essence of subjectivity ... feminism must therefore claim women's equal citizenship on the basis of women's rational autonomy and deny that gender and sexual difference are relevant to citizenship. But feminism must also represent women's needs and interests, which requires an account of women's subjectivity that highlights gender and sexual difference ... . Thus feminism finds itself juggling two accounts of subjectivity that can have contradictory implications' (228).

This book promises an insightful contribution to third-wave feminist scholarship by highlighting the ways in which women are harmed by social policies informed by either horn of the dilemma of difference. Some contributors attempt to show how policies based on universalizing discourse ignore the concrete realities of women's lives, while others argue that policies designed to meet women's unique needs nonetheless wind up marginalizing them further. Jennifer Reich, for example, in 'Enemies of the State: Poor White Mothers and the Discourse of Universal Human Rights', shows how human rights discourse has filtered down into the criminal codes of many American states and been used to cast (and severely punish) poor mothers as tyrants responsible for committing human rights violations against their children. Sharon Meagher, in 'Predators and Protectors: the Rhetoric of School Violence' and Norma Buydens in 'Bad Mothers as "Brown" Mothers



in Western Canadian Policy Discourse: Substance-Abusing Mothers and Sexually Exploited Girls', argue that policies aimed at protecting female children from school violence and teen prostitution nonetheless wind up blaming mothers for these social crises. Sally Scholtz, in 'Battered Women's Syndrome: Locating the Subject Amidst the Advocacy', argues compellingly that while battered women's syndrome may well force the legal system to acknowledge women's lived experience of domestic abuse, it nonetheless simultaneously forces the women who employ this defense to deny their own agency and autonomy.

However, while many of the contributions to this volume do succeed in highlighting some rather perverse policy implications of the dilemma of difference, most offer far too little by way of actual policy analysis and focus instead on the media's portrayal of women as reckless and irresponsible mothers. Indeed, what the volume offers in spades seems to be not policy analysis but rhetoric analysis. A majority of the essays concentrate on exposing the extent to which the rhetoric surrounding school violence, gun control and prostitution (and by this the authors clearly mean the rhetoric employed by the media) either explicitly or implicitly identify abusive mothers, working mothers, addicted mothers, single mothers and overly doting mothers as responsible for these, and other, social ills. While this 'mother blaming' is troubling, little attempt is made to investigate the reasons behind it.

In light of this, the volume is disappointing. Since, for the most part, the contributors fail to properly analyze specific policies, neither do they offer valuable suggestions on how such policies might be reconfigured to truly benefit women. This is perhaps not very surprising, since both the editors and contributors seem to accept that it is the very dilemma of difference that is ultimately the problem. Some attempt is therefore made to offer potential routes out of this double bind, usually involving suggestions on how subjectivity, agency and autonomy ought to be redefined to better coincide with women's experiences and interests. These suggestions, however, which are few and far between, are confusing and philosophically tenuous.

In the end, the most memorable aspect of this book comes from the factual test cases to which many of the authors refer. Reich, for example, points to the case of Traci Kaufman, whose boyfriend was sentenced to thirty-five years in prison for drowning her two year old daughter, while Traci herself was sentenced to seventy-two years for the 'false imprisonment' of her three children. And Ellen Feder reveals, in 'Fixing Sex: Medical Discourse and the Management of Intersex', that one in every two thousand live births in the United States is born with both male and female genitalia, and that most of these children are surgically reassigned to the female gender — on the grounds that a smaller than average penis seems a worse fate for a boy, according to the medical community, than infertility to a girl. The volume is replete with these and other fascinating details, but rarely are they accompanied by serious policy analysis or promising proposals for policy change. In the end, therefore, while the book promises an analysis of how the dilemma of difference plays out in contemporary social policy, in fact its main achieve-

ment is to show how mothers are blackballed in the media, which is not such a significant or novel contribution to third wave feminism after all.

**Vida Panitch**

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**Joseph Mendola**

*Goodness and Justice:*

*A Consequentialist Moral Theory.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Pp. 336.

US\$80.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-85953-0).

Mendola's book defends a new version of consequentialism. The theory has three distinct components, which have already been defended separately in Mendola's other publications: multiple-act consequentialism, hedonism, and maximin (preference for the maximization of the well-being of the worst-off).

One of the problems for traditional consequentialism stems from the fact that many things that individuals do are parts of group actions: consequentialist evaluation of a group action, considered as a whole, is often in conflict with consequentialist evaluation of its parts, taken one by one. There all too often seem to be strong consequentialist reasons for individual defection from group action, even though the action is desirable on consequentialist grounds. Mendola's solution for this problem is multiple-act consequentialism. Its crucial feature is an asymmetry between its treatment of decisions on joining a group action and its treatment of decisions on defecting from a group action one has already joined. According to Mendola, one should join if one's *contribution* to the group action produces better consequences than whatever one would do otherwise, but one should defect only if the defection produces better consequences than the group action *as a whole*. This combination of conditions creates a ratchet-effect that favors participation in worthwhile group actions.

In expounding multiple-act consequentialism, Mendola uses the term 'group' in a wide, semi-technical sense. According to him, the ultimate members of all groups are not persisting individuals, but brief time slices of human beings. An individual human being, looked at over a period of time, is a group of such time slices. This means that one's pursuit of one's own long-term projects is to be evaluated as a group action. Moreover, Mendola's wide sense of the term 'group' enables him to postulate single-purpose groups devoted to various actions (or abstentions from actions) that are not ordinar-

ily regarded as group actions. In that sense of the term, most human beings are, for example, members of the group of non-murderers, and also of the group of truth-tellers. This device, coupled with the stringent condition on defection from group actions, enables multiple-act consequentialism to emulate many aspects of deontological ethics, in a manner similar to indirect consequentialism.

There is a tension between the significance that multiple-act consequentialism gives to long-term commitments of group memberships, and its insistence that atomic agents are time-slices of human beings. If my present time-slice is a new agent, why should we regard it as being already a member of the groups that were joined by my yesterday's time-slice? If the present slice decides to not go along with the action of such a group, why should we evaluate that as defection, given that the present slice was not the one that joined the group? Mendola notices this tension and responds that the new agent 'finds itself inside the relevant group, by the natural temporal inertia of accepted reasons' (83). But that does not really solve the problem, because it can be restated in terms of 'accepted reasons': if the today's time-slice is really a new agent, why should we deem *it* to have *already* accepted these reasons, just because *another* slice accepted them yesterday? Mendola also tries to deal with the problem by pointing out that a group can be joined by another group, such as an ongoing individual (61), but that, again, does not solve the problem, because it is not clear why a new time-slice must be regarded as a member of any pre-existing groups unless *it* chooses to join them.

The core of Mendola's argument for the second component of his theory, hedonism, is that if we attend to the qualia of paradigmatic physical pleasures and pains, we will realize that they are, respectively, value and disvalue. It is, however, doubtful whether attending to these experiences in this way is a precise enough method to distinguish his position, according to which the value and disvalue are in the qualia themselves, from the unremarkable observation that we have preferences regarding the qualia. The reader is also likely to be left with a sense of having been given merely a promissory note that Mendola's way of looking at simple physical pleasures and pains provides a basis for analyzing more complex experiences. Moreover, even if one is persuaded by Mendola that pleasure is value, in some sense of that word, one might not be persuaded that it is value in a morally relevant sense of the word: one may still wonder how my introspection of this value in my own pleasures is supposed to lead me to be morally concerned about the pleasures of others, which I can never introspect?

Mendola's positive arguments for hedonism, however, occupy less than half of his discussion of that topic; the rest is devoted to his criticisms of various specific positions he disagrees with. Many of these criticisms have considerable merit that is independent of his positive arguments.

According to Mendola, the instances of this value can be ordered only ordinally; the value does not present itself to us as cardinal. Ordinality of value rules out the maximizing requirement of traditional utilitarianism,



and leads us instead to maximin. Mendola's version of maximin is more extreme than the well-known version of Rawls: it requires us to focus on the worst momentary bit of experience that can be found anywhere among the possible consequences of the action we are contemplating. Mendola has some ingenious arguments to show that his version of maximin is not as unintuitive as it seems to be at first, but many readers will probably have an impression that these arguments do not cover all aspects of its unintuitiveness.

Regardless of how much of Mendola's theory is ultimately convincing, it has to be said that this is a book that is rich in detail, well crafted, and carefully thought out.

**Mane Hajdin**

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**Mark C. Murphy**

*Natural Law in Jurisprudence and Politics.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Pp. 204.

US\$75.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-85930-4).

Murphy begins by arguing for two central theses about natural law theory. First, the natural law jurisprudence thesis (NLJT), which is a conceptual claim, maintains that valid law is backed by decisive normative reasons for compliance. Second, the natural law politics thesis (NLPT), which is a structural claim, maintains that the binding force of law is generated through its connection to the common good of the political community. On his view, the NLJT is more fundamental or definitionally prior to the NLPT (8). These may seem like familiar natural law theory claims, but Murphy provides some novel defences of perennial natural law views and, in a number of places, provides extensions beyond traditional natural law positions.

In Chapter 2, Murphy rejects John Finnis' 'legal point of view' argument for the NLJT, and argues that because of the function of law and the status of legal norms as illocutionary acts we should believe that law that is not backed by decisive reasons for compliance is defective *qua* law.

In Chapter 3, Murphy elucidates the conditions under which non-defective law exists, *viz.* through its connection to the common good. Arguing against instrumentalist and distinctive good conceptions of the common good, Murphy advances an aggregative conception such that it is the state of affairs in

which every citizen is fully flourishing that provides the conditions under which non-defective law obtains its reason-giving force.

In Chapters 4 and 5, Murphy argues that natural law theorists have considerably underestimated the extent to which a consent theory of political obligation can help to underwrite how the common good provides law with its normative force. He argues the widespread acceptance of law's ability to provide decisive reasons, in virtue of the law being a determiner of the common good principle, can serve to explain why citizens' consent can make the law authoritative over them. Indeed, Murphy maintains this account is better than Finnis' coordination account on the basis that while Finnis' coordination function of law explains why its determinations of the common good are treated as authoritative, it fails to establish that the law is in fact authoritative.

In Chapter 6, Murphy advances the intriguing claims that a treatment of legal punishment should be included within a natural law view, and that punishment is to be understood first and foremost in terms of its authoritative character, and justified in terms of the common good. Natural law positions employing consequentialist or equal burden distribution justifications are rejected in favour of a retributivist and expressivist account of punishment. The book concludes, in Chapter 7, with an explication of the limits of natural law political philosophy.

Let's briefly consider the NLJT thesis. According to Murphy (1), for a reason to  $\Phi$  to be decisive is for ' $\Phi$ -ing to be a reasonable act for one to perform and not  $\Phi$ -ing an unreasonable act for one to perform, and so for a law to be backed by decisive reasons is for there to be decisive reasons to perform any act required by that law'. Moreover, '... the only law that *merits* our obedience is law that meets a certain minimum standard of reasonableness' (9). There are a number of places where Murphy claims it is the common good of the community that purports to secure law's reason-giving force. This is a plausible claim, but the property of a consideration that allows it to possess reason-giving force does not entail that it is in any way decisive *per se* in establishing what an agent has most reason, or ought to do. It is unclear how Murphy thinks the property of being a reasonable act can make a reason in favour of such an act decisive. It would seem he is using a common-sense notion of decisiveness as the quality of being conclusive, in this case establishing what an agent ought to do *simpliciter*. For instance, in Chapter 2, in a number of places he identifies the demands of law as mandatory norms (at least with respect to duty-imposing laws, but also with other laws). In saying that one has decisive reason to act, one claims that of all the possible reasons for or against acting, it is the reasons legal demands generate, or are backed by, which provide agents with the considerations that are ultimately determinative in establishing what one ought to do. Difficulties arise, though, as it seems in a number of instances one will have more than one reasonable act to choose from, or there seems to be conceptual space open for the possibility of reasonable acts that do not contribute to (though do not detract from) the common good. Perhaps Murphy means that reasonableness is to

be understood in terms of decisiveness, such that there is some connection between the all-things-considered reasonable act being the one an agent has most reason to comply with?

Frustratingly, Murphy never adequately defines and explains what the notion of 'practical reasonableness' is and thus its central role within a natural law account of jurisprudence and politics. To be fair, Murphy does elucidate what he takes practical reasonableness to be in an earlier part of his project: *Practical Rationality and Natural Law* (CUP 2001). One surmises that since he maintains that one can accept a natural law theory of jurisprudence and politics without accepting a natural law theory of practical rationality, he wanted to keep those views separate. However, since the NLJT and NLPT depend on the concept of practical reasonableness, it would have been helpful for at least a partial justification of the concept that purports to support both claims.

Anyone doing work in political or legal theory will find this book of tremendous interest, full of rich arguments, and worthy of close examination. It is doubtful that the arguments will convince those not already hospitable to natural law views, nevertheless, such a sharp defence of natural law theory illustrates why it remains a prevalent view in the face of continuing criticism. Murphy's work on natural law theory is definitely the most thought-provoking and constructive of recent natural law scholarship, and he will be viewed by many as taking up the mantle from Finnis as the leading figure in natural law theory.

#### **A. M. Viens**

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#### **Alan Nelson, ed.**

*A Companion to Rationalism.*

Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing 2005.

Pp. 523.

US\$138.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-1-4051-0909-3).

Rationalism is as familiar as it is elusive. Philosophers will recognize certain theses and methods as quintessentially rationalist: the appearance/reality distinction, with the inculcation of the ability to grasp the real; the theory of innate ideas and valuing these ideas as the surest foundations of knowledge; taking the world to be a single unified and infinite entity, together with the challenge of rendering such unlimited monism consistent with our experience of finitude and diversity; preferring deductive, a priori modes of dem-



onstration over inductive, a posteriori ones. Yet, even though rationalism is familiar, it's hard to answer the question, 'What is rationalism?' Now, part of the problem may lie in the question itself: in his introduction, Nelson says that 'philosophers have learned not to expect detailed, or even fully coherent, answers to this sweeping kind of question' (xiv). This is surely correct. But even if a conclusive and comprehensive account of rationalism cannot be given, many philosophers would presumably like to say more than they can at the moment. If so, this is the book for them. With twenty-five essays arranged into four parts and addressing topics from epistemology and metaphysics to ethics and psychology, it is the most complete treatment of the subject known to me.

The first part, 'The Core of Rationalism', is the most theoretically oriented, in the sense that it alone detaches rationalism from a specific historical period. Its essays are written by Alan Nelson, Thomas Lennon, Gary Hatfield, and David Cuning. The goal of this part is not, as Nelson puts it, to proclaim a 'neatly delineated set of doctrines' (3) which are individually necessary and jointly sufficient to account for what it is to philosophize rationalistically. Rather, it seeks to identify and explore some fundamental features of rationalism. Nelson's 'The Rationalist Impulse' exemplifies the approach. Beginning with the rationalist conviction that genuine knowledge of the world is acquired through the mind and not the senses, Nelson proceeds to outline the means by which two prominent rationalists, Plato and Descartes, think we can be trained to rely on reason to get at the truth. After he has sketched this educational regime, he moves on to the 'most prominent example of a simple rationalist truth', which is the 'the idea of infinite being' (6). Nelson lists the main properties of this idea, and then explains how rationalists from Descartes to Russell 'reconfigure' experience to accommodate the appearance of diversity with the reality of singularity (8). Since his points are often more easily made by contrast, Nelson frequently juxtaposes the rationalist position he's discussing with an empiricist rival. As a propaedeutic to the topic of rationalism, the four essays in Part 1 are very helpful.

The next part, 'The Historical Background', is designed to set the scene for the flourishing of rationalism in the early modern period. Its scope is the entire history of what Nelson calls 'theoretical rationalism' (xiv) prior to the seventeenth century. Though it is not obvious how three of the five essays address this topic — a point to which I shall return below — those by Hugh Benson and Steven Nadler do speak to it directly. The subject of Nadler's 'Rationalism in Jewish Philosophy', for example, is rationalism in medieval Jewish philosophy, described by him as 'the philosophically most interesting and influential variety of rationalism in the Jewish intellectual tradition' (101). Nadler discusses three issues: the interpretation of scripture, the justification of the Law (*halachah*), and the relationship between reason, happiness and providence. For each of these, he briefly explains the views of three representative figures: Saadya ben Joseph (d. 942), Maimonides (d. 1204) and Gersonides (d. 1344). By way of conclusion, he considers the

complex relationship between Spinoza and his medieval Jewish forebears. Given the amount of material he's covering, it is inevitable that the reader is often left with more questions than answers, but it is a measure of Nadler's success that he leaves one with a sense of where to go to find those answers.

Part 3, 'The Heyday of Rationalism', is on rationalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is the largest part, with nine essays touching on an array of issues. Lex Newman and Kurt Smith write on problems of knowledge and representationalism; Lawrence Nolan and Dennis Sepper take up the role of imagination in mathematics and rationalist thought more broadly; Alice Sowaal and Timothy Crockett grapple with problems surrounding Cartesian and Leibnizian conceptions of body; finally, Alan Nelson, Andrew Youpa, and Henry Allison deal respectively with modality, moral philosophy, and Kant's critique of rationalism. While all of the essays have their appeal, Allison's 'Kant and the Two Dogmas of Rationalism' is one of the best. His mastery of both Kant and his rationalist predecessors allows him to treat them with sensitivity. The two dogmas that Allison has in mind are, first, the 'predicate-in-notion principle' (which 'states that in every true proposition the predicate is contained in the concept of the subject' (343)) and, second, the 'reducibility principle' (which holds that 'sensible knowledge acquired through experience is reducible [in principle] to the intellectual variety, which is supposedly attained through the pure understanding independently of any appeal to experience' (343)). As Allison observes, these are not *prima facie* implausible; yet, they lead to some of the more bizarre rationalist doctrines (the connection between the predicate-in-notion principle and Leibniz's controversial distinction between necessary and contingent truths is well-known). Allison expounds on both the appeal behind the principles and Kant's critique of them. Readers will learn much about Kant and rationalism from him, just as they will learn much from the other essays in this part.

Part 4, although called 'Rationalist Themes in Contemporary Philosophy', actually covers a broader period, for it runs from the nineteenth century to the present. The contributors are David Woodruff Smith, Paul Livingston, Alan Nelson, David Stump, Jonathan Michael Kaplan, Mariam Thalos, and Richard Manning. They explore how rationalism relates to a number of issues, including phenomenology, analytic philosophy, the self, science, decision theory, and feminism. In 'What is a Feminist to do with Rational Choice?' Thalos begins by raising a number of reasons feminists and other 'liberationists' (453) have to be skeptical of rationalism. For example, feminists are rightly suspicious of the rationalist insistence on 'retreat from so-called "appearances"' (452). Given that human life as we experience it is constituted by such appearances, if we flee them for so-called reality, we leave behind everything that really matters. Despite this and other well-founded reservations that feminists have, Thalos still thinks that they can salvage a part of rationalism, for she argues that a rationalist mechanism for making certain kinds of choices is preferable to its empiricist alternative. So, Thalos' ultimate recommendation is that liberationists cherry-pick selected theses

or methods from rationalism. The cautious attitude she exhibits toward rationalism is mirrored by many of the essays in this part. Though they show that rationalism continues to be a vibrant part of philosophy, they also acknowledge the need to be critical of the inheritance they have received.

I can recommend this book without hesitation. Yet, it would be remiss of me not to mention one omission. As mentioned above, the five essays of Part 2 are supposed to present rationalism prior to the early modern period: in editor Nelson's words, they 'take us from the beginning of theoretical rationalism up until the great flowering of rationalist thought in the seventeenth century' (xiv). In point of fact, however, only Benson and Nadler do that. The other three contributors, Antonio LoLordo, Matthew Kisner, and Dennis Sepper, take on figures and issues internal to early modern era itself. Now, it can be unfair for a reviewer to complain about what a book doesn't say. For two reasons, however, I think the complaint justified here. Not only does the failure to adequately discuss rationalism in Hellenistic, late ancient, and medieval philosophy omit a great deal of extremely interesting material, it also reinforces a false impression of rationalism, one uninformed by the varieties of rationalism to be found outside the temporal parameters of this book. This is not a criticism of LoLordo, Kisner, or Sepper's pieces, which are solid. Since they are about figures and issues in the early modern period, however, they cannot possibly help to fill the gap just identified. For that gap to be filled, more discussion of rationalism after Plato and before Descartes is needed.

**Jon Miller**

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**Johanna Oksala**

*Foucault on Freedom.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2005.

Pp. 238.

US\$80:00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-84779-7).

Freeze-out, a game won by a process of elimination, describes well the operative assumptions of everyday philosophical writing: analyze away whatever issues you can and what remains is frozen as the truth. Oksala attempts to resist a Foucault freedom freeze-out. Foucault's remarks such as 'the freedom of the subject and its relationship to others ... constitutes the very stuff of ethics' (*Ethics*, London: Penguin 1997, p. 300), make it difficult



to do otherwise. Unfortunately, Oksala does little to thaw out freedom. One is left with a slushy concept, its edges difficult to discern.

The book is organized well into three divisions, language, body, and ethics, mapping Foucault's major phases of work: *genealogy*, *archeology*, and *ethics*. The contents page clearly sets out the structure, and the list of abbreviations provides a useful short English and French bibliography.

In the introduction Oksala notes the freeze-out problem: 'Freedom is a concept that is repeatedly used today in discourses ranging from political philosophy and rhetoric to self-help guides, yet it seems that it has never been less clear what it means' (1). Foucault is often criticized for posing problems concerning freedom, as Oksala notes (though references throughout are minimal and preoccupied by a few works, e.g., Gutting and Han). Her introduction culminates in a bland, evasive thesis: 'Freedom lies in the ontological contingency of the present, in the unpredictability of our ways of thinking, acting, and relating to other people' (13). Freedom is frozen out here and subsequently, displaced by its ontological prerequisites (time, contingency) and psychological associations (unpredictability).

Oksala's approach explores the shared domain between Foucault's archeology and phenomenology (transcendental conditions of the possibility of knowledge), and between Foucault's genealogy and feminism (embodiment). In Part 1, the encounter with phenomenology places select texts of Foucault and Husserl side by side. The encounter between genealogy and feminism explicates some of Butler's books alongside Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* and some Foucault. No one comparison is sufficiently detailed to yield insight, nor is the collective enterprise precise or general enough to generate an informed conclusion. The textual summaries are not well focused on freedom, and there is much repetition and sign-posting.

Oksala's reliance on a handful of secondary sources wears thin as difficult issues loom. Consider her discussion of philosophy of science in Foucault and Husserl (45f), important for conceiving the relation between transcendental and empirical and the meaning of archeology. Oksala affirms the originality of Foucault's archeological method, noting its indebtedness to Bachelard and Canguilhem: 'As a historian of biology, Canguilhem focused on concepts ... deployed by the biologists whose work he was analyzing. Foucault, however, deals not only with first-order biological concepts, but also with concepts that define the conditions of possibility for formulating such concepts' (45). Anyone who has read Canguilhem should be puzzled. Canguilhem appears in Oksala's bibliography and is quoted in her text, but she admits that '[s]ince my principal topic is Foucault's relationship to phenomenology and not to French philosophy of science, my presentation of Foucault's relationship to Bachelard's and Canguilhem's thought relies considerably on Gutting's work' (45). There's the problem: 'issues' are defined by rigid compartmentalization; failures of synthesis and gaps in scholarship are explained away by noting the singular narrow focus.

Oksala turns up the heat occasionally but then lets it dissipate. We learn that Foucault 'suggests that we attempt to think of the subject as a discursive

effect and freedom as a non-subjective opening up of possibilities for multiple creative practices' (87). 'Suggesting' and 'attempting' are the right terms. Freedom is frozen out again as Part 2 ends with 'The undefined freedom of the lived body opens up a space in which political freedom can be sought' (153).

Political practice is explicitly defended in Part 3 as a justification of the evasion of definition: 'we can think that, for Foucault, the ideal of freedom is something that can be shown with philosophy even if it cannot be said in its (propositional) language ... . His books speak directly of the lack of freedom and hence indirectly of freedom ... . Philosophy as an ethical practice does thus not necessarily mean that we write lots of academic books on ethics, but that our philosophical life is ethical' (172). We can think just about anything but why is it better to think of Foucault's freedom as this rather than that? This question may be at least partially resolved rather than left open in an intellectual mush. But the freeze-out of freedom is almost complete. While Oksala originally deemed negative definitions of freedom insufficient, they now justify the impotence of academic books. Toward the end of one such book we are pointed toward the life that waits upon finishing reading, a reading that began presumably in seeking an answer to the question.

Oksala considers the ontology of freedom in her penultimate chapter, but only briefly. Foucault's assertion, 'Freedom is the ontological condition of ethics', is 'cryptic' (188) she claims. Why so? If freedom cannot be ontological, the claim appears cryptic indeed, but why assume such a view? Oksala's difficulties only intensify when she asserts, categorically and with little argument, that 'Freedom is not an ontological characteristic of the subject' (188). The freeze-out is now bone-chilling (evasion of substantive discussion for the duration followed by categorical insistence). Instead Oksala suggests freedom is 'an opening of new possibilities of thought and experience' (189). The concept's edges have been erased. Oksala's conclusion merely dresses up the truism: 'For Foucault, freedom refers to the indeterminateness of the constitutive matrix and to the contingency of all structures. It is the virtual fractures that appear in the invisible walls of our world, the opening up of possibilities for seeing how that which is might no longer be what it is' (208). OK then, the book is on its last page, the freeze out is complete, life begins again and freedom wins.

**Peter Trnka**

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**Michael Purcell**

*Levinas and Theology.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Pp. 208.

US\$70.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-81325-9);

US\$27.99 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-521-01280-5).

Some books are remarkable for what they *almost* accomplish. This is such a book. Purcell's intent is quite clear: there are 'the great themes' in Levinas' thought, and '[t]his book attempts to outline some of [them], particularly as they might relate to theology' (2). One wonders, though, whether such outlines are able to provide enough support for the rather striking conclusions that Purcell draws from them. Additionally, at times the essay reads as purely an introduction to Levinas and stays quite close to standard interpretations. Yet, at other times, it seems addressed to scholars and depends on extremely contentious interpretative strategies. This would not be much of a problem if Purcell did a better job of distinguishing these two dimensions of the text itself — especially when he moves from exegesis to positive analysis. What results is a book that is remarkably powerful in its effect, but lacking in rigor.

Purcell opens by offering three reasons that Levinas is significant for contemporary Christian theology: 1) God can only be encountered in terms of the human; 2) 'ethics is first theology'; 3) contemporary thinkers are beginning to do theology in a Levinasian strain, e.g., Marion, Henry, Chrétien, and Burggraeve. Purcell contends that Levinas 'offers to theology a new voice, a new grammar ... , [and] a new lexicon for articulating the human in its tendency towards the divine ... ' (3). Levinas, hence, presents to both phenomenology and theology 'a challenge, an opportunity, and a language' (6).

Chapter 1 provides a basic account of the Levinasian interpretation of Husserlian phenomenology. Therein, Purcell interweaves a reading of Levinas' *The Theory of Intuition in Husserlian Phenomenology* with a consideration of contemporary debates surrounding phenomenology and theology. Not surprisingly, Purcell considers and responds to the influential work of Dominique Janicaud on this front. In Chapter 2, Purcell focuses on Levinas' own complicated understanding of theology and questions whether a 'theological reduction' is possible on the basis of Levinas' 'ethical or intersubjective reduction' (49). Stressing the importance of Levinas' critique of *theism* and his insistence on *a-theism* (61), Purcell notes that 'A theology which seeks to be phenomenologically adequate is a theology whose point of departure must be shamelessly anthropological (and ultimately incarnational)' (63). It is here that we begin to see the two themes that will be central to the development of Purcell's argument: the existential focus of theological reflection and an incarnational notion of subjectivity.

Chapter 3 works out the philosophical and theological implications of 'incarnate existence'. The important aspect of this chapter is Purcell's em-



phasis on the Levinasian notion of the sublimity of the ordinary and the exceptional in the everyday. The 'everyday' is not something to be overcome, as Heidegger thought, but already engages the transcendent in that selfhood is *pour-l'autre*. Chapter 4 extends this conception and, although Purcell depends entirely too heavily on Levinas' 1961 account of subjectivity and does not adequately address the way in which this account is substantively altered by 1974, he does provide a helpful, if not exactly original, account of Levinas' relationship to Descartes and also of the distinction between the Odyssean and Abrahamic philosophical trajectories. It is with Chapter 5 that the book really moves beyond an introductory text and broaches more substantive ground. Here Purcell wrestles with the problems of translating a theology of grace into a Levinasian perspective. Bringing Irenaeus together with representatives of recent theology (viz., Maréchal, Rahner, and de Lubac), Purcell contends that Levinas helps us think the relationship between nature and grace due to the way in which he articulates selfhood as a decidedly *kenotic* relationship to the Other. 'The glory of God', Purcell proclaims, 'is not only the human person fully alive, as Irenaeus writes, but also the human person fully awake. *Gloria Dei, homo vigilans*. What provokes ethical awakening is the advent of the other person, always prevenient, who excites an insatiable desire for the other who is always excessive and unencompassable' (134). In Chapter 6, Purcell suggests that this *kenosis* yields a 'liturgical orientation of the self'. The joint aspects of liturgy, worship and service, come together as a specific kind of 'work' (*œuvre*) that is not merely undertaken by the self, but 'accomplished' in the self (139). Purcell labels the life that results 'eucharistic existence.' Claiming that 'responsibility, as "for-the-other," has the same "for-structure" of the eucharist' (158), Purcell links this liturgical practice with social justice. After discussing Levinas' essay 'Man-God', Purcell then concludes by bringing eschatological existence to bear on the question of political life, which always occurs in a time of 'response and responsibility' (167).

Three criticisms are worth noting: 1) 'Theology' is throughout the book understood to be implicitly *Christian*. However, such key notions to Purcell's argument as 'ritual', 'incarnation', and 'eschatology' operate substantively differently in Judaism and Christianity and require a much more nuanced engagement than Purcell provides. 2) From the fact that Levinas claims that 'ethics is first theology' it does not follow that he is, *ipso facto*, correct about this. Purcell's repeated use of this phrase gives the indication that repeating a statement somehow makes it true (see 2, 28, 45, 59, 105, 155). 3) Although the final chapter is the best and most provocative of the book, there is not enough done to suggest that Levinasian philosophy does indeed yield positive political results. Although Purcell does ask all the right questions regarding the apparent lack of political traction in Levinas, he just does not go beyond asking questions to actually provide answers to them.

The importance of Purcell's conclusions should not be understated, however. Though he does not provide enough support for the necessary entailment from Levinasian philosophy, Purcell does open new spaces for thinking

the relevance of Levinas for contemporary Christian theology. Purcell's essay is worth reading if for no other reason than that it sketches where we may need to go in our thinking if we are to bring God, responsibility, subjectivity, and justice together from the outset. To that end, the book is at least highly suggestive even if it is not convincing. And it is because I agree so wholeheartedly with Purcell's overall trajectory that I wish he had done more to eliminate the possibility of its being dismissed for lack of evidence.

**J. Aaron Simmons**

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**Nicholas Rescher**

*Scholastic Meditations.*

Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press 2005.

Pp. 179.

US\$49.95 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8132-1410-8).

Contemporary textbooks on medieval philosophy often introduce their subject with consideration of whether any real contributions were made to philosophy by scholastic thinkers. That this is not considered a rhetorical question (imagine asking such a question about the ancient Greeks) is a testament to the persistence of certain eighteenth-century prejudices. To suggest, as does Rescher, that the heyday of scholasticism was a golden age of philosophizing may seem to many a revolutionary statement. This judgment, however, has become increasingly more accepted, and today Rescher is hardly alone in his assessment. In the past few decades, the practice of looking to the medieval scholastics for both philosophical inspiration and source material has not been confined to modern neoscholastics. So many contemporary analytic philosophers have discovered kindred philosophical spirits among the early scholastics that the view of medieval philosophers as mere logic-choppers and doctrinal authoritarians is no longer quite the commonplace it once was.

Certainly a notable respect for the scholastic tradition is evident in the products of Rescher's vast philosophical output. Indeed, his scholarly career — a career that spans the second half of the twentieth century — bears the marks of much scholastic influence. In a sense, then, this collection of ten essays serves as something of a career capstone for a contemporary philosopher who, while never circumscribed by scholasticism, has deeply appreci-

ated both its intrinsic intellectual value and its specific philosophical contributions.

Rescher's scholastically inspired meditations are intended to mediate between typical scholastic concerns and contemporary philosophical issues. While historical influences are evident in each essay, currently debated issues remain the focus. In fact, this collection provides a good model of how the contributions of the early scholastics can be brought to bear on contemporary philosophy, making this book as intellectually provocative to analytic philosophers as to neoscholastics. Although this collection of essays is topically somewhat eclectic, it is nonetheless unified by Rescher's conviction that there is much to learn 'about the proper conduct of philosophizing' from the debates of medieval schoolmen.

Earlier versions of four of the essays have previously appeared in journals, and another appeared in the Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association. Five essays appear here for the first time. Three are what might be called critical surveys. The first of these, 'Choice Without Preference: The Problem of Buridan's Ass', provides a useful historical survey of the problem of non-preferential choice, along with critical commentary on varying conceptions of cause, reason, motive, and preference. Beginning with Aquinas' rejection of infinite regress in his five ways, 'Issues of Infinite Regress' analyzes various notions of regression associating the viciousness of explanatory regress with finite intelligence. Likewise, 'Nonexistents Then and Now' discusses the medieval notion of *possibilia* as divine ideas, contrasting this with contemporary treatments of the transworld identity problem.

In two previously published essays concerning Nicholas of Cusa, Rescher addresses topics that do not often engage contemporary philosophers. 'Nicholas of Cusa on the Koran: A Fifteenth-Century Encounter with Islam' is a fascinating study of a learned medieval Christian evaluation of Islamic teaching that is today even more topical than when first published in 1965. 'On Learned Ignorance and the Limits of Knowledge' confirms and extends the original insight of Cusanus that knowing always involves a practical acceptance of the imperfection of knowledge.

Rescher continues his consideration of the scope and limits of human knowledge in 'Unanswerable Questions and Insolubilia' which, in a sense, serves as an application of Cusanus' pragmatic principle of ignorance. Surveying various types of ignorance, Rescher articulates the connection of ignorance and error, showing that, in matters of knowing, progress and revision often go hand in hand. The limitations of human knowledge, as contrasted to the perfections of divine knowledge, are nowhere more evident than in the human attempt to understand God's mode of knowing. In 'Omniscience and Our Understanding of God's Knowledge', Rescher argues that these limitations are not simply a matter of theology, but concern the character of knowledge itself, for scientific knowledge of nature is just as analogical as is knowledge of God — a point on which Rescher and certain medieval scholastics are in hearty agreement. In one more discussion of



human intellectual limitation, 'Being qua Being', Rescher argues that, while classical attempts to univocally define existence fail, ontology nonetheless remains possible, for 'the limits of definition fortunately do not constitute the limits of elucidation.'

The final two essays address the important topic of the nature and value of respect for tradition. 'Thomism: Past, Present, and Future' provides a thought-provoking assessment of where Thomism stands in the contemporary philosophical landscape. A certain magisterial tone pervades 'Respect for Tradition (and the Catholic Philosopher Today)', wherein Rescher takes up the difficult question of what it means to be a Catholic philosopher. Arguing that respect for tradition is at the heart of Catholic philosophy, Rescher distinguishes such respect from allegiance and acceptance. This is supported by a careful analysis of the notion of respect and its place in the intellectual life, providing grounds for the insight that respect for tradition is as much a matter of critical appropriation as it is of deferential reception.

At a time when many contemporary philosophers are rediscovering the riches of scholastic thought, this book provides both an encouragement and model. Yet, these essays also bear the marks of Rescher's own distinctive mode of philosophizing. The result is a volume that manifests the ways in which the career of this productive late-twentieth-century philosopher itself mediates between scholasticism and contemporary thought. The reader will indeed find here the fruit of both the respectful study of the tradition as well as critical philosophical analysis.

**Michael W. Tkacz**

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**Neven Sesardic**

*Making Sense of Heritability.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2005.

Pp. 282.

US\$80.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-82818-5).

Does nature (inherited genetic makeup) or nurture (environment) make us what we are? Are traits like IQ heritable, and if so, what exactly does this mean? There has long been a heated controversy between hereditarianism (the view that intellectual and behavioral differences between different groups of humans are principally due to genetic differences) and environmentalism (the denial that genetic differences are decisive). In the 1970s, in the wake of severe criticisms of heritability studies of IQ-levels in different

human races, a consensus emerged among philosophers of science that claims like 'IQ is heritable', even when based on solid empirical data, do not have much explanatory content. Much heritability research, on the received view, is based on flawed methodology and unsound interpretations of data, so heritability analyses are uninformative and misleading.

Sesardic argues that this view rests on heavily biased judgments, and cautions us not to jump to conclusions in the nature-nurture debate. His central claim is that both hereditarianism and environmentalism are methodologically sound theories, and that their opposition is an empirical issue, not one that can be resolved by a priori philosophical analysis. Most philosophers of science as well as some scientists have not carefully assessed the facts, Sesardic argues, and have been too quick in adopting an anti-hereditarian position. Moreover, the philosophers who have entered the debate have committed the mortal sin of philosophy of failing to analyze the argumentations that the various participants in the debates have presented to a sufficient depth. The philosophers in the debate, Sesardic writes, 'have displayed a surprising lack of intellectual curiosity and analytical acuity. They hastily accepted some general anti-hereditarian arguments that possessed only superficial plausibility' (9). Sesardic's aim is to 'soften the anti-hereditarian consensus' (5).

The introduction and first chapter provide the necessary scientific, philosophical and historical background to the nature-nurture controversy. Chapters 2-5 are devoted to the systematic rebuttal of some of the commonly presented arguments against the scientific value of heritability analyses and the correction of some mistaken views of what heritability claims actually mean. Chapter 2 concerns gene-environment interactions, i.e., the environmental dependence of the effect that variations in genotype have. Sesardic argues that when the notion of interaction is properly understood, the presence of gene-environment interactions does not imply (contrary to the common view) that heritability claims are intrinsically uninformative. In Chapter 3, a similar point is made with respect to gene-environment correlations, i.e., the fact that organisms with a particular genotype tend to find themselves more often in a particular environment than do organisms with other genotypes. Chapter 4 addresses what Sesardic calls Richard Lewontin's 'master argument' that was advanced in the 1970s against the conclusions of Arthur Jensen's studies of the heritability of IQ-levels in different human races, and that fueled the anti-hereditarian consensus. Lewontin argued that Jensen failed to distinguish within-group heritability from between-group heritability and so unwarrantedly concluded from the empirical finding that IQ-levels are heritable *within* a particular group that IQ-differences between races depend on genetic differences *between* races. Sesardic shows how participants in the debate have persistently ignored Jensen's and others' (valid) responses to Lewontin's argument, and in this way have jumped to accepting anti-hereditarianism without sufficiently weighing the cases of the two sides. Chapter 5 addresses the widespread view that a high degree of heritability of a trait implies that the trait cannot be modified once it occurs

in an organism. While the heritability of a trait is often held to imply that no means will help to alter that trait, Sesardic shows that the actual situation is much more subtle.

This book, however, focuses not only on the philosophical and scientific contents of the nature-nurture issue. An important part is devoted to the sociology of the heredity debates: Who took or attacked which position and why? Why were some positions accepted without questioning and particular counterarguments ignored? These issues pervade the book but are particularly prominent in Chapter 6, where the political convictions of researchers come into focus. This chapter addresses one of Sesardic's primary worries, that scientific hypotheses often are not evaluated objectively, but on the basis of political and social convictions. Especially when socially and politically uncomfortable issues such as the genetic basis of IQ are at stake, Sesardic argues, political (in)correctness tends to determine how participants in the debate assess particular hypotheses. Sesardic aims to unmask political motivations where they play a role and to provide a counterweight to biases in the debate (as he explains in the concluding Chapter 7).

Sesardic discusses social and motivational issues very honestly and, perhaps as a consequence, on many occasions in somewhat blunt and accusing terms, directly aimed at persons rather than positions. Throughout the book, one well-known scientist or philosopher after the other is taken to task for his or her faulty argumentation, simple-mindedness, sloppy scholarship, etc. At one point, Sesardic even exclaims that 'the sheer level of ignorance, distortion, and flawed reasoning that characterizes the "anti-heritability" camp is unprecedented in science and philosophy of science' (207) — harsh words that will not go down well with many readers.

This book is a thoroughly argued and timely counterweight to the anti-hereditarian consensus in the philosophy of human behavioral genetics. Among the extremely important points Sesardic makes is a particularly salient one — in present-day contexts — pertaining to the use(lessness) of racial profiling to identify potential terrorists (217-24). But these points could have been made in a better and more effective way by taking a less personal and more distanced perspective on the issues. The text contains just too many personal attacks, and the author's irritation too often shines through. This distracts from the usually very good arguments, which is a pity for an otherwise important contribution to the philosophy of behavioral genetics.

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**Matthew Simpson**

*Rousseau's Theory of Freedom.*

New York: Continuum 2006.

Pp. 124.

US\$130.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-8640-0).

Freedom has not always been considered an inherent or absolute political value. Nor has it long been a primary justification for the weightiest of international decisions. Having recently become both, it is urgent to reconsider freedom's nature and conditions. Simpson does so through a careful exploration of the work of Rousseau that will be a useful and refreshing read for advanced undergraduates in political philosophy, for graduate students in social and political thought, and for Rousseau scholars.

In a lucidly written introduction and six chapters, Simpson elegantly disentangles four different kinds of liberty in the thought of Rousseau: natural, civil, democratic, and moral. He demonstrates that most interpreters stress one of these at the expense of the others, culminating in the familiar liberal, collectivist, and Kantian camps of Rousseau scholarship. While each of these is partly right, each also ultimately diminishes the challenges that make Rousseau's considerations so relevant.

Focusing primarily on Rousseau's *Social Contract*, while drawing on his *Second Discourse* and *Emile* as necessary, Simpson begins with natural freedom or the freedom from all obligations, which, he notes, is the least significant of freedoms for Rousseau. It describes an amoral state of nature in which one takes and enjoys whatever one can acquire and keep from others. Simpson then turns to freedoms that follow from the formation of political society and the social contract to which people are morally obligated because they assent to it without coercion. Simpson explains that civil freedom is also understood as the absence of external impediments, but unlike natural freedom, is not absolute. It describes our ability to make decisions about how to lead our lives, according to Simpson, borrowing the language of Hobbes, 'where the law is silent'. Challenging ominous readings of Rousseau's claim that citizens must alienate everything, Simpson emphasizes that although in principle anything can be required of anyone (this is what makes tax and draft laws, however controversial, coherent), everyone is to get back whatever is not required by the general will. The potential limitations to civil liberty, in other words, are not excessive. They amount to the requirement that we exercise it in ways that are consistent with the common good and freedom of others.

Moral freedom, in contrast, describes living under laws of one's own authorship, an ability to act without internal impediments. This is not identical with the thought of the Stoics, however. One may not, in Rousseau's view, be morally free in a prison cell. For him, moral freedom and autonomy are coextensive with a well-ordered and legitimately governed society (95). This is due to the changes in us that such conditions augur: in a state of nature, the only bases for action are stronger or weaker passions that weigh

upon us. In civil society, we act according to rules beyond our inclinations. To live politically is to make a practice of asking, 'What should I do based on the terms of the compact that I have legislated for myself?' Simpson emphasizes that being morally free, in this sense, has little to do with 'feeling free'.

Finally, democratic freedom involves exercising one's unalienated sovereignty, by literally making law. Simpson argues that Rousseau's requirement that all members of the polity directly participate in framing law was neither a prudential consideration of how to avoid citizens' dependence on representatives nor intended to ensure correct outcomes. Simpson writes, 'The problem with representation is not that it is unwise, but that it is illegitimate' (77). Given the terms of the contract in which sovereignty belongs to everyone, to lend this power to a small group of representatives would give them the authority to redefine — and significantly narrow — the meaning of sovereignty, violating 'the artificial equality the contract aims to create' (81).

Emphasizing the tensions among these discrete freedoms, Simpson illuminates the fragility of the project of citizenship. Patriotism, dutifulness, and passion for the common good can easily become re-instantiated as superstition, servility, and factionalism. The means through which we aim to become moral agents may instead devolve into an even more servile state of nature. The message, argues Simpson, is that '[a]ll things come at a price', that one cannot have all goods at once (117), and that the important consequence of Rousseau's theory of freedom remains: *perfection and finality in politics are not possible* (118).

Simpson's astute explication of Rousseau leaves one curious about how best to weigh the kinds of freedom that he outlines and the different kinds of societies that emerge out of their various combinations. In addition, given the centrality of Rousseau's conception of the general will, which in addition to involving the pursuit of equality, well-being, and justice, also stressed seeking correct outcomes, one wonders about the relative roles of each kind of freedom in determining what is, in fact, right. Finally, Simpson critically engages Benjamin Constant's accusation of Rousseau as seeking, in collective self-rule, a return to fifth-century Athens. In addition to acknowledging that Rousseau and Constant both sought balances of individual liberty and democracy, if differently, and their shared concern that the indifference of citizens might lead them too easily to surrender their share in political power, one might ask: If negative freedom describes what is available to us where laws are silent, how are we to understand the ubiquity of law in the twentieth century? There are few moments in which the law does not speak. Indeed it appears to say something about the most minute details of our mundane lives. Frequently, the more pronounced difficulty concerns the execution of law, whether or not law that could speak is silenced or made audible. This fact of modern life challenges the coherence of the ongoing use of Constant's distinction to discredit the viability of political theory that links meaningful freedom indispensably to the articulation of shared purposes.

In sum, Simpson's book is a pleasure to read and important for thinking through many pressing political questions. I wished that he might have

addressed some of these at greater length and more directly, but the aims of his book are excellently carried out.

**Jane Gordon**

Temple University

**Alan Soble, ed.**

*Sex from Plato to Paglia:*

*A Philosophical Encyclopedia.*

Westport, CT: Greenwood Press 2006. 2 vols.

Pp. 1248.

US\$299.95

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-313-32686-8);

US\$329.95

(e-book ISBN-13: 978-0-313-06268-1).

This book comes with the heft (and price) of an encyclopedia. It's professional, scholarly, even-handed, and inclusive. It offers invaluable bibliographic resources, a scrupulous network of cross-references, and painstakingly detailed indices. In addition, there is a useful 'Guide to related topics' in which entries are grouped under twenty-two sub-headings such as 'Analytic Philosophy', 'Catholicism, Roman', 'Feminism', 'GBLT', 'Non-Western Philosophy', 'Continental Philosophy'. (This last, with perhaps excessive literalness, lumps Bataille and Foucault with Leibniz, Spinoza, and Sade, all three of which also figure under 'Philosophers (Secular)'.) But don't be misled: these two volumes are not too heavy to hold comfortably to sit and read. You won't find many sex tips here, though the editor's own masterly contribution on 'Masturbation' does offer fourteen picturesque synonyms for that activity. But you will find deep scholarship, tough-minded argument, hours of intellectual pleasure, and the occasional flush of meta-titillation.

Alan Soble, a leading philosopher of sex, has collected a rich array of 153 articles by over a hundred contributors. The result is a fascinating collection, not least the eight articles by Soble himself, including an 'overview' of the philosophy of sex, which are written with characteristic wit and good sense. Dipping in more or less at random brings ample rewards. Apart from the substance of the articles themselves, the reader is invited to follow rich lodes of 'Additional Readings' following the references list in all major entries. Well-crafted essays discuss a wide variety of questions regarding aspects of sex relating to gender (dimorphic or not — cf. 'Intersex'), pleasure, reproduction, love, desire, ethics, politics, connection with (or alienation from) others, and more. Ideologies of sex from other traditions are not left out, with such



entries as 'African Philosophy', 'Chinese philosophy', 'Islam', 'Indian Erotology' and 'Tantrism'. Many historical and contemporary figures get their own entries, including sex haters such as Augustine, Schopenhauer, and Scruton, sex promoters such as Havelock Ellis, Robert Ellis, and Russell, and those, like Plato, Nietzsche, and Freud, who have deepened our culture's profound ambivalence about sex. Enlightening and sensible entries on 'Bestiality', 'Cybersex', 'Incest', 'Marriage', and 'Prostitution' raise the hope that hysterical expressions of stubborn prejudices may not remain forever the only mode of discourse possible on those topics.

Some but not all authors appear to have been chosen for their critical approaches to their topics. A sympathetic treatment of Aquinas is given by Stephen Lahey, who is described as 'interested in applying premodern theological approaches to the needs of contemporary society' (1105); a Jesuit, Edward C. Vacek, was picked to find fault with Richard Posner's economic perspective on sex. The historically important doctrine of Natural Law, which has had an enormous influence on sexual ethics in religious circles and even on secular thinkers such as Roger Scruton (q.v.), receives a good deal of criticism. In an entry on 'Natural Law (New)', Andrew Koppelman remarks that one reason the approach is important is that 'it may be the last respectable stronghold of the beliefs that homosexual conduct is intrinsically wrong and marriage is necessarily heterosexual' (708). Just how respectable it can still be is a question that is not asked insistently enough, despite closely argued critical entries on 'Catholicism: Twentieth and Twenty-first Century' by Christine Gudorf and 'Animal sexuality' by Jeffrey Herschfield. The former skewers the incoherences of the Vatican view. The latter notes soberly that 'the fact that humans are mammals seems not to have influenced Aquinas,' who thought birds made better models for humans.

But those criticisms remain too respectful. The arbitrariness with which Natural Law doctrines need to interpret the supposed facts of nature in order to reach foregone conclusions is scarcely less appalling than the consequences of those conclusions themselves. Although the encyclopedia has various references to AIDS, no contributor sees fit to point out that millions of avoidable deaths from AIDS result from the Vatican's prohibition on birth control, which itself rests not merely on the pretension that one can reliably divine nature's intentions, but also on a subtle distinction between acts that are 'intrinsically generative acts qua intentional' and those that are 'intrinsically nongenerative qua intentional acts' (52, s.v. 'Anscombe, G. E. M'). Next to this, debates about angels dancing on the head of pin are positively earthy.

Anscombe's is one name the inclusion of which does not seem clearly justified. Thomas Nagel is another excellent and well-known philosopher most of whose writings have nothing to do with sex. His inclusion rests on a single famous article in which he defended an intriguing but manifestly implausible analysis of sexual desire, a view quite sufficiently dealt with in the excellent entry on 'Desire, Sexual', and which notably — as pointed out in Louise Collins's 'Cybersex' — fits online sex at least as well as bodily rutting. It seems similarly hard to understand why there is an entry on

Heidegger, who by the admission of its author 'has little to say about sexuality' (435), and who anyway gets discussed elsewhere, notably in separate entries on 'Phenomenology' and 'Existentialism'. By contrast, there is none on Kinsey (who is no doubt rightly said to be less fun to read than Albert Ellis, who does get his own entry). The entry on 'Beauvoir, Simone de' reads: 'See Existentialism'. In that entry, by Richard Kamber, Beauvoir rates less than one third of the space allotted to Sartre. Furthermore, she is barely mentioned in the entry on 'Feminism, French', perhaps because unlike the writers featured there Beauvoir made lucid and rational arguments. That treatment, given her influence as the author of the book that re-launched feminism in the twentieth century (the eighteenth's Wollstonecraft, incidentally, also fails to rate a separate entry), seems rather less than Beauvoir's due. I also regret the omission of Frank Wedekind, whose radical and influential 'Tragedies of Sex', doesn't even make it into the index. But these are quibbles.

This is a splendid book, worth its high price — though why the paperless version should be even pricier by ten percent is a mystery about the non-sexual perversity of publishers' twisted minds.

### **Ronald de Sousa**

University of Toronto

### **Jason Stanley**

*Knowledge and Practical Interests.*

Toronto and New York: Oxford University Press 2005.

Pp. 204.

Cdn\$55.50/US\$45.00

(cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-19-928803-8).

On the surface, there is nothing wrong with this book. Stanley has written 182 clear, brief and surveyable pages of prose to make the case for a single well-defined proposition. 'Knowing', he says, 'is an interest-relative relation' (179). He rightly identifies contextualism as 'the most plausible alternative account', which is also arguably the received view in contemporary analytic philosophy. Beyond that, the plot is simple. Hannah and Sarah are trying to decide whether or not to make a bank deposit on a Friday afternoon. They *think* the bank might be open on Saturday as well, but do they *know*? The answer to this question, argues Stanley, depends not just on their evidence for their (true) beliefs about the bank's hours but on, for example, whether they have bills coming due.

The broad outlines, then, will be clear to anyone who has a serious stake in the outcome. If you are trying to decide whether 'what makes someone's true belief a case of knowledge is partly determined by facts from the domain of practical rationality' (v) or 'knowledge ascriptions ... are context sensitive in a distinctly epistemological way' (16), then this is just the book for you. Unfortunately, most of the people who will find this book useful do not really need to read it because they already have the means to engage with Stanley's position much more directly. They attend the same seminars, conferences and workshops, read the same journals, and frequent the same web logs. As a sign of the times, he quotes from Jon Kvanvig's invaluable blog, *Certain Doubts* (6).

The most telling indication of both the quality and isolation of Stanley's argument can be found in the preface. Here he acknowledges his debt to Timothy Williamson, a philosopher who needs no introduction (recognizing his name is a good indication that you meet the minimum requirements to follow the book's argument). 'I have discussed every aspect of this book with Williamson', says Stanley in what might uncharitably be read as a rather bald appeal to the former's authority. For Williamson, we are told, has commented in great detail 'at each stage of the project', and Stanley recalls the culmination of this support 'in several three-hour phone conversations giving me page-by-page comments on the whole manuscript' (x). It would be uncharitable (and no doubt a bit resentful) to see this merely as namedropping rather than the sincere expression of one philosopher's gratitude for another's criticism. But there is a twist to the story. Stanley begins the next sentence with the words 'Though he does not agree with my views ...', thus implying that it is possible for two philosophers to engage very seriously with each other's positions without moving either in its essentials. The idea that such efforts are not wasted defines a particular kind of philosophy: the view that philosophy is about the arguments, not their conclusions.

Readers, then, should not expect Stanley to convince them. Rather, they are being informed about his position, presumably to help them define their own. The style of philosophy that he pursues is intended to provide colleagues with a foil for a position that depends on the existence of 'interest-relative invariantism' in order to shine. Indeed, it is only within a rather circumscribed field of positions that the dust jacket's promise of 'a startling and provocative claim' will have any carry, and Stanley is well aware of this. His 'occasionally distressing' conclusions, he notes, are no surprise to 'friends and family members more at home with non-analytic traditions in philosophy' (v). They may, however, be surprised that he develops his position in 'the powerful intuitive sway of the thesis that knowledge is the basis for action' (12), without mentioning, say, John Dewey, or surprised that he can engage at great length with ideas about how ordinary uses of the word 'know' depend on local contexts without mentioning Wittgenstein. While this again simply underscores the 'analytic' bent of this book, it should be noted that since the mid-1960s, the interest-relativity of knowledge has served in many other fields as a point of departure, not the tentative conclusion of an argument.



Stanley has an explanation for his eccentricities: he wants 'to preserve as much as possible of common sense intuition' (v). But it is a 'common sense' that seems utterly isolated from everyday practices, one where intuitions are tested against highly artificial examples that are generated with the clear aim of satisfying precisely the needs of his argument. That is, while there is an aesthetic pleasure in turning his very ordinary examples over in one's mind, their epistemological force will be clear only within the highly esoteric milieu of what Stanley calls 'analytic philosophy'. Even those who would identify with this label, however, will get lost in his elaborate positioning of 'intuitions', arguments and positions — e.g., 'while DeRose's objection undermines the letter of Hawthorne's proposal, it does not undermine its spirit' (101). It sometimes seems a long way back to Stanley's position, often through very quiet neighbourhoods.

It might seem that I don't like this book. Indeed, Stanley raises serious doubts about what notions like 'practical rationality' and 'epistemic matters' mean to philosophers (2), but nonetheless uses them (in his own way) in drawing his conclusions. He even ends the book by leaving its implications largely up for grabs — and later books. And that *is* less than satisfying to me. But in the end I find myself wanting to recommend this book — not for its insights but for its literary pleasures. Its careful turning and returning of the story of Hannah and Sarah and their trip to the bank is worth the price of the book. Philosophers who read this book as a matter of course, however, will get something far too predictable out of it. This book, I want to say, deserves another kind of reader.

**Thomas Basbøll**

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**Andrew Stark**

*The Limits of Medicine.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2006.

Pp. 264.

US\$70.00 (cloth ISBN-13: 978-0-521-85631-7);

US\$25.99 (paper ISBN-13: 978-0-521-67226-9).

This book addresses the enhancement debate in philosophy of medicine. Stark, a professor of strategic management at the University of Toronto at Scarborough, proceeds methodically through three main issues, using eight sorts of cases of purported enhancement to explain and develop his view.

There are three chapters, bookended between an introduction and a conclusion. The first chapter examines the distinction between cure and enhancement; the second asks when enhancements may reduce the authenticity of those who get them; and the third scrutinizes when enhancements might be a form of cultural genocide. The eight conditions Stark considers in each chapter are 'physical slowness for competitive runners, mild depression, black racial features, plain facial features, deafness, blindness, obesity, and anorexia' (17).

Stark rejects biological approaches to defining normality. He argues we need to use social norms in defining what counts as a medical condition, with the result that a condition can be normal in one society while abnormal in another. Specifically, his approach is that a condition can be seen as abnormal when the group of people who have that condition legitimately view their condition as socially abnormal. Clearly, a great deal of weight rests on the concept of legitimacy here.

According to Stark, when the frequency of a condition (mood, for example) is distributed over a bell curve, the curve itself gives us no help in determining the lines of normality. One reason for this is that a bell curve 'has no landmarks,' he says, quoting Edmond A. Murphy (36), and so it does not tell us where to draw the limits between normality and pathology. He says that standard deviations are not of 'much help in precluding debate over the cutoff of norm on a bell curve' (37). By way of contrast, Stark argues that other distributions give more direction about where to make the demarcation between normality and disease. He argues that when 'a group's condition falls not on the hump at all but on the recognizable tail of a skewed curve, it conclusively lies outside the norm' (39). He nevertheless concedes in a footnote that 'It's true that there can be disagreement as to where exactly the tail of a skewed curve begins' (208). Stark's point, that some distributions of frequency of conditions are more easily separated into normal and pathological than others, seems reasonable, but his suggestion that a bell curve gives *no* help in making the division is overstated. Having a bell curve distribution does not dictate where to draw the line between normal and abnormal, but it provides some help in making the decision at least slightly less arbitrary.

Stark's approach allows for the medicalization of many conditions. He summarizes his view as follows: a condition is medical 'if members of the group harboring the condition can legitimately view their phenotypic condition as falling outside the social norm ... or deem others to have reached the social ideal' (83). He argues that seven of his 'eight conditions' are medical; only having black racial features would not count as a medical condition on his view. Maybe the least convincing case here concerns the slow runners. He defines a slow runner as someone 'for whom there are always other runners capable of beating him, assuming that he and they all engage in the same rigors of training, exercise, and diet' (72). Stark argues that if they so wish, runners who are faster than the average for runners can still legitimately count themselves as in need of a cure (although not necessarily

abnormal) because there are other people who are faster than them. He emphasizes that the fastest runner cannot claim a disordered status, because on his view, in order to count as disordered one has to be slower than an actual runner, not just a possible runner.

It is implausible that Stark's approach will capture all ordinary intuitions about what counts as a medical problem. While his general stance is clear enough, and his examination of various cases is detailed, it is often difficult to discern the central ideas that motivate his approach. This elusiveness characterizes the second and third chapters as much as the first. Stark sets out what he calls a 'Kantian' view of authenticity, which he explains has two main points. First, it is egalitarian in that people should not have advantages over others due to their inborn attributes or dispositions; so it is legitimate to cure those with medical conditions to make them equal to others. Second, and with top priority, 'cure should never diminish a person's genuine, struggle-born achievement, whatever it may be' (93). The basic idea seems to be that personal struggle and striving is good and provides authenticity, so cures should not be used that reduce struggle. Stark's insight here about the central role of struggle in the debate about the inauthenticity or artificiality of enhancements is important and worth emphasizing. He argues that when a person uses a technology to change herself and achieve more, this is compatible with an authentic life so long as she continues to struggle. This is clear in itself, but when he argues that it would be inauthentic for slow runners to use steroids, on the grounds that this would erode genuine achievement, it is difficult to discern why this sort of case is different from the other seven cases.

The third chapter addresses the concern that enhancement may enable a cultural genocide of minority groups such as the deaf, the blind, the depressed, and so on. He introduces conceptions of 'cultural spouses' and 'cultural siblings', and via a complex argument arrives at the conclusion that the only group for which we might have a medical cure (remember that race is not a medical condition on his view and so is not a candidate for cure) that nevertheless should not be used due to cultural considerations is that of the plain featured. Again, readers will likely finish the chapter unsure of how to assess the arguments.

This book is intriguing, yet ultimately disappointing. Stark would do well to restate his central arguments more succinctly in shorter papers making clearer the heart of his logic.

**Christian Perring**  
Dowling College



**Jean-Pierre Torrell**

*Aquinas's Summa:*

*Background, Structure, and Reception.*

Washington, DC: The Catholic University  
of America Press 2005.

Pp. 166.

US\$17.95

(paper ISBN-13: 978-0-8132-1398-9).

Torrell has given us a short work on Aquinas' *Summa theologiae* to complement his more lengthy treatments. This is an introduction to reading the *Summa theologiae* rather than an introduction to the entire thought and works of Aquinas. Although it is a thin volume, it contains a tremendous amount of information about the *Summa*. In addition it provides an important framework for understanding what one encounters in the *Summa*. Although this book focuses on the *Summa* as a theological work, it contains discussions important to those who try to understand Aquinas' philosophy. This review will focus on the aspects of the book of interest to philosophers.

The book starts with a chapter on Aquinas' life and works. This is not a complete biography, but an account which gives essential background on the *Summa*. During his teaching at Orvieto Aquinas encountered an institution that used inadequate moral manuals which neglected dogmatic matters and which did not cover the Gospel foundations of moral theology. Thus, the *Summa theologiae* was planned as a synthesis of theology for beginners that treated subjects in their proper order. To the extent that philosophy appears in the *Summa* it is in the service of theology. It does not contain extended unified philosophical treatises. Still, knowing the theological context of a philosophical discussion is often important for understanding the point of the philosophical reasoning.

Torrell follows this with two chapters outlining the structure of the *Summa*. Here and elsewhere he explains that 'sacred doctrine' includes more than our current understanding of 'theology'. It contains all Christian teaching beginning with the scriptures. The discussion of the section of the *Summa* on Christ contains an important section on 'Reasons of Appropriateness'. Torrell explains that '[c]ontrary to a deductive method that is sometimes attributed to him but which is not his, Thomas does not want to prove the truths of the faith, nor to demonstrate other truths from those that he holds in faith'. Many of the arguments in the *Summa* need to be evaluated as probable arguments from 'appropriateness' or 'reasonableness' rather than as demonstrative arguments. This does not mean that no deductive philosophical arguments are found in the *Summa*; it's just that one must not unreflectively read every argument as a demonstration.

In the following chapter, 'The Literary and Doctrinal Milieu', Torrell outlines critical background for reading the *Summa*. He explains disputed questions and how topics are broken down into questions and articles in the

*Summa*. In the section of the chapter on sources, Torrell reviews the Greek, Jewish, and Arabic sources which influenced Thomas Aquinas. While Aristotle provided many basic concepts and methods, so much so that a knowledge of Aquinas' Aristotelianism is necessary to read him, it is incorrect to read him as a 'pure' Aristotelian. Torrell writes: 'Thomas is not the hard and fast Aristotelian that triumphalist Neothomists in the early half of the twentieth century like to imagine'. Aquinas is profoundly influenced by Neoplatonic, Stoic, and Arabic thought. Torrell reports the results of recent research firmly establishing these conclusions. Unfortunately, for a long time the Aristotelian reading led to Aristotelian commentaries being translated while more Neo-platonic works remained untranslated.

The fifth chapter presents a brief but valuable review of disputes over the *Summa* and studies of it prior to 1800. This provides an overview of the scope of earlier work on the *Summa*. The sixth chapter covers the events leading up to *Aeterni Patris* and the study of the *Summa* since then. The study of Aquinas before and after this encyclical focused on his philosophical thought. This led to some creative and insightful studies. Unfortunately, the authoritative manner in which the teaching of Thomism was imposed undermined the communication of the vitality and creativity of the original thought. In addition it created a demand for 'manuals' of philosophy and theology that were sometimes more Thomist in name than fact. As a result, the Thomism rejected by many after Vatican II was not the real thought of Aquinas.

Over the last century more work has been done recovering the theological focus of Aquinas' thought, especially the *Summa theologiae*. Part of this is the clarification of Aquinas' understanding of the aim of theology: 'not to reach conclusions through a deductive method, but to understand the articles of faith that are the basis of theology'. In this chapter Torrell provides a review of more recent publications which, while brief, is very useful.

In his conclusion Torrell offers the following evaluation of the part of the Thomistic revival referred to as 'Neothomism': 'Independently of distortions of precise points, it seems that the most common and damaging error was to have considered Thomas first of all as a philosopher and to have believed it possible to isolate certain parts of the *Summa* as "philosophical." This is a glaring error of perspective'. While passages like this could give the impression that Torrell thinks that Aquinas should be read solely as a theologian and not at all as a philosopher, such an impression would be mistaken. He commends several philosophical studies of Aquinas. His dispute is with a reading of Aquinas and of the *Summa* which overemphasized the philosophical and Aristotelian elements, to the near exclusion of other philosophical influences and of the basic theological purpose.

Philosophers interested in talking a close look at Aquinas' reasoning can find a good deal of value in this volume. It provides background information on the *Summa* which makes it much easier to understand. It alerts the reader to the necessity of appreciating the theological focus as part of understanding the point of various philosophical discussions. As long as passages that may

appear to reject philosophical study of Aquinas are read as criticisms of the excesses of a specific tradition, the book is worth study.

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**Christopher Wellman**

*A Theory of Secession:*

*The Case for Political Self-Determination.*

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This is an insightful and well-argued contribution to contemporary debates concerning the legitimacy of secession. In Wellman's view, we ought to take a permissive stance towards secession: a group possesses a right to secede so long as 'both the separatist group and the remainder state would be able and willing to perform the requisite political functions' (35). It is the capacity of both groups to provide the 'vital benefits of political society' that ought to be our primary concern in assessing whether to support or reject a secessionist claim (35). These vital benefits, which remain largely undefined throughout Wellman's book, are to be understood in democratic terms: both the seceded state and the state left behind must be able to provide a stable democratic environment for all their citizens. If, for example, the state is seeking to secede with the intention of engaging in democratically unjust activities — slavery, to use one of Wellman's examples — the secession at issue is not morally legitimate.

Wellman's contribution is a careful balance between a commitment to individualism and a commitment to a kind of meaningful group autonomy that can be derived from individualism: 'the value of group autonomy [derives] from the welfare of the members of the group in question' (49). Individuals qua individuals, rather than as group members, are harmed when the group is not self-determining. For Wellman, equality and individual autonomy are not the sole metrics of harm; respect is likewise significant in Wellman's attempts to delineate the harms of denying a right to secede. It is possible for individuals to be the victims of disrespect, as members of a group denied the right of self-determination, even when their individual autonomy has not been violated and their equality has not been undermined (56).



Wellman describes the group autonomy to which he is committed as political and democratic. It is political because the main condition determining the legitimacy of a secessionist bid is whether the new states can perform politically. It is democratic because it is concerned with whether the citizens themselves are clamouring for secession. 'Democratic decision-making should', so long as political stability is a plausible outcome, 'prevail' in determining whether a state should launch a secession bid (54).

The attempt to tie the legitimacy of the secessionist bid to the *political* capacities of the seceding and left-behind state distinguishes this view from those views that link secessionist bids to cultural claims. For Wellman, the cultural or national aspirations of the seceding group are effectively irrelevant to adjudicating the legitimacy of a secessionist bid (112). In response to the objection that, as a matter of fact, secessionist claims are nearly always made in these terms, and that we ought therefore to weigh their merits, he responds 'I aim to answer the moral question of what type of party has a right to secede, not the descriptive question of what types of parties typically exhibit an interest in state breaking' (114-15). Wellman is of course drawing an important analytic distinction; he does not, however, take the objection seriously. In an analysis of an issue (in this case, secession) in which nearly all *actual* claims take a particular form (in this case, framed in terms of national or cultural aspirations), it is not sufficient to dismiss so casually the facts of the matter.

It seems clear to those who infuse their own moral claims with an appreciation for the empirical conditions at stake that there is considerable harm done in ignoring the cultural dimensions of secessionist claims, as Wellman proposes to do. He admits as much when he observes that, under some circumstances, 'we could utilize additional criteria to distinguish among the eligible secessionist movements, and the nation/non-nation could be an important consideration when prioritizing the competing claims to independence' (113). How we might take account of the distinction, in such a way that is consistent with Wellman's commitment to focusing on political claims alone, is not clear. If national claims are merely descriptive, and so carry no normative weight, they cannot then be helpful as 'additional criteria' by which to adjudicate among competing claims for secession.

The emphasis on democratic decision-making at the core of a legitimate secessionist movement is likewise worth investigating. It matters, for Wellman, that citizens themselves demand secession from a larger state, and he is skeptical of secessionist bids made by small minorities of elites. Here he is responding to philosophers who reject most secessionist bids in favour of statism, and in particular, those who advocate a super-majority in a referendum on secession rather than a simple majority before accepting a bid as legitimate. Wellman writes: 'it has always struck me as undemocratic to allow a minority to dictate how majorities should live', and in requiring a super-majority in a vote on a secessionist claim, we are doing just that (63). There is no reason to think that a community will vote 'recklessly or nonchalantly' in choosing for or against secession, since it is such a grave

decision (62). He may be correct, but he nevertheless provides no fully satisfying answer to those who are cautious in legitimizing secessionist bids that require only a simple majority. It may be that it is wise to err on the side of caution, even if we require a series of plebiscites to register support (at greater than 50%) for secession over time, as Wellman suggests. Given how frequently Wellman invokes the Quebecois, he might have assessed why it is that the Clarity Act — which demands that a ‘clear majority’ of Quebecois support secession, and which emerged in part in response to a Supreme Court decision that unilateral secession is illegal — is undemocratic.

In sum, this book is a welcome addition to the philosophical literature on state-breaking. Its emphasis on the political and democratic elements of secession makes it a novel contribution to a debate that is, as he rightly observes, largely concerned with the national and cultural claims that motivate secession. Although in my view he gives short shrift to these arguments, his is a challenging and insightful argument that deserves careful consideration.

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