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**Table of Contents • Table des matières**

<b>Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco, eds., <i>Animal Philosophy: Essential Readings in Continental Thought</i> . . . . .</b>	235
Margaret Van De Pitte	
<b>F.M. Barnard, <i>Herder on Nationality, Humanity, and History</i> . . . . .</b>	237
Esteve Morera	
<b>Gabriela Basterra, <i>Seductions of Fate: Tragic Subjectivity, Ethics, Politics</i> . . . . .</b>	240
Christopher McTavish	
<b>David S. Clarke, ed., <i>Panpsychism: Past and Recent Selected Readings</i> . . . . .</b>	242
Phillip H. Wiebe	
<b>Wendell John Coats, Jr., <i>Montaigne's Essais</i> . . . . .</b>	245
Craig Walton	
<b>Tim Crane and Katalin Farkas, eds., <i>Metaphysics, a Guide and Anthology</i> . . . . .</b>	247
Robert Fahrnkopf	
<b>Donald Davidson, <i>Problems of Rationality</i> . . . . .</b>	250
Manuela Ungureanu	
<b>Daniel C. Dennett, <i>Sweet Dreams: Philosophical Obstacles to a Science of Consciousness</i> . . . . .</b>	254
David Ohreen	
<b>Jorge J. E. Gracia and Jiyuan Yu, eds., <i>Uses and Abuses of the Classics: Western Interpretations of Greek Philosophy</i> . . . . .</b>	256
Roslyn Weiss	
<b>Stephen R.C. Hicks, <i>Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault</i> . . . . .</b>	259
Edvard Lorkovic	
<b>William Hirstein, <i>Brain Fiction: Self-Deception and the Riddle of Confabulation</i> . . . . .</b>	262
William Seager	
<b>Paul Hoyningen-Huene, <i>Formal Logic: A Philosophical Approach</i> . . . . .</b>	264
Arthur Sullivan	

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<b>Walter Jost</b> , <i>Rhetorical Investigations: Studies in ordinary Language Criticism</i> . . . . .	267
Stanley Bates	
<b>Claire Elise Katz</b> , <i>Levinas, Judaism, and the Feminine: The Silent Footsteps of Rebecca</i> . . . . .	269
Brian Bergen-Aurand	
<b>Chris Lawn</b> , <i>Wittgenstein and Gadamer: Towards a Post-Analytic Philosophy of Language</i> . . . . .	271
Lauren Swayne Barthold	
<b>Andrew Light and Avner de Shalit, eds.</b> , <i>Moral and Political Reasoning in Environmental Practice</i> . . . . .	274
James Connelly	
<b>Bertram F. Malle</b> , <i>How the Mind Explains Behavior: Folk Explanations, Meaning, and Social Interaction</i> . . . . .	276
Wendy Lynne Lee	
<b>Patchen Markell</b> , <i>Bound By Recognition</i> . . . . .	278
Susan Hekman	
<b>Delos B. McKown</b> , <i>Behold the Antichrist: Bentham on Religion</i> . . . . .	281
James E. Crimmins	
<b>Cheryl Misak, ed.</b> , <i>The Cambridge Companion to Peirce</i> . . . . .	283
Michael Kubara	
<b>David E. Ohreen</b> , <i>The Scope and Limits of Folk Psychology: A Socio-linguistic Approach</i> . . . . .	288
Heidi L. Maibom	
<b>James F. Pontuso</b> , <i>Assault on Ideology: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's Political Thought</i> . . . . .	290
Jeff Noonan	
<b>Duncan Richter</b> , <i>Historical Dictionary of Wittgenstein's Philosophy</i> . . . . .	293
Béla Szabados	
<b>Livio Rossetti, ed.</b> , <i>Greek Philosophy in the New Millenium</i> . . . . .	296
Christopher Byrne	
<b>Richard Rorty and Gianni Vattimo</b> , <i>The Future of Religion</i> . . . . .	299
Jeffrey Dudiak	
<b>Cecilia Sjöholm</b> , <i>The Antigone Complex: Ethics and the Invention of Feminine Desire</i> . . . . .	301
Dina Mendonça	
<b>Ten Chin Liew</b> , <i>A Conception of Toleration</i> . . . . .	303
Susan M. Turner	
<b>Peter van Inwagen, ed.</b> , <i>Christian Faith and the Problem of Evil</i> . . . . .	306
Robert Larmer	
<b>Morton White</b> , <i>From a Philosophical Point of View Selected Studies</i> . . . . .	308
Brian Hendley	
<b>Robert Wicks</b> , <i>Modern French Philosophy: From Existentialism to Postmodernism</i> . . . . .	310
Edvard Lorkovic	

**Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco, eds.**  
*Animal Philosophy:*  
*Essential Readings in Continental Thought.*  
New York: Continuum 2004.  
Pp. xxv + 220.  
US\$120.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8264-6413-0);  
US\$33.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8264-6414-9).

Atterton and Calarco cull the work of eleven noted French and German philosophers to see what contribution they might make to the vigorous philosophical debate about animals — about what animals are like and how we should relate to them. Each selection of texts containing the gist of the philosopher's position is commented upon by a noted scholar in the field. The result, Peter Singer claims in his merciless Foreward, confirms that the Continentals have had almost nothing of interest to say on the topic. The editors concede this, but think these 'motley' selections '... open up new vistas for research even if they often turn out to be cul-de-sacs for the thinkers themselves' (xvii). Why then read the book? Singer rightly notes (xii-xiii) that what might be learned from encountering so many scientifically uninformed and philosophically uncritical ideas is something about the limits of our thinking beyond our own case, about the impact of cultural beliefs on philosophical theories, etc. There is more than this to the book, however, although it makes the reader do heavy work. The four following paragraphs group the primary texts as 'Bad', 'Tangential', 'Interesting', and 'Constructive'.

The several opaque or poorly reasoned contributions are morbidly interesting. Heidegger, developing a new ontology of animals, gives an unreconstructed Cartesian view. He simply presupposes an 'abyss of essence' between humans and animals, and that animals are 'poor in world' (17). Calarco tries and fails to find something beyond the question-begging and scanty, dated, science here, concluding that Heidegger's impressive failure in argument is what makes the texts interesting. Other notably unhelpful or just plain uninformed voices include Bataille, Deleuze and Guattari, and Ferry. Georges Bataille, too, takes animal mindlessness ('the animal is in the world like water in water' [34]) and our inability to know animals as premises. Jill Marsden helps with Bataille's tortuous language, but does not criticize his ideas. Deleuze and Guattari think that animals are 'movements, vibrations, thresholds in a deserted matter' (106), a state to which we should ourselves aspire. The human project of 'becoming animal' (87) is best captured by Kafka's description of becoming cockroach. James Urpeth tries to make sense of this text. Even if at the end 'the reader remains none the wiser,' the slog through the material is worth it if it leaves us feeling 'oddly feral' (110). Luc Ferry promises something new, acknowledging that the false belief that animals do not feel pain underwrites our unjust laws and cruel practices. Wanting to undo our sadism without compromising our ontological supe-

riority, he modifies Kant's intuition that animals are significantly different from us and can be used, by seeing them as our analogues. We must vivisect them, harvest spare parts, eat them, etc. kindly and in moderation (as the Pentateuch counsels) because they are analogues of humans, and not merely to guard against poor character traits. Verena Conley pulls no punches in taking Ferry apart, and makes interesting suggestions about how to fashion a scientifically informed metaphysics of animals.

Cixous' contribution is so rich and complex as to go far beyond the 'animal debate' issue. What directly applies is found in the feminist critique of biology issue (some of which is indebted to her.) Stephen David Ross' commentary ably strengthens her position as it relates to animals. Irigaray's commissioned piece is a personal memoir celebrating animals and has nothing to add to the debate.

Interesting because of constructive commentary are the Nietzsche, Levinas and Foucault chapters. Alphonso Lingis, commenting on familiar passages from *Zarathustra*, argues that we are well advised, given what we are doing to our planet and ourselves, to follow Nietzsche in prioritizing Nature, health, and a self-understanding suited to human physiology, that is, an animal organism. Emmanuel Levinas could have got it right and failed to (miserably,) but the elements might be there in his ethics of compassion for the human 'other' for an ethics appropriate to animals as recent science presents them. Atterton thinks this is so, if we delete all of Levinas' unsubstantiated Judeo-Christian presuppositions about the human/animal divide. One worries what this would do to the rest of Levinas' thinking, given how much human supreme value depends on being distinct from animals. Early on, Foucault discusses the invention of madness out of historical attitudes toward animality, humanity, and aberrant behavior. He then rarely mentions animals. Clare Palmer tries to deduce his own views from this material, but the result suggests a rather Calvinistic view of Nature and a romantic idea of animal wildness/freedom. She is likely right to suggest that, had post-Genealogy Foucault assessed late twentieth-century social attitudes and scientific beliefs, he would have seen that animals are being 'normalized' (and thus useless for his early romanticizing of the mad.)

Derrida and his commentator, David Wood, fully redeem this book. Derrida is a careful critic of Heidegger, Levinas, et al, and avoids their mistakes. Writing later than most (1997: the paper was originally presented to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Cerisy-la Salle conference, and is also available, translated by David Wills, in *Critical Inquiry* 28 [Winter 2002]), Derrida had full access to recent science (e.g., cognitive ethology) and to the Anglo-American philosophical literature on the 'animal question'. (Moreover, he lived with a cat who has given the lie to Descartes on the *cogito* as well as animal sentience.) He makes many of the usual points — about how our language contributes to philosophical errors about animals, about the endemic speciesism of Judeo-Christian religions and the debt Western science and philosophy owe it, about the arbitrariness of taking supposedly distinctive human attributes as the measure of moral considerability, about the self-deception and self-serving behind

a distinction of kind between humans and other animals, and about the moral imperatives flowing from a more honest understanding of humans and other species. It is a thoughtful, self-critical, clever and passionate call to reason and feeling. David Wood's appreciative and critical commentary supplements and sometimes extends Derrida's arguments. Derrida thinks the debate about animals and whether to continue our normal practices is a war about pity and compassion; Wood worries about our unreflective or uncaring violence toward animals, other people, and the environment in general. The problem is how to get us to conceive ourselves aright, as part of nature — an animal, in fact — so that we can become compassionate and spare ourselves as well as the countless animals we harm. He is right: 'Environmentalism is the owl of Minerva for our time' (144).

**Margaret Van De Pitte**

University of Alberta

**F.M. Barnard**

*Herder on Nationality, Humanity, and History.*

Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens

University Press 2003.

Pp. xii + 188.

Cdn\$/US\$70.00

(cloth: ISBN 0-7735-2519-X);

Cdn\$29.95/US\$24.96

(paper: ISBN 0-7735-2569-6).

The most interesting point to emerge from Barnard's book is that Herder, far from holding narrow and dangerous views of nationality and culture, developed a 'conception of nationhood in ... [a] non-exclusionary sense.' Barnard shows that Herder had a fine understanding of the complex 'oneness of nationality and humanity' and its potential problems; above all, that Herder did not think in terms of opposed camps (11). In so doing, Barnard provides a convincing argument to remove doubts about the ethnocentric, or perhaps even racist, implications of Herder's theory of culture, nationality and ethics, and certainly to deny any suggestion that his thought might have supported the views of Nazis and other fanatics, as it has sometimes been suggested. In this alone, Barnard's treatment of Herder is a worthwhile effort.

Barnard's approach is based on a series of contrasts — contrasts between ideas, such as causality and purpose in history, and contrasts between Herder's thought and that of various important figures in European intellec-

tual life. While the focus of the latter is on Rousseau, Heine, and Masaryk, Kant's shadow seems to lurk behind much of what Barnard has to say. The approach works at many levels: it gives the reader a clearer understanding of the history of ideas in Herder's age, and at the same time, a clearer and more sharply focused view of Herder's thought, its importance, and its influence on European intellectual history. Barnard's approach works well when the contrasts between ideas and authors are sufficiently sharp to allow for clear distinctions that help clarify the issues. However, when no sharp contrasts exist, as is the case of Chapter Four on Herder and Masaryk, the approach is not helpful in explicating Herder's ideas. In this case, however, Barnard does provide an account of parallel kinds of nationalism that were considered in central Europe, perhaps under some influence by Herder. Hence, a contrast between Herder's nationalism and other forms of nationalism that led to exclusion and violence, is subtly implied.

What is perhaps surprising about Barnard's book is that, although Kant's thought is often discussed, there is no chapter devoted to the relation between Kant and Herder. Given both the intellectual relations that existed between these two philosophers, the problematic statements Kant made on race, or his ethical ideas, such a chapter would have been of great interest to students of the Enlightenment and its critics. If there is a contrast to be exploited to full effect in these matters, there is no better or more fascinating one than that between Kant and Herder.

Perhaps the most compelling idea in Barnard's book is found in Chapter One, devoted to the Hebraic roots of Herder's nationalism, which establishes the founding ideas of Herder's ethical thought. This chapter is particularly worthwhile reading in that, by showing Herder's understanding of, and openness to, Jewish communities in Germany, and his 'anticipation of political Zionism' (36), Barnard also produces a fine reading of Herder's views on the ideals of nationalism, which were deeply rooted in the Hebraic tradition dating from the times of Moses. Herder's account of Moses' talent for politics is about the most interesting section of the book. According to Barnard, Herder saw Moses as the creator of a free people whose claim for the 'divine origin for his laws was simply an act of exceptional political wisdom, but never a case of self-aggrandizement' (23).

For Herder, the individual is embedded 'within a larger whole that forms the matrix ... of a person's existence and development.' He viewed human reality not as a whole or a 'homogeneous *substance*' which leads to the exclusion of others, 'but rather as an *ensemble* made up of a great variety of smaller wholes that are self-regulating units in their own right' (27). In other words, pluralism is key to Herder's view of nationality. Herder's pluralism, his idea of nation, or culture, Barnard contends, is not to be mistaken for a view of the superiority of one group or even a race. Herder, perhaps in contrast with many of his contemporaries, 'had no use for the concept of race and denied that national differences could be explained in terms of racial differences' (35).

Since, as Barnard argues, Herder maintains an organic view of society, it is not difficult to see why he would lean towards a communitarian rather than an individualist ethics. Herder's position signifies an ideological shift 'from doctrines of individual rights to doctrines of collective rights which in spite of its organismic metaphors, foreshadows no so much racist Nazism ... as the emergent gulf between "liberal" and "communitarian" positions' (27). What Herder seems to retain from individualist ethics is some view of the equality of human beings, or at least, as Barnard puts it, a certain dislike of 'inherited social privileges' (40). It seems then, that much of Herder's criticism of the Enlightenment has found resonance in contemporary political philosophy.

Herder may be best known for his work on history, as he developed some of the key ideas that historicists such as Dilthey would later develop. Barnard pays particular attention to this side of Herder's thought, and chooses to focus his attention on the question of historical causation. Given that 'human striving is of necessity purposive' (106), it appears that natural causation and historical causation must be fundamentally different (107). But, could there be a purpose of history, and if so what is it? For Herder, Barnard points out, we can at best try too understand the ends towards which people strive, and cannot, as Vico thought he could, discern the higher purposes of providence. Thus, there is no ultimate explanation in history, which leads Barnard to conclude that, for Herder, only a relative objectivity is possible in history, and objectivity that relies, to some extent, on imaginative insight (108-9).

Barnard does well in focusing on the question of historical causality, for this is the issue that became the litmus test in the distinction between the *naturwissenschaften* and the *geisteswissenschaften* developed of the historicism of the German historical School. On Barnard's account, Herder anticipated this idea in his discussion of the complexity of historical causality, as opposed to the relative simplicity of physical causality. Barnard points out that Herder's view at times appears similar to that of Hume's, though in the end Herder, on closer reading, 'does accept the existence of multiple interrelations ... that hold together, not by external links, but by virtue of their own shapes, properties, and internal powers' (112). Barnard's analysis of the key ideas related to causality, such as internal and external relations, powers etc., is suggestive, but not sufficiently developed to provide a solid account of Herder's theory of history. Still, the analysis is suggestive and provides, as a good book should, not necessarily a good solution but a spur to read further.

Finally, the current concern with globalization and its effects is, like so many other modern themes, also the object of reflection in Barnard's book. Suffice it to say that Herder, Barnard suggests, sounded the alarm on the difficulties of reconciling vastly different cultures. In particular, he was concerned with the shortcomings of conceptions of progress and of development conceived narrowly as economic progress; these ideas, which are currently thought to lie at the core of globalization, are deeply rooted in the rationalist culture of the European Enlightenment. As we could expect from Herder's theory of humanity and of his political and cultural pluralism, he



would not be taken by the 'myopic form of universalism which inclines to judge every variant as a deviant' (138).

To conclude, Barnard's book is an attempt to give a complex and fair interpretation of Herder's thought as a whole. His account of culture, nationalism, and the ethics of communitarianism, and his study of causality in history are merely the key themes in the book, but there is a wealth of detail and that is well worth studying. Of particular interest is Barnard's effort to relate Herder's thought to contemporary issues. In arguing that all history is contemporary history, Croce emphasized the point that the problems of the present frame our understanding of the past. Nowhere is this more evident than in Barnard's book on Herder. Clearly, in this case this is a good thing, for he produces an account of Herder that is subtle, balanced and which speaks to important issues we face today: multiculturalism, nationality, globalization. The focus of the book is entirely European, and in this, given the contemporary significance of what Barnard has to say, it might have been a good idea to devote a chapter to probe the meaning of Herder's thought outside the European contest in which it grew, perhaps taking, for instance, the thought of Du Bois, the author of the *Souls of Black Folks*, as an interlocutor who had much to say on the questions Herder explored.

**Esteve Morera**  
York University

**Gabriela Basterra**  
*Seductions of Fate:*  
*Tragic Subjectivity, Ethics, Politics.*  
New York: Palgrave MacMillan 2004.  
Pp. 168.  
US\$65.00. ISBN 1-4039-2569-6.

Since its release in 2004, Basterra's diagnosis of that which is currently underlying our contemporary social situation has caught the attention of several leading political theorists (e.g., Judith Butler and Ernesto Laclau). Basterra's basic thesis states that modern consciousness has been structured and constituted by a form of *tragic* self-representation. That is to say, according to Basterra's analysis, although the modern subject has often understood itself in and through the emancipatory potential of a self-directing rationality, the self of the modern world has, unbeknownst to itself, consistently constituted itself in *subjection* to certain coercive forces that have functioned as a kind of tragic and fateful destiny. Basterra refers to this

tension between our emancipatory and deterministic modes of self-consciousness as *tragic modern subjectivity* (67).

The intrigue of Basterra's various diagnoses are the ways in which she ties together these observations and relates them to our contemporary self-understanding of the social-political climate. On her account, although she does not deny the reality of certain alienating and objectifying forces, she argues that, for the sake of a revitalization within democratic practice (3), we need to collectively acknowledge that such forces ultimately stem from our own construction and self-imposition. For, she claims that such objectifying obstacles have functioned to suppress a more basic ethical obligation that issues forth from the demand of a human other. In this way, the goal of her text is to analyze both the structure of tragedy and the structure of ethical demand, as a manner in which to approach the decisive rapport that obtains between our ethical obligations and our participation within the process of political decision making.

Basterra's exploration of these views draws from an impressive array of literary, psychoanalytic and philosophical texts. For example, in order to portray the structure of tragic subjection, she appeals to literary works that range from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* to Lorca's *Blood Wedding*. Meanwhile, in one of the more interesting sections of the text, she locates the structure of ethical obligation within a curious encounter between Kant's critical ethics and Levinas' phenomenological observations. Here Basterra does well to avoid the facile interpretation of Kant's 'empty formalism' and appeals instead to the recent work of Jacob Rogozinski (*Kant et l'énigme de l'éthique*). Although her interpretation may trouble readers who like to characterize Kant's moral philosophy within some ready-made typology such as 'Moral Non-Realism', Basterra's reading emphasizes instead the peculiar *alterity* of the Moral Law. Following Rogozinski, she stresses that although Kantian autonomy is the *ratio essendi* of Moral Law, our bindingness to the Moral Law is not itself the result of a free rational act. That is, although we may be free to either act for-the-sake-of the Law or not, *we are never free* from our obligation to the Law.

In this way, Basterra's analysis speaks of an 'auto-heteronomy' (139) that characterizes our heteronomous subjection to the Law, all the while preserving an autonomous moral obligation to act for-the-sake-of the Law. Such an account of the primacy of 'ethical heteronomy' (162) allows Basterra to express her more basic point concerning the structure of *tragic modern subjectivity*. Namely, she concludes that the basis of modern liberal politics is *not* in fact constituted by a free act of contractual association, and she further points out that this entrenched ideology has consistently functioned to suppress the more fundamental ethical obligation that has already (heteronomously) issued forth from a living other. Thus, on her account, a revitalization within democratic practice requires that we not only recognize our role in the free creation of obstacles that suppress this fundamental ethical obligation, but that we must better enable our political institutions

to properly allow humanity the capacity to respond to this prior ethical demand that lies at the basis of human constitution.

Although Basterra's conclusions are certainly provocative and timely, some readers may find themselves frustrated by the manner in which she presents many of her conclusions. More philosophically minded readers may wish that Basterra had avoided so much intertextual complexity and focused instead upon more determinately presenting the substance of many of her claims. For example, while it may be interesting to draw out the various connections between Racine's *Phèdre* and Lacanian psychoanalysis, the overall urgency of her topic and tone suggests that something more straightforward and easily accessible would have better served some of her stated purposes.

Nevertheless, the breadth and reach of Basterra's knowledge is undoubtedly impressive, and her text marks an important and challenging contribution to the contemporary attempt to re-think the decisive rapport that obtains between ethical obligation and political organization.

### **Christopher McTavish**

Loyola University of Chicago

#### **David S. Clarke, ed.**

*Panpsychism: Past and Recent Selected Readings*. Albany: SUNY Press 2004.

Pp. x + 184.

US\$54.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-7914-6131-9);

US\$17.95 (paper: ISBN 0-7914-6132-7).

David Clarke, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Southern Illinois University, has supplemented his recent *Panpsychism and the Religious Attitude* (SUNY Press, 2003) with a book of readings that give a historical overview to the view that mentality not only occurs in human experience, but is found in all living things, perhaps even beyond these to anything that has a qualitative perspective on events. Clarke traces this idea in Western thought back to Democritus and Empedocles, through Aristotle, who is well known for endorsing the view that in addition to humans, plants and other animals also 'have souls'. A brief chapter on Tiantai Buddhism demonstrates that panpsychism has found expression elsewhere. Clarke returns to this perspective in his concluding remarks where he suggests that Buddhism is a greater friend of the environment than Christianity ever has been.

The best known advocate of panpsychism in the early modern period was Leibniz, and among nineteenth-century advocates were the psychologists Gustaf Fechner and William James (in later writings), and the philosophers Arthur Schopenhauer and Josiah Royce. After briefly discussing these and other authors, Clarke turns to interact with twentieth-century philosophers, which dialogue comprises more than half the book. Alfred North Whitehead, who considered even crystals to be 'structured societies' and thus capable of a primitive form of mentality that he called 'feeling', is the best known recent defender of panpsychism, and his views have strongly influenced Charles Hartshorne and David Griffin. Jaegwon Kim advances an unusual form of panpsychism as an implication of his materialistic physicalism, in which the mental supervenes upon the physical and has no causal efficacy beyond that which the physical constituents of things possess. Mental events consequently become epiphenomena, and the lack of any basis for distinguishing human life from any other thing (apart from complexity) also allows supervening properties to be present everywhere in nature. This is not a common position among those who advocate physicalism, and Clarke scrutinizes it by advancing an alternative he describes as 'panexperientialist physicalism' (104). He views brain cells themselves as centers of experience, which emerges out of their more elementary constituents. Moreover, besides the upward causation that occurs from the body to the mind, a downward causation from the mind to the body occurs through self-determination of the mind. Consequently, mentality is rejected as merely an epiphenomenon.

Clarke criticizes the dismissive view on panpsychism of Paul Edwards, articulated in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* that Edwards edited, for relying on positivist criteria of meaningfulness. Clarke charges Karl Popper with having adopted an absurd interpretation of panpsychism, according to which a capacity for consciousness is having a capacity for memory, which can hardly be applied to atoms and molecules. At this point Clarke offers 'the bare feelings' that Whitehead spoke about in order to conceptualize how 'the mental' might be just conceivable at such primitive forms of bodies (128); however, imagining this property is not possible. In developing the plausibility of his panpsychism, Clarke examines several articles published very recently that indicate that panpsychism is enjoying something of a renaissance. Thomas Nagel expresses one of the greatest difficulties associated with mentality, viz., how could it have emerged in just one jump in the evolutionary process? If it could not have done so, the view that all living beings exhibit mentality, down to the amoeba that live in our bodies, is not inconceivable. A second challenge now looms, viz., how can something exhibit mentality but not be conscious of doing so? And a third, viz., why is mentality not obviously encountered at the levels below animal life, if it indeed is present there? Clarke does not evade the hard questions that panpsychism precipitates, and does not advance easy answers.

Clarke is sympathetic to William Seager's position that panpsychism cannot be classed with scientific theories, for it is not capable of experimental testing (170). Rather, it is a 'purely philosophical theory' belonging to specu-

lative metaphysics whose plausibility can be assessed on how it makes sense of the existence of the apparent fact that that living beings below humans on the evolutionary scale have perspectives on events. Clarke observes that this position is generally adopted by reflection on the analogy that exists between animals and us. Moreover, panpsychism can be pragmatically justified by observing the impact that it would have on environmental problems. Instead of justifying the preservation of plants and animals for the benefits these confer on human life, panpsychism 'assumes every organized natural body has some intrinsic value, no matter what its level of complexity' (174). Such a position is often advanced among present-day defenders of animal rights, including defenders of vegetarianism. Such a position cannot be pushed too far, of course, for if plants also have intrinsic value because of their 'mentality' we might become squeamish about eating them — the prospects of finding an ethically untainted source of food suddenly become rather small. So pragmatism cuts deep. Clarke views panpsychism as having at least as much plausibility as mechanist views of the universe, or as Judaeo-Christian humanism with its emphasis on human life and indifference toward animal suffering because animals are devoid of souls. However, the latter is a caricature of that religion's articulated alternatives.

Clarke's panpsychism undercuts one of the ever-popular arguments for theism inasmuch as it does not speculate that the source of consciousness in the universe is found in the creative action of some Supreme Being. Some theists have of course viewed their position as also belonging to speculative metaphysics, so in that respect panpsychism competes with other comprehensive views on the universe, including religious ones that attempt to account for intrinsic and ethical values. Many Christian theists are now embarrassed by the calloused attitude that earlier generations adopted to the natural world, and applaud the much kinder outlook of Buddhists, Hindus and Jain monks, as well as of their own Albert Schweitzer. In an effort to compare the most adequate of the comprehensive perspectives on offer, panpsychism clearly warrants being given a hearing, but many other issues need to be addressed before assessing it as the most plausible option. Clarke advocates a consistent panpsychism that is worthy of further thought.

I noticed several typos. On p. 169 the words 'one' and 'which' are run together, and on p. 172 the word 'a' should be inserted between 'how prominent' and 'part they play'.

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**Wendell John Coats, Jr.**

*Montaigne's Essais.*

Master Works in the Western Tradition,

Vol. 11. New York: Peter Lang 2004.

Pp. 125.

US\$19.95. ISBN 0-8204-6316-7.

Coats' purpose in this small volume is 'to encourage a "naive" reading [of the *ESSAIS*] by liberally educated general readers in the interest of gaining an appreciation of Montaigne's approach to the "art of living"' (2). We are to seek 'as much repose or tranquility in the soul [as is] available to us when we accurately match our individual capacities and our general capacities as human beings with what *we* can realistically achieve in life' (4). Practical and political schemes draw us into instrumental planning and manipulating others for the sake of an uncertain future, so should be avoided as much as is possible. Montaigne finds solace and stability in religious and political ritual and tradition (and Coats cites Michael Oakeshott on these lines). Cultivating his own individuality, Montaigne comes to value greatly the meaning we find in actions done in the moment and for their own sake. Scepticism is investigated, but he adopts its arts of questioning, not for the sake of suspension of judgment but to defend his fideism and make humble his own and others' moral and intellectual presumption. 'The key to human happiness, or at least Montaigne's own happiness, likely comes from ... living in the present moment as much as possible — that is, living a life (in philosophic terms) of temporal solipsism whenever realistically possible' (11).

To organize this reading, Coats draws on quotations in the original French (paired with Frame's English translation) in three chapters subsequent to the introduction: 'Montaigne's Philosophy of Appropriate Living', 'Montaigne's Religious Views', and 'Montaigne's Political Views'. Chapter Five is a Bibliographic Essay considering several recent contributors to Montaigne interpretation and Coats' responses. The volume concludes with a Postscript that locates 'temporal solipsism' in relation to Montaigne's 'individualism'. Coats concludes that 'temporal solipsism' and Montaigne's individualism are complementary. 'The opportunities to value and cultivate one's uniqueness as an individual and to savor fleeting individual moments of consciousness are enhanced in a life devoted insofar as possible to avoiding instrumental projects and activities which threaten to efface one's individuality by submerging one in collective enterprises requiring constant effort and attention for future and uncertain benefits, in a life illuminated by the insight that the most certain path to human contentment lies in the direction of doing things for their own sake insofar as is prudently possible' (106). When such 'temporal solipsism' is not prudently possible, one does one's civic duty, but still as 'privately' as one can — to avoid instrumental thinking which becomes complex, manipulative, uncertain and sometimes fanatical.

Chapter Two is the longest, and carries the brunt of Coats' case for this interpretation. Coats sees Montaigne in the eudaimonian school of ethics,

contrasted sharply with Pauline Christianity's strict dualism and spiritual vs. natural (or holistic) ethics. Always aware of his own inconstancy, Montaigne nevertheless finds within himself 'une forme maistresse' which wants to communicate to others, makes only modest claims for human reason, enjoys bodily appetites in moderation, prefers a private life and friendships, relies on customs and traditions, and is averse to cruelty and torture (10). Coats sees Montaigne as rejecting Aristotle's ethics two ways — first where Aristotle allegedly views instrumental acts as imposing thought on matter for the sake of some future good (sic), and, second, concerning the theoretic life. Each of these points plays a strong role in building the view that one can only act and live a tranquil life by sticking to actions done 'now' and for their own sakes, without any instrumentality. (Implicitly the theoretic life does not meet that rule.)

Coats aims to explore and illustrate these points in four themes — friendship, conversation, ritual performance and citizenship. Conversation is considered first, and several fine passages testify to the immediacy and 'for its own sake' ethic Montaigne discovers in genuine conversation. Friendship is then discussed (in parallel to Aristotle's handling).

Instead of going on to ritual performance, Coats next develops five pages of discussion as to why Montaigne prefers the private realm: there he can be true to himself and refrain from dissimulation. Coats notes that when Montaigne served both Henry's as an intermediary during France's civil strife, a Spanish diplomat described him as 'muddled' — as if he lacked polish, presumably because such posturing would be unnatural to him. But Coats does not note the respect and praise from both Henry's for Montaigne's ability to engender their trust during dicey negotiations. (This may be the promised section on citizenship).

This is followed by an intermediate summary, and then the section on ritual and custom (24 ff.), both of which can be enjoyed for their own sakes, even if some instrumentality attaches to them. The remainder of the chapter deepens Coats' case for acting in the moment for its own sake, including overcoming conflict and facing failures or, when we are too weak for that, finding comfort in distractions — another aspect of 'temporal solipsism'. 'Genuine tranquillity is to be sought in the contentment of the soul in well-doing for its own sake' (32). A passage in Montaigne's final essay, 'Of experience', '... might be called the key to Montaigne's art of living: "Nostre grand et glorieux chef-d'oeuvre c'est vivre à propos. Toutes autres chose, regner, thesauriser, bastir, n'en sont qu'appendicules et adminicules pour le plus"' (50).

Some case along the lines of a modest Christian Stoicism is moderately plausible, but Coats' term 'solipsism' is troubling. Coats himself emphasizes Montaigne's sociability, his openness to strangers and his love for meeting new people. Descartes' *cogito* is a solipsism only sure of its own being, and only for an instant. Montaigne has no such involution, whether feigned or actual. He sees himself as legatee of others' gifts — of friendship, language, practice and support. And I think Coats' stark view of all instrumental action

as polluted by pretension, uncertainty and even presumption, goes too far. Gilbert Murray's 'failure of nerve' chapter seems to haunt this 'solipsism'.

Still, Coats' volume challenges the naive as well as the more experienced Montaigne reader. He argues forcefully for his view, and ranges widely throughout the *ESSAIS* for confirmation and to consider apparent counter-instances. He packs vital themes into his chapters and shares the nuance with which Montaigne gives us a scattered, but comprehensible and humble account of his voyage of self-discovery.

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**Tim Crane and Katalin Farkas, eds.**

*Metaphysics, a Guide and Anthology.*

Toronto and New York: Oxford University Press 2004.

Pp. xx + 770.

Cdn\$60.00/US\$43.00. ISBN 0-19-926197-0.

This is an enormous book — 54 readings spread over several major topics which divide the book into ten parts, each having an introductory essay by Crane and Farkas (hereafter CF), taking up nearly 800 pages altogether. A brief review of this book must be content to give an overview of its contents and discuss its general suitability as a text. The topics comprising the ten parts are God, Realism and Idealism, Being, Universals and Particulars, Necessity, Causation, Time and Space, Identity, Mind and Body, and Freedom and Determinism. Each part consists of several articles, the median being five, which are usually a mix of historical and contemporary readings, with an emphasis on the latter. Less than a third of the readings are pre-twentieth-century, and CF justify their inclusion in a largely contemporary anthology on the grounds that historical sources can still be relevant to today's debate, and also that understanding something of the historical sources of a philosophical problem is important for understanding the problem itself. In practice, however, their integration of historical and contemporary sources to achieve this end is not entirely successful, since the first two parts are mostly just historical readings, so that there is little contemporary debate given for them to illuminate. In the remaining parts, with fewer historical contributions, there is mixed success in integrating the historical readings with the contemporary ones. Even where it succeeds, the value of



most of the historical sources used in the anthology could be gotten from the introductory essay alone, and their place might better have been taken by contemporary readings which dealt with the historical issues in a more accessible way, or which added depth to the contemporary debate. Thus, in Part One (God), the ubiquitous material by Anselm, Aquinas and Paley might have been replaced by Plantinga's discussion and new modal version of the ontological argument. Aquinas could have given way to a contemporary restatement of the cosmological argument (Richard Taylor's elegant version comes to mind). Paley's version of the argument from design could be dispensed with entirely, leaving Parfit's more contemporary 'fine-tuning' version, which is included, as the sole representative of the argument from design. A contemporary version of theodicy (perhaps John Hick's 'soul-making') could be added to give balance to Mackie's reading promoting the problem of evil as insurmountable for classical theism.

The historical readings in Part Two (Realism and Idealism), though again predominant, offer an improved organizational coherence over the previous part in that the three historical sources — Locke, Berkeley, and Kant — do exhibit a helpful dialectical progression in their departure from naive realism into, first, a more sophisticated representational realism followed by empirical and then transcendental idealism. The first of the two contemporary readings which then follow—Howard Robinson's renewed attempt, in the spirit of Berkeley, to show the vacuity of the concept of matter — obviously remains squarely within the realism/idealism debate. Dummett's reading on realism, however, is more tangential, aiming to draw an illuminating comparison between the realism/nominalism distinction and the realism/idealism distinction rather than focusing on the latter distinction itself. The issue of whether this reading is close enough to the focus of the rest of Part Two to warrant its inclusion, or even whether it ought to be included somewhere just for its intrinsic interest, Part Two being as good a place as any, is in any case rendered moot (at least for this edition of the anthology) by the fact that Dummett's article, as here presented, is virtually useless. The alert reader will first realize something has gone wrong when encountering the following sentence on p.124: 'On this realist view, statements about character relate to something which we mass, or that, say, two strips of carpet either are or are not of the same length, independently of whether we have applied the test for mass or equality of length.' The reader who persists to p.125 will find: 'For the platonist, the meaning of a statement is given by a determination of its truth-conditions, false.' The undeterred reader, pushing on to p.127, will finally get: 'I them in different language.' Checking the anthology's version of Dummett's reading against the version in his own book reveals that each of these puzzling sentences results from combining the first part of one sentence with the last part of another sentence, these two sentences being separated, in each of the three instances, by about two pages of text, missing in the anthology's version of the article. Dummett's article is challenging enough in the best of circumstances without having to put up with this sort of carelessness that reduces the whole thing to rubbish. Though I have not

examined all the other readings with equal care, as far as I can determine, this is the only reading in which large chunks of the original text are inadvertently omitted, though the book contains other minor gaffs, e.g. the unintended homonym on p. 111: ‘... behind the read of my sense datum is the red of a physical object.’

In the remaining eight parts of the anthology, the focus shifts, for the better, to contemporary readings almost entirely, two parts (V and VIII) having no historical readings, and the others having only one or two such readings. In none of these remaining parts is the addition of historical readings a serious distraction from the contemporary debate, but it is no surprise that the two parts having only contemporary readings are the most tightly organized. In Part V (Necessity) we move from Lewis’s seminal discussion on modality to the different views of David Lewis, Plantinga and Armstrong concerning the ontological status of possible worlds. Taken together with the lucid introductory essay by CF, which gives us a brief primer on modal logic as well as Quine’s skeptical views on modality, we have an ideal, balanced presentation of this topic, more helpful than anything else I have seen on this subject. The treatment of identity Part VIII is also quite good, with introductory material on Leibniz’s Law, parts and wholes, and personal identity, as well as stimulating essays by Chisholm, Lewis, Parfit and Snowdon.

In the parts that do contain one or two historical readings, they are generally integrated successfully into the contemporary debate, e.g., Descartes’ dualism as contributing to Part IX (Mind and Body) and Hume’s compatibilism as contributing to Part X (Freedom and Determinism). Even where integration is lacking, as when Plato’s famous discussion of the cave is served up and thereafter ignored (CF saying only that Aristotle had a different view on the nature of universals, suggesting perhaps that Plato’s own student didn’t take him seriously on this point, so neither need we), this is of no great consequence, since few readers would have expected such a view to be a live option for the contemporary debate in the first place. My own view is that such a dismissal of Plato’s metaphysics would be a mistake, but since arguing the point would be beyond the scope of this review, suffice it to say that from the standpoint of contemporary mainstream Western metaphysics — the perspective of most readers of this review — Part IV’s discussion of the problem of universals is just fine, with or without Plato, stimulating contributions being made by Armstrong, Lewis, Donald C. Williams, and Shoemaker. Much the same can be said for the remaining parts, with Part III (Being) having several interesting, though diverse, readings, including Quine’s classic ‘On what there is’ and a remarkable reading by van Inwagen arguing that there are no such things as tables and chairs. There are also good, sustained discussions on causation in Part VI (Causation) and, building on the work of McTaggart, on the nature of time in Part VII (Time and Space).

Overall, despite a few problems, this is a remarkable book. As a guide to issues in metaphysics, the introductory essays by CF are exemplary, and the anthology is, for the most part, skillfully put together and not just a compi-

lation of hastily thrown-together readings. But what about its usefulness as a text? CF suggest several ways in which the book might be used, from teaching the whole thing in a year-long course to dividing it up in different ways for several more intensive courses. These are all good suggestions (though even a year-long course would not be enough to go through this book in its entirety), with one proviso. While the blurb on the back cover advertises this book as 'a complete introduction to metaphysics', and that might not be much of an exaggeration, it would be an appropriate introduction to metaphysics mainly for a student already advanced in other areas of philosophy. Someone being introduced to philosophy through this book would have a difficult time finding a sufficient number of readings contributing to some organizational theme and yet understandable by the beginner. It is true that the introductory essays which comprise the guide to the anthology are accessible to the novice, but their accessibility is generally in stark contrast to the readings they introduce. Helpful as these introductions are, they do not provide nearly enough guidance to enable the beginner to cope with more than a few of the contemporary articles. CF suggest that a 'somewhat introductory' course might be fashioned around the parts on God, Realism and Idealism, and Freedom and Determinism. This might work, depending on the meaning of 'somewhat', but even these parts contain readings unsuitable for the beginner. For a truly introductory philosophy course emphasizing metaphysical themes, there are many less comprehensive (but also less hefty) texts that would provide a more suitable alternative.

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**Donald Davidson**

*Problems of Rationality.*

Toronto and New York: Oxford University Press 2004.

Pp. xx + 280.

Cdn\$120.00/US\$74.00

(cloth: ISBN 0-19-823754-50);

Cdn\$48.00/US\$24.95

(paper: ISBN 0-19-823755-3).

This is the fourth volume in a series presenting most of Davidson's philosophical papers, following *Essays on Actions and Events* (1980; 2001), *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (1984; 2001) and *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective* (2001). The main interest of *Problems of Rationality*, which includes 14 articles published mostly after 1984, lies in the numerous illumi-

nating connections Davidson draws between the conceptual resources unleashed by his theory of interpretation, and traditional and contemporary perspectives on an impressive variety of issues, e.g., the possibility of knowledge, the objectivity of evaluative judgements, the nature of thought, and of irrationality. Due to Davidson's unexpected death, the final touches to this volume were put by his widow Marcia Cavell, who also signs the Introduction, and by Ernest LePore, who conducted the interview with Davidson that is included here.

Essays 2, 3 and 4 ('Expressing evaluations', 'The objectivity of values' and 'The interpersonal comparison of values') focus on the relation between evaluative attitudes, beliefs and language, and introduce many interesting contrasts between Davidson's theory of interpretation and views of prominent philosophers interested either in language (Austin), meta-ethics (Mackie, Blackburn), or moral psychology (Kant). 'Expressing evaluations' begins with an argument for the negative thesis that we can learn little about values by concentrating on explicitly evaluative sentences, given the loose 'tie between what sentences mean and the purposes they are used to promote' (21). But the negative argument prepares the ground for another one in favour of his construal of the contrast between belief and desire as directed to the *same* sentence (25-6), an idea that opens the door to the application of decision theory to the study of interpretation. The discussion thus discloses more of Davidson's original motives for applying decision theory to the individuation of subjective probability (belief) and the desirability of the truth of a sentence, and stresses that 'the evaluative attitudes, and the actions that reveal them, form the foundation for our understanding of the speech and behaviour of others' (35), a foundation we share with others. Essay 4 provides further clarification on his support for the objectivity of evaluative judgements, while Essay 3 defends this idea further by focusing on 'how the *content* of moral judgement is determined' (43). Davidson highlights alleged misconceptions shared by anti-objectivists (Mackie) and objectivists (McDowell) alike, e.g., understanding the objectivity of value as depending on its location as a property, or on its supposed conceptual link to human sensibilities. This preparatory critical work makes room for a third, more satisfactory, position on the objectivity of evaluative judgements that construes it as depending on 'a systematic relationship between the attitude-causing properties of things and events, and the attitudes they cause' (47). Evaluations are thus correct or incorrect based on interpersonal standards, and these have to be presupposed for genuine disputes over values to take place. This is indeed a novel position, since the objectivity of value judgements as defined is taken to involve no explicit agreement, and no clear way of deciding on each evaluation what is right or wrong: 'It is consistent with objectivity that there should be no clear answers about what is right or obligatory' in very difficult or unusual moral problems (51). The appendix to this paper presents one more route to the conclusion that 'evaluative judgements ... are objectively true or false' (56), and elucidates further the Scylla and Charybdis between which Davidson's thought navigates: he supports

neither the idea (shared by Hume and Blackburn) that the motivational, emotive nature of evaluative attitudes rules out their objectivity, nor the position which bolsters their objectivity based either on a conceptual tie to human sensibilities (Wiggins), or on exceptionless moral principles (Kant, Mill). The crux of this new, interesting, albeit sketchy, argument lies in stressing the role of validity in practical reasoning, and hence on the idea that evaluations have truth conditions, even when they are not objectively true or false (56).

The point of presenting Essay 1 'The problem of objectivity' within this first grouping of papers remains unclear; its topic is somehow disconnected from the other three, while its final argumentative lines show traces of hurried editing. Here Davidson connects his philosophy of thought (holism of language and thought, and their inextricable relation) to traditional issues in epistemology. His explicit interest lies here in addressing the question, 'How did we come by the concept of an objective reality in the first place?', before responding the familiar one, 'How can we justify our belief in a world independent of our minds ... ?'(3). Davidson hopes that once we understand the essential links between having concepts, mastering the concepts of truth and falsity, and the holism of the mental, we can contemplate a more satisfactory response to the traditional question about justification (albeit not a refutation of scepticism). For, arguably, his account of interpretation implies that what makes an understanding of error possible is 'that many of our beliefs are true and justified, and so constitute knowledge' (4).

The nature of thought is the theme brought to the forefront of most articles in the second cluster of the collection. 'Turing's test' offers a critical analysis of Turing's 1950 article 'Can machines think?', and argues that, although correct in taking meaningful verbal response as the essential mark of thought, the test is inadequate. It leaves out the interrogator's information about how the computer's reactions depend on mutually observed objects and events (information required for inferring that its linguistic dispositions are *similar* to those of the interrogator, according to Davidson's theory). While this paper stresses the semantic and causal-historical properties of thought and meaning, its sequel Essay 6, 'Representation and interpretation', elaborates on the consequences of Tarski's distinction between syntax and semantics for Davidson's core thesis of an irreducible difference between common-sense psychological explanations and those in the sciences. Although introduced later in the paper, this thesis also lies at the centre of 'Problems in the explanation of action', a rather eclectic essay which begins with arguments for the identity of events such as pulling and raising one's hand, and then brings new light on Davidson's older attack against the idea (defended by Wittgenstein) that reason explanations are not causal, while uncovering a likely source of his disagreement with the Wittgensteinian position in the construal of the distinction between causes and strict laws (109). The paper ends with additional defences of this distinction against newer challenges by Hempel and Føllesdal, and with a clarification of his view of the mental as a conceptual and not an ontological category (114).

Although written about ten years later than the previous papers, Essays 8 and 9 ‘Could there be a science of rationality?’ and ‘What thought requires’ still concentrate on the divide, due to the nature of thought, between common-sense psychology and natural sciences. Essay 8 places this theme in a history of positions on the prospects of psychology as a science, and provides a sketchy defence of his view of a science of rational behaviour against criticisms by Chomsky and Fodor. Essay 9 elaborates further on Davidson’s taking a subject’s understanding of *mistaken* belief as the essential criterion for thought. Bringing his position close to current research in empirical psychology, he locates the roots of the concept of false belief in ‘learning to *explain* errors,’ but misses the opportunity to engage with the related literature in developmental psychology (145). Although placed after such recent papers, Essay 10, ‘A Unified theory of thought, meaning and action’ takes us back to far older arguments for an account of meaning framed within a broader one of intentional action, and so it would have been helpful to locate it earlier in the volume — say, as preparing one’s reading Essays 2-4.

The last cluster of articles presents Davidson’s explorations on the successes and limits of his theory of interpretation when applied to understanding irrational action and belief. ‘Paradoxes of irrationality’ defends some of Freud’s central theses through independent arguments (further elaborated in ‘Incoherence and irrationality’) for the existence of semi-independent overlapping departments of the mind, and thus for mental causes that are *not* reasons for what they cause (184). But, Davidson insists, an agent ‘cannot fail to comport most of the time with the basic norms of rationality, and it is this fact that makes irrationality possible’ (197). Both ‘Deception and division’ and ‘Who is fooled?’ provide illuminating conceptual analyses of self-deception as an instance of irrationality, while deploying his core theory of belief and meaning to accommodate subtle differences between self-deception and lying, or between self-deception and other instances of irrationality such as wishful thinking, or weakness of the will.

The collection showcases Davidson’s integrated system of philosophy that enhanced its unity with the later work. The essays in this collection can be seen as the results of his impressive effort to evaluate time and time again the power of his core theory of interpretation against challenges rooted in a vast array of historical and contemporary views. As a consequence, Davidson’s thought appears here as a true model of the inevitable holism of philosophical inquiry.

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**Daniel C. Dennett**

*Sweet Dreams: Philosophical Obstacles  
to a Science of Consciousness.*

Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press 2005.

Pp. xiii + 199.

US\$28.00. ISBN 0-262-04225-8.

The problem of qualia, as Thomas Nagel recognised in his now famous 1974 article 'What Is It Like to Be a Bat', is that any objective scientific view of the mind abandons the subjective feel or unique character of mental states. Nagel's paper set off an explosion of books and articles, all seeking to overcome this explanatory obstacle (or gap) of consciousness in various ways. Some philosophers support the position that consciousness is irreducible (Jackson, Searle); others think its insuperable (McGinn); and still others have bravely argued that phenomenal consciousness can be explained, but not reduced, to brain science — a form of dualism (Chalmers, Robinson).

Daniel Dennett stands in stark contrast to all of these views. Ever since he published *Explaining Consciousness* in 1991, Dennett has consistently pushed our intuition pumps about consciousness to the point of collapse. The *what it is likeness* of our conscious experiences, Dennett said over a decade ago, is not like anything at all — it's a myth. Consciousness does not lie beyond the grasp of science and should be seen as merely a hangover of the mythical Cartesian Theatre that still dominates philosophy and psychology. In his latest book, *Sweet Dreams: Philosophical Obstacles to a Science of Consciousness*, Dennett reworks, refines, and defends much of his previous work on consciousness over the past twenty years in his usual witty and playful style. Once we remove the bedevilment of qualia that has obfuscated the true nature of consciousness, he states, we will see '... a naturalistic, mechanistic explanation of consciousness is not just possible; it is fast becoming actual' (7). Although Dennett's ideas on consciousness will be repetitive to those familiar with his earlier work, he has always had a knack for reshaping philosophical problems using contemporary psychological/neurological research to help us see them in new light: *Sweet Dreams* is no exception. Using examples such as object rotation, déjà vu, magic, change blindness, and prosopagnosia (the inability to recognize familiar faces), Dennett resets the traditional problem of consciousness in order to show this intuition pump is best thrown onto the scrap heap of outdated ideas.

So what obstacles preclude us from a science of consciousness? Dennett argues that philosophers we must resist the powerful intuition that consciousness is somehow mysterious: it's not like magic (Chapter 3), it does not make life worth living, and we are often mistaken about our own first-person accessibility or subjectivity of qualia (Chapter 4). The remainder of *Sweet Dreams* (Chapters 6, 7, and 8) is devoted to a revision of Dennett's multiple draft theory — renamed fame in the brain or cerebral celebrity. Let me focus on two of the most influential obstacles against a scientific account of qualia,

which Dennett addresses in detail, the zombie hunch (Chapters 1 and 2) and Frank Jackson's colour blind Mary (Chapter 5).

The zombie hunch is based on the notion that it's logically possible for someone to be behaviourally indistinguishable from a normal human being but lack consciousness. This cannot be right, say qualiaphiles, because the qualitative aspect of human experience is fundamentally missing from zombies. Similarly, a mechanistic theory of consciousness will also leave out something important — its subjective feel.

Dennett's response is consistent with his earlier work — qualia are an illusion. In the course of our enculturation we come to see consciousness as private, incommunicable, and inaccessible to third-person investigation by scientists. But this is just a mistake. Dennett states: 'The third-person methods of the natural sciences suffice to investigate consciousness as completely as any phenomenon in nature can be investigated, without *significant residue*' (29). There is no reason to believe that consciousness is a mystery. In just the same way that science fails to find photosynthesis and earthquakes mystifying; a third-person approach of consciousness will equally cease to be mystifying. The zombie hunch is simply misguided.

As a confessed qualiaphile, I am deeply sceptical of Dennett's suggestion that our subjective experiences will be captured by a scientific account of mind. Consider the non-traditional (e.g., colour, pain) example of *what it is like* to storm the beaches of Normandy, France on D-Day June 6, 1944. I fail to see how a third-person perspective could capture the qualitative aspect of this experience. Any attempt would be so clinical, exoteric, and superficial in its explanation as to be laughable. To many veterans of war, their experiences are indescribable.

Frank Jackson's colour-blind Mary is one of the most popular obstacles to consciousness. Jackson argues that if colour-blind Mary came to learn everything there is to know about the physics and physiology of colour, she would be surprised when she experiences colour for the first time. In short, our colour experiences have non-physical properties absent from physical facts of the world. Dennett, of course, disagrees. Dennett here introduces RoboMary. RoboMary, like traditional Mary, is omniscient about colour. Despite having black and white cameras for eyes, she can program herself about what colours will look like before she actually sees them. If RoboMary knows *everything* about the science of colour, then she will know what it's like to experience blue or red before she receives her new colour cameras. Dennett states, '... she won't learn anything, and she won't be surprised; there are no such manifest phenomenological facts' (113). Drawing an analogy, Dennett suggests that if the *what it is like* to see Paris by moonlight in May can be conveyed in a few thousand words, then Mary could easily know what it is like to see red or blue if programmed with a few million or billion words about colour.

This analogy is weak. Having never been to Paris myself, but having read Hemingway, I still do not know what's it like to walk along the Avenue des Champs-Élysées or see the Sainte Chapelle. One can image what it is like —



have a sense, an inkling — but this is not the same as actually being there. Similarly, programmed RoboMary will never *really know* what's it like to see red or blue.

Dennett presents the philosophical obstacles to a science of consciousness with renewed vigour. What makes this book stand out is its accessibility to non-philosophers. Dennett is unique among philosophers, able to present complex ideas with clarity and a rye wit. It's no wonder his books are best sellers.

**David Ohreen**

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**Jorge J. E. Gracia and Jiyuan Yu, eds.**

*Uses and Abuses of the Classics:*

*Western Interpretations of Greek Philosophy.*

Burlington, VT: Ashgate Press 2004.

Pp. xi. + 199.

US\$84.95. ISBN 0-7546-3870-7.

The central question of this volume is an intriguing one: how well did later philosophers do as interpreters of earlier ones? The volume begins with a formal analysis by Gracia of the practice of interpretation that attempts to give some sense of the range of activities that go by that name. Although Gracia dutifully counts as interpretations those having an agenda (e.g., feminist, Freudian, Marxist, Thomist, sociological, psychological, theological, literary), in the end he regards as legitimate only those interpretations that approach a text with firm grounding in its language and in logic, and with due consideration of its historical and cultural context.

The three essays that solidly address the book's central question are Ivry's 'Averroës on Aristotle', Wippel's 'Thomas Aquinas' Commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*', and Cho's 'Heidegger's Hermeneutic Reading of Plato'. Ivry and Wippel make substantially the same points: Averroës and Aquinas hold Aristotle in the highest esteem, agree with him on the whole, represent him fairly faithfully, try not to confuse their own point of view with his, and are less at odds with him than with some of his interpreters. Averroës, as Ivry shows, remained faithful to Aristotle's insistence that God's or the gods' sole occupation is contemplation; his opponents are Aristotle's Neoplatonic and Occasionalist interpreters, Avicenna and al-Ghazali; and his departure from Aristotle comes mainly in his regarding nature as the necessary precondition for the study of soul and not the other way around. Aquinas, as Wippel convincingly argues, is on most occasions careful to separate his own views from his interpretation of Aristotle; his main opponent is Avicenna;

and on the one occasion on which he exploits an ambiguity in Aristotle's writing to attribute to him a position he probably did not hold, viz., that God is the cause of the being of all things, Aquinas may well have been unable to imagine him not holding it. Cho's question concerns Heidegger's motive for replacing education with truth as the subject of Plato's Allegory of the Cave. As Heidegger sees it, Cho argues, Plato's intention in the Allegory is to replace ancient ontology's emphasis on truth as Being with man-centered truth as 'correctness in saying'. Heidegger thus regards Plato's thinking as the 'beginning of Humanism' (104).

The remaining essays in this volume largely fail to address squarely the question of whether the interpreter does justice to the philosopher he interprets or whether his own aim causes him to skew ('abuse') the sense of the work considered. Each asks instead a question of its own devising.

Rossetti's question is why it is that pre-Socratic views play only a minor role in Plato's early writings, become more prominent toward the end of Plato's middle period, only to fade away again in the late period. Rossetti's uncritical acceptance of the periodization of Plato's works and of the 'developmental hypothesis' blinds him to the most obvious answer, viz., that Plato makes use of pre-Socratics where appropriate. Rossetti treats the shifting fortunes of pre-Socratic thought in Plato's writings not simply as an indication of different stages in Plato's intellectual development but also as a mark of the waxing and waning of Plato's own personal intellectual prominence. According to Rossetti, when Plato dominates the intellectual scene early in the fourth century as a producer of *Sokratikoi logoi*, the sole genre of philosophical writing flourishing at the time, he neglects the pre-Socratics or shows disdain for them. It is only when his dominance begins to fade that he comes to respect and engage pre-Socratic thinking. Rossetti offers no answer to the question of why Plato loses interest in the pre-Socratics at the end of his life.

Robinson, preferring to avoid the much-belabored question of how Aristotle fares as an interpreter of the pre-Socratics, focuses his attention on Aristotle's understanding of Parmenides. According to Robinson, Aristotle rightly recognizes that Parmenides' description of the One as eternal, undifferentiated, unchanging and unchangeable, unmoving and immovable, ungenerated and indestructible, refers to the totality or whole, rather than to the things that compose that totality or whole. Robinson further approves of Aristotle's use of Parmenidean notions as the foundation for his view that the Pure Act of the Prime Mover is the 'eternal moment of coming to awareness' — of itself (41).

Graham's contribution proceeds on the assumption that Plato and Aristotle were very different thinkers, Plato being a philosopher of insight and imagery, and Aristotle being adept at rigorous analysis and systematization. But he approaches the question of Aristotle as an interpreter of Plato by mining Plato's texts for insights and images that might constitute the foundational ideas that Aristotle then develops into real philosophy. In nearly every instance, Graham's project causes him to distort Plato's insight.

Moreover, Graham exaggerates Aristotle's advances over Plato: Aristotle is not as careful to confine truth to propositions as Graham would like (see, for example, *Metaph* II i, 993b23-31, where Aristotle says that the principles of being are true); nor does he consistently give primacy to concrete individuals over form: he speaks both of form's being what a thing is (*Ph* II i, 193a) and of actuality's being logically and ontologically prior to the individual (*Metaph* IX viii, 1049b).

MacDonald's essay on Augustine as an interpreter of Plato is beset by two problems: (1) it is not after all Plato but the Manichees with whom Augustine takes issue in his analysis of the battle within his soul between the wills of flesh and spirit; and (2) the original contribution MacDonald credits Augustine with making to the Platonic analysis of *akrasia* may have nothing to do with the phenomenon of *akrasia* at all. Augustine's current predicament is no doubt the result of repeated instances of *akrasia*, but his inability to commit fully to Christianity is not itself an instance of *akrasia* but rather a consequence of his lust's having by now calcified into habit.

Matthews thinks it 'a pity' (55) that Nietzsche does not look to the pre-Platonics to find something philosophically interesting in what they say — except in one instance. According to Matthews, Nietzsche does succeed in paraphrasing Parmenides fairly well and indeed refutes him by finding a logical flaw in his argument. Matthews, however, fails to see what is at issue here: what Nietzsche 'refutes' is not a point in Parmenides' argument but rather what he regards as Parmenides' disastrously misguided apotheosis of reason.

Rudavsky's essay fails to ask the all-important question of whether and how Maimonides' interpretation of Aristotle is influenced by a presumed interest in preserving Jewish orthodoxies. Does Maimonides ever permit his interpretation of Aristotle to be affected by his religious commitments? Alternatively, does his characterization of the Torah as a parable perhaps free him to interpret Scripture in light of Aristotelian truth? Rudavsky instead airs a concern that has little to do with Maimonides as an interpreter of Aristotle: her perception of a certain reluctance on Maimonides' part (at least on an exoteric reading) to concede to the woman Miriam, sister of the men Moses and Aaron, a level of spiritual perfection on a par with theirs. Rudavsky's concern is surely misplaced: Maimonides, like the rabbinic sages he quotes, betrays no such reluctance. The problem they face is one of finding a way to account for why in the case of her brothers but not in Miriam's own case the Torah says that they died 'by the mouth of God'. Their answer is simple: it was deemed unseemly to use this expression with respect to a woman. Even if Rudavsky is right to claim that the material principle is regarded by Maimonides as a feminine one, it is beyond doubt that Maimonides believed that all human beings — male and female alike — are equally corrupted by it.

Yu's critique of MacIntyre's Aristotelianism asks whether MacIntyre and Aristotle may be legitimately charged with relativism. According to Yu, MacIntyre's attempt to replace Aristotle's biological teleology with his own social teleology makes him more susceptible than Aristotle to the relativist

label, for the saving grace of Aristotle's biological teleology is that it includes the non-relativist element of contemplative virtue. Once MacIntyre suppresses this aspect of Aristotelian ethics, Yu contends, he forfeits the only ground upon which Aristotle can be shielded from the relativist charge. For if Aristotle (1) holds that man is a political animal, (2) defines virtue by the mean 'relative to us,' and (3) connects *êthos* as virtue to *ethos* as habit, how can he not be a relativist? Yet even without contemplative virtue, Aristotle is no relativist. That man is a political animal is for him a natural feature of man, encompassing, on the one hand, man's lack of self-sufficiency and, on the other, his capacity for speech; that the mean is relative to us affects our own particular place within an acceptable range but does not relativize the range itself; that moral virtue is related to habit signifies only that virtue is acquired by practice. Aristotle shows no signs of regarding moral virtue as varying with place and time.

*Uses and Abuses of the Classics* falls victim to the difficulties that often plague the publication of conference proceedings. While fascinating in its conception, it does not quite fulfill its promise.

### **Roslyn Weiss**

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### **Stephen R.C. Hicks**

*Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault.*

Tempe, AZ and New Berlin/Milwaukee, WI:  
Scholarly Publishing 2004.

Pp. vi + 230.

Cdn\$38.95/US\$29.95

(cloth: ISBN 1-59247-646-5);

Cdn\$24.95/US\$18.95

(paper: ISBN 1-59247-642-2).

Budding Postmodernists beware: Stephen R.C. Hicks' *Explaining Postmodernism* is a polemic in primer's clothing. What opens innocently enough as an intellectual history of postmodernism and its rise to academic respectability quickly uncovers its true intentions as a bitter condemnation of postmodern philosophy and politics as well as a much needed critical reflection on the postmodernization and relativization of both academic and popular opinion.

Hicks' text defends two related theses. First, postmodernism emerged as a response to a perceived failure of enlightenment epistemology. More specifically, 'Postmodernism is the first ruthlessly consistent statement of

the consequences of rejecting reason, those consequences being necessary given the history of epistemology since Kant' (81). The Enlightenment and its products (e.g., liberal politics, free markets, scientific progress and technological innovation) are premised on a profound confidence in human reason. The assumption is that human reason can, when extricated from the prejudicial world of traditional belief, superstition and custom, lead humans to complete, unified and unambiguous knowledge of the entire realm of possible experience. However, this position faced two seemingly intrinsic challenges in the eighteenth century. On the empirical level, reason comes face to face with skepticism. If rational humans acquire knowledge from experience, then, as Hume persuasively demonstrated, that knowledge will always only be probable; inferences can never obtain deductive certainty. On the other hand, if we jettison experience altogether and trust reason alone, we face the problem of adjudication Kant so famously noticed: without an appeal to experience we cannot test reason's results, leading to mutually exclusive yet equally valid rational systems.

In Hicks' view, Kant's attempted resolution of this impasse is key for the development of postmodernism. Although Kant is typically considered an Enlightenment figure — one who 'dared to know' — Hicks focuses instead on the seemingly 'skeptical' consequence of Kant's transcendental turn, namely, that human reason is incapable of knowing reality as such. With Kant, 'reason is limited to awareness and understanding of its own subjective products' (28). The next important step on the path to postmodernism is taken by Hegel, whom Hicks reads as mainly proposing a view of reality (Reason itself) as essentially conflicted. For Hegel, contradictions are not mistakes in reasoning; they are consequences of thought itself. On this foundation postmodernism emerged as an outright attack on the Enlightenment ideal of Reason, as anti-realist and epistemologically subjectivist; because the postmodernist stands on the shoulders of Kant and Hegel, s/he is rampantly relativistic, seeing in any claim to objective truth or faith in reason an example of deceitful false consciousness at best and downright oppression at worst. Instead, the postmodernist relishes contradiction and focuses on the perspective of the contingent subject separated from 'reality'.

Hicks' second thesis is that postmodernism emerged as a more or less unified political strategy and justification of failed socialist politics: 'Postmodernism is the academic Left's epistemological strategy for responding to the crisis caused by the failures of socialism in theory and in practice' (89). On the basis of the relativism described above, the Left irrationally maintained its socialist agenda in spite of the 'obvious' political failures of socialism and in spite of the success of liberal politics (a child of the Enlightenment) in general. In its political aspect, postmodernism finds its roots in Rousseau's critique of civilization. Rousseau thought that civilization dehumanizes and weakens natural human sympathies. Ultimately, the price of civilization is goodness and healthy human nature. From this follows the postmodernist's neo-Marxist rejection of everything 'establishment' as profoundly immoral and alienating, turning to the irrationalism of relativistic

epistemologies for support. Put differently, because socialism has been proven wrong, the only recourse left for socialists against the reason of liberal progress is the irrationalism of postmodern epistemology.

Hicks' disagreement with postmodernism might be reduced to two complaints. First, postmodernism is deeply inconsistent. Postmodernism makes the mistake of joining its relativism to dogmatism: 'subjectivism and relativism in one breath, dogmatic absolutism in the next' (184). In other words, postmodernism makes the same error that relativists have made since the inception of sophism: it subjects all claims to truth to its relativistic critique except for one claim — the claim to relativism itself. Second, postmodernism is a dishonest — and too often violent — justification of an untenable politic. In Hicks' estimation, liberalism and capitalism have proven to be more effective than socialism in promoting justice and equality, have improved the quality of life of many people and have done so without the violence of socialist strategies (148; chart 5.4). In short, socialism has failed — time and again. Socialist intellectuals are thus faced with two options: either inch closer to the center/right (i.e., reject socialism altogether) or, since they no longer have any rational or scientific support available to them, become postmodernists by polemically attacking liberalism, whereby rejecting all claims to rational consistency. The latter strategy, however, is nothing more than an irrational justification of a prejudicial and untenable inclination to the defeated left.

I have two related reservations about this text. First, whereas Hicks' rejection of postmodernism is supported by summaries of its key figures, the book is surprisingly 'light' on exposition. Especially considering that an important strand of continental European philosophy since the eighteenth century — a strand that includes postmodernism in its trajectory — is so heavily preoccupied with serious hermeneutical reading, cursory summaries do the history of thought and its students a serious injustice. Whether Hicks' interpretations are right or wrong is only a secondary concern (although I believe too many of his interpretations are more wrong than right). The problem is that a reader has no basis in Hicks' text itself to assess those interpretations. After all, interpretations need as much defense as arguments in order to be convincing. What's more, since the results of Hicks' interpretations serve as the basic premises of his subsequent critical argument, a thorough hermeneutics is indispensable. Second, although it accuses (rightly I think) postmodernism of being too polemical, Hicks' text is itself an extended polemic. Instead of disproving postmodernism, Hicks dismisses it; instead of taking postmodernism seriously and analyzing it carefully on its terms, Hicks oversimplifies and trivializes it, seemingly in order to justify his own prejudice against postmodernism. If postmodernism is in fact untenable, which it very well might be, Stephen Hicks has unfortunately not demonstrated that.

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## William Hirstein

*Brain Fiction:*

*Self-Deception and the Riddle of Confabulation.*

Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2004.

Pp. ix + 289.

US\$28.00. ISBN 0-262-16221-0.

Hirstein's deep and thorough investigation of one of the most puzzling facets of mental illness and brain trauma is a wonderful resource for philosophers and scientists, who may find illumination coming, as it were, from both directions. Hirstein has the rare distinction of being a knowledgeable neuroscientist as well as a professional philosopher and his work is both scientifically well informed and philosophically sensitive. And yet the reader may come away from the book with a certain sense of dissatisfaction.

Hirstein's topic is *confabulation* — the surprisingly prevalent symptom of a variety of cognitive disorders of making up utterly unfounded and more or less wild claims. A stroke victim who is paralyzed on one side blithely denies that there is anything wrong. Confabulation enters when she is asked to explain why she cannot fulfill a simple task, such as touching her nose with her paralyzed hand. The patient will just make up some story to explain the failure with apparently complete sincerity and utter conviction. More elaborate confabulations arise in Korsakoff's syndrome, spurred on by that condition's characteristic pervasive amnesia. Victims will glibly fill in the missing pieces of their lives with whatever comes to mind. In the much more bizarre and rare Capgras syndrome we find people who spin tales explaining how their closest friends and relations have been replaced by fakes (twins or, in the modern spirit, carefully constructed robotic doubles).

The natural first philosophical question is simply what is confabulation? Hirstein advocates an epistemic analysis. What is distinctive about confabulation is the ill-groundedness of the confabulated claims along with an associated core *irrationality* in the meta-assessment of the claims. Although not committing to a complete set of necessary and sufficient conditions, Hirstein (187) offers a fairly complex epistemic account:

Jan confabulates if and only if:

1. Jan claims that *p*.
2. Jan believes that *p*.
3. Jan's thought that *p* is ill-grounded.
4. Jan does not know that her thought is ill-grounded.
5. Jan should know that her thought is ill-grounded.
6. Jan is confident that *p*.

But of course by these criteria there are a lot of confabulators who are not under medical care; some even who hold high office. As Hirstein notes, while clinical confabulation frequently involves highly implausible claims, this is not always the case. A paralyzed woman who confabulates about painful

arthritis in her shoulder has not said anything particularly implausible, and in theory we can imagine a Korsakoff's confabulator getting his story about last weekend right just by accident. Hirstein does a good job linking these issues about confabulation to traditional debates in epistemology and makes something of a case for the idea that clinical confabulation is an extension of perfectly normal tendencies and is linked to more mundane cases of self-deception.

Confabulators fail most spectacularly criterion (5) above. It is important to stress, as Hirstein does, that confabulators are not raving lunatics — they are in general perfectly capable of rational thought and reflection. The most perplexing feature of confabulation, then, is why it is that confabulators cannot simply be reasoned with. Hirstein reports that it is sometimes possible to point out successfully the ill-groundedness of confabulatory claims, but that the confabulator attaches perplexingly little importance to this and quickly lapses back into fantasy.

Hirstein explores an interesting possibility here. It may be that there is an essential emotional component to the cognitive mechanisms that construct and maintain our belief systems. Thus the merely reasoned correction of some confabulated belief may not engage any emotional response in the confabulators, whereas a confabulated belief structure somehow 'feels right'. Many confabulations involve denial of significant problems with high emotional 'charge'. Perhaps the confabulated situation permits the patient to *feel* that things are OK after all. The significance of the sense of 'rightness' or 'orientation' that we normally experience as part of what James called *fringe* consciousness has been underappreciated by epistemologists and its preservation may be more important than cold rationality.

But of course one still wonders why the afflicted person cannot come to realize that they are suffering from a confabulatory syndrome! This is after all by far the most plausible explanation of these patients' situation. The core question about confabulation is how it can be that people who have more or less intact cognitive faculties cannot come to know about their own condition and thus bring their confabulation under control. Even if we opt for some kind of theory in which confabulators seek relief from some kind of, presumably overwhelming, epistemic distress, why aren't they relieved by the truth and why can't they see and accept the truth?

Here is where some dissatisfaction with Hirstein's book may set in. But it stems from no fault of the author, who goes to great lengths to cover the multitude of theories which have been proposed. In crude terms, the view which Hirstein favors posits a double fault. First, confabulators suffer some deficit that may be emotional, cognitive, perceptual or brutally physical. It is not hard to see how it might be comforting to project the initial problem onto the external world or at least on to some feature which is not so serious as the real difficulty. But a normally functioning mind will not allow the free invention of absurd and completely unsupported hypotheses. Confabulators, though, suffer from a second deficit, which Hirstein localizes to damage in the orbito-frontal cortex, where, it seems fairly clear, a variety of meta-cog-



nitive processes (consistency checking, plausibility gauging) are housed. Damage to these areas, it is claimed, prevents the confabulations from being eliminated or overruled by standard checking systems. The idea is that while we *all* are inclined towards confabulation, our fantasies are held in check by frontal processes.

The dissatisfaction lies with our immense ignorance about how neural processes subserve such cognitive functions as 'consistency checking'. It is now commonplace to distinguish the so-called personal level features of mind from the sub-personal mechanisms that enable the former. In these terms, we are in the very unsatisfactory situation of giving what are essentially personal level labels to hypothetical sub-personal systems. From the personal level, what is going on does not make much sense: the confabulator does not lack consistency checks *tout court*, but operates in seemingly bizarre patterns which help support the confabulations rather than undermine them. The *global* cognitive values of consistency, reasonableness and plausibility are fractured and suddenly become domain limited. There is no personal level story that can make sense of this, but we utterly lack any sub-personal account of how content is instantiated in the brain or manipulated by neural systems. There is a level of frustration that is perhaps unavoidable as science finds itself on the threshold of bridging this gap. Hirstein ably shows the impressive extent of our current knowledge of the brain systems involved in confabulatory syndromes but also reveals that we have as yet no inkling of how to integrate this knowledge into a coherent theory of how mind emerges from the buzzing neurons.

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**Paul Hoyningen-Huene**

*Formal Logic: A Philosophical Approach.*

Trans. Alex Levine. Pittsburgh:

University of Pittsburgh Press 2004.

Pp. xi + 254.

US\$17.95. ISBN 0-8229-5847-3.

This book 'owes its existence to the author's frustrations with earlier texts' (ix). Hoyningen-Huene holds that while there are many good introductions both to formal logic and to the philosophy of logic on the market, both tend to 'leave the connection between the arcane formalisms and the ordinary understanding of what logic is about almost entirely obscure' (ix). His goal is

to 'unite the motives underlying both sorts of text' (ix). The result is a unique, interesting book.

The book consists of four chapters and three appendices. The first chapter (1-25) begins with some examples of simple intuitively valid arguments, and then uses them to motivate and elucidate some core concepts. The preliminary discussions of logical form (9-13) and of the intension-extension distinction (22-4) are good illustrations of the distinctive focus of this book. Although both issues are important components of an understanding of logic, they are at the same time not quite canonical. They tend to be left up to the teacher, barely mentioned in the textbooks. Both of these strands (as well as a variety of others of similar status) are picked up at several junctures below.

The second chapter (26-123) is by far the longest, taking up about 40% of the entire text. Primarily, it contains a thorough treatment of the syntax and semantics of statement logic. Throughout, questions in the philosophy of logic and meta-theory are discussed as they arise. For example, the substitution theorem (63-4) and the insertion theorem (99-102) are discussed and proven; and the question of the strengths and weaknesses of the classical definition of validity receives extensive treatment (71ff, *passim*). The discussions of trivial instances of validity (91-6) and of the relation between validity and provability (118-20) merit special mention, as these are other paradigm cases of issues that this book is conceived to address — i.e., they come up in every logic class, but yet they do not get much press in the standard texts.

The third chapter (124-80), on predicate logic, is structured similarly to the second. However, it is significantly shorter because much of the thorough discussion in the second chapter pertains here as well, and does not need to be reshaped. As in the case of the second chapter, discussions of syntax, semantics, meta-theory, and philosophy of logic all occur cheek-by-jowl. Some of the distinctive features of this chapter include discussions of the relations between predicate logic and traditional syllogistic logic (143-5), of universal quantification and existential import (149-50), and of the decision problem (173-5).

The final chapter (181-207), 'The Mathematical Approach to Statement Logic', begins with a preliminary discussion of what it means to approach logic mathematically (181-5). After defining an uninterpreted syntax (185-91), it describes in some detail a model-theoretic (191-5) and a proof-theoretic (195-203) approach to statement logic. The chapter ends with brief discussions of the concepts of consistency and completeness (203-5), and of how these methods and results apply to predicate logic (206-8).

Finally, Appendix 1 (209-11) contains a proof of a mildly interesting theorem that came up in the second chapter, which states that no formula of statement logic can be logically true unless at least one sentence letter occurs more than once. Appendix 2 (212-53) contains solutions to the ample assortment of exercises (compiled by Alex Levine and Christopher von Bülow). Appendix 3 (253-4) contains a short but carefully selected list of suggestions for further reading.

One serious shortcoming of this book is the unnecessarily difficult system of cross-referencing. One quickly gets lost in the arcane system of section headings (e.g., 1.1, 1.2, etc.), sub-headings (2.4.a, 2.4.b, etc.), and numbered remarks within these sub-headings (e.g., chapter 2, section 1.2, paragraph b, contains 9 numbered remarks). The result is that, when one is told, say, 'This argument will have to wait until section II.2.5.b' (39), or that 'this theorem is discussed in section II.3.2' (209), it is not clear where to look. It is hard to track down these cross-references, and this can be awfully annoying.

Another criticism concerns Hoyningen-Huene's claim that, in a certain sense, 'logic cannot be taught' (3). (The reason offered is that, while many students catch on quickly to the notion of formal validity, many others just never quite seem to get this fundamental point.) This claim is in keeping with the gap-bridging, pioneering spirit of the book, akin to some of the other issues familiar to logic teachers but not mentioned in the standard texts. However, in addition to being just simply striking for its audacity, there are a number of problems with the claim. Even if it were true, it might be unwise to put it on p.3 of an introductory text to logic, as it may lead readers to drop the text and switch courses, more quickly than they otherwise would. More deeply, though, the sentiment expressed strikes me as a pernicious myth. Although the idea that many people are just hopeless logic-dyslexics is prevalent, its prevalence seems to be due mostly to its function of providing solace to lazy students and teachers. One might as well say that golf, knitting, or accounting cannot be taught; although one probably wouldn't say it on p.3 of an introductory instructional book. It is disheartening to see such an expert logic teacher contribute to the propagation of this enemy to logic-pedagogy.

On the whole, though, this is a nice readable book that does what it says it will try to do. It is unique and worthwhile in addressing these various relevant but non-canonical philosophical questions about formal logic, in the course of developing a formal logic. Hoyningen-Huene's treatment of these issues is accessible without being oversimplistic. The discussions are nicely paced and structured, and there is nothing forced or staged about the way the convergent strands proceed.

At the end of the day, though, while I would recommend this book as a helpful and interesting read, to teachers and advanced students alike, I do not think that it is a suitable introductory text. It is a bit too informal, not sufficiently systematic, explicit, or thorough in its development, to use as the basis for a course.

**Arthur Sullivan**

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**Walter Jost**

*Rhetorical Investigations:*

*Studies in ordinary Language Criticism.*

Charlottesville: University of Virginia

Press 2004.

Pp. xiii + 346.

US\$55.00. ISBN 0-8139-2249-6.

Walter Jost has written a splendidly humane book — humane in content and humane in tone. Jost attempts to give a philosophically sophisticated justification for a kind of literary criticism that can avoid the dogmatic apriorism of some post-modern literary ‘theory’ without falling back into the kind of naïve humanism of which the postmoderns are rightly suspicious. He sees his philosophical discussion as the way to avoid the naivety, not the humanism. He also generously presents examples of what he calls ‘ordinary language criticism’ in a series of readings of some of Robert Frost’s major poems. Throughout, he treats both the theorists and the literary critics whom he criticizes with respect — seeking to find something right in what they have said even as he rejects, or modifies, or extends it.

The book is divided into two parts. The first four chapters constitute an overview of some important recent thought in philosophy, and its implications for the study of literature. The second group of four chapters present the readings of the individual Frost poems: ‘The Death of the Hired Man’, ‘West-Running Brook’, ‘Snow’, and ‘Home Burial’. This raises an issue about the potential audience for this book. It might seem that the two sections are addressed to radically different groups — the first to philosophers and ‘theorists’, the second to readers of Frost and scholars of literature. Jost’s whole argument in the books is that these need not be two disparate groups. Using the vocabulary of rhetoric, in the first part he attempts: ‘to map out a rhetorical practice ... . That locates Frost in various intellectual contexts and situations. My claim for it is not originality of thought but rather reinvention of some traditional materials and the perspicuousness of an organized rationale of the relevant data’ (23).

The materials that Jost presents are what he characterizes as ‘underappreciated resources for criticism to be found in the traditions of rhetoric, hermeneutic phenomenology, pragmatism and so-called ordinary language philosophy and criticism.’ The presiding figure over these resources, for Jost, is Stanley Cavell. Wittgenstein and Heidegger, who are crucial presences throughout, are seen in Cavell’s reading of them. Jost does not claim to provide an independent assessment of these readings, but rather to re-present them in a context in which their implications for literary theory can be drawn.

And what are these implications? If I were to frame an answer to this question, it would be put much more crudely than Jost’s. It is roughly that the extreme literary skepticism of some post-modernist literary theory cannot be correct, and if it were correct, it would be fatal for criticism. Nietzsche and pragmatism had already articulated fully the anti-foundationalist posi-

tion without drawing skeptical conclusions from it. Wittgenstein had analyzed language in an anti-foundational way, and, in Cavell's reading, had analyzed the human motivation to skepticism — what Cavell calls 'the truth of skepticism'. None of these need imply a general instability of meaning, or a necessary self-deconstruction of all texts. Indeed, anything that we know a priori about all texts cannot be of interest to criticism, which is concerned with the particular object. Rhetoric, as a long-standing tradition of seeing the multiple uses of language, and as having long analyzed the circumstances, or context, of language use, fits well with the Wittgensteinian view of language discussed by Cavell. Jost fills out this picture in great detail, and his immensely wide reading is drawn on to give a kind of bird's eye view of this intellectual landscape. In addition to those already mentioned, he draws on figures like Kenneth Burke, Gadamer, Dewey and host of others

The particular task of criticism that Jost undertakes is to characterize the 'low modernism' of Frost, i.e., to help us understand that Frost is indeed a modernist and to see his specific differences from 'high modernism'. It is here that the philosophical emphasis on the 'ordinary', as Cavell finds it in Austin and Wittgenstein, and as he finds it underwritten in Emerson and Thoreau, comes most into play. The image of Frost as a kind of crusty, New England cracker-barrel philosopher has long been abandoned by sophisticated readers; Randall Jarrell and Lionel Trilling more or less ended it in the mid-twentieth century. There has been a parallel misunderstanding of the concept of the 'ordinary' in ordinary language philosophy that Cavell has been at pains to correct since the beginning of his writing career.

Jost doesn't think that there has yet been a general reading of Frost that sufficiently understands him as a philosophical poet. One of Jost's uses of the resources of rhetoric in understanding the long poems of Frost, monologues and dialogues, is to help characterize the kind of language use they involve. Much of high modernist poetry is *epiphanic* — concerned with the achievement of an epiphany. Frost certainly writes some epiphanic poems. However, the long poems, Jost believes, are best characterized as *epideictic*, involving a showing forth of the ordinary, which may have been right before us, but which has been occluded.

Jost presents Frost not just as a poet whose great work can be illuminated by the general intellectual issues that have been discussed in the first part of the book. He understands Frost's work as directly engaged with these issues. Hence, Frost is not just an example to whom we apply a philosophical view: he is a 'philosophical poet' whose work helps us to understand the possibility of poetry, not by constructing a theory, but by presenting the condition of humanity, the forms of life, that must precede all theories. I don't have space to discuss his detailed readings, but I found them provocative in Emerson's sense of that terms. Philosophers should look at his use of Heidegger, in his reading of 'West-Running Brook', perhaps the most overtly philosophical of Frost's poems.

In the first part of the book, Jost's language is, necessarily, more abstract and more clotted. It flows more easily in the second. Anyone interested in the

literary 'theory' culture wars of the past three or four decades, would profit from reading this book.

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**Claire Elise Katz**

*Levinas, Judaism, and the Feminine:  
The Silent Footsteps of Rebecca.*

Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2003.

Pp. xvi + 215.

US\$49.95 (cloth 0-253-34302-X);

US\$22.95 (paper: 0-253-21624-9).

In this book, Claire Katz combines a feminist critique of Judaism with a Biblical reinterpretation of feminism to expand our understanding of the relationship between ethics, hospitality, and maternity. Concentrating on Levinas' ambiguous deployment of gender, Katz explains in detail the struggle against virility and conquest that lies at the heart of his description of ethics. Using analytical tools Levinas overlooks, Katz clarifies, extends, and critiques Levinas' discussion of the feminine as both metaphor and referent to empirical women. In the end, she shows how this dual role of the feminine 'serves as both the interruption of virility and the model for the ethical' (3). She shows us how Levinas' concept of the feminine comes from the images of Biblical Matriarchs who return laughter, hospitality, and generosity to the lineage of the Patriarchs without becoming fixed in those images.

As Katz clearly explains, Emmanuel Levinas' goal in his phenomenology of ethics was to describe what provokes ethical relationship, what makes ethics possible in a too-often violent and self-serving world. His goal was never to construct a system of behavior or a prescriptive ethics, but to try to discover the meaning of ethics, the way in which ethics happens in a life-loving and affirming manner. Ethics, for Levinas, does not come from an outside source (like God or law) but arises in the immediate relationship I have with the person standing before me, with my response to 'the alterity of the other' (16). The call of the other provokes my response, and demands that I respond without the assurance of knowing how to respond. Ethics is responding to the call of the other without reducing the other, without assimilating the widow, orphan, or stranger, and it is founded in sexual difference from the start. It is linked to hospitality and maternity, concerned with the creation of life and the care of the other person — concerns that have been central for feminist thinkers as well.

Crucially, Katz is not writing an apology for feminism, Levinas, or Judaism. Rather, she is addressing one of the most complex concepts in Levinas' work, 'the feminine', in order to offer a new perspective that can help us better understand masculinity and femininity in regard to ethics. As she says, 'the laughter of Isaac joins the generosity and hospitality of Rebecca' (149). She gives us the powerful examples of hospitality and maternity to examine and criticize in Ruth, Boaz, Rebecca, and Sarah. The host is responsible toward his guest, whether he wants to be or not. The simple act of letting the stranger in your door protects her from the wind and the rain. The host cannot avoid aiding and abetting her. The pregnant mother is responsible toward her fetus, whether she wants to be or not. Before she realizes she is pregnant, the mother's body nourishes the embryo. She cannot avoid that initial response; it is not a conscious act, and it has the power to transform later responsibilities. She can refuse it later, and this ethics does not preclude the reality of the politics of abortion (of a relation that involves other others), but the initial response is beyond her will. This inability of the maternal body at first to refuse, is what, for Levinas, makes maternity the ethical relation *par excellence*.

Her body gives to the other that is the fetus without the mother having knowledge of that giving, without reducing the relationship to an understanding. This is why maternity has served as so powerful a metaphor of the ethical relationship, in good and bad ways. Katz points out that this connection between ethics and maternity risks two points — essentializing women, and establishing sacrifice as a dangerous model for women. Katz replies, though, that we must look at maternity through the images of Sara and Rebecca — mothers who embody both responsibility and *jouissance*. They are the erotic maternal, the woman who laughs in sexual delight and the woman who dies at the news of her son's near sacrifice. They are multi-vocal and, therefore, not reducible to any one aspect or category. They are, thus, models for both empirical women and the metaphorical status of these attributes in everyone. 'The maternal body demonstrates how responsibility works in all of us' (143).

Levinas' work often avoids a clear discussion of the Woman. This has led to some important feminist critiques of his philosophy. In this book, Katz draws from feminism and images traditionally associated with women's lives, to clarify his work. She shows the deep connections between hospitality and maternity for women and men. Her strategy is additionally noteworthy in that she not only provides female examples, but also in that she provides examples at all, which have been notoriously often missing from both Levinas' work and from the supposedly clarifying work of many of his other readers. Levinas began by describing the meaning of ethics in the world; Katz returns to that ethics by showing us how we might see it in the world. These examples are not easy, and, when Katz further analyzes key women from the Hebrew Bible, they prompt a good number of questions and may make some readers very uncomfortable. That is the strength of this book, though. It asks us to look back at ethics, religion, and feminism so that all three may become

more significant for women and men. In the end, Katz offers these examples to counter stereotypes of women while also challenging one-sided views of Jewish conceptions of femininity. She gives us a book about the meaning and possibility of ethics that is life-loving and affirming.

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**Chris Lawn**

*Wittgenstein and Gadamer: Towards a  
Post-Analytic Philosophy of Language.*

New York: Continuum Books 2004.

Pp.vii + 161.

Cdn\$130.00/US\$105.00. ISBN 0-8264-7529-9.

Chris Lawn aims to persuade 'analytic' philosophers of language of the importance of Hans-Georg Gadamer for helping them recognize 'the historical dimension of their task' (152). He argues that Gadamer's explicit historicity provides an answer to the question Wittgenstein, unable to shake off his *Tractarian* ties, never addresses, namely, 'How is it possible to follow rules and yet go beyond them?' (xv). To get the most out of the book, one ought to see oneself in his intended audience and read it as an introduction to Gadamer. For those already persuaded of Gadamer's relevance, the sections on Gadamer's thought contribute little original analysis. And while Lawn's sections on Wittgenstein may offer new insights for the more 'continentally' inclined, they fail to argue in-depth enough for Wittgensteinians. With that said, the best reader of the book may be someone seeking an introduction to both of these thinkers. Furthermore, Lawn's clarity of style, propensity to define basic terms (e.g., 'anti-foundationalist'), and occasional over-generalizations (particularly at the beginning of chapters and in his Conclusion) contribute to the introductory feel of the book.

In Chapter One, relying on Charles Taylor's designation of 'expressive' and 'descriptive' language, Lawn maps Gadamer's 'continental' approach to language onto the former and Wittgenstein's 'analytic' approach onto the latter. Based on this, Lawn sets up one of the main threads of his argument, namely, that the work of the later Wittgenstein never really escapes its 'descriptive' roots. He shows how Wittgenstein's descriptivist theory commits itself to a non-public and internalized view of meaning, whereas Gadamer's expressivist position recognizes the social implications of language.



Chapter Two, like many of the other chapters, begins with a careful historical situating of the relevant points of comparison between Gadamer and Wittgenstein. E.g., this chapter gives a brief discussion of Gadamer's familiarity with Wittgenstein as well as the fact that although Wittgenstein likely never read Gadamer, early Wittgensteinians (e.g., P. Winch) pointed to the hermeneutical bent of Wittgenstein. He notes a key similarity between the two thinkers in their use of '*spiel*', which emphasizes the continuous 'to-and-fro' of the game and supersedes the individual consciousness of the players. But the similarity does not extend much deeper. It is precisely at this point of comparison that Lawn locates one of the most significant differences between the two thinkers, namely, that Gadamer's conception of tradition allows for fluidity of play between language-games of the past and present whereas Wittgenstein's 'fragmentary' concept of language-games renders a now defunct language-game mute.

The third chapter serves as a basic introduction to Gadamer's hermeneutics, focusing specifically on Gadamer's analysis of language in *Truth and Method*. Lawn covers such concepts as tradition, prejudice, dialogue, and the speculative structure of language. Although accurate and clear, this chapter fails to get beyond a superficial consideration, adding little to the secondary literature on Gadamer.

Perhaps because Lawn's fourth chapter on Wittgenstein offers more by way of criticism and controversy, it provides a more interesting read than the previous chapter. He finds Wittgenstein's famous comment, 'When I obey a rule, I do not choose. I obey the rule blindly', to be problematic and puzzling — problematic to the extent it precludes the possibility of interpreting rules, something that he sees Gadamer's hermeneutics as allowing, indeed requiring; and puzzling because Lawn does think there is some room for the porousness of interpretation in Wittgenstein's description of a rule as a custom. By contrast, Gadamer's reliance on '*phronesis*', shows how judgment (i.e., interpretation) is a necessary part of 'rule following'. Lawn highlights how, for Wittgenstein, although there is a 'rationality at the core of each of the many language-games' (77), it remains internal to them, allowing no rational interaction *between* different language games. According to Lawn, the monadic feel of language games results from Wittgenstein's neglect of the social and historical components of language. Thus whereas Gadamer's account allows a gradual, 'organic', and rational change between language-games, Wittgenstein's permits only abrupt changes akin to paradigm shifts.

The fifth chapter takes the discussion on the historicity of language further, asking specifically whether Wittgenstein's conception of language can incorporate the new. Although Lawn finds a possibility for resolving this issue in Wittgenstein's use of custom — since it might be understood in terms of (Gadamer's conception of) tradition — he notes that Wittgenstein ultimately sees custom as an unreflective practice. Lawn argues that Gadamer's conception of horizon adds a measure of historicity missing in Wittgenstein's account.

Lawn's sixth chapter focuses on Wittgenstein's and Gadamer's interpretations of Augustine, showing Gadamer to have the richer interpretation. Lawn expresses his agreement with A. Kenny that Wittgenstein projects his own rejected *Tractarian* view onto Augustine. He proposes that had Wittgenstein been more careful in his reading of Augustine, this would have helped him overcome his 'linguistic relativism'.

The seventh chapter contrasts Gadamer's 'poetic turn' to Wittgenstein's silence about poetry. In one of the more in-depth discussions of the book, Lawn shows Gadamer's advantage over Wittgenstein: play for Gadamer is not irrational but incorporates a non-purposive rationality. Gadamer reveals the 'to-and-fro' of play to have a rationality of its own, but one that transcends the individual players. The final section of the chapter presents Wittgenstein as a 'tragic aphorist', by which Lawn, in a comparison with Pascal, refers to the sense in which there is ultimately no resolution between the two voices in Wittgenstein: 'for all the novelty and daring of the later Wittgensteinian fragments there is a constant struggle between the strict ('Tractarian') conception of language as a calculus and a more open, playful language' (145). Lawn concludes by maintaining that Wittgenstein ultimately sides with the former picture.

But is it adequate, in light of recent literature, to speak so readily of the 'two-Wittgensteins?' Perhaps a consideration of the therapeutic continuity between 'early' and 'later' would deepen Lawn's analysis of Wittgenstein and provide a tool with which to offer a more penetrating critique of Gadamer. The tension holding together his book, i.e., the twin contrasts between both the *Tractatus* and Wittgenstein's later work and the *Tractatus* and Gadamer, gains force from a standard (and increasingly controversial) interpretation of the 'early Wittgenstein'. But, given Lawn's sensitivity in refusing the unhelpful dichotomy between 'analytic' and 'continental' philosophy, one would have wished for a similar restraint in dichotomizing the 'two Wittgensteins'.

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**Andrew Light and Avner de Shalit, eds.**  
*Moral and Political Reasoning in  
Environmental Practice.*  
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2003.  
Pp. viii + 357.  
US\$75.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-262-12252-9);  
US\$30.00 (paper: ISBN 0-262-62164-9).

'Environmental philosophers should find a way to become more involved in argumentation that takes place in environmental campaigns and is discussed in the broader environmental literature' (1). This book is a contribution to this — and succeeds triumphantly. Its first part addresses general questions on the role of political philosophy in environmental thought; the second examines particular tools and concepts employed in environmental reasoning; the third applies the foregoing to a number of case studies.

Michael Freeden (in a piece which is an application of the understanding of political theory and concepts developed in his *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*) argues that 'well-being is the first virtue of the community' just as 'justice is the first virtue of the state' (34). The point here is not whether we accept this contention *per se*, but Freeden's argument that within green political thought it is possible to mount holistic conceptual arguments through 'configurational conceptual analysis'. In such thought, reasoning is not constrained by 'cascades of lexical and logical priority and replaces them with a cluster notion of conceptual interdependence' (42). In this I think he is quite right: much reasoning in political theory is constrained by an inappropriate understanding of the nature of concepts. Freeden seeks to redress this conceptual misunderstanding and he argues his point persuasively.

Matthew Humphrey gives an extremely interesting and useful account of the different senses, meanings and applications of the much misused term 'intuition' in environmental reasoning. This corrective is of great value, as so often theorists argue straight past each other, with each claiming insight from intuitions which unfortunately do not always coincide with the deep intuitions of others. The matter is exacerbated by the fact that the very term intuition and its cognates can refer to different objects — to a method of approach, to a faculty of intuition, and to a particular ethical content, for example. Thus, when rivals argue past each other, they often disagree not only (or necessarily) over the content of an intuition, but over what it *means* to be an intuition. Humphrey brings these points out clearly and helpfully. Part One is rounded off by David Schlosberg who deals eloquently with 'the justice in environmental justice', arguing that this should be extended to include justice as recognition as well as the more familiar notion of justice as fair distribution.

Part Two opens with Tim Hayward discussing whether there should be constitutional environmental rights (now developed at length in his recent book of that title [Oxford University Press 2005]). He brings together an

understanding of the already existing state of play on constitutional rights, together with analysis of the associated concepts, and the prospects for progress in this direction. William Griffith on trusteeship and public trust and Finn Arler on 'Ecological utilization space' are both persuasive in their advocacy of what it means to care for the earth and its future. Griffith suggests that we should rediscover the notion of public trust whilst Arler revisits some of the key notions in the debate over sustainability. This is a neat and suggestive chapter, clearly and incisively expressed, and containing many nuggets of reasoned wisdom. It is one of many chapters that one would happily see placed in the hands of anyone requiring a concise introduction to issues and concepts in environmental politics and ethics. The value of Paul Thompson's account of the ethics of crop biotechnology is that, although he argues what to many environmentalists is an unpopular case, he does a good job in drawing out the arguments of those who object to biotechnology. And he is surely right to do so. Even if one opposes Thompson's position, it should be welcomed on the good Popperian grounds that any argument which takes it seriously and successfully rebuts it will necessarily be stronger and more robust as a result.

Alan Holland and John O'Neill write on the importance of narrative in our understanding of environmental policy, particularly when we are dealing with the 'natural'. They contrast 'old' and 'new world' ways of looking at these issues and come out in favour of old world ways, characterised by the inclusion in our evaluations of a narrative of human involvement and influence on the natural world. This contrasts with the new worldview that we are concerned with wilderness, defined as the absence of human influence. They suggest that this view often mistakes a particular form of human inhabitation by indigenous populations for wilderness. I found this contribution to be the most sheerly enjoyable to read of all: it is written with panache and élan and really draws the reader into the narrative; given that it is propounding the virtues of a narrative form of understanding, its self-instantiation of the idea it expresses is both impressive and fitting.

Of the final papers which make up Part Three, let me say briefly that the first considers the appropriateness of a case-based approach to environmental ethics (done with distinction by Robert Hood). In the second, Vivian Thomson — a pragmatist looking for (but not necessarily expecting) principles in environmental policy making — examines the policymaking process leading to the introduction of lead-free gasoline in the USA. Clare Palmer and Francis O'Gorman contribute a chapter on foxhunting that deals with all aspects of the subject in an intelligent, subtle and provocative way under the heading of 'Animals, Power and Ethics'. It is a pity that more people in the UK did not argue in such a way; if they had, the debate would have been elevated to an altogether different plane. Niraja Jayal rounds off the collection with a discussion of 'Ethics, Politics, Biodiversity — a View from the South'. Her conclusion, following a tightly written account of local communities, ownership, property and rights, is that 'the gentle ethics of the environment must engage with the question of power if the multiple asymmetries

— global, national, and local — that characterize the control and use of biodiversity are to be meaningfully addressed' (313). This is also the final sentence in the book and, in some ways, the sub-text of its second and third parts. Maybe this is where the debate should be going next?

This has been a whistlestop tour of this excellent collection of essays. Now you know the stops, I suggest you take your time explore each one thoroughly. All of the papers seemed to be both uncommonly well-written and also (and this is, given the editors' intentions, a term of praise) *useful*. Both the editors and authors are to be congratulated on dealing with concepts, topics and issues critically, openly and carefully without shirking or evading difficulties.

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**Bertram F. Malle**

*How the Mind Explains Behavior: Folk Explanations, Meaning, and Social Interaction.*

Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2004.

Pp. 328.

US\$38.00. ISBN 0-262-13445-4.

In his most recent contribution to the philosophy of cognitive psychology, Bertram Malle goes to painstaking lengths to build the case for a folk-psychological theory of mentality and behavior explanation that (a) raises and addresses the explanatory shortcomings of its predecessor, attribution theory, (b) offers an alternative model of behavior explanation grounded in a view of intentionality that distinguishes between the attribution (to self and others) of reasons *for* behavior as opposed to causes *of* it, and (c) seeks to integrate the cognitive and social aspects of behavior explanation in order to show how people not only explain their own and other people's behavior, but interpret and manage social impressions and interactions. This latter objective is of particular significance because, if plausible, Malle's model promises to show how behavior explanations function both as cognitive tools in the construction/attribution of meaning *and*, especially through language, as social tools used in navigating the interactive complexities of specific social contexts. A tall order, such a model aims to delineate both the social utility of behaving in specific ways depending upon the impression we want to convey as well as the import of creating coherent representations of the behavior of ourselves and others.

My quibbles with Malle's otherwise fine work are specifically philosophical, that is, they are with his ontological/conceptual assumptions, not his empirical method (except insofar as his assumptions inform it). My primary

issue is with his claim to have offered a model of behavior explanation whose persuasive force is *explanatory* and not merely *descriptive*, an important question given the continuing controversy in philosophy of mind over whether explanations which appeal to folk-psychological attributes like desires and beliefs can be made invulnerable to the criticism that they are circular and therefore explanatorily vacuous (Why did Mary give Suzy roses? *Because* she believed Suzy liked them. How do we know Mary believed Suzy liked roses? *Because* she gave Suzy roses.). How, in others words, does the reference to belief in this example explain Mary's behavior, and not simply describe it according to the more or less successful folk-psychological tradition of her culture? Does Malle establish the philosophical foundation he needs for his appeal to Mary's intentions in non-question begging fashion? Ultimately, I think that although this work demonstrates tremendous descriptive breadth that ranges over dozens of behaviorally relevant variables, the answer is still, 'No'.

Key to Malle's model is his tripartite division between behavior whose explanation appeals to the *causal history* of the reasons given for an action, *factors* which enable (e.g., make possible but do not cause) a behavior to occur, and *reasons* offered for actions regarded as intentional on the part of an agent. Elaborated through an array of subcategories and illustrated via a rich selection of descriptive example (to which I cannot do justice here), Malle's central postulates are that (a) people distinguish intentional from unintentional behaviors; (b) to explain the former, people appeal to one of the above modes of explanation; (c) reason explanations cite the mental states in light of which an agent acts to explain an action; (d) causal histories cite background factors which inform reasons for acting; (e) enabling factors clarify how an intention may be turned into the performance of an action; (f) unintentional actions are explained by causes largely understood as mechanical (86-7). It is (c), however, which occupies pride of place in Malle's folk theory of mind, because it provides the link that connects our desire to understand behavior with its specific social ends. 'The very concept of intentional action,' Malle argues, 'requires the monitoring of other people's mental states, because what drives, explains, and predicts their actions will be a particular set of desires and beliefs' (223). 'Among all explanations,' he continues, 'reason explanations most clearly embody the influence of the folk theory of mind because they are defined as ascriptions of mental states in light of which the agent formed her intention to act ... Without a folk theory of mind, humans might still be able to provide causal explanations, even for intentional behavior, but they would be incapable of providing reason explanations' (223). Only human beings, moreover, 'have the capacity,' according to Malle, 'to interpret behavior in terms of its underlying mental states' (222).

Herein, however lies what I think to be a circularity in Malle's reasoning. On one hand, Malle claims that without a folk theory of mind, human beings would not be able to interpret the behaviors of other human beings except insofar as these lend themselves to causal or, at best, causal history explanation. On the other, Malle seems to tacitly appeal to our allegedly *exclusive*

capacity for interpreting behavior qua mental states as grounds for justifying a folk theory of mind. No doubt, I have seriously oversimplified Malle's 'ontological framework' (222) in order to couch this issue, but, because he insists that his model explains and not merely describes intentionality with respect to understanding and enacting behavior, I think he needs something more than what amounts to an appeal to what we do *do* to justify the claim that his model *explains* what we do *do* — no matter how rich his description of behavioral subcategories and example. What Malle does insist is that 'if explanation is not one thing, there is little sense in looking for neural substrates of explanatory processes ... it seems rather unlikely that there is a unique neural substrate to a conceptual framework ...' (230). This, however, seems rather sidestepping, especially in light of Malle's references to paranoid personality disorder and disorganized schizophrenia (232-3), both maladies whose brain origins are well-known. How, in other words, can we offer a genuine *explanation* of human mental states without reference to the neural substrates Malle seems to dismiss? Why should we count the conceptual framework which underlies our explanation of people's behavior as itself explanatory without having some sense of what underpins this framework? What role does Malle attribute to the neural substrate? What, for Malle, is a mind such that the behavior for which it is responsible can be explained by reference to it in a fashion that does not necessitate any particular appeal to the brain in which it is instantiated?

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**Patchen Markell**

*Bound By Recognition.*

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University  
Press 2003.

Pp. 320.

US\$59.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-691-11381-5);

US\$19.95 (paper: ISBN 0-681-11382-3).

Patchen Markell's *Bound By Recognition* has a number of overlapping goals. First, Markell wants to place the contemporary politics of recognition in context, asking why we are so concerned with recognition in the present and identifying the origins of that concern in the history of political philosophy. Second, Markell wants to critique the politics of recognition by arguing that it is rooted in a fundamental misconception about identity. Third, he wants

to replace the politics of recognition with what he calls the politics of acknowledgment.

The means by which Markell proposes to accomplish all of these goals is an 'unorthodox interpretation and reappropriation of Hegel' (7). Although, as he admits, Hegel is usually read as the 'godfather' of the contemporary politics of recognition, Markell argues that this reading is an oversimplification. Markell identifies a 'neglected dimension' of Hegel's philosophy that, he claims, illuminates the limits of the ideal of recognition and suggests 'an alternative understanding of justice, rooted not in recognition but in acknowledgment' (7).

At the heart of Markell's argument is the assertion that the politics of recognition entails a misrecognition — the failure to acknowledge the subject's ontological condition. This leads him to his most radical claim: that the politics of recognition entails sovereignty over the self and is thus a version of the individualism and universalism of liberalism. Markell develops his critique through an analysis of the prominent recognition theorist, Charles Taylor. Markell claims that Taylor defines recognition as the acknowledgment of identity in an essential sense. Markell argues that Taylor's definition of identity fails to analyze the relationship between human agency and identity and that this leads him to ignore the finitude that restricts the aspiration to sovereignty.

The politics of acknowledgment that Markell advances as an alternative to the politics of recognition is rooted in the work of Sophocles, Hegel and Arendt. His central contention is that identity is not a *fait accompli*, but, rather, an on-going activity. Acknowledgment is directed at the basic condition of one's own existence and activity, including the limits on one's identity that arise out of our 'constitutive vulnerability' (3). To establish his theory Markell turns first to the Greek tragedies. He argues that in these tragedies recognition is itself portrayed tragically; efforts to achieve sovereign agency are ethically and politically problematic, that is, they are misrecognitions. The centerpiece of Markell's argument, however, is his reinterpretation of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. Instead of reading Hegel, as does Taylor, to support the thesis that recognition is a crucial human good, Markell reads him instead to be arguing that the pursuit of the sovereign satisfaction of recognition is, necessarily, misrecognition. Citing Hegel's discussion of Antigone in the *Phenomenology*, Markell argues that Hegel's account accords with the perspective developed in Greek tragedy. For Hegel, he concludes, recognition is an ideal, but the ideal cannot insulate us against the reversals of action.

Markell uses this theory to evaluate instances of the politics of recognition in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 is a kind of case study of identity politics that focuses on the nineteenth-century emancipation of Jews in Germany. Chapter 6 takes on the highly charged issue of multiculturalism. In both cases Markell argues that the results of the politics of recognition are mixed: there are some very real gains, but its capacity to respond to injustices is limited. Most tellingly he argues that the politics of recognition overlooks some of the



deeper relations of power and forms of subordination that it is designed to combat (171).

Markell's concluding chapter contrasts the politics of recognition and the politics of acknowledgment. The focus is contingency and vulnerability. Markell wants to counter what he sees to be the confidence of the politics of recognition to define and assert identity with an emphasis on the instability of identity. Although he does not want to deny the necessity of acknowledging identity, he wants to assert that doing so is not as simple as the advocates of the politics of recognition have asserted.

Markell's book joins what is now a huge literature criticizing identity politics. Despite its popularity in some camps and despite its virtual institutionalization in the political life of Western democracies, academics are almost universally opposed to the practice. But it would be unfair to dismiss Markell's book as just another critique of identity politics. His claim that identity politics, like liberalism, assumes the sovereignty of the individual, is a significant claim. It cuts to the heart of identity politics and problematizes its challenge the liberal tradition. Markell's reinterpretation of Hegel is also noteworthy. Whether or not this reinterpretation ultimately holds up to scrutiny, it is telling that he makes a compelling case against identity politics based in the work of the philosopher who is regarded as its founder.

The most difficult aspect of any critique of identity politics, however, is proposing an alternative. There is a reason for the rise of identity politics. It speaks to the problematic concept at the center of liberalism, the universal citizen, and the hierarchies it has created. Identity politics attempts to redress this problem and the politics of acknowledgment that Markell proposes attempts to do as well. It seems legitimate to ask, then, what we would gain by embracing the politics of acknowledgment. Here things get murky. As Markell himself admits, his theory is too abstract. In political terms, how would we distinguish between recognition and acknowledgment? How would we acknowledge the vulnerability of our identities in ways that are politically viable? Markell makes no attempt to answer these questions. Ultimately his analysis is an interesting and challenging academic exercise but one that leaves the fundamental problems of identity politics unanswered. But what is needed from political philosophy today, however, is just such an answer.

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**Delos B. McKown**

*Behold the Antichrist: Bentham on Religion.*

Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books 2004.

Pp. 417.

US\$32.00. ISBN 1-59102-116-2.

The utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) published three major books on religion. In *Church-of-Englandism and its Catechism Examined* (1818), he vehemently attacked the political character of the established church and recommended its 'euthanasia' or disestablishment. In the course of this polemic he applied his philosophy of language to a detailed dissection of the absurdities of the Church catechism, and argued against its use in the curriculum proposed by the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. This was followed by *An Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion on the Temporal Happiness of Mankind* (1822), in which he critically evaluated the utility of religious beliefs, most notably the belief in an afterlife of eternal rewards and punishments. Finally, in *Not Paul, but Jesus* (1823) he challenged the veracity of the New Testament accounts of Paul's conversion and subsequent maneuvering within the early Christian church, concluding he was an impostor bent on personal aggrandizement.

In *Bentham on Religion* Delos McKown devotes three chapters to each of these texts. In the first chapter of each part he summarizes the content of the particular text, the second chapter provides a defence of Bentham's arguments, and the third offers a critical assessment of the text. McKown's discussion — part exposition, part textual analysis, with extensive passages of McKown's own theological explorations thrown in — is thorough and at times penetrating and rewarding. In many respects he demonstrates a sure touch in handling Bentham's philosophy of religion. However, the unduly cumbersome tri-partite chapter structure also leads to unnecessary repetition, and McKown indulgently passes on to the reader rather more than is necessary about his own personal views on religion. So much so, we may be forgiven for thinking that the *Antichrist* of the title is a reference to the book's author rather than the utilitarian philosopher who is its subject. The flow of the book is also marred by frequent and lengthy digressions, both in the text and in the notes (many of which run on for several pages). More importantly, however, the project is almost entirely disengaged from the principles of Bentham's utilitarianism and based on the false assumption that these anti-religious writings constitute a 'forgotten side of Bentham' (386). The latter will be news to Bentham scholars.

The best chapter in the book is McKown's explication of Bentham's philosophy of language and its application to his analysis of the Church of England catechism. Here McKown dispenses with a full exposition of the political content of *Church-of-Englandism*, to focus on Bentham's analysis of the beliefs expressed in the catechism. The explanation he provides of Bentham's philosophy of language is not new. Other writings on Bentham

may be consulted on this topic, including Ross Harrison's impressive book *Bentham* (Routledge 1983; reprinted 1999), in which Bentham's theory of meaning is situated as the core element in understanding his philosophy. McKown appears not to have read Harrison, but his analysis follows suit, and is helpfully applied to Bentham's trenchant critique of the catechism. Such rewards, however, come at a high cost to the reader.

A typical example of McKown's approach occurs in Chapter 3 when he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the *Analysis*. Bentham, he says, ought not to be criticized on the basis of recent advances in genetics, psychology, and 'brain chemistry'. Yet, he cannot refrain from pointing out what these would have told Bentham about the nature of religious belief. Interesting no doubt, but hardly to the point. Added to this is the irksome manner in which McKown conducts his discussions, such as when he states: 'I can do no better in clinching the point above [Bentham's underestimation of the 'prowess' of revealed religion] than to quote myself in criticism of Karl Marx's failure to understand religion' (100). A few pages later he recommends that instead of the term 'insanity' to capture the gap between religious beliefs and ordinary empirical experiences, Bentham 'would have been well advised to use "religion-specific irrationality"', but then points out that he could not have done this 'since I believe myself to have originated this less colourful but more accurate term' (102). And, when discussing the dualism of body and soul in relation to the scriptures, McKown writes: 'At this point I can do no better than to appropriate a few words from an unpublished manuscript of mine' (201) — a Bachelor of Divinity thesis from 1955. And so it goes on.

The irritating character of the book extends to McKown's treatment of other interpretive works on Bentham, including my own *Secular Utilitarianism: Social Science and the Critique of Religion in the Thought of Jeremy Bentham* (OUP 1990). He devotes a good deal of energy to rejecting the interpretations set forth in that book, but I spare the reader the tedium of a detailed response. Several of his arguments are to the point, but too many others are based on mis-readings. At bottom, his criticisms appear to be based on the entirely mistaken assumption that I am a Christian apologist (82), 'a pious defender of the faith' (198), whose 'metaphysics is much more densely populated with "spiritual" denizens than is Bentham's' (345). This will be a startling revelation to those who know me, and to those who say I pushed too hard the view that Bentham was a zealous atheist.

As interesting as *Bentham on Religion* may be to philosophers of religion, this is mainly because McKown has some very interesting things to say about that subject, particularly when he draws upon recently acquired knowledge in science to make his arguments. However, this is not a text from which Bentham scholars can learn much. It settles none of the issues related to the authorship of Bentham's writings on religion — two of the three books appeared under the names of pseudonyms, and with unspecified editorial assistance — and it contains no information on the extant manuscripts related to these books. Until definitive versions of these texts and related

manuscripts are published in *The Collected Works of Jeremy Bentham* (in progress), a final pronouncement on Bentham's writings on religion will not be possible.

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**Cheryl Misak, ed.**

*The Cambridge Companion to Peirce.*

New York: Cambridge University Press 2004.

Pp. xi + 362.

US\$70.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-57006-9);

US\$25.99 (paper: ISBN 0-521-57910-4).

Misak has two Peirce collections, a 1998 and this one; there are now over a dozen Peirce anthologies available. His renaissance blooms, over a century after 'being frozen out' (1) of academic America.

Misak's 'he was a difficult man and this was no doubt partly responsible' (1) must be a slip. Hypocritical Puritan Christian administration is the reasonable diagnosis. She portrays Peirce as an ethical conservative, based on instinct. But he well knew instincts are overridable by education/habituation (second nature) and even self criticism (autonomy). The normative sciences (aesthetics, ethics and logic) presuppose self-control. *Antidogmatist* (anti-tenacity-apriorism-authority) fits him better. Values are amenable to reasoned progress not unlike science — as Misak herself argues in her chapter; yes, truth applies to ethics, but she omits that truth itself is a form of goodness and that Peirce renames ethics *antethics* or *practics* to contrast conservative (folklore) morality (1.574; see below).

Like the book, Misak's opening overview admirably covers most bases, except the classification of the sciences, unravelling the 'tangled skein' of his corpus; criticism is much harder now but (as she expects) still manageable. The overview begins: 'pragmatism — the view that our theories must be linked to experience or practice ...'; *linked* is too broad and *the* too narrow. Variations on *link* include empiricism, positivism, even Kant; and pragmatism itself is not *a* view, not even CSP's view, but a movement — as is CSP himself; one early form is his 'bantling' which he finally lets go. Misak says, 'Peirce credits Berkeley's arguments that all meaningful language must be matched with sensory experience as the precursor of pragmatism' (2). This misfits CSP's later modal pluralism which includes real possibilities and

generalities (types, laws, habits and 'would be's'). The 1903 lectures *do* affirm *nihil est in intellectu quin prius fuerat in sensu* (241), but spin it inimitably into a semiotic Kant: anyone who 'proposes that we should begin by observing "the first impressions of sense", forget[s] that our very percepts are the results of cognitive elaboration' (5.416). (For more on perception see the Rosenthal chapter.)

Remarkably, Misak quotes 'we must look to the upshot of our concepts in order to rightly apprehend them' to explain Peirce's pragmatism (2). But the context of CP 5.3 (1902) disassociates him from James' Radical Empiricism and recants his early view as Stoic; 'the spirit of the [pragmatic] maxim ... would direct us to something very different from practical facts, namely to general ideas.' Misak says CSP 'unlike his [empirical] verificationist [theorists of meaning] counterparts wants all hypotheses exposed to the pragmatic maxim' — as though he was merely a meaning-verificationist with an exception, namely, 'he does not exempt formal (or 'analytic') sentences' (as though these were the same!). (The relation of CSP to James and other pragmatists is the focus of Pihlstrom's chapter. See below for verificationism of another sort.)

Dipert is humbled by his task. His careful tour through CSP's logical development ends with: 'As we approach the century mark after Peirce's death ... there is some truth to the claim that the most important work on Peirce's logical philosophy remains to be done' (319). He notes the apparent 'embarrassment' of CSP's founding logic on mathematics — contra the Russell-Whitehead mainstream. Not for Quine: 'It may be said that classical mathematics reduces to logic, but it may also be said, in a different and equally defensible sense of the word 'logic' that logic stopped and mathematics began with [classes]' (*Methods of Logic*, 224 ). But the logic that morphs into mathematics is not CSP's normative science, which he placed just below mathematics and phenomenology in terms of applicability of its principles.

Wiggins is less patient. 'It is time to supercede the form of words ... .' The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed upon by all who investigate is what we mean by truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real' (89). At least in Dummett's sense, 'Peirce is not an antirealist ... There is no pragmaticist conception of truth' (116). CSP would welcome dialectical supersession. But Dummett too may be superceded — that CSP is not an antirealist by *his* lights is at best a curiosity. The possibility of incompatible yet pragmatically true theories conflicting with the law of excluded middle presupposes logical truth values are the same as those for empirical and theoretical descriptions; as a calculus 'T or F', 'not T and F', etc. do just as well uninterpreted. Also theoretical reality is vague; the excluded middle does not apply to vagues (5.448). That CSP has no conception of truth doesn't follow from Wiggins' inability to find it in the five cited passages. (Rosenthal cites Almeder's 'Peirce's Thirteen Theories of Truth' [207].) However, Wiggins is surely right that, given the unscientific methods of fixing [dogmatic] belief (tenacity, authority, apriorism), Peirce is innocently sanguine that science *will* win out in the end (see 5.494). In many moods CSP seems to think

truth is what *will* prevail. Wiggins 'justifiably hope' is better. Thayer, trying to thresh out the kernel, finds *would if ideal*, better yet (5.565ff).

The theory of signs makes truth an attribute of propositions — complex signs interpreting other signs as having one part refer to/denote the same thing as the other part. If so, it is true (5.553). 'Truth is conformity of a representamen to its object, ITS object, mind you' (5.554). A proposition minimally refers to something and classifies it. Thus truth is correct classification, correct according to the norms of interpretation. Signs include (i) icons, (ii) indices and (iii) symbols, which denote their objects only because an interpreter knows (i) a resemblance — both signifier and object signified share relevant classifications, (ii) a causal connection between signifier and signified, and (iii) they are tied by a cultural norm—a community rule or standard of correct linguistic behaviour. (Compare Hume's resemblance, cause/effect and contiguity.) An icon such as a recording or photograph may truly, faithfully, accurately represent by resemblance its performance/object and may be proven so (fallibly) by experiencing both. A symbol such as a sentence (itself a creature of interpretation of noise/ink *as* language) may be interpreted according to symbolic norms as a vehicle of reference and classification; if correct, it will truly, faithfully, accurately represent its object and may be proven so by observation — provided it refers to empirical objects and classifications. (*True proposition* evolved from *true friend*; *proof* evolved from *tried* or *tested*; in ordinary contexts these differ because one might know a truth by an irreproducible experience which is insufficient as a public proof; hence the tried *and* true: like friends, such propositions might be true, trustworthy etc. without *one's* knowledge; proofs answer *how do you know?*) Knowing the language-norms *we* can prove by seeing that 'The apple is red' is true. But symbols about reality behind appearance (theories) are *ipso facto* unprovable (publicly *or* privately) in this way. Thus explanatory theories are about what experiences, as signs themselves, are (hypothetical) *indices* of. When empirical proof is impossible, an idealized method is the best we can do. A Hookway footnote ponders a '*constitutive* account of truth' (148). *Pure proceduralism* seems better; empirical proof/verification is the imperfect (fallible) procedure for propositions about empirical objects and events whose truth is knowable (but irreplicably) without the proof procedure. In court, a trial is a proof procedure; yet a defendant and witnesses can know prior to it. Theories are meaningful but unknowable apart from the procedure. Faith—the will to believe—is mere tenacity; revelation is irreplicable — the method of authority. The ancients put gods (supernatural psyches) behind appearances; beginning with the presocratic *physikoi*, science naturalizes the supernatural — but it remains mysterious, only approachable like  $\pi$ .

Truth is conformation of a representation to ITS object. CSP denies the intelligibility of things in themselves — objects of reference apart from referential equipment including perception and theoretical dialectic itself (Habermas cites 5.311, 5.392). Putnam tried to make CSP out to be an absolute realist; Hookway takes him to task for this ('colours are real' [128] but perceiver relative). Reality can only be the world as *we* can represent and

know it — if *we* try our (collective) best; gods may be less epistemically challenged (5.553). Rosenthal notes problems about applying traditional labels of realism/idealism (208ff). Hookway argues CSP finally realizes external objects exist independently of our thoughts about them (144). But the nature of the objects — their whatness — is not so independent. *Parmenidean* or *indeterminate realism* seems better: of reality in itself we can say only 'It is'; what it is is TBD; but even *It is* is a sign [1.547]. (But Short claims since cause/effect are independent of interpretation so are indices [221] — which seems an invalid conversion—and that later sign theory implies a defensible form of 'teleosemantics' [233].)

Misak too ties truth to ideals: 'Were we to get a belief which would be as good as could be, that would be a true belief' (7). And realizes this must be tied to evidence (13); but adds, 'Peirce sums up the matter thus: "a true proposition belief in which would never lead to ... disappointment" ... A true belief is a permanently settled or indefeasible belief'(7). Given the evidentiary requirement truth can no more be merely the undisappointing than it can be James' folly, the satisfactory — which CSP thinks an incomplete idea, satisfaction being at least dyadic; *undisappointing as a predictor* is better.

For iconic and symbolic representations of the apparent world, *true* is a positive and *false* a negative term; falsity is the absence of truth — missing the bulls-eye to some degree or other. Truth is perfection; there are no degrees — *truer* means *less false*. Theoretical truth inverts this: the true *is* the false-proof, which comes in degrees. And judging false-proof, presupposes the test, the proof. Otherwise it is merely possibly false-proof, what CSP called a 'make believe'(5.416, 5.565). For theories, the tried is the true, resulting only from repeated trial and error. (Hookway provides another source for the negativity thesis [139].)

The (1905) variation — truth is belief unassailable by doubt (which Misak favours and denies is epistemic [5]) — also fails in the face of dogmatism. However *reasonable doubt* makes it a matter of ideals. Thus we get the criminal law standard of proof — which given fallibilism, may be the best humans can reach at any given stage. We *can* conceive of doing better only minus deadlines and other limitations of actual inquiry: beyond reasonable doubt, given perfect (best possible) information — after an ideal search. Knowledge combines both truth and rationality; retracting either forces a retraction of *know*. Theoretical truths would be unretractable knowledge claims; error-proof. Thus my expurgated CSP is an epistemic verificationist *about* (theoretical) truth. (A Wiggins footnote says Dummett is in agreement [126].) Dewey's 'truth as warranted assertability' gets CSP right, given caveats regarding empirical and theoretical truths, and given belief as the sincerity condition for assertion. (He criticized James: drinking a liquid to test for poison might have unsatisfactory consequences in general; but it might verify the hypothesis as true.)

Carnap first complained that the CSP-Dewey conception was epistemological and confused, based on Tarski. But CSP's sign theory makes even sentences creatures of interpretation *as* language; propositions — reference

and classification — are interpretations of language/sentences. Alleged truth bearers transcending interpretation and knowledge can only be ‘make believe’ (5.416). (Skagsted’s chapter argues CSP used sign theory to distinguish mind/cognition from consciousness, making *collective mind* and *unconscious mind* literal and anticipating work in AI.)

This is CSP’s response to Hookway’s ‘buried secrets’ problem: countless truths will never be verified or even tested. These are ‘make believe’ truths and ‘make believe’ propositions—possibilities not actualities. ‘It rained one inch on the morning of the Battle of Hastings’ seems either true or false, but which one is now unverifiable; it in *now* theoretical. In these cases we have an indeterminate truth value, not an unproven truth or falsehood (5.565), not unlike Aristotle’s future sea battle. It will be or it won’t/did or didn’t. But *now* it is neither true nor false that it will/did (5.448, 5.505).

Hookway concludes that CSP did not offer, after all, a definition of truth but groped toward a performative account (first plumbed by Strawson following Austin’s own performative theory of *know* as offering a warranty — the performative version of Dewey.) *True* said in response to an assertion may simply express agreement as does *I know, I know*. However even sincere agreement is compatible with belief for no good reason. Serious sincere uses of *I know P* and *P is true* presuppose the speaker believes he has proof.

In opposition to positivists, CSP made normativity, ethics, aesthetics and logic, an object of science. Truth is a variety of logical goodness (1903 Lecture Five): for ‘veracious propositions [sincere] to say that a proposition is false and that it has been *found* to be false are equivalent ... It appears, then that logical goodness is simply excellence of argument.’ The good, like the sun, lets things be and lets them be known.

Space permits mere mention of other worthy chapters: Boler discusses CSP and scholastic realism; Anderson, science and religion; Levi, statistical reasoning, conjecture, induction and relations to Bayes and Popper. This collection will no doubt cause future Peirce scholars to dig deeper and reach higher. That tangled skein may yet be woven into a Peircean tapestry or two. They might converge regarding CSP’s final positions; there would be no other truth about this. Supersession is more likely.

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**David E. Ohreen**

*The Scope and Limits of Folk Psychology:*

*A Socio-linguistic Approach.*

New York: Peter Lang 2004.

Pp. 279.

US\$52.95. ISBN 0-8204-7029-5.

In *The Scope and Limits of Folk Psychology*, David Ohreen argues that folk psychology is a human artifact with significant cross-cultural variation. Children learn it through first learning its vocabulary, and in its adult form it is ineliminable. In six chapters, one of which is introductory, he discusses folk psychological realism, eliminativism, the development of folk psychology, its cross-cultural manifestation, and how it relates to rationality. *The Scope and Limits of Folk Psychology* is a book version of a PhD thesis. Unfortunately, what makes a fine PhD thesis often does not make a fine book. A book should go far beyond a literature review, and Ohreen's does not. The original ideas in the book are underdeveloped, and the reader who knows the area will not find much of interest to her. A notable exception is the chapter on cross-cultural differences in thinking about mind and action. Much of the discussion about folk psychology both in psychology and philosophy assumes a relatively cross-culturally stable construct. Ohreen makes a fine effort to throw doubt on this approach. He leaves the reader stimulated and curious. However, instead of developing the argument he begins so well, he hurries off to another topic. This is a general shortcoming of the book. Where the real work should begin, we have a new chapter on another topic.

Ohreen sides with Daniel Dennett's way of regarding the reality of the propositional attitudes. He thinks the debate about whether psychological states really exist is misguided. It does not further our understanding of the mind. What *would* further such understanding is looking closer at how folk psychology is used. Before doing so, however, Ohreen introduces and rejects eliminative materialism. He leans on Terrence Horgan and James Woodward's criticism of Churchland, and aligns himself with Kathleen Wilkes' criticism of the entire framework: folk psychological knowledge is not like the theoretical knowledge of scientists. This leads us to suspect that he is not friendly to the theory theory of folk psychology. And, sure enough, in the following chapter this theory — together with simulation theory and modularity theory — are rejected as plausible accounts of the development of folk psychology. What seems to be the problem is that none of the prevalent accounts sufficiently take into consideration the relation between mastering the *language* of folk psychology and mastering its concepts. Children learn concept by applying them in the interaction with others within a culture.

I found this treatment unsubtle. It would be truly shocking if the views Ohreen rejects maintain that the acquisition of folk psychology has nothing to do with *using* the relevant concepts or doing so in the interaction with others. We need to know why these views are committed to rejecting that

the ability to understand what people say and to communicate linguistically can have anything to do with folk psychological development. Then we need details of how, if psychological concepts cannot be acquired without linguistic competence, language promotes such acquisition. Here Ohreen faces some empirical difficulties insofar as an increasing number of infant studies indicate that children have a rather sophisticated understanding of others before they master the relevant vocabulary. His idea also appears to conflict with his later claim that some animals, e.g. dogs, have intentional understanding.

In my view, the most interesting part of the book is the chapter on how people explain behavior and think about mind in other cultures. Here Ohreen avails himself of anthropological and psychological research. There is no unequivocal evidence that children's psychological understanding develops in the same order across different cultures. Other cultures have different ways of conceptualizing mind and behavior. Westerners have a more individualistic understanding of the springs of their behavior — as Richard Nisbett has shown — and more of a tendency to ruminate over their own thoughts and feelings. But many cultures don't seem to be that concerned with the mind. For instance, Samoans apparently think it impossible to ever know the reasons for action, wherefore they spend little time speculating about them. The question is what to make of these cultural differences. Here things start going much too fast. In short order, both theory theory and simulation theory are rejected as being compatible with the cross-cultural data. This is quite surprising since, *prima facie*, it seems that some forms of theory theory would be ideally suited to account for this variation. Here it seems to me that Ohreen does not do enough justice to what counts as evidence for children to work with. The fact that children develop folk psychological understanding themselves does not mean that they are impervious to how the people around them talk about and relate to mind and action. Ohreen concludes that whereas there is a universal understanding of others as thinking beings — apparently not that different from the intentional understanding of certain animals such as dogs (204n10) — there is no universal folk psychological understanding, understood as belief/desires psychology (raising questions about what his ineliminativism consists in).

The last chapter concerns the rationality of beliefs. I was uncertain about its relevance to the project. Ohreen concludes that other cultures do sometimes have irrational beliefs about the springs of action and other things. The intervening argument rests in part on dubious evolutionary speculations. It turns out that it is surprisingly easy to show how rationality was selected for: 'if Thor has true beliefs that Sally loves him, he has a much better chance of copulating and passing on his genes' (240).

Ohreen's book is well written. It is clear and has a nice flow to it. I cannot recommend the content, however. It is not that Ohreen is not well read. He presents enough material to show his mastery of the area. But one has the feeling that he does not have much to add. His arguments rely

heavily on the work of other people, to which he adds only small nuances. It is not a book that will change the thinking about folk psychology.

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**James F. Pontuso**  
*Assault on Ideology:*  
*Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's Political Thought.*  
Lanham, MD: Lexington Books 2004.  
Pp. 226.  
US\$25.00. ISBN 0-7391-0594-9.

The first edition of Pontuso's *Assault on Ideology* was published in 1990. Reading the second edition in 2005 I felt like someone who just received a piece of the Berlin Wall for Christmas. In 1989 the concrete would have glowed with the energy of liberation; in 2004 it would have been just a cold chunk of concrete. Likewise, in 1990, the case that Pontuso makes for Solzhenitsyn as a major political thinker might have sounded more plausible. Fifteen years after the end of the Cold War, however, Solzhenitsyn's political (as opposed to historical and literary) achievement sounds dated and derivative.

The text can be analysed into three thematic moments: Solzhenitsyn's critique of Soviet totalitarianism, his claim that its deep cause was Marx's radicalization of Enlightenment philosophy, and his prescriptions for a good social order.

There can be no doubt that Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* was a seminal historical-literary work of the twentieth century. Pontuso contends, however, that this *magnum opus*, as well as lesser-read works, must be mined for their political ore as well. Indeed, Pontuso claims that it was Solzhenitsyn's testimony to the brutality of the Soviet regime that was responsible for hardening political opinion in the West against the Soviet Union and thus a key link in the causal chain that led to its ultimate collapse (146-7). This argument is not convincingly supported. As American disclosures following the demise of the Soviet Union revealed, the policy of *détente* was not a function of ideological and political softness towards the Soviet Union but of faulty intelligence that overestimated its economic and military strength.

That said, Solzhenitsyn remains an essential figure in the struggle against totalitarianism, one whose bearing witness to the horrors of the prison camps should not be forgotten. As is often the case, however, those

who live in the midst of history do not always provide the most sophisticated explanations of it. Such must be said to be true of Solzhenitsyn's attempt to explain the genesis of the disaster that was Soviet Communism. Pontuso explains that Solzhenitsyn rejects the three main theories of why communism proved so brutal: that it was a consequence of pressure to industrialise, or of an endemic authoritarianism in Russian culture, or of the 'cult of personality' created around Stalin. Instead Solzhenitsyn offers a fourth alternative, that totalitarianism was the necessary outcome of trying to put Marx's theory into practice. Of these four possibilities I will consider in more detail the first and the last.

The first explanation is rejected by Solzhenitsyn, but Pontuso does not present an entirely convincing case in support of it. A more detailed consideration of the consequences of industrialization for agrarian and colonized peoples in the West reveals strong parallels with the consequences of Soviet industrialization for Russian workers and peasants. It is true that there were no Gulags or liquidation of the *kulaks* in England in the eighteenth century, but there was the enclosure movement that destroyed peasant livelihoods, not to mention the slave trade and the genocide of the aboriginal population of North, Central, and South America. If these parallels are considered in the detail that they deserve, the terror of the Soviet Union can plausibly be explained, as Stalin himself said, by its trying to do in five years what the West did in fifty. Such an explanation by no means justifies the deaths of millions of people, no more than the superior productivity of capitalist agriculture justified the starvation of English peasants or the profit made from sugar plantations justified the extermination of enslaved Africans. Historical understanding and moral critique are separate orders of philosophical discourse. Pontuso, following Solzhenitsyn, tends to confuse them.

Failure to adequately support the rejection of the first explanation raises problems for the plausibility of Pontuso's support for the fourth explanation. This problem is compounded by a fundamental tension that runs through Pontuso's examination of Solzhenitsyn's critique of Marx. Pontuso admits that Marx's work is open to different interpretations. In fact, he provides a very good overview of those differing interpretations (68-70). However, this exegetical sophistication disappears when it comes to examining Solzhenitsyn's critique. Pontuso abandons the principle of charity in favour of straightforward affirmations of Solzhenitsyn's reconstruction of Marx as a mechanical materialist who believed that the end of communism justified any means of achieving it. This ignores the philosophical complexity of Marx's work, but worse, overlooks the core of his political position, which was not that a party of professional revolutionaries could create communism by force of will, but rather that the liberation of the working class had to be the collective act of the working class itself. One can reject that position for a number of reasons, but in order for the rejection to be valid the actual position must first be acknowledged. It is understandable that Solzhenitsyn, raised on the pabulum of Communist Party indoctrination, could present Marx as he does. But that Pontuso, clearly possessed of a more nuanced understanding

of Marx, should follow him is a failure of argumentation. Rarely is the web of historical causality so straightforward as to justify claims that one thinker's theory is the direct cause of eighty years of faulty practice.

The text is ultimately a disappointment, however, because its aim — to vindicate Solzhenitsyn as a major political thinker — is not fulfilled. This is not due to any lack of scholarship or argument on Pontuso's part, but because Solzhenitsyn has little of contemporary relevance to say. His critique of the Enlightenment adds little to Burke's arguments of two hundred years ago. His contention that Enlightenment humanism caused atheistic relativism is implausible, given that most major Enlightenment thinkers (if we include the Scottish and German enlightenments) were not atheists, that atheism is still a minority position, and that most relativists treat the Enlightenment as the modern source of universalism. His claim that the political crimes of the twentieth century are due to loss of belief in a 'complete supreme entity' (149) is underdetermined by facts and argument, ignores the litany of brutality organized religion carries in its historical wake, and sounds even less plausible in the aftermath of believers in a 'complete supreme entity' flying passenger planes into office buildings, prompting another set of believers in the same (theologically speaking) complete supreme entity to bomb the hell out of two countries in response. Despite a very well researched text, Pontuso uncovers little that could be called a 'political theory' and less of anything of practical significance to people still suffering social injustice today.

For all that I would still recommend that this book be read, and in particular by anyone who believes (as I do) that Marx's social theory remains relevant. While I was unconvinced by Pontuso's arguments, that does not mean that Solzhenitsyn's testimony as to the reality of the Soviet Union should be forgotten. It should, on the contrary, be studied. If I am wrong and Solzhenitsyn right about the connection between Marx and Stalin, then that practical reality would negate any remaining value in the theory.

**Jeff Noonan**

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**Duncan Richter**

*Historical Dictionary of Wittgenstein's  
Philosophy.*

Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2004.

Pp. xxvii +242.

US\$60.00. ISBN 0-8108-5059-1.

Although he produced a spelling dictionary for schoolchildren, dictionaries seemed to have a dark side for Ludwig Wittgenstein (W) in that they manifest the power of language to level difference by making everything look the same. They make describing, asking, promising, praying look the same. It might be said, in the same spirit, that a dictionary of W's thought makes him just another figure in the history of philosophy whose main themes and terms can be captured in propositions and theories. In this respect then such a dictionary might be thought to miss the radical difference that W stands for in history of philosophy.

Duncan Richter's dictionary is unconcerned with such extreme reactions, and aims to be a useful reference work for students of W's philosophy, interested scholars from other disciplines, as well as for curious general readers. Its contents include a chronology, a brief biographical sketch, an outline of the early and later philosophy, a series of entries on W's major concepts and themes, on historical figures whom W read or was influenced by, on his family and contemporaries, on W's 'builders' and major exponents through the second half of the twentieth century, and lastly offers a bibliography.

The entries range from short paragraphs to a few pages and include such expected basic topics as propositions, logical atomism, the picture theory of meaning, show/say distinction, language games, forms of life, family resemblance, meaning as use, physiognomy, etc. Some unexpected but welcome entries are on music, jokes, and poetry. Among the historical entries, we find such expected figures as Saint Augustine, Arthur Schopenhauer, Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, Adolf Loos, Weininger, Spengler, and then, surprisingly, we come across Willard Quine, Richard Rorty, D.Z. Phillips, Cora Diamond, James Conant. There are also crisp entries on members of W's family and friends.

Richter's dictionary nicely balances philosophical and biographical materials, and importantly brings in history. W has always posed a challenge to historians and to himself, as to his relation to the history of philosophy. In conversations and discussions W himself spoke contemptuously of other philosophers and was keen on distancing himself from the tradition. Some scholars — Ray Monk, for example — even claimed that W's later philosophy was so original that it is without precedent in the history of philosophy, and hence entirely disconnected from it. Given such pronouncements, the idea of a historical dictionary that lists and explores connections and differences between figures in the history of philosophy and W's thought in its various incarnations is welcome.

Let us look at some of the entries. In general, they are crisp, informative, and reliable. Since the dictionary has *historical* in its title, I start with a few comments on some of the historical figures. The entry on Plato is disappointing, mainly because of what it does not say. It neither sketches W's relation to the father of the tradition, nor does it explain or comment on W's obsessive preoccupation with Plato, which bordered on wrestling with the father of Western philosophy to whom he did not want to be a footnote. Under Lev Tolstoy: the short stories and writings on religion are mentioned as much admired, but his crucial work in aesthetics *What is Art?* is not, despite the fact that W read and reread it and said that we could learn a lot from Tolstoy's insights into, as well as his bad theorizing on, aesthetic questions. The entry on the fellow Viennese Otto Weininger is unsatisfactory, since it not only dismisses him as adolescent reading for W, but fails to mention that Weininger is on W's list of ten authors who philosophically influenced him. Nor does Richter refer to Weininger's posthumously published book *On Last Things* (recently translated by Steven Burns), which influenced W's remarks on animals. This treatment of Weininger is odd, since the entry on the Viennese architect Adolf Loos, who is also on W's list, singles Loos out as 'one of the most important influences on his thinking.' I wonder: If Loos occupies such a lofty position, why not Weininger?

A few other things might raise eyebrows as well as questions about what counts as 'historical' in the title of the book. There is a rather long discussion of the disagreement between New and Old Wittgensteinians concerning the reading of the *Tractatus* — which not only strikes one as *de trop*, but also gives a queasy feeling of 'back to the future'. The New Wittgensteinians read the *Tractatus* as ironical in intent, as an elaborate joke, which reduces traditional philosophy as well as its own theories to absurdity. The idea is that the early W did not really hold the picture theory of meaning, nor was he serious about any of the theses of the *Tractatus*. Here the question has to be asked: Would W's moral views allow such an ironical stance? One might say: just as there are some things about which a Tractarian must be silent, there are some things he cannot be ironical about. Some other trace of strangeness: the entry on Norman Malcolm, by any measure one of the great American builders of W, merits seven and a half lines, while the entries on Cora Diamond merits 27 lines and that on James Conant 36 lines! Again, there is a surprisingly long entry on Richard Rorty — more than half a page — despite the fact that no one could seriously consider him to be a scholarly contributor to W studies.

The entry on music perks one's ears up, but turns out to be disappointing, since it neglects to bring in connections between music and philosophy in W's mind. He said to his friend Drury: 'It is impossible to say in my book one word about all that music has meant in my life. How then could I hope to be understood?' In light of this, it might have been interesting to refer briefly to Schubert, Brahms, Mahler, especially since the poet Rilke is mentioned, even though he was simply a beneficiary of W's generosity and played no role in

W's philosophical development, while the mentioned composers are alleged to have done so.

Last, but not least: there is no escape from the family. I noticed a factual error: 'Neither Ludwig nor any of his brothers married or had children,' we read on p. 197. False. Paul W, elder brother and one-handed concert pianist, emigrated to New York, married one of his piano students, and they had children! As to friends and lovers: There is no entry on W's great female love, Marguerite Respinger.

The bibliography at the end is comprehensive, and helpfully divided in to sections: W's Works, Bibliographical aids, Introductory texts, Biographies, W and Language, W and Mind, W and Ethics, and so on. Sometimes one has the impression that Richter is too inclusive and exclusive at the same time. For example, it is puzzling why some ground-breaking pieces are omitted, while relatively fanciful contributions are included. Consider: in the category W and Politics, Hanna Pitkin's early *Wittgenstein and Justice* is excluded, as is Allan Janik's pioneering *Essays on Wittgenstein and Weininger* in the section on Wittgenstein and Other Thinkers, yet other titles, such as *Wittgenstein and Derrida* are included. Under Wittgenstein and Aesthetics, Morris Weitz's classic works 'The Role of Theory in Aesthetics' and 'Wittgenstein's Aesthetics' are missing, and the recent collection of essays *Wittgenstein, Aesthetics and Philosophy*, edited by Peter B. Lewis, which was published in 2004, is misdated as appearing in 2003.

Having said all this, I still recommend Duncan Richter's dictionary as a reference book for libraries and for private acquisition by students and readers of W. It is a valuable resource and a useful aid in engendering a better understanding of the works of one of the seminal thinkers of the twentieth century.

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**Livio Rossetti, ed.**

*Greek Philosophy in the New Millenium* [sic]:

*Essays in Honour of Thomas M. Robinson.*

Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag 2004.

Pp. 346.

C44.50. ISBN 3-89665-205-2.

This *Festschrift* is both eclectic and eccentric. The range of topics discussed includes Aristotle's account of intellectual activity, the collapse of neo-scholasticism in Quebec's system of higher education, the impact of Greek philosophy on contemporary moral theory, the justification of vegetarianism in Plato's *Timaeus*, and several personal tributes to Tom Robinson, the person honoured by this *Festschrift* and a long-time professor of Philosophy and Classics at the University of Toronto. Moreover, these essays are written in English, French, Spanish, Italian, and German, edited by an Italian professor of philosophy, and published in Germany (which may account for the misspelling of 'millennium' in the title). There is even a poem in Modern Greek. The range of languages is so great that, apart from Prof. Robinson himself, there are few people alive today who would be able to read all of the contributions.

The eccentricity of the collection has to do with the fact that very few of the contributions have anything to do with the scholarly interests of the person being honoured, in this case Plato's psychology and natural philosophy, and their connection to the Presocratics and Aristotle. Indeed, very few of the contributions are scholarly articles at all, at least not of the sort that one ordinarily finds in philosophy journals. Instead, most of the articles consider the standing of ancient Greek philosophy in the world today, and they do this by looking at the various communities of scholars around the world who are engaged in analyzing and teaching the work of ancient Greek philosophers. Moreover, the survey offered is truly world-wide; the nations or regions covered range from Canada to Chile, Australia to China, Ireland to Scandinavia, and Spain to modern Greece. What we have here, then, is an exercise in professional self-examination, done, literally, on a global scale.

Despite its wide geographical range, such an exercise may seem parochial. After all, ancient Greek philosophy is only one sub-field within the history of philosophy, and the latter is itself a sub-field of philosophy. Still, ancient Greek philosophy has generally enjoyed a pride of place within the history of philosophy, and as the history of philosophy fares, so tend to fare many other disciplines that are historical in subject matter, but aspire to be more than just antiquarian. So, while this volume will be of interest primarily to those who specialize in ancient Greek philosophy, it will also be illuminating to those interested in current trends in the republic of letters.

For the most part, the essays take the form of national surveys of the local specialists in ancient Greek philosophy. Sometimes these country-by-country surveys give us more detail than anyone who is not an archivist could possibly

want, but this approach does have the merit of allowing several interesting patterns to emerge. Some of them are as follows:

1) Virtually everywhere, even in Europe, the study of ancient Greek is disappearing from secondary schools. In a sense, this is just a return to the state of affairs that prevailed at the beginning of the twentieth century, when studying Latin and Greek in secondary school was the preserve of a small and privileged minority. In effect, the study of ancient languages has not survived the enormous expansion of secondary schooling that took place in the twentieth century; the model of secondary schooling that was applied to the few could not be applied to the many. Given the lack of immediate utility from knowing these languages, it is not surprising that things have turned out this way. Still, it is somewhat amusing that, despite the tremendous increase in wealth that took place during the twentieth century, there were probably more students studying Latin and Greek in secondary school at the beginning of that century than at its end.

2) As a consequence, teaching these languages has become largely the preserve of universities. Since the level of language proficiency required to study ancient philosophy in the original is typically not reached until the end of an undergraduate programme, translations have become very important. Several contributors to this volume worry about the effect this will have on the study of ancient Greek philosophy, but there is reason for optimism. For many of the current generation of specialists in ancient Greek philosophy did not start their language studies until university.

3) During the twentieth century, many of the non-European universities were still heavily dependent on European scholars for the health and, in some cases, the very existence of their programmes in ancient Greek philosophy. This dependence took various forms; in some cases, it was the emigration of European scholars to former colonies; in others, extended visits by Europeans abroad; in others, students from outside Europe attended European universities to receive their training. While all of this still goes on, the gap between the European and non-European universities is much smaller than it once was. In many ways, this is a tribute to these European scholars; their efforts were so successful that their students or their students' students are catching up to their masters. Still, the Europeans felt and still feel that the ancient Greeks are part of who they are. Some worry about the extent to which Plato and Aristotle can be exported.

4) One reason for thinking that they can is the connection many contributors emphasize between ancient Greek philosophy and contemporary philosophy. This connection to other areas of philosophy is not new. The study of ancient Greek philosophy has often been understood by its practitioners as a way of doing philosophy *tout court*, which has encouraged openness to other forms of philosophical enquiry. The way in which this connection was made, however, has depended upon local circumstances. In the Catholic countries and universities, ancient Greek philosophy was taken seriously as a source of truth, but was usually subordinate to the pursuit of theology and tended to be interpreted according to the tenets of neo-scholasticism, particu-

larly during the first half of the twentieth century. In the 1950's and 1960's, particularly in the English-speaking countries, analytic philosophers held that ancient Greek philosophers were still of interest because they raised important questions about logic, definition, meaning, and epistemology. This interest in the Greek contributions to what Aristotle would call the theoretical sciences was followed by an interest in their contributions to the practical sciences of ethics and political philosophy, particularly in the case of virtue ethics. Both of these types of inquiry continue to this day. In the German-speaking world, however, the view still seems to be that philosophy cannot be understood apart from its history, and the historicist way in which this connection is understood often means that philosophy is indistinguishable from doxography. Thus, in Germany, Switzerland, and elsewhere, scholars still wrestle with the ambiguous legacy of Nietzsche and Heidegger. For, the iron rule of history that binds the ancient Greeks to their time also binds twentieth-century historians of philosophy to their own time; the claim by the latter to occupy an exceptional standpoint, from which the historical limitations of other periods can be seen, remains unproven. Specialists in this area are still trying to decide how much language and history matter in understanding ancient Greek philosophy.

Taken together, the essays in this book describe the intellectual engagement with ancient Greek philosophy that took place throughout most of the world during the twentieth century. One of the most interesting features to emerge from this history is that the study of ancient Greek philosophy became a kind of battleground between a fundamentally historicist view of philosophy, on the one hand, and a non-historicist view that saw ancient Greek philosophers as contributing to the lasting scientific legacy of mankind. It is perhaps not surprising that this dispute should have been especially acute in the study of the ancient Greeks, for if there is a period of human history that can claim to have contributed something beyond its own time and place, it is this one. Sorting out the difference between the merely contingent and transitory, on the one hand, and the lasting and significant, on the other, is something students of ancient Greek philosophy have had to do for many years now, and it is a question that all who seek to understand human affairs must address. Come to think of it, this was also one of the central questions considered by ancient Greek philosophers.

Getting scholars to reflect about these matters is not easy, and they usually do so only out of some sense of personal obligation to a valued colleague. It is a tribute to Tom Robinson that his service to this field should be the occasion for this self-examination.

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**Richard Rorty and Gianni Vattimo**

*The Future of Religion.*

Ed. Santiago Zabala. New York:

Columbia University Press 2005.

Pp. 91.

US\$24.50. ISBN 0-231-13494-0.

*The Future of Religion*, in which editor Zabala brings together Richard Rorty and Gianni Vattimo on the question of religion, contains an introductory essay by Zabala, an essay each by Rorty and Vattimo, and an interview with both Rorty and Vattimo conducted by Zabala in Paris in 2002.

Zabala, in 'A Religion Without Theists or Atheists', argues that after the postmodern deconstruction of metaphysics there are no longer any 'reasons' for either theism or atheism. He thus ties the rebirth of religion in the third millennium to the proclamation of the death of God (which he insists is not anti- but post-Christian), to a religion emerging across contemporary secularism. This new configuration of religion is taking shape, Zabala believes, in the 'weak thought' of Rorty and Vattimo, who share — one from the side of pragmatism, the other hermeneutics — the conviction that our Occidental concern over metaphysical certainties has ceded to the notion of *Bildung*, or culture, an 'existential self-creation that replaces handed down knowledge' (3). With neither religious nor atheistic truth claims able to prevail, the future of religion rests upon turning our attention to new concerns and purposes, namely, to a conception of a God who turns over power to humanity who must then find a way to live up to, not God, but each other, to the enhancement of freedom and the renewal of civic life through an inclusive and non-coercive political conversation.

In 'Anticlericalism and Atheism', Rorty argues that the 'anti-essentialist' movements in twentieth-century philosophy (which 'urge us to fight free of the old Greek distinctions between the apparent and the real and between the necessary and contingent' [30]), in advocating instead an historicist 'sociality of reason' or 'communicative reason,' allow us to get beyond the old debate between science and religion, which henceforth 'need not compete with one another,' and this because such thinking — having abandoned the search for ahistorical essences — is able to focus on 'questions about what context certain beliefs and practices or books can best be put in, for what particular purposes' (31-2). If we give up the notion that belief in the divine is an empirical hypothesis, then "empirical evidence" is irrelevant to talk about God, but this point bears equally against atheism and theism' (33). Being religious or non-religious, then, is more like being 'musical' or 'unmusical' (quoting Weber), is a matter of whether or not one resonates with a certain set of questions. Rorty admits that he himself is 'religiously unmusical', and regrets that in the past he has used the term 'atheist' to describe his position regarding religion when he should have used the term 'anticlerical,' since the latter, unlike the former, 'is a political view, not an epistemological or metaphysical one,' is the view that 'ecclesiastical institutions ... are

dangerous to the health of democratic societies' (33). Rorty's 'contemporary secularism' makes no claim about the existence or non-existence of God (a question Rorty finds 'uninteresting'), and is not opposed to religion so long as the latter is privatised and does not impose itself in the public square wherein 'the quest for truth and knowledge is no more and no less than the quest for intersubjective agreement' (36), an agreement hindered rather than helped by the presence of religion. The latter claim, Rorty stresses, 'is not a recognition of the true essence of religion, but simply one of the morals to be drawn from the history of Europe and America' (36). For the rest of the article Rorty approvingly comments on Vattimo's 'attempt to move religion out of the epistemic arena' (34) by 'identifying Christ neither with truth nor with power but with love alone' (36).

'The Age of Interpretation' is opposed by Vattimo to both the Age of Faith and the Age of Reason, and names our Heideggerian-Gadamerian age as one which 'reduces all reality to message,' one in which the Nietzschean statement that 'there are no facts, but only interpretations' is accepted and, simultaneously, itself recognised as an interpretation. Vattimo's most fascinating claims apropos religion are based upon Dilthey's claim that 'it is the advent of Christianity that makes possible the progressive dissolution of metaphysics ... Christianity introduces into the world the principle of interiority, on the basis of which "objective" reality gradually loses its preponderant weight ... [Nietzsche and Heidegger] draw the extreme consequences from this principle. ... Hermeneutics — expressed in its most radical form ... — is the development and maturation of the Christian message' (46-7). But if 'postmodern nihilism constitutes the truth of Christianity' (47), this means that the Scriptural 'truth that shall make you free' needs be understood as other than — even as the dissolution of — objective truth, and be reduced to 'a call to practice — the truth of love, of charity' (51). This proximity of truth to charity Vattimo finds in contemporary postmetaphysical philosophy, pre-eminently in Gadamer's hermeneutics for which truth 'comes about as the ongoing construction of communities' (51). Our 'age of interpretation' is possible 'only because we are living in a civilisation shaped by the biblical, and specifically Christian message' (52), such that being 'nihilistic enough' (sufficiently anti-metaphysical) correlates with being 'Christian enough' (53).

In the three-way dialogue, 'What is Religion's Future After Metaphysics?', Zabala leads Rorty and Vattimo through a free-flowing discussion of 'weak thought' and its implications for philosophy, social change, conversation, religion and the Church, politics and economics, and the Church's stand on ethics and sexuality. The dialogue serves, as might be expected from this form, more to provoke and entice than to systematically inform. It's somewhat disappointing here, perhaps, that Rorty and Vattimo spend most of the time affirming and congratulating each other on the merits of charity. A sharp exchange on their differences — which had been hinted at in each of their essays and might have been instructive, for it is not altogether evident that Rorty's anti-clerical, privatisation of religion and Vattimo's Christian secularism are, in the end, compatible — hardly gets underway.

For those interested in possibilities for post-metaphysical approaches to religion, this brief book opens a vista onto the thought of two potentially helpful thinkers, and may well provoke further study.

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**Cecilia Sjöholm**

*The Antigone Complex: Ethics and the  
Invention of Feminine Desire.*

Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2004.

Pp. ix + 209.

US\$45.00. ISBN 0-8047-4892-6.

In *The Antigone Complex*, Cecilia Sjöholm argues for the intrinsic role of desire in the formation of ethical values. Introducing the concept of the 'Antigone complex', Sjöholm brings to the surface the complexity present in any discussion of feminine desire in order to illuminate the obscure and multifaceted object of desire. The book analysis the way Antigone has been used as a model of feminine desire in a variety of philosophical texts, and how this model is conditioned by a certain view of women as being deficient in relation to ethical norms. In contrast with the conception of ethics as a domain of values that can be considered independently from issues of desire, Sjöholm aims to show, by pointing out the revelatory power of feminine desire embodied in Antigone, the constitutive role of subjectivity in ethics frequently overlook and ignored in ethical consideration.

In the first chapter, Sjöholm puts forward the historical picture of the philosophical discussion of feminine desire in relation to the discussions of ethics and morals, showing that the Enlightenment period sets a distinctive link between a lack of morality and virtue and feminine desire. Giving the reader a good summary of Mary Wollstonecraft's work and her conception of feminine desire, the chapter shows us that feminine desire is paradoxically capable of becoming a sign of moral autonomy.

The following two chapters expose the way Antigone is used as a model of feminine desire in philosophical texts. 'Sexuality Versus Recognition: Feminine Desire in the Ethical Order' focuses on Hegel's reading of Antigone and his considerations about femininity. The aim of the chapter is to examine how the intertwined relationship between feminine and the unethical characterized by Hegel can be interpreted as a different intertwined reality. Instead of accepting the marginalized reading of feminine desire and inter-

preting negatively its irreducible character to any social order, Sjöholm challenges us to consider that this is a mark of an unavoidable resistance of the ethical subject to the ethical order. She argues that in this picture we can recognize the reasonableness of the problematic conflicting relationships between family and state. The feminine we encounter, according to Sjöholm, 'is closer to contemporary theories of subjectivity than to a social definition of women's actual role in society' (30). This suggestion gives shape to the next chapter, which discusses Martin Heidegger's reading of Antigone showing us that his interpretation is an attempt to unravel Dasein in its purity ignoring determinations like gender. Despite the fact that Heidegger ignores gender issues in his interpretation of Antigone, Sjöholm shows how the Heideggerian point of view projects an understanding of feminine desire that is not teleological, nor biological, nor can it be reduced to a social or cultural construction. Feminine desire presents itself, in this Heideggerian perspective, as the 'figure of a kind of impossibility that is found at the heart of Dasein' (80).

In this way Sjöholm creates the stage to put forward the concept of an Antigone complex in Chapter Four. Arguing against structuralist tendencies in psychoanalysis, Sjöholm uses Simone de Beauvoir in a critique of Freud and Jacques Lacan for theorizing on female sexuality. Showing how Antigone challenges the idea that desire can be explained through a reduction to a symbolic structure, the chapter aims to demonstrate that psychoanalysis and feminism open a way for a philosophical elaboration of the connections between desire and ethics. The Antigone complex does not appear as in symmetrical opposition to Oedipus, nor as its complementary complex, and therefore does not apply only to women but is paradigmatic of all subjects.

The final chapter departs from Judith Butler's reading of Antigone criticizing the naturalization of normativity in family politics and proposes a reading of Lacan that puts forward the Antigone complex as an illustration of the ethics of the real.

Suggesting that we have to rethink our concept of family, Sjöholm shows how the Antigone complex opens a space for questioning that continually appeals for a search for an understanding. Though Sjöholm recognizes that psychoanalysis lacks an explicit theory of ethics, and has a dubious relationship to morality, she nevertheless wants to stress the ethical inspiration of psychoanalysis by arguing, at the end of this final chapter, for a crucial connection between ethics and psychoanalysis. This connection is not given by a hidden normative order of psychoanalysis but by a specific understanding of subjectivity, which has an intrinsic role to play in the process of ethical self-reflection. This is why she thinks Antigone serves as an adequate model, for it projects an ethics in which the subject appears as autonomous but also as a server, where the subject appears as finite but also capable of maintaining absolute values, a subject that appears as vulnerable but also a lord. With this Sjöholm hopes to have demonstrated that it is insufficient to think of our drives and desires as threats to ethical values, and that it is crucial for ethical reflection to recognize the way 'they contribute to the

formation of moral values' (132). The end of the chapter explores how two very different films about women and their strong and problematic relationship to their piano illustrate the undergone discussion. Though Cecilia Sjöholm makes an effort to connect and illustrate her discussion with vivid reality, one ends the book with a need for more on the practical consequences of her argument for future ethical inquiry. The dramatic ending of the book reads: 'all we need to do is affirm something that is sustaining us, between those two walls of impossibility that we are up against. What a chance, and what a surprise!' (154). This end leaves us with a sense that we are missing the poetic strength of the sentence because we are missing directions for future philosophical reflection that have this as their point of departure.

*The Antigone Complex* is an interesting contribution for the understanding of the role of subjectivity in the formation of ethical values and ethical order giving us a scholarly tour on the connection between ethics and philosophical reflection on feminine desire as well as the importance *Antigone* in the philosophical tradition.

### **Dina Mendonça**

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### **Ten Chin Liew**

*A Conception of Toleration.*

Portland, OR: International Specialized Book Services Inc (for Marshall Cavendish International, Singapore) 2004.

Pp. xi + 125.

US\$19.00. ISBN 981-210-368-6.

Ten explores the liberal version of toleration in several short essays collected in *A Conception of Toleration*. None of the pieces are original to this book, so avid readers of Ten will no doubt be familiar with the material. The 'liberal conception' (1) of toleration implies, at a minimum, non-interference with the ways of life which others freely choose. In the first essay, Ten builds upon this thin foundation by criticizing three additional criteria developed by Michael Walzer, Peter J. Nicholson and Susan Mendus respectively. Walzer argues toleration implies anything from hatred of, at one end, to enthusiastic support for, at the other, its object. Ten counters with the ordinary language argument tolerating what we already enthusiastically support seems silly. Ten therefore defines toleration as an attitude which implies some kind of *aversion* to its object. Next, regarding its objects, Ten takes on Nicholson's



argument toleration should be restricted to cases of *moral* aversion and counters it must also target our mere dislikes and annoyances.

Finally, Ten takes up Mendus' thesis toleration is an attitude one can only have toward *alterable* targets and as such, it represents a category error to ask racists to 'tolerate' persons of different racial origins from themselves. Ten objects to this criterion on two separate grounds. First, he argues against the requirement for alterability by reiterating the point toleration does not exclude targets which are merely disliked. Since we often dislike things or states of affairs that cannot be altered, we could very well be called upon to tolerate that which cannot be changed. Second, Ten argues even if alterability *was* a limit on targets of toleration, this would not support Mendus' inference racists cannot be asked to tolerate persons of other races. This is because what racists hate is the *proximity* of such persons not their existence.

In between the front and back ends of the collection are several book reviews as well as a few applied ethics pieces — on abortion, homosexual rights and pornography. Abortion, conservatives argue, is not an acceptable case for toleration because the 'moral status of the fetus' cannot be set aside (23). Judith Jarvis Thomson, Ten counters, argued persuasively via the violinist analogy that, even if the fetus has rights, those rights cannot possibly be outweighed by the mother's. Her entitlement to say when and who could make themselves at home in her body was surely the most fundamental security of the person right imaginable — one so basic it would, if exercised, even override anyone else's right to life. Michael Sandel argues that, unless the government is able to change the citizenry's moral view against homosexuality, it is unlikely homosexuals will ever enjoy full integration into society, and, as such, toleration is not enough. But, Ten insists, grudging non-interference would still be preferable to the injustices they have always suffered and would continue to suffer if, in order to establish homosexuals' equality before the law, we had to wait for the moral consciences of most citizens to fully embrace the concept of equal rights.

Where Ten comes across as enlightened on both these applications, his treatment of the question of pornography is another matter. Granting the pieces in which it is discussed are over twenty years old, Ten buys the argument that the consumption of pornography is a causal factor in the *reduction* of sex crimes against children and women and as such, however repugnant people find it, since it is demonstrably not implicated in harm, its production and consumption must be tolerated.

In the last chapter entitled 'The Ethics of Citizenship', Ten argues a middle normative position between the virtues of republican citizenship and those of democratic or liberal citizenship. John Stuart went against his father James Mill's version of liberal citizenship by insisting political participation was a necessity for all citizens as part of their education in toleration and thus in their ability to promote utility. The father had argued it was enough old men understood the needs of young ones and husbands ably protected the interests of their wives and children to ensure the pleasures and pains of all would be managed morally. Ten rejects both the elder Mill's paternalistic

conception of citizenship and what he calls the 'too austere' conception of John Stuart Mill's participatory, almost republican, conception of democratic citizenship. The latter, Ten argues, is too demanding in its moral requirement for political activism. It is not necessary, he says, to involve oneself in the political process in order to cultivate the liberal virtue of tolerance. Surely, participation in or even devotion to one's cultural or religious community can lead to an enlargement of the narrower circles of feeling which most persons never exceed. Ten concludes with, as noted, a middle position on ethical citizenship. 'The fact that in some contexts, and for some purposes, one is partial and attached to one's family, friends or cultures does not mean that one cannot in the context of a different role, act impartially in the promotion of the common interests of one's fellow citizens' (124).

I have two problems with Ten's argument. One, the younger Mill was not the 'too austere' political theorist Ten paints him as. Indeed, there is plenty of evidence Mill held more or less the view that Ten presents as his own. Two, I am more than just a little sceptical concerning Ten's argument any sort of non-political communal activity (involvement in one's religious community, for example) develops the social feelings in the same way political activity does. It seems to me while Mill would indeed have acknowledged many sorts of public activities could satisfy his requirement for political participation, not just any sort would do. In order for the correct feelings to be developed, it was necessary persons interact with and engage the ideas of those with whom they strongly disagreed, as well as with those whose interests were foreign or repugnant to them. No amount of communal activity within the confines, say, of an Amish settlement, could hope to succeed in that task.

Especially in light of growing conservative, communitarian and perfectionist political tendencies in the U.S., Ten's casual dismissal of Mill's insistence on varieties of contested but nevertheless true political activities as part of the basic moral education of citizens seems dangerously cavalier. He argues against Raz's 'competitive moral pluralism' in much the same vein and with similarly shaky results. But then did any of us think for a moment, ten or so years ago, a progressive U.S. society would be given up so quickly and decisively in favour of a Christian fundamentalist state?

In conclusion, I find the collection under review an odd mix of extremely relevant discussion of toleration *per se* and as applied to the case of homosexual rights, and theorizing on the topic that seems out of step with current social and geopolitical realities.

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**Peter van Inwagen, ed.**

*Christian Faith and the Problem of Evil.*

Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans 2004.

Pp. xiv + 316.

US\$35.00. ISBN 0-8028-2697-0.

*Christian Faith and the Problem of Evil* consists of fourteen essays and an introduction by the editor, Peter van Inwagen. The book arises out of a 1999 six-week summer seminar, sponsored by Calvin College and the Pew Charitable Trusts, devoted to the problem of evil. With the exception of the four essays by Paul Draper, Alvin Plantinga, Richard Otte and van Inwagen, the material in the book comes from participants in the seminar.

The problem of evil is multi-faceted involving, to use van Inwagen's phrase, 'a complex of many philosophical and theological problems about God and evil' (viii). A strength of this collection is that, although with the exception of Draper, the writers are Christian, it approaches the problem of evil from a variety of perspectives, many of which are not typically considered in treatments of the relation of God and evil. Perhaps the reason for this is that not all the contributors are professional philosophers. Among those contributing are Barbara Omolade, a sociologist, John Schneider, a theologian, Robert Stanley, a specialist in French literature and Carol Winkelmann, a linguist.

The result is that, although a number of contributors approach the problem of evil in a manner that will seem straightforward and familiar to analytic philosophers of religion, a number do not. Among the former group, for example, there is a tightly reasoned essay by Del Kiernan-Lewis. He argues that any claim based on the existence of evil that God, defined as a morally perfect, omniscient, and omnipotent being, does not exist, depends on premises whose truth is not entailed by such a being. Thus, provided the theist is prepared to reject such premises, the argument from evil fails.

Among the latter group we find the problem of evil addressed in a way that takes seriously the additional resources a specifically Christian theism may bring to the problem. Eduardo Echevarria, for example, drawing on the thought of John Paul II, explores the idea that human suffering, united with the suffering of Christ, participates in the outworking of God's salvation of humanity.

Still other contributors do not write on the philosophical issue of how the existence of evil is to be shown to be consistent with the existence of God, but rather on a variety of topics engaging with evil and Christian faith. Richard McClelland, without attempting to deconstruct the importance of philosophical discussions of the problem of evil, examines the array of psychological motives operative in such discussions in his essay 'Normal Narcissisms and the Need for Theodicy'. John Schneider in his 'Seeing God Where the Wild Things Are: An Essay on the Defeat of Horrendous Evil' explores the literary theme of evil as primordial chaos and its relation to God, arguing that 'sensitivity to the symbolism of God and evil in ancient biblical tradition, as

applied in Job, and then reapplied in the Gospel of Mark, gives Christian theology powerful resources to add to discussion of the problem of evil and belief in God' (261).

Discussions of evil, especially by philosophers, tend to deal with evil as abstracted from particular individual instances of evil. Eschewing any discussion of how evil can be shown to be consistent with the existence of God, the essays by Omolade and Winkelman explore in very concrete detail how oppressed women of Christian faith deal with evil. In her essay 'In the Bible, It Can Be So Harsh!', Winkelman chronicles the various understandings of God and evil by which battered African-American and white Appalachian women come to terms with their experience of domestic violence. In 'Faith Confronts Evil' Omolade explores the important role African-American women, many of them illiterate, played in the struggle against slavery, and how centrally these women depended on their Christian faith. Such essays are hardly standard fare for philosophical discussions of the problem of evil, but their inclusion enriches the volume.

Much lip-service is paid to being interdisciplinary, but it is no easy matter to achieve such a goal. A strength of this volume is that engages with the relation of evil to Christian faith from a variety of relevant disciplines. It does so in a manner that, in the main, makes genuine scholarship available to non-specialists in the various disciplines represented.

A great challenge of being genuinely interdisciplinary is to discover unity in difference. The very diversity of approach which characterizes this collection of essays and which constitutes one of its most interesting features, raises the question of how the various authors see their essays in relation to one another. An attractive idea would have been to include comments by the authors on each others' contributions. Perhaps this would have made the book even better than it is. It is, nevertheless, a valuable contribution to the subject of the relation of evil and Christian faith.

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**Morton White**

*From a Philosophical Point of View  
Selected Studies.*

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University  
Press 2005.

Pp.viii + 355.

US\$45.00. ISBN 0-691-11959-7.

The first thing that strikes you upon reading this new collection of essays by Morton White is that he has been doing philosophy for a very long time indeed. With this work, he has now authored or edited eighteen books. Three of his best known were written more than fifty years ago: *The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism* (1943), *Social Thought in America* (1949), and his edited *The Age of Analysis* (1955). This latest collection includes forty-one essays published from 1947 to 2003 (though nine of them have already appeared in a previous collection published in 1973). The essays range from technical philosophical analyses, to penetrating historical studies, to personal reminiscences. Nothing, it seems, is left out. For example we are treated to White's 1996 rejoinder to Dewey's defense of his distinction between the desired and the desirable. White had originally criticized Dewey on this point in 1949. Although Dewey apparently wrote a reply in 1950, it was not published until its inclusion in the last volume of his *Collected Works* in 1990. As White himself observes, 'by publishing a rejoinder to Dewey at this late date, I may make my exchange with him one of the longest-running ones in the history of philosophy ...' (167-8).

Similarly we have White's 1999 note on the ethical views of C.I. Lewis, responding to a letter he received from Lewis in 1963. Even more unusual is his 2001 memorial talk about Quine that consists primarily of whimsical bits of advice to White's eight-year old son on how to study the multiplication tables, and obscure bits of geography to White's eleven-year old son that Quine wrote in a letter of 1953. Also of interest are White's personal memories of G.E. Moore and his prescient reactions to philosophy in England shortly after the Second World War. White is impatient with philosophers who favor logic and epistemology at the expense of social, political, and moral problems. As far back as 1952 he chastised analytic philosophers who only 'venture into mathematics and physics when stimulated by logical needs, and flirt with psychology in the theory of knowledge, but most of their finely ground axes have been used to sharpen other axes. Few of the redwoods of human concern ever fall before them' (14). Although we may regret the implication that anyone should ever *want* to cut down the magnificent redwoods, we can share his dismay that the clarification of concepts is not used very often by philosophers to help us deal more effectively with real human concerns.

In contrast to the axe-sharpeners, White is a philosopher who writes on the history of ideas with the stipulation that 'if you are going to talk about the causes and consequences of philosophical beliefs, you had jolly well better

know what those beliefs are' (218). Taking his lead from Isaiah Berlin's contrast between thinkers who are hedgehogs with one big idea and those who are foxes who seek to master all of the details, White does a good job of analyzing notions of historical inevitability, teaching and religious commitment, psychologism and truth, the revolt against formalism in American social thought, and the negative attitudes of American intellectuals toward the city. He is particularly incisive in what he has to say about the pragmatists, Peirce, James, and Dewey, and likes to describe himself as a kind of 'holistic pragmatist'.

Here White claims to be following Pierre Duhem, a French scientist who argued that we should include scientific beliefs as part of a conjunction of beliefs testable against our own sensory experience. Noting that Quine and Tarski 'extended Duhem's views to include logical beliefs ... [whereby] a so-called recalcitrant sensory experience may lead in principle to the abandonment of even a logical belief,' White wants to extend this further to include moral beliefs. These, too, he claims, should be tested 'against sensory experiences *and* feelings of moral obligation' (93). He criticizes Quine's view that while 'thanks to its links with observation [science] retains some title to a correspondence theory of truth, a coherence theory is evidently the lot of ethics' (203). For White, ethics is also anchored in experience and its claims must therefore correspond to sensory observation and a feeling of obligation. He states that 'we make ethical as well as epistemological statements about what we ought or have a right to do and ... we appeal to certain feelings along with sensory experiences when we test the systems that contain such statements' (187). In short, for White 'there are ethical and epistemological normative beliefs' (189).

In this spirit, White urges philosophers to follow the 'heroic exemplars' of Mill, James, and Dewey, who took risks and dealt with what Dewey liked to call the problems of mankind, rather than just the problems of philosophers. White sees topics like history, religion, morals and education as falling well within the purview of philosophy. He encourages philosophers to broaden their concerns by studying the major institutions of civilization. Modern empiricists should include ethics and political philosophy as well as epistemology among their concerns, and 'a philosophical interest in language should include an interest in aspects of culture other than natural science and formal logic' (3). Paraphrasing Quine's claim that 'philosophy of science is philosophy enough,' White formulates a different one-liner: 'philosophy of culture is philosophy enough' (346-7).

These are but a few samples taken from this intriguing collection of essays. It is well worth reading for its historical and its philosophical insights. White writes with a lively style and does not shy away from criticizing friends like Quine and Moore or heroes like Berlin and Dewey, as well as taking on adversaries like the logical positivists. He is especially good at summarizing views that he disagrees with. Throughout a long and distinguished career at Harvard and subsequently at the Institute for Advanced Study, he has consistently maintained a high standard in the

pursuit of his self-described vocation 'as a philosopher and as a philosophical historian of American ideas' (284).

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**Robert Wicks**

*Modern French Philosophy:*

*From Existentialism to Postmodernism.*

Oxford: Oneworld Publications 2003.

Pp. x + 342.

US\$26.95. ISBN 1-85168-318-6.

The problem with surveys of philosophy is that they typically incline towards one of two vices. On the one hand, surveys often focus strictly on exposition, giving summaries of one philosopher after another with little more than chronological coincidence between them. On the other, they can lean too heavily on narrative, focusing primarily on one theme, sometimes obscuring the differences between authors by grafting their work together into single chapters or oversimplifying the philosophies in question through thematic reduction. The great virtue of Robert Wicks' *Modern French Philosophy* is that it avoids these two problems by successfully providing both serious exposition and cohesive narrative.

Wicks' narrative begins: 'much of twentieth-century French philosophy can be understood as a quest for freedom stimulated by the problem of understanding one's place in the world as both an individual and as a social being' (vii). Although Wicks does not draw this connection, if his claim is correct, there is a sense in which twentieth-century French philosophy finds some roots (yet not all its roots) in the eighteenth century with Rousseau's articulation of the problem of legitimacy: how are liberty and constraint co-possible (see *le Contrat social*)? Like Rousseau, the French intellectual of the twentieth century sought to redeem the individual and her liberty against a seeming progress that rendered humans less free and less self-determining (both privately and politically) by tying them to illegitimate political rule and/or to deterministic and materialistic self-conceptions. The difference, however, is that whereas Rousseau was ultimately optimistic about civic participation and republicanism, the twentieth-century intellectual was more suspicious, seeking instead a radical break with tradition through emancipation.

In the light of this difference, Wicks begins his study with a brief chapter on the 'surrealist setting' of the twentieth century. According to Wicks, we

will understand Sartre, Camus, Foucault and Derrida better if we set them against the backdrop of dada and surrealism. These politicized aesthetic movements were essentially reactionary (Wicks, mistakenly I believe, refers to their goals as revolutionary, but that seems to imply a positive program that was in fact missing), rejecting all established claims to truth and authority. The nihilism of dada, characterized by its 'feeling of chaos, fragmentation, assault on the senses, absurdity, frustration of ordinary norms, pastiche, spontaneity, and posed robotic mechanism' (10), arose as a form of radical and self-consciously inconsistent skepticism, as an utter rejection of the status quo stemming from dissatisfaction with the European world following the first world war. Rather than simply valuing passion against reason or sense against intellect, dada and surrealism sought to overturn reason altogether. It is in this light that Wicks offers an exposition of some important figures of the twentieth century.

Wicks provides sympathetic yet critical discussions of fifteen important twentieth-century French intellectuals. Wicks' cast is as interesting for its inclusions as it is for its exclusions. Although he omits some important figures who have recently been the focus of much scholarship (e.g., Emmanuel Levinas, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Julia Kristeva), he justifies this move by hopefully remarking that the figures he has included will shed light on the omitted authors: presumably his account of Sartre will benefit a reading of Merleau-Ponty, Derrida of Levinas and Barthes of Kristeva. In their place, Wicks has included two often disregarded writers: E.M. Cioran and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. He has done so because 'they effectively represent the extremes of individualistic nihilistic pessimism and global social optimism' (x).

Wicks divides his presentation into three parts. First, 'Surrealism, Existentialism, and Vitalism', which, in addition to the preparatory study of surrealism, includes chapters on Bergson, Sartre, Camus, Cioran and Teilhard. Together, these studies uncover a deep concern with freedom and a profound suspicion of social normativity and scientism. Second, 'Structuralism'. Here we find chapters on Saussure, Lévi-Strauss, Lacan and Barthes, focusing on the French 'linguistic turn', which considered linguistic presentation to be essentially arbitrary. In this light, this principle was used to uncover the hidden meanings and basic structure of language, society, neurosis and popular culture.

Third, 'Poststructuralism and Postmodernism'. Beginning with Barthes again, this part continues with Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Irigaray, Deleuze and Baudrillard. What unites these authors is the view that structuralism must be turned on itself. In other words, the language we use to 'uncover' structure is itself arbitrary and open to further structural analysis. The result is a rejection of foundationalism and an attempt to explicate the socio-linguistic world in order to uncover the dishonesty of traditional language use in the names of freedom and emancipation. As a whole, Wicks exposes twentieth century French philosophy as 'a 'negative' quest to be 'freed from' oppressive forces' (297), yet a quest that is restrictive because it



is merely 'reactive to given ... oppressive situations' (297). Nonetheless, this movement opens a space for avoiding both the dangers of absolutism (in politics and knowledge) and the paralyzing skepticism of surrealism in favor of 'an acknowledgement of dialogue which remains receptively open, ... where questioning of authority is allowed, and where terroristic silencing is prohibited' (299).

Let me conclude by cursorily pointing to two possible weaknesses of this book, one of which is, in some sense, also one of the book's strengths. First, *Modern French Philosophy* tends to be a little unbalanced. A reader who wants to learn about Sartre will do well to look through Wicks' text, which offers an articulate summary of Sartre's existential philosophy, whereas someone looking to learn about Deleuze may be both disappointed and misled, since the treatment of Deleuze (and really we should call it Deleuze/Guattari, since there is no significant discussion of anything Deleuze authored alone) is comparatively brief, with an exposition cut short by a critical discussion that contributes to an evaluation of Deleuze but not to an understanding of his work. Second, this text is too often uncontroversial. Scholars may not always agree with Wicks' interpretations, but they will rarely be surprised. As such, this text reads much more as a compendium than as a work in intellectual history or the history of philosophy. However, therein lies its great strength. Robert Wicks has written a clear and simply stated account of a complex moment in western philosophy, a moment that is growing in interest among students throughout the English-speaking world. For those students and their teachers, *Modern French Philosophy* fills a gap.

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