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Editors • Directeurs

Roger A. Shiner

Department of Philosophy

4-108 Humanities Centre

University of Alberta

Edmonton, Alberta

Canada T6G 2E5

Alain Voizard

Département de philosophie

Université du Québec à Montréal

C.P. 8888, Succursale Centre-Ville

Montréal, QC

Canada H3C 3P8

E-Mail: roger.a.shiner@ualberta.ca

E-Mail: voizard.alain@uqam.ca

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Department of Philosophy
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T6G 2E5

Tel: 780-492-8549
Fax: 780-492-9160
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**Prière d'adresser toute
correspondance concernant les
comptes rendus en français à:**

Alain Voizard
Département de philosophie
Université du Québec à Montréal
C.P. 8888, Succursale Centre-Ville
Montréal, QC
Canada H3C 3P8

Courriel: voizard.alain@uqam.ca

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Charles Altieri

Postmodernisms Now.

University Park: Pennsylvania State

University Press 1998. Pp. viii + 311.

US\$55.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-271-01803-8);

US\$22.50 (paper: ISBN 0-271-01804-6).

This book is the latest addition to the Penn State Press *Literature and Philosophy* series, and is Altieri's second book for that series. It is a collection of ten vigorous and challenging essays — nine of them previously published — which establish the contemporaneity of some recent American visual and poetic art. Brought together in one volume these essays help to develop an overall thesis that, given the increasingly problematic status of dominant postmodern theorizing and the paralyzing contradictions into which it has been driven, it is now possible to claim that America's most valuable negotiations of postmodernity are to be found in the engagements of its artists and writers.

The essays are gathered to form five parts, fronted by an introduction in which Altieri sets out his thesis and briefly sketches the theoretical context in which he is working, a more detailed version of which is reserved for inclusion as an appendix. Part I consists of a single essay seeking to separate the 'living' from the 'dead' within contemporary postmodernisms, making explicit what has failed in dominant American postmodern theorizing and showing how some contemporary American poetry helps to negotiate the emergent contradictions. The discussion becomes more concrete in Part II with two essays focusing on the achievements of artists and writers of the late fifties in their efforts to break with late modernism. The first draws parallels between the poetry of Ashbery and the visual art of Johns and Rauschenberg, whilst the second recontextualises the poetry of Creeley, O'Hara and Plath to reveal a shared project in the development of a logic of contingency characterized by the rejection of modernist (New Critical) poetics. Part III then examines different value frameworks in postmodern poetry, beginning with a discussion of the ways in which some contemporary poets contribute to moral philosophy through the versions of moral agency they afford. This is followed by essays providing individual analyses of two contemporary poets (Ashbery and Lauterbach) and how they relate to what remains valuable from earlier traditions, whilst the final essay of this section offers a critique of contemporary radical poetics and its adequacy in accounting for particular works.

Part IV explores the ways in which contemporary visual art can provide both a rich embodiment of postmodern thinking — illustrated by the placing of Frank Stella's work in a surprising yet successful dialogue with that of Jacques Derrida — and a test of what is problematic when that thinking is politicized, as with the 'oppositional postmodernism' of the late 1980s. Finally Part V contains an excellent concluding essay responding to the overriding question of what writers and artists can make out of the inevitable

contradictions of postmodern theorizing. Here Altieri concentrates on the sublime, for 'there is no principle within contemporary arts more invoked and less well handled than this for working at the limits of understanding' (19). Since in our postmodern culture being at the limits of understanding is a cause for self-congratulation, this essay asks how it is possible any longer to have a viable notion of the sublime. Altieri once again turns to the arts to seek a concrete response to this problem, exploring the work of some contemporary writers (Coover and Borges) who have developed a thoroughly postmodern version of sublimity — the sublime of self-disgust.

Each of the essays in this collection provides its own valuable insight into the way that art can act as a counterpoint to the excesses of current theory; in particular, the dialogue that is established here between poetry and philosophy is both welcome and refreshing, with its conviction that poetry can be taken seriously as a source of wisdom. There is throughout, however, a noticeable contrast between the manner of Altieri's discussion on the theoretical level and that on the artistic level. The theoretical discussion is, by and large, abstract, whilst the exposition of particular artworks is carried out at the concrete level of close critical reading (and in places bears an uncanny resemblance to Altieri's course programme at Berkeley). This switching from abstract to concrete style is perhaps coercive with regard to establishing the overall thesis, a fact of which the author is aware, admitting in the first essay that '[i]t is tempting to use my own abstractness ... as a vehicle for sharpening the contrast that I will now draw to the arts' (35).

One difficulty in recommending this collection lies in envisaging an audience for it. Certainly, its readers must be experienced in the field since the essays assume a particular level of familiarity not only with current American postmodern theorizing and academic criticism but also with the contemporary American arts scene (which, as my use of adjectives here emphasizes, makes this a very American book, less accessible to, say, a British or European audience). Readers who are experienced in all these contexts will, no doubt, find this book engaging and stimulating, although I suspect it is likely that such readers may already have come across most of these essays in their original sources of publication (the title 'Postmodernisms Now' is perhaps misleading; the 'now' should be interpreted loosely as the essays have been published over the last decade, one as early as 1988). With this in mind, the rationale behind the collection is unclear, and it is certainly a collection rather than a synthesis, despite the organizing design of the introduction. Also unclear is the reason for including as an appendix the 'sketch' of what Altieri claims are the four discourses basic to postmodernism, first summarised in his introduction. Since the collection assumes a certain level of knowledge on the reader's part such a sketch should not be necessary; on the other hand it is not basic enough to act as an introductory background for less experienced readers.

Finally, the referencing and footnoting system is somewhat idiosyncratic and occasionally irritating. Altieri makes mention of a number of visual art projects for which there are unfortunately no illustrations, and some cita-

tions in the text are not honoured in the bibliography (e.g., Levine [221] and Calvino [280]). Often, footnotes would be welcome to provide references to anchor the more abstract theoretical discussions; at the other extreme, there are in some essays distracting footnotes of up to a page in length engaging in side issues that would be better either incorporated into the main text or left out altogether.

These points aside, this collection makes a fine 'Altieri Reader' for those experienced in the field of contemporary American postmodernism.

Lisa Jones

(Department of English Language and Literature)
University of Liverpool

Stephen Eric Bronner

Camus: Portrait of a Moralist.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

1999. Pp. xiv + 279.

US\$37.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8166-3283-9);

US\$14.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8166-3284-7).

This is a lively, well-written, and eminently judicious account of Camus' writings and activism that would serve as an excellent short introduction to the thinker from a variety of perspectives, though the unifying thesis, that Camus' enduring significance lies in his character as a moralist rather than in his philosophy or political theory, is less ground-breaking than Bronner claims in his preface. While Bronner announces his intention to understand Camus' writings as 'a single exercise in symbolic action,' it is nevertheless a great strength of this study that individual works are not distorted to create an artificial unity, but rather that the inconsistencies and countercurrents in Camus' oeuvre are highlighted.

The biographical part does not pretend to any originality, but refers us to the monumental works of Lottman and Thody (both of whom, according to Bronner, are weak on interpretation). Bronner's thumbnail sketches of the political and economic context of the various stages of Camus' life are excellent, and he is adept at the telling historical detail. In the first chapter Bronner gives particular attention to Camus' dissertation *Christian Metaphysics and Neoplatonism*, which he believes gives an excellent insight into the often neglected influence of Christianity on Camus. Bronner places Camus alongside such figures as Heidegger, Nietzsche and Jaspers, as a 'religious atheist.' The justice of this claim becomes evident in the course of

the book, particularly in relation to *The Fall*, which Bronner judges to be 'the most beautiful ... and enigmatic' of Camus' works.

Ultimately Bronner values the literary works over the philosophical: his philosophy works best, according to Bronner, in images. It is to Bronner's credit, however, that, though he largely sticks to his interpretation of *The Stranger* as a *bildungsroman*, he nevertheless concedes that the novel does threaten 'to leave the reader adrift in the relativism its author claims to reject.' Bronner ultimately judges *The Stranger* to be, despite the intentions of its author, a 'profoundly antiphilosophical' work; a shortcoming which he also finds in *Caligula*. In dealing with *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Bronner argues against those commentators that have supported Camus' distancing of himself from existentialism, commenting that Camus himself relies for his argument on the evocation of attitudes that are neither more nor less intuitive and self-referential than those he criticizes in Heidegger and Sartre. *The Myth of Sisyphus*, according to Bronner, is an 'existential work with real philosophical limitations' — its morality being unsystematic, and its reasoning circular — which nevertheless expresses a certain historical reality in its attempt to assert the sanctity of life in the face of the madness of the times. He posits a similar historical interest in *The Rebel*, though his judgment of its philosophical pretensions is equally strict: its fundamental notion — that solidarity is implicit in the notion of rebellion ('I rebel, therefore, we exist') — lacks philosophical grounding, and its message, he holds, can be summarized as 'a weary live and let live wisdom.' In general Bronner judges that what is sound in Camus' philosophy is not original, and what is original is not sound.

In chapter three Bronner deals with Camus' turn from concern with the plight of the individual in a meaningless world to that preoccupation with solidarity and the ethics of resistance that ultimately issued in *The Plague*, a work of 'great humanism and even greater moral simplicity' according to Bronner, which provides the best understanding of Camus' political world view. It is the following chapter, dealing with Camus' celebrity, and the intellectual infighting of postwar Paris, which best illustrates the justice of Bronner's characterisation of Camus as a moralist, and, indeed, the extent to which Camus acted on his own dictum that 'there is no objection to the totalitarian attitude other than the religious or moral objection.'

In chapter five Bronner notes the irony of Camus' *Summer* — expressing his contempt for any philosophy of history, suspicion of progress, and rejection of force as a means for resolving conflict — appearing just as the Algerian revolution broke out. Bronner justly observes that too much of what has been written about Camus' attitude during the Algerian conflict concerns his identity as a *pieds noirs*, and argues that Camus' famous remark — 'I will defend my mother before justice' — should be understood in terms of his belief in limits, common sense, and basic familial attachments, outweighing any commitment to ideology or politics. Bronner judges, however, that Camus — who was 'less interested in questions of political power than the symbolism evoked by major events and the normative values at stake' — confused the

issue, that his stance was impractical, and that his primary ethical aim should have led him to embrace the side (the FLN) with the best chance of ending the conflict.

Bronner asserts, in his conclusion, that the fall of communism has rendered Camus' humanism, his liberal convictions, internationalism, emphasis on principle over ideology, and his advocacy of human rights, once again timely. He approvingly quotes Sartre's judgement that Camus 'through the obstinacy of his refusals ... reaffirmed the existence of moral fact within the heart of our era,' and argues that Camus' 'literature of moral deliberation' is equally relevant today, as a response to the cynicism and relativism of our postmodern age.

James Kirwan

Kobe City University

Thomas A. Carlson

Indiscretion. Finitude and the Naming of God.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1999.

Pp. xiii + 307.

US\$45.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-226-09293-3);

US\$18.00 (paper: ISBN 0-226-09294-1).

The aim of Carlson's book is to interpret the apophatic view of God's ineffability together with recent continental approaches to the question of what a human subject is, and by means of this suggest an analogy between these modern discourses on subjectivity and the medieval apophatic and mystical theology. It is quite a demanding work, that presupposes that the reader is familiar (and, I think, sympathetic as well) both with recent continental thinking and with the different philosophies of Hegel and of Heidegger. Naturally, it is impossible to do justice to Carlson's at times very complex analyses in this short review.

However, Carlson's main idea is easy to grasp. And it is this idea that is the most significant contribution in Carlson's book. After the ideas of the death of God and the death of the subject in modern time, the important question in our context is the following, as Carlson sees it: '... how might the seeming absence and unknowability of God, however one figures them, be tied today to the seemingly incurable wounds of a once enlightened and autonomous subject?' (3) Through readings of Hegel, Heidegger, Pseudo-Dionysius, Marion and Derrida, Carlson tries to suggest an answer to that question by means of an analogical imagination.

If one, on the one hand, thinks that this may be a relevant question and if one has interests in the history of continental philosophy, Carlson's book makes for stimulating reading. But on the other hand, if one thinks that the question is rather forced, one will probably find the work painfully question-begging, since Carlson never gives any knockdown arguments for accepting the analogy between God and the death of the subject in the first place.

On this, Carlson writes (16): 'In my use of analogy here, I stress that the analogy is one of relation, not attribution: the relation of *Dasein* to the impossible death in Heidegger is likened to the relation of the created soul to the unnameable God in Dionysius.' Thus, what Carlson thinks that the analogy will suggest, is a similarity of structures. But since what the terms in question (God and death) indicate are, according to Carlson's philosophical inclinations, unknowable, he finds himself 'prohibited, by the very terms of the analogy, not only from identifying those terms but also from distinguishing them ...' (17). Hence, Carlson thinks that since the referents of the terms are indeterminate, they are both beyond 'consciousness and language' (ibid.), and therefore the move of the analogy is possible, as a relation of similar structures. Thus, the thought about God and death as somehow similar and therefore related is, according to Carlson, an 'indiscretion': it is an 'unsettled and unsettling analogy between two figures of the unknowable and ineffable' (ibid.). However, this seemingly unwarranted analogy can, as Carlson sees it, cast some light on the affinities in discourses of negative theology and the post-modern thinking about death. He writes: '... I signal some important ways in which such an apophatic analogy might allow for contemporary philosophical understandings of death and traditional mystical understandings of God to illuminate one another ...' (ibid.).

Does the move sound intuitively convincing? Well: I will at least give Carlson credit for his clearly stated strategy, even if I cannot see how such an unwarranted thesis could be of real philosophical interest. I find it rather obscure. Why suggest a similarity of two assumed unknowable referents in the first place? And why just assume a rationale of Heidegger's doctrines of death? But since everything in Carlson's strategy seems to depend on one's initial attitude towards Heidegger and his thoughts on death as *Dasein*'s fundamental possibility of the impossible, worries like that become, perhaps at least for Carlson, obsolete.

Therefore, at best, Carlson's use of the analogy is suggestive and imaginative. But if one is looking for arguments, one will certainly be disappointed. This has consequences for the philosophical value of his work. The reading and the appreciation of it is of course distorted, when the initial thesis of the work is said to be 'groundless' (17) and at the same time highly dependent on some questionable doctrines in Heidegger's thinking. During my reading of Carlson's analysis of the various thoughts of different philosophers and their assumed analogical interconnections, I cannot refrain from wondering where Carlson's suggested analogical strategy will leave us, if we should accept it as a sound method. That is, as I see it, a serious question that Carlson leaves on the ground like forgotten luggage, just before his exegesis

takes off in the imaginative air. And the analogy in question is in fact Carlson's fundamental point. As such, its possible results are of great value for the literary and historical interpretation of various trends in continental philosophy. Carlson shows clearly that thinkers as Heidegger have often been using a kind of negative language that is similar to the gnomic formulations of apophatic discourse, e.g. Pseudo-Dionysius. Thus, since there are some blatant affinities of the language of Heidegger and of the language of Christian mysticism, Carlson's book shows at best that a careful historical exegesis of this matter can enlighten the interpretations of such Heideggerian notions as 'the possibility of impossibility' and the like.

But the aim of Carlson is to go further than this. His attempt in the present work goes beyond the history of philosophy and enters the domain of (normative) philosophical theology. Therefore, the ultimate aim of his analysis is in fact not to be purely exegetical, but, as he himself puts it, to signal possible ways of naming God in the post-modern world (cf. 254-62).

The value of this move is of course highly dependent on a justification of the thinking of Heidegger and others, and a justification of Carlson's suggested analogical strategy as well. It is not a matter of philosophical taste. After all, there are still many people, philosophers and non-philosophers alike, that find certain ideas in continental philosophy both counter-intuitive and question begging. These will certainly have some trouble with accepting Carlson's very imaginative but somewhat unwarranted suggestions for philosophical and theological God-talk today.

Johan Modée

(Department of Theology and Religious Studies)
Lund University, Sweden

Terrell Carver

The Postmodern Marx.

State College: Penn State Press 1998.

Pp. viii + 243.

US\$50.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-271-01867-4);

US\$17.95 (paper: ISBN 0-271-01867-2).

This work contains a number of valuable essays on various aspects of the interpretation of Marx. The title, clever though it is, and bound to aid sales, promises a bit too much. A more accurate title would be hermeneutics and reader response theory of Marx. Carver emphasizes those aspects of post-modernism which concentrate on the plurality of interpretations of a text. Gadamer, and Ricoeur are mentioned, and Derrida is given a whole chapter. However, Carver does not present Marx as a theorist of postmodern society

or a version of Marxism adapted for grappling with postmodern society. The essays center on issues of revised interpretations and the plurality of Marxes through different historical periods, but are not part of an integrated interpretation of Marx. The postmodernist might reply that to give an overall theory of postmodern society or an overall interpretation of Marx would itself not be postmodern. This is not to say the book is not helpful. Carver is one of the most balanced and well informed commentators on Marx. His previous works on methodology of the *Grundrisse* and on the Marx-Engels relationship show a knowledge and utilization of both 'continental' and 'analytic' approaches to Marxism without falling into the obscurantism or the ahistorical formalism to which the two approaches are respectively prone.

Carver emphasizes that it has been a mistake of many Marxists to claim to present the One True Marx and to dismiss other interpretations as heresies. Carver notes that there are quite literally a plurality of authors, including Engels and the various editors and translators of the works of Marx, of Marx's works (the majority of which were not published in his lifetime). Carver himself has previously written some of the most interesting work extant on the relationship of Engels to Marx (*Marx and Engels: The Intellectual Relationship*) and discusses that topic here with an eye to problems of interpretation. Engels, after Marx's death constructed the standard account of their relationship (about which Marx wrote little) and allowed Marx to 'speak from the grave' by selectively editing Marx's unpublished drafts. There are also, notoriously, a variety of voices of Marx himself, both through biographical development and between topics, whether technical economics, political propaganda, journalism or historical narrative. Marx also directed writings to audiences with differing political views and goals, making it impossible to assimilate all of his statements to a single unified and transparent expository stance. Carver criticizes the relative superficiality of Derrida's treatment of Marx. Derrida chose mainly less significant metaphors, such as those concerning ghosts and spectres, and even concerning these he often misconstrues the simplest use of these, as in the opening phrase of the *Communist Manifesto*. Carver, for contrast, analyzes the image of the vampire in *Capital*. Carver does not offer a grand alternative to Derrida, nor does he specify what features of Derrida's approach might contribute to his choice relatively insignificant metaphors in Marx and misinterpretation even of those. Nor does Carver himself offer an improved extended treatment of Marx's other frequently used metaphors besides the vampire (say a theoretically sophisticated, more textually informed version of what Stanley Edgar Hyman attempted for Marx among others four decades ago in *The Tangled Bank*).

One of the most illuminating particular interpretations Carver gives is that of the famous and puzzling passage stating that under communism people would be hunters in the morning, fishermen in the afternoon and critical critics after dinner. Based on the detailed analysis of handwriting in the *German Ideology* manuscript by W. Hiromatsu (unfortunately as yet only in Japanese) Carver notes that Marx apparently added the reference to

'critical critics' to Engels' utopian claim, turning the statement into a linking of Fourierian utopian notions with the stance of the left Hegelian critical critics whom Marx and Engels were attacking.

Carver reviews his own account of the Marx/Hegel relationship, claiming, rightly, that Marx's discipleship to Hegel has been overemphasized in comparison to Marx's concerns with the analysis of contemporary events and his interest in a variety of other thinkers. (Carver does not discuss alternative philosophy influences on Marx, such as Fichte, but rather claims that philosophical theorizing was not central to Marx's project, as it was for the cosmology of the later Engels.)

Carver includes a chapter on Marx and gender. This chapter underestimates the extent and pertinence of what Marx and Engels had to say about the family and economics. It does make the interesting suggestion that rather than rejecting Marx's blinkered views on sex and gender in terms of contemporary feminist perspectives, we should look at Marx's views on women and factory labor in relation to the feminism of the nineteenth century, which often held a view of women as purer and more civilized than men.

The 'Epilogue' notes that there have been multiple Marx's, of Leninism, Frankfurt School, Gramsci, rational choice, and Situationism. Each group has approached Marx's text with particular purposes and problems and claiming to have the 'true Marx'. Carver's valuable work would have been strengthened if he had added a chapter discussing some of these schools in terms of reader response theory, but he has at least set the frame for such analyses. The title perhaps promises more than what the book actually offers, but the title may perform one valuable service, lead self-described post-Marxist post-modernists, who are really pre-Marxist, to encounter some of the best and most sensible sympathetic Marx commentary available in English.

Val Dusek

University of New Hampshire

Michael Davis

*The Autobiography of Philosophy: Rousseau's
Reveries of The Solitary Walker.*

Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield 1998.

Pp. 296.

US\$60.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8476-9226-4);

US\$24.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8476-9227-2).

Through an examination of a series of texts from the history of philosophy (*Being and Time*, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, *Metaphysics*, and the *Lysis*), culminating in an extended reading of Rousseau's *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, Michael Davis explores the thesis that the practice of philosophy involves a coincidence of its *object* and its *method* of inquiry. Insofar as philosophy studies its own practice, Davis suggests that we, as the practitioners of philosophy, also become the objects of philosophical inquiry. Thus, he claims, philosophy can be understood as a form of autobiography — both its own autobiography and our autobiography. Since philosophy is a discursive activity, Davis' attempt to draw together the object and methods of philosophy turns the study of the discursive and rhetorical practices of philosophers into a directly philosophical topic.

Davis' attention to the philosophical significance of the way philosophy gets written begins to fill a serious scholarly gap. More particularly, Davis has noticed both that Rousseau is one of the most rhetorically complex and opaque writers of philosophy, and that Rousseau's rhetoric does not just obscure or stylize his philosophical thinking, but rather serves as its essential vehicle. This approach to Rousseau is refreshing in a philosopher, as it has until now been the well-guarded domain of Straussian political scientists. Rousseau has been treated with contempt by philosophers, condemned to the ranks of the 'essayist' and tossed sneeringly to literary and political theorists for further study. When philosophers have turned to Rousseau, they have focused only upon the few decontextualized snippets from his work that read most like traditional philosophy. Davis has done Rousseau a great favour, by restoring him to a place of honour next to other philosophical giants such as Heidegger and Aristotle, and by respecting this master of novels, plays, operas and essays as a self-conscious master of his own rhetoric. Sometimes Davis' attention to rhetorical details, in his own text and in those he studies, threatens to outstrip the philosophical significance of those details. However, it is a welcome change to find a text by an Anglo-American philosopher that risks erring in this direction, rather than in the direction of unselfconscious writerly flatfootedness.

Davis does an excellent job of teasing out several interrelated tensions in the *Reveries*, which together govern the structure and themes of that text. For instance, the *Reveries* is, on the surface, a meditation on being alone. But Davis shows that Rousseau, married and living as a notorious public personality on the outskirts of Paris, makes use of a peculiar notion of aloneness. Rousseau finds himself enslaved when he perceives and interacts with his

world as structured by alien wills. Aloneness has little to do with literal physical isolation, but is rather a type of freedom achieved through the effective reduction of the people around him to mere natural objects, governed by necessity rather than will. Yet even as he writes of his 'success' at freeing himself through aloneness, his self-descriptions are structured by paranoid understandings of his appearances and relations to others, and he ends the work mourning the loss of the completeness he once enjoyed when living through his relation to his great love, Mme. de Warens. A similar tension comes from Rousseau's attempts to free himself through practices of passive non-interference, in which he tries to respond to his environment immediately rather than engaging in a battle of wills with it. He pursues naturalistic botanical study, gets voyeuristic pleasure from the happiness of others, and writes reveries which merely reflect thought and experience instead of legislating and reconstructing it. But all of these practices end up driving Rousseau to extreme sorts of interference. He alters the ecosystem of the island he 'naturalistically' studies and he creates opportunities to watch the happiness of others by secretly micromanaging their environment. In the process of trying to remain true to the goal of passive, immediate, free reverie, Rousseau's discourse repeatedly undermines itself by becoming constructive, interest-ridden, and structured by the demands and perspectives of others. Davis interprets Rousseau's failure to write true reveries as symbol and a symptom of his inability to find freedom through a passive, necessity-governed relation to his world. Thus ultimately, the message of the *Reveries* is a pessimistic one, and its self-proclaimed project of finding and recording freedom through 'aloneness' must be deemed a failure. Davis' attention to Rousseau's rhetoric is essential to his being able to see these dark themes in the *Reveries*. Rousseau's argument proceeds by displaying the fatal tensions within a discursive project — that of inscribing himself and his environment in terms of necessity alone.

Oddly, Davis seems willing to extend his hermeneutics of suspicion to all levels of Rousseau's writing project except the most basic, namely the honesty and transparency of Rousseau's purposes in writing the *Reveries*. While lavishing attention upon Rousseau's justifications for lying, his suspicions of the motives and meanings of the words of others, and his eerie willingness to surreptitiously manipulate those around him, Davis fails to question the surface-level appearance that 'The *Reveries* is a book in which it is the author's purpose to reveal himself as fully as possible' (157). Davis concludes that the ultimate aim of the text is to serve as a redemptive gift for the reader: '[Rousseau's] soul is meant to become the vehicle for the realization of our souls' (269). This faith in Rousseau's commitment to honest, benevolent self-revelation is in tension with everything else that Davis teaches us about Rousseau. The *Reveries* consistently reveals Rousseau as unable to rid himself of his desire for revenge at his readers' rejection of him, so there is no reason to think he would wish to redeem these readers' souls. And we know from his explorations of the impossibility of transparent, non-interventionist discourse that he would not likely see his own text as such a benign medium.

Rousseau, in his later writings, refers to himself as a deformed, monstrous soul who can never be free. He suggests that what made him that way is his acute understanding of his own nature and of the role of alien wills in making him who he is. This self-awareness destroys the blissful blind habit which gives freedom to the citizens of Rousseau's imagined utopias, wherein ignorance allows the ways of the world to appear governed by mere necessity. If philosophy is autobiography for Rousseau, then philosophical reflection does not simply disclose but actually deforms and enslaves us. This is consistent both with Rousseau's anti-philosophical stance in his early writings, and with his demonstrations in the *Reveries* that safe, passive reflection is impossible. The discursive tensions revealed in the *Reveries* have the power to turn the reader into a monster like its author — a fitting posthumous revenge against Rousseau's 'tormentors'! In a book about the purposes of hiding and lying — a memoir which brazenly contradicts his own earlier *Confessions* — we would need good evidence to conclude that Rousseau's goals are as upstanding as Davis claims.

While each of Davis' textual readings is careful and illuminating, the book as a whole suffers from a lack of unity. Davis succeeds in convincing his readers that each of the texts he discusses draws some essential link between philosophy, under some description, and autobiography, under some description. But he does not provide the connective tissue that would reveal this link to be interestingly similar in the various texts. Instead, he gives a sequence of internal analyses, with no unifying conclusion, an introduction which seems separate in topic from the rest of the book, and only a two-page 'parabasis' in the middle of the book to join together its parts. Davis is too quick to claim without argument that apparently different ideas in different authors are in fact versions of the same idea, and I worry that he is using the ambiguity and rhetorical flexibility of the phrase 'autobiography of philosophy' in order to make it look as if he has found a common unifying theme in the history of philosophy where there isn't one to be found. For instance, Davis opens the book with a discussion of Heidegger, for whom philosophy is the telling of an ontological narrative of *Dasein*, stripped free of the ontic details which individuate particular human narratives. In the next chapter, Davis discusses Nietzsche's genealogical picture of philosophical inquiry, which roots philosophical practice in concrete, historically situated narratives. Rousseau, on the other hand, gives the story of his individual life, rather than a temporalized account of human nature itself, such as we find in Heidegger or Nietzsche. It is not obvious that or how Davis is using the term 'autobiography' to refer to relevantly related discursive practices in these very different cases.

Davis needs to work harder to carve out a distinctly *philosophical* sense of autobiography, so as to convince us that his linking of philosophy and autobiography is not, in the end, a deflationary reduction of the philosophical to the empirical or the personal. He calls the *Reveries* a 'philosophical psychology', but it had better not turn out that in fact, Rousseau is engaging in 'psychologized philosophy'. Heidegger manages to avoid a deflationary

stance towards philosophy, because of his focus on *Dasein* (who is no particular individual) as the entity under its own scrutiny, and because of his insistence upon this being ontological rather than ontic scrutiny. A genuinely philosophical version of the turn to self-examination is also explicit in Kant and Hegel, who, as the giants of the so-called 'Copernican turn' in philosophy, are notably missing from this study. But at least in Rousseau's case, we must ask why reflection upon a particular, contingent life gets to count, *as such*, as philosophical practice. Davis' answer is sometimes that Rousseau's life is 'exemplary' (a claim I find implausible, given the amount of time Rousseau spends insisting that he is 'unique among men' in various ways). But this would, at most, prove his autobiography to have *general* significance; it goes no distance towards showing its *philosophical* significance, nor its similarity to the depersonalized ontological narrative we get from someone like Heidegger. If Davis wishes Heidegger to provide us with the tools for understanding other authors' autobiographical discourses as distinctly philosophical, then he needs to show us explicitly how to apply or extend Heidegger's framework to apparently different philosophical domains and projects. In other words, Davis' work displays an excellent philosophical sensitivity to particular texts, but falls short as the work of *metaphilosophy* that, given its theme, it needs to be.

Rebecca Kukla

Carleton University

Rene Descartes

The World and Other Writings.

Trans. Stephen Gaukroger.

New York: Cambridge University Press 1998.

Pp. xxxvi + 208.

US\$59.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-63158-0);

US\$18.95 (paper: ISBN 0-521-63646-9).

Most students are introduced to Descartes through the *Meditations* or the *Discourse*, in which Descartes concentrated primarily on epistemological questions, and then on questions of fundamental metaphysics. This work gives a very different introduction to Descartes. It includes a translation of the extant text of *Le Monde*, some related texts from the *Dioptrics* and from the *Meteors*, and the first complete translation of Descartes' late work, the *Description of the Human Body*. *Le Monde* was Descartes' first major attempt to present his physics systematically, but he abandoned it upon hearing of Galileo's condemnation.

The text is well translated. The few awkward passages are translations of awkward passages in the original. There are few misprints. The most glaring is the misidentification of the Adam and Tannery volume (as XI rather than X) which contains the works here translated.

The introduction by Stephen Gaukroger is very helpful and his annotations are important, given the technical nature of the subject matter. Unfortunately, these annotations taper off after the first part of *The World*, and are quite sparse in the biological writings. The reader who is not already an expert in anatomy and physiology will wonder which of Descartes' now rejected proposals were the result of errors of observations and which came instead from an ingenious, but wrong, interpretation of correct observations. Such readers would benefit from the more thorough commentary found in the Bitbol-Hesperies and Verdet edition of *Le Monde, L'homme* (Paris: Seuil 1996).

The World is divided into two parts, the *Treatise on Light* and the *Treatise on Man*. There are two chapters connecting the parts which are lost, and there was a third part on the soul, to which Descartes makes reference, but which was either lost or never written. While the particular problem of the *Treatise on Light* is an account of what light is and an explanation of how it is transmitted, Descartes' answers to these questions go beyond light to a general account of the physical world, including cosmology and gravity.

Descartes held that matter came in three basic elements, ultimately distinguishable by the sizes, motions and shapes of their components. Light, on his account, was a pressure, or 'tendency to motion,' initiated by the first kind of matter, transmitted through the second kind, and reflected or absorbed by the third. Descartes also used this theory of elements, coupled with analogies to hydrostatics, to account for the light and heat of the sun, the motion of the planets around the sun, the motion of the moon, the rotation of the earth, and even the migration of comets among the different vortices, each centered on a star. He also explained why ordinary bodies of the third element have weight: the force exerted by the second, more rapid, elements push them towards the center of the earth. To supplement the section on light, Gaukroger includes the section from the *Dioptrics* in which Descartes gave his derivation of the sine law for refraction, and the section from the *Meteors* where he explained the colors in terms of difference of rotational motion.

Descartes' theory is fascinating, not simply as an insight into his thought, but as a valuable piece of the history of science. We see Descartes driven by a model, seeking to explain a huge variety of disparate phenomena in terms of a universal theory. We see Descartes surprisingly unconcerned with epistemological and foundational issues, making no attempt to argue for the truth of his model, but unabashedly asserting that he is simply describing a 'fictional world,' which will turn out to be indistinguishable from the actual world.

The biological works continue this hypothetical method, using the model of the three elements, in conjunction with many observations and much

speculation, to give an account of how animal-machines work. In the *Treatise on Man*, Descartes gives his account of the operations of varieties of organs, including the heart. He argues that the heating of the blood causes both the expansion of the heart and the rush of blood out of the heart, a position maintained in the *Description of the Human Body*, where it is defended against Harvey's account of the heart as a pump. The most speculative of Descartes' biological remarks occurs in this last work in the section on the development of the fetus.

One point which is so important to Descartes that he opens his discussion of *The World* with it is his claim that representation does not require resemblance. This position is usually taken to be a purely philosophical one; yet Descartes sees it as necessary for his scientific enterprise. If light and everything else we sense is transmitted by purely mechanical changes in the sense organs and the nerves, and not by a transmission of species, then the form or likeness will not itself be transmitted to the representation. The problem is not dualism, as some have argued, for it is not just mind states, but brain states which have to be able to represent without resembling.

Points such as these make this book an important addition to Descartes scholarship and required reading for those working on Descartes and the history of science.

Russell Wahl

Idaho State University

John Dewey

Principles of Instrumental Logic: John Dewey's Lectures in Ethics and Political Ethics.

Ed. Donald F. Koch.

Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press 1998. Pp. xii + 192.

US\$39.95. ISBN 0-8093-2173-4.

Terry Hoy

The Political Philosophy of John Dewey: Towards a Constructive Renewal.

Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers. Pp. 141.

US\$49.95. ISBN 0-275-96341.

Jerome A. Popp

Naturalizing Philosophy of Education:

John Dewey in the Postanalytic Period.

Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press 1998. Pp. x + 153.

US\$34.95. ISBN 0-8093-2171-8.

A decade ago pragmatists could still refer to themselves as inhabiting a 'little island' apart from the analytic mainland, or as flying by 'philosophical night vision'. But the recent resurgence of interest in classical American pragmatism, and John Dewey in particular, has fulfilled Richard Rorty's prophecy that Dewey waits at the end of the road travelled by analytic philosophy. Three new works on Dewey's moral, educational, and political thought complement recent rehabilitations of his metaphysics, logic, and theory of knowledge.

Dewey's *Lectures in Ethics and Political Ethics* is Donald Koch's third installment of unpublished notes delivered at the University of Chicago during Dewey's crucial transition from idealism to pragmatism in the 1890s. Dewey offered a course on ethics in the Fall of 1895, and a companion offering on political ethics the following Spring. The surviving manuscripts are apparently highly condensed versions of the lectures Dewey actually delivered, which Koch describes as 'very abstract and difficult, while at the same time clear' (x). Of obvious interest to scholars, Koch suggests that the *Lectures* also reveal an underlying unity in Dewey's general philosophy often hard to discern in his vast and diverse later works. In particular, the *Lectures* establish the link between logic and morality Dewey maintained throughout his career but never quite articulated in masterworks such as the *Logic* of 1939 and the *Ethics* of 1908.

For Dewey, logic is no mere manipulation of formal relations and symbols, but an expression of the dynamic problem-solving activity through which humans survive and flourish. As the 'tool of tools' of such activity, language and the formation of judgment are prime candidates for logical analysis. In

forming a judgment, the subject of a statement sets up the 'material conditions' for prospective requalification, the predicate the 'way' or 'method' of such requalification. In discovering that 'water is H₂O', for example, 'water' denotes certain sensed properties, 'H₂O' a further hypothesis — an 'end to be reached' by a prescribed method or action (45). The copula 'is' marks a tension between the settled subject and the hypothetical predicate resolved when successful testing establishes the identity of 'water' and 'H₂O'. Once determined, this connection becomes a simple fact, but realists forget that such facts are not given 'ready-made' by reality, but are achievements of directed problem-solving activity.

What holds for judgments of ordinary and scientific objects holds equally for values. An ethical judgment is necessary when a previously unified or settled state of affairs becomes problematic. To deliberate about the correctness of a proposed act is to pit impulses grounded in habits against a standard or norm of conduct. More precisely, a tension is generated between a particular or sensed *desire* and a general rule that dictates one's *duty* (66). Utilitarians focus upon desires, Kantians upon duties; for Dewey both are starting points for intelligent deliberation — the search for a solution that resolves the conflict between impulse (subject) and rule (predicate). When affirmed in practice, this solution revises the standard and creates a new mode of habituated response.

The *Lectures in Political Ethics* extends this problem-solving pattern to the relationship between individuals and society. Dewey rejects both Locke's autonomous self whose primary concern is the preservation of individual liberty, and the contrary socialist view that subordinates individuality to the common good. Both views fail to see that a self is neither a priori nor autonomous, but constructed in the ongoing co-adaptation of organisms and environments. Dewey recognizes both an *instrumental* self, the fund of habits, memories, and dispositions that is the *subject* of potential reorganization, and a *projected* self that is the proposed ideal (predicate) of such changes. To reconcile these selves through directed action modifies the pattern of dispositions and reunifies the self (130-1).

Human environments are invariably social, including those that explore inorganic nature. As such, the most comprehensive organism-environment adjustments for human beings are *political* adjustments. Just as individual values are forged in the clash between habits and duties, so too are social values forged in the clash between concrete *economic means* (subject) and general *ethical ends* (predicate). Economics marks a supply of material resources, ethics the liberties and constraints that measure the responsible allocation of these resources. Politics is the art of finding an equitable balance between economics and ethics (148).

Unbridled individualism upholds economic liberty at the expense of the general good, socialism the reverse, but a truly effective political system incorporates both. Impulses and conflicts are inevitable in social life, and individuals must be free both to propose novel solutions and to engage in public reflection and dialogue on their merits (155). Government, however,

should not be honored as a mere institution or repository of the good, but as a *function* for adapting individual impulses to social ends (154).

As Koch notes, the *Lectures* are indeed compressed and difficult, but hopefully this drawback will not limit their appeal to students of Dewey alone. To be sure, this is a scholar's bonanza, for the *Lectures* vindicate the contested claim that Dewey's 'turn' to pragmatism was essentially complete by 1895. But the diligent general reader may also find these *Lectures* richly rewarding. Dewey ultimately traces the elusive connections between facts and values, logic and ethics, individuals and societies with a coherence verging upon a 'system' from this reputedly most 'unsystematic' of thinkers. Readers used to Dewey's sometimes plodding pace and elliptical digressions might actually welcome the brisk lucidity of the *Lectures*. Koch's separate introduction to each lecture and extensive notes with contemporary references are also quite informative.

Jerome Popp's *Naturalizing Philosophy of Education* is an ambitious book that touts the re-emergence of Deweyan pragmatism in the philosophy of education. Temporarily eclipsed by the trendy formalism of analytic empiricism, pragmatism has now regained a prominent position among educational theorists. Popp documents the decline of empiricism, and urges the adoption of a pragmatic model that is naturalistic and scientific rather than 'political' and relativistic.

Analytic empiricism gained acceptance in the 1930s as it replaced the historic and contextual musings of speculative philosophy with a methodology that promised precision and logical rigor. Proceeding from premises deemed true by definition (a priori analytic), this 'First Philosophy' sought a 'decontextualized approach to the foundations of science' that extended to epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics (6). In the philosophy of education, the analytic movement downplayed the importance of learning and human development — these were 'psychological' concerns about the formation of belief, not rational strategies for the acquisition of truth (113, 20).

In subsequent decades, however, internal inconsistencies and external attacks undermined confidence in unshakeable axioms and context-free inferences. The failure of mathematical foundationalism, Quine's attack on analyticity, Gettier counterexamples, and Kuhn's thesis that scientific paradigms are temporary and imbued by culture, all hastened the decline of analytic empiricism and the re-emergence of pragmatism.

According to Popp, the lesson to be learned from this, and a baseline for future growth, is the naturalistic conclusion that the a priori is justified only in scientific contexts. As such, psychology, neuroscience, and biology are integral to both a general theory of human cognition and to discovering effective techniques for teaching and learning. The absolute a priori of First Philosophy must thus yield to a scientific pragmatic a priori whereby certain elements are regarded as stable within a situation to serve as guides or tools for resolving unstable elements, though they too are revisable in other contexts (60).

Popp does not want to overthrow conceptual analysis in epistemology or education, but to ground it upon a naturalism of sound scientific practice. To illustrate this, he cites Wesley Salmon's 'mark' theory of causation. Unlike Hume, who questioned causation because he could not detect connections between discrete events, the 'mark' theory grounds 'genuine' causation upon unquestioned laws of nature (117-19). Applied to educational theory, this analysis of causation signifies that effective teaching 'must not only intersect with a learner but it must enter into a causal interaction with the learner. Learners are causal processes because they can be marked by causal interactions and can propagate such marks' (125).

Naturalizing Philosophy of Education is praiseworthy for its breadth of scholarship and its contribution to the revival of pragmatism. If Popp is right about the vacuity of analytic empiricism in education, then something like his pragmatic program is long overdue. Nonetheless, this book has one profoundly puzzling defect: for a work purportedly on 'Dewey in the Postanalytic Period', the actual citations of Dewey are alarmingly few, and there are even fewer in-depth expositions of his views. Popp chides educators who honor Dewey as a ghostly patron saint without mastering the details of his philosophy, but Dewey is largely relegated to just such an ephemeral presence here. The exposition is generally left to lesser luminaries such as Ronald Giere and Larry Laudan. This is truly unfortunate, for Dewey's positions on sensationalistic empiricism, the pragmatic *a priori*, and contextualized meaning are typically superior to those offered by Popp. And Salmon's theory of causation is actually quite remote from Dewey's view. Causality, for Dewey, is not in the observed 'marks' generated in accordance with some universal law, but in the satisfactory and predictable realization of *consequences* in the wake of projected expectations.

Popp finds himself dragging at least some of the empiricist baggage he's dying to unload, and the underlying reason might be his incomplete grasp of what Dewey means by 'naturalism' and the 'naturalization' of education. Dewey, of course, would heartily endorse Popp's claim that education should avail itself of the findings of natural science. But Dewey's broader sense of 'naturalism' addresses not the *content* of science but its *methodology*. For several centuries natural science has looked for *ways* to succeed in a world fraught with uncertainty and peril. In comparison, the human sciences, including education, have languished not merely because they have resisted the *results* of natural science, but because they have resisted its *methods*. For Dewey, to make education 'scientific' means to address its unique challenge — not to causally 'mark' students, but to encourage the development of interests, initiative, and problem-solving skills that engender citizenship and the ability to contribute positively to the construction of the social good. Amazingly, Popp doesn't even discuss this *summum bonum* of Dewey's philosophy of education.

Fortunately, this omission is rectified in Terry Hoy's *The Political Philosophy of John Dewey*. Hoy explores Dewey's views of the Enlightenment, naturalism, and educational theory to both articulate and defend a political

philosophy Dewey himself dubs 'renascent liberalism'. As a *tertium quid* between unbridled capitalism and state-supported socialism, renascent liberalism combines the best of the American progressive movement with elements of John Rawls' contemporary theory of justice.

The Renaissance revived the ideal of the *polis*, the secular citizenship and social identification lost with the end of the Greco-Roman civilization. Art, literature, and later science supplanted liturgy as the highest form of human expression. Although the Enlightenment philosophers abandoned the Greek cosmology of fixed essences, they retained the notion of an absolute ground or foundation for knowledge. Rationalists affirmed the supremacy of reason, empiricists the priority of the perceiving individual. Unfortunately, internal inconsistencies and social turmoil eroded confidence in both rationality and individualism: the romantic backlash of the nineteenth century led to contemporary postmodernism.

Dewey, of course, led the charge against the Enlightenment's 'quest for certainty', yet Hoy claims he remained dedicated to salvaging its achievements. Early liberalism deserves praise for rebuffing institutional challenges to entrepreneurship and initiative. But once individual liberty became identified with 'human nature', needing only the removal of legal barriers to flourish, it lost contact with its origin in experimental social action (20). In America, unrestrained capitalism eventually stifled competition and created a 'corporate' mentality of mechanization, standardization, and depersonalization (21).

For Dewey, however, the absence of external constraints of old liberalism is merely *negative* freedom. The ideal of renascent liberalism is *positive* freedom, 'the fullest development of human capacities to share in the good that society has produced and the ability to contribute to the common good' (83). In Dewey's words, 'democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience' (65). Dewey believed open discourse and intelligent consensus-building could rejuvenate the original *constructive* function of individualism, and in so doing transform the 'Great Society' into the 'Great Community'. Education is the motive force of this transformation: too often schools stress specific skills that socially compartmentalize and thus isolate students; instead, students must interact with broader environments so as to actively help reconstruct their communities (58-60).

Hoy adroitly wards off criticisms from both the political left and right. Marxists frequently complain that Dewey is mired in an 'idealism' that fails to directly confront the historic structures of race, sexism, and class division. Beyond his own activism in abolishing such inequities, however, Dewey approached these as broad *social* problems, not as divisively narrow *class* interests or conflicts (66-7). At the other extreme, traditionalists such as Reinhold Niebuhr fault Dewey for being blind to the ineradicable egoism and selfishness in human nature that inevitably undermines consensus-building by rational and moral persuasion. Hoy admits some truth to this criticism; nonetheless, the appeal to 'changeless' egoism in 'human nature' is not only

unduly pessimistic but is entrenched in a wisely abandoned essentialism (69-70).

For Hoy, the contemporary theory most complementary to Dewey's is John Rawls' theory of justice. Like Dewey, Rawls shares a renascent liberalism of democratic institutions that promote 'a fair system of cooperation between free and equal persons.' Rawls' famous 'veil of ignorance' is a means of ascertaining the equitable allocation of resources that prevents consideration of personal privilege or power. His 'difference' principle allows individual initiative and advance that does not impede the well-being of society's least advantaged.

Rawls' theory has one key advantage over Dewey's — it is more realistic given the actual forces that shaped and sustain the American political experience; for Rawls' view is compatible with market capitalism and mainstream liberalism, whereas Dewey advocates the more extreme remedy of a grassroots socialism. Yet Dewey offers something missing in Rawls' account — an 'imaginative vision of human possibilities' grounded in a sound scientific methodology (115-18).

Any new book on Dewey's political philosophy finds itself in an increasingly crowded field led by excellent recent contributions by Robert Westbrook and Alan Ryan. But what Hoy's book lacks in the biographical and historical detail of these longer works, it compensates for in the clarity and cogency of its argument. Hoy's scholarship is impeccable, and he cites marvelous passages that bring Dewey's submerged eloquence to the surface. His case for Dewey's lasting significance is both well reasoned and eminently reasonable. This little book is a big accomplishment.

Frank X. Ryan

Kent State University

William A. Edmundson, ed.

The Duty to Obey the Law.

Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield

Publishers, 1999. Pp. x + 352.

US\$58.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-8476-9254-X);

US\$20.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8476-9255-8).

In this anthology, Edmundson's focal point is the age old question, 'Why should I obey the law?' In response to this question Edmundson presents chronologically works written between 1963 and 1997 by: Wasserstrom, Rawls, Wolff, Smith, Simmons, Sartorius, Raz, Greenawalt, Klosko, Soper, Hirschmann, Waldron, Green, and Murphy. In making his selections, Edmundson does a fine job in choosing articles that define the current debate, clarify the issues and provide a wide spectrum of responses. However, because many of the authors assume readers' familiarity with the historical background of the debate, the beginner may find the anthology quite dense.

Edmundson ameliorates this concern in his introduction where he reviews each author and highlights principles that readers should keep in mind. He canvases the authors' differing views on the stringency of the obligation to obey (from absolute to advisory) and the various grounds for obedience (from consent to natural duty). In doing so, Edmundson deals with the authors fairly and is careful not to warp their theories to accommodate his own. A shortcoming in Edmundson's summary is that some authors are dealt with too briefly, most notably Wolff and Hirschmann who discuss the exact nature of 'authority' and 'obligation'.

In a second part of his introduction, Edmundson advances two lines for future inquiry (12). The first involves the need to refine fair play and natural duty theories of obligation and reconcile them with the idea that consent theories must be the foundation of legitimate government (12). The second is the need to conceptually refine political authority and determine its connection with obedience (12). Edmundson offers six propositions as the best way to reconcile the two lines: '1. X is an *authority* only if X at least implicitly makes claims distinctive of authority. 2. An authority X is a *legitimate* authority only if X's distinctive claims are true. 3. Political authority is a species of authority, whose distinctive claim is that persons subject to it have a general moral duty to obey its commands. 4. Political authority is legitimate only if it imposes a general moral duty of obedience on those subject to it (from 2 and 3). 5. There is no general duty to obey political authority X, even if X is (nearly) just. 6. Legitimate political authorities are possible and even actual.' In applying the framework, Edmundson focuses mainly on the logical incompatibility of propositions 4-6 and his discussion illuminates the authors' efforts to reconcile the three propositions by refining theories of consent, fair play, natural duty, etc. The problem is, though the focus on propositions 4-6 is interesting, Edmundson's propositions substantially ignore his suggested second line of inquiry.

The 'authority' and 'obedience' question needs to be addressed first. However, proposition 1 is circular and a non-starter. Since proposition 1 does not tell us what an authority is, proposition 2 and 3 can tell us nothing about *legitimate* authority and required obedience. This in turn has implications for propositions 4-6. This is where Edmundson's lack of attention to the specific nature of 'authority' and 'obligation' hinders his framework. We must first ask what 'authority' and 'obligation' *are* and *whether* they link before trying to understand *how* they link. For example, Wolff discusses the exact nature of authority and separates the factual claim that people *do* obey with the moral claim that they *ought* to (63-8). Hirschmann believes that gender biased liberal obligation theory prevents discovery of the true problem (243-6). If people are born into relationships and obligations, discussions about the consent of autonomous individuals is misdirecting (246).

Thus, there is more at play than different theoretical explanations for consistently defined concepts of 'authority' and 'obligation'. For positivists, since there is no authority above the state, a challenge to the laws *is* a challenge to the state. In an effort to curb the abuses of omnipotent governments positivists develop consent theories or principles of fair play and natural justice to govern promulgation of laws and justify removal of the government. For normativists, a government may be legitimate based upon the principles which govern its existence and yet fail to correctly apply a moral imperative in passing a particular law. Such errors may justify civil disobedience but may not justify revolution. When reviewing the contributions in the anthology, one sees that various authors have different conceptions of 'authority', 'obligation' and their connection; Edmundson's framework doesn't assist the reader to sort this out.

In conclusion, Edmundson's anthology is full of well-selected readings that define the range of the problem in its most current incarnation. His contributions and summaries are insightful and will promote valuable discussion. I look forward to a second edition, or a companion article, where Edmundson gives himself more room to work with his framework and further clarify the exact nature of the debate in which he is engaging.

Dale J. Dewhurst
University of Alberta

Eldon J. Eisenach, ed.

Mill and the Moral Character of Liberalism.

Penn State Press 1998. Pp. 325.

US\$48.50 (cloth: ISBN 0-271-01836-4);

US\$18.95 (paper: ISBN 0-271-01837-2).

In spite of John Skorupski's monumental and insightful work on Mill's thought (*John Stuart Mill* [Routledge 1989]), Mill continues to be regarded in most circles as a conflicted Victorian pedant with one good essay to his credit. Eldon Eisenach, editor of *Mill and the Moral Character of Liberalism*, a collection of contemporary essays on Mill's thought, argues that Mill's lack of contemporary philosophical appeal is lamentable because 'light from Mill's mind would help illuminate a way out of an ever-murkier maze of rights and identity discourse in which liberal moral and political philosophy now finds itself' (1).

In this collection, that light is trained on the idea of personal development as individual liberation within rather than from historical and cultural situatedness. As such, the relationship between virtue and happiness which Mill discusses in *Utilitarianism* takes center stage in many of the pieces. But that relationship, Eisenach argues, cannot be properly understood if we restrict our study to his most well known works. In order to see how the arguments of *On Liberty* and *Utilitarianism* represent Mill's thought, they must be read in the context of many of his other works. When done so, it becomes clear that Mill saw just how complex the problems of realizing liberal democracy could be — something which the authors in this collection argue has been missed by the twentieth century's love affair with Neo-Kantian versions of individual rights and fatal attraction to post modern identity discourse.

Peter Berkowitz's and Nicholas Capaldi's readings of Mill as a sensible traditionalist for whom the role of virtue was central to personal development will appeal to those with virtue liberal tastes. Berkowitz, for example, argues that the charge that Mill's liberal individualism called for the overthrow of all convention simply cannot be maintained. Capaldi picks up on this same 'conservative' thread arguing that based on an important distinction between 'liberal culture' (77) as a form of life and 'liberal social philosophy' as a 'naturalistic and scientific' (78) way of justifying liberal culture, Mill's liberalism is able to duck well-targeted criticisms of the latter. Donner takes up a feminist reading of the same theme in Mill's thought. In Bernard Semmel's piece, the conservative thread is extended at the cost of Mill's traditional reputation as the father of Modern Liberalism. Richard Ashcroft draws the thread further challenging this reputation on the basis of the seriousness with which Mill took his own democratic socialist thought.

Two pieces in the collection raise practical issues and challenge the conservative theme somewhat. Janice Carlisle explores Mill's 'working man' with a view to establishing Mill as a liberal thinker with Post Modern credentials. Carlisle argues that Mill changed the terms of the actual political

debate over the franchise — up until then centered on the question of whether workers could handle it — by showing that this question was beside the point. If their concerns were in any way important, since no one with the franchise knew what it was like to be a worker, their voice had to be brought into the political process. In Richard Vernon's essay, the hypothetical question of Mill's position on pornography is taken up on the heels of the Dyzenhaus (Mill would endorse censorship) - Skipper (Mill would not endorse censorship) debate. Vernon rejects the terms of that debate and concludes that Mill probably would have supported censorship but on the sociological grounds that it tends to make the reciprocity of the sexes which was necessary for the moral constitution of society almost impossible.

Two essays on the issue of religion in Mill's thought round out the first part of the book and re-focus on Mill's conservatism. Eisenach argues that Mill's position in *On Liberty* makes it clear that 'future liberalism will be built not on the ruins of Christianity but within its expanded religious, historical, and philosophical framework' (228). Robert Devigne argues we must take Mill's admitted debt to the philosophies of the Ancients seriously for it is there that one finds the overarching conception of rigorous mental training which characterizes his moral, social and political liberalism.

Three older essays complete the collection. Clark W. Bouton's 1965 work 'John Stuart Mill: Liberty and History' examines the centrality of Mill's philosophy of history to his argument in *On Liberty*. Richard Friedman's 1966 piece 'A New Exploration of Mill's Essay On Liberty' takes on the 'divided Mill' theory concluding that the 'presence of an individualist and a social justification of liberty in the essay *On Liberty* is the product of ... design' (300). And finally, Allan D. Megill's 1972 essay 'J.S. Mill's Religion of Humanity and the Second Justification for the Writing of *On Liberty*' confirms Friedman's thesis that Mill ought to be regarded as 'the first British philosopher of individualism aware of the tenuous status of the individual and his liberty in specifically modern society' (316).

In spite of finding the collection a refreshing change from the largely uninformed accounts one meets with in most introductory texts and round table discussions of Mill, I worry about the conservative direction in which most of the inclusions take him. Redefining Mill for the Millennium in this way seems to presume that we are currently trapped by the fragmentation of identities and society caused by the Enlightenment, that this is a bad thing for individuals and the groupings they form, that we need a way back from the brink of chaos and annihilation to the communal hearth and that Mill can lead the way. There are other ways of seeing our 'current predicament' — that the fragmentation is wonderfully liberating or that we are, as Mill feared in his time, *too much* of a herd. If one views the present in either of these ways, a conservative Mill is unlikely to be very illuminating.

Susan M. Turner
Athabasca University

Harry G. Frankfurt

Necessity, Volition, and Love.

New York: Cambridge University Press 1999.

Pp. xii + 180.

US\$54.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-63299-4);

US\$17.95 (paper: ISBN 0-521-63395-8).

Of the fourteen articles that comprise this collection, thirteen have been previously published. And some of Frankfurt's best work is not included here, since it was included in an earlier collection (*The Importance of What We Care About* [Cambridge University Press 1988]). This collection complements that one (ii). Moreover, there is no thematic unity that holds these articles together. Nonetheless, most of the articles are of such great quality that the collection has to be highly recommended. Frankfurt's wisdom and thought-provoking style make reading these articles a most enjoyable and valuable experience whether or not one agrees with the views defended therein.

The articles can be divided into three groups. The first five articles are about Descartes and modern philosophy in general. Articles six, seven, eight, nine, eleven, and fourteen revolve around a cluster of topics which include the will, practical reason, love, caring, and the meaning of life. It is with respect to this second group of articles that the title of the collection makes most sense. The remaining three articles (ten, twelve, and thirteen) seem to have drifted into the collection with no particular concern for their fit with the other articles.

The opening article is a bold one. It is a whimsical page-and-a-half piece in which Frankfurt addresses the well-known puzzle regarding God's omnipotence: if God is omnipotent then is he able to create a stone so heavy that he would be unable to lift it? Instead of criticizing the self-contradictory nature of the question, which is the typical move, Frankfurt points out that accepting the question entails accepting that God can 'create situations which he cannot handle', but then, the puzzle is solved, since God should have no problem handling 'situations he cannot handle' (2).

The second article examines Descartes' discussion of his own existence. The article begins by casting doubts on Jaakko Hintikka's interpretation of cogito ergo sum as performatory rather than inferential. Painstaking textual analyses allow Frankfurt to undermine Hintikka's view. The article elegantly moves away from a discussion between Hintikka and Frankfurt and turns into a masterful discussion of Descartes' general aims in the *Meditations*. The third article contrasts Descartes to other thinkers regarding the distinction between God's will and God's understanding. For Descartes the two are inseparable, whereas for the scholastics, God's understanding conditions God's will. Descartes' famous view 'that the world might be inherently absurd' (39) and that 'God could have made contradictory propositions true' (30) follows from the inseparability of will and understanding. In the fourth article, Descartes is contrasted with Spinoza. Frankfurt shows that Des-

cartes wished to 'escape the irrationality of the universe by discovering coherence within his own mind', and that Spinoza wished to 'escape the irrationality within his own psychic experience by discovering the coherence of the world outside himself' (53). However useful this contrast is in helping us to understand two different motivations for rationalism, Frankfurt's views elsewhere jeopardize its plausibility. In article eight, Frankfurt tells us that Descartes 'was moved to philosophize less by ignorance than by anxiety', and that 'what worried him was that he might be by nature so profoundly defective that [he could not rely on his own intellectual capacities]' (98). This sounds a lot like Spinoza's worry as presented by Frankfurt in article four.

Article six is an attempt to clarify the expression 'freedom of the will'. Frankfurt points out that both terms in this expression are vague. And though Frankfurt convincingly shows that what is usually meant by 'freedom' of the will is really 'power' of the will (74), he does not clarify sufficiently the meaning of 'will'. All Frankfurt tells us about the will is that it is 'absolutely and perfectly active' (79). By this he means that 'to decide to do that rather than to do this, is logically tantamount to deciding to do that' (78), and from this Frankfurt concludes that someone's decision 'cannot be unfree, or against his will' (79).

Articles seven and nine revolve around 'ideals' and 'final ends'. The motif of these articles is simple: 'excess of choice impairs the will' (110). There is a tension between freedom and autonomy (109). 'What one cares about' Frankfurt points out, 'is the most important source of limitations to the will' (110). Now, caring is neither cognitive nor affective: it is volitional. Yet Frankfurt never defines the realm of the volitional, and this makes it difficult to understand the nature of caring and related notions, which Frankfurt focuses upon, such as 'wholeheartedness'. (Frankfurt refers the reader [81] to the previous collection for clarification on the meaning of 'volitional necessity'). In spite of this difficulty, Frankfurt's point remains clear: caring gives rise to a sort of 'volitional necessity', whose force is 'similar to the force of love' (114), and which gives meaning to one's life (115).

The third group (articles ten, twelve, and thirteen) gathers together thematically odd pieces. Article ten is an exegesis of biblical texts and talmudic commentaries, which seeks to show the special character of God's creation of man (as opposed to God's creation of the rest of the world). Article twelve is a short response to an article by John Fischer and Mark Ravizza ('Responsibility and Inevitability', *Ethics* 101: 258-78). Frankfurt disagrees with their view that there is a moral difference between actions and omissions. However interesting Frankfurt's view as presented in this article may be, it is hard to understand why this article was included here. Article thirteen is an elegant attempt to show that equality in and of itself is not a valuable goal. Discussing, amongst others, Isaiah Berlin's remarks on equality, Frankfurt convincingly shows that what allegedly justifies equality is really something else: typically, respect for human dignity.

The articles are impeccably written. They exhibit great intelligence, intelligence understood in the sense of wisdom rather than in the sense of

mere cleverness. Anyone interested in the many topics covered in this collection would benefit from reading what Frankfurt has to say.

L.A. Zaibert

Grand Valley State University

Raymond Geuss

Morality, Culture, and History:

Essays in German Philosophy.

New York: Cambridge University Press 1999.

Pp. viii + 207.

US\$49.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-63202-1);

US\$14.95 (paper: ISBN 0-521-63568-3).

Geuss describes this collection of seven recent essays as 'a series of free-standing attempts to understand a set of overlapping but distinct philosophical and historical topics' (vii). The range of topics, while largely confined to issues and personalities within nineteenth- and twentieth-century German philosophy, is indeed impressive. The collection begins and ends with essays on Nietzsche, and particularly on his analysis of Christian morality. There is an exercise in the history of ideas that explores the development of the concepts of '*Kultur*', '*Bildung*' and '*Geist*' in German political thought since Kant, and a critical introduction to Ernst Tugendhat's moral philosophy. What may be considered to be the core essays in the collection, and in effect the essays that give the collection some coherence and unity, concern aesthetic theory, and particularly the work of the Frankfurt theorist Theodor W. Adorno.

Of the seven essays, that on '*Kultur*' is perhaps the most specialized. A fine exposition of the history of three interrelated concepts, but it is not immediately clear if this exposition has very much light to shed on the topics of the other essays. Similarly, the account of Tugendhat's ethics is a useful and effective introduction, especially for an English language audience, to a contemporary German philosopher's work. But Tugendhat (precisely because he is an analytic philosopher) makes uneasy company with the two principle thinkers Geuss discusses, Nietzsche and Adorno.

The Nietzsche essays serve as fine critical introductions to his moral philosophy. Geuss is skilled in breaking down the shifting complexity of Nietzsche's thought into precise themes and lines of argument. The first essay demonstrates, with great clarity, the strength of Nietzsche's historical analysis of Christianity (and one would be hard pushed to find a better introduction to exactly what genealogy entails), and links genealogy pro-

foundly to questions of truth and power. The final essay explores the tensions that remain in Nietzsche's ethical thinking as he at once rejects Christianity, and yet seeks to avoid nihilism. There is a significant discussion of the concept of 'bindingness' at the center of this essay.

An essay entitled 'Art and Theodicy' is possibly the richest and most stimulating of the collection. Through appeal to Hegel, Adorno and Nietzsche, Geuss addresses the role of art in reconciling us to the world, so that we can see ourselves as at home in it. This in turn becomes the problem of distinguishing between art as true theodicy, where the problem of evil is genuinely resolved, and as false theodicy, where art becomes a form of ideology, concealing or illegitimately validating the evils of the world. In Hegel and Adorno, Geuss finds thinkers struggling with a world that, at least for much of its history, does not allow for true theodicy, and thus throws into question the status of art. The theme is stimulating, and Geuss has much of interest to say about Adorno's account of the 'non-affirmative' nature of art — that is to say, of an art that self-consciously struggles with its position as false theodicy — and art's distinctiveness from a merely affirmative entertainment. (This theme is more concretely developed in the next essay, that explores Adorno's relationship to the composer Alban Berg.) Nevertheless, occasionally Geuss represents the arguments of both Hegel and Adorno with a rather broad brush. It is not obvious, for example, that the full implications of Hegel's analysis of the death of art (that is itself so important to Adorno's conception of non-affirmative art) is fully grasped. At times, the criticism of Adorno also becomes suspiciously *ad hominem*, as Geuss attacks Adorno through his supposed narcissism.

In the remaining essay in the collection, Geuss turns to Adorno's essay 'Vers une musique informelle' (from *Quasi una fantasia*). The general issue raised here is whether a dialectics can ground an artistic manifesto (for, Geuss argues, dialectics is necessary retrospective in its analysis, while a manifesto, saying what art should be, is prospective). The problem with this account is not the general issue raised, for that is the fundamental one of the relationship of art to philosophy, but again with the reading of Adorno. Geuss does not give a detailed rehearsal of Adorno's argument, so a prior knowledge of the essay is needed. Further, Geuss tends to divorce this essay from the rest of Adorno's work, so leaving in the air a number of important questions of interpretation: is this confusion of dialectic and manifesto characteristic of all Adorno's work, or just this essay? Would this essay itself be interpreted differently if embedded more reflectively in the context of the rest of Adorno's writing?

Each essay taken separately is stimulating and thoughtful; at times irritating, but rarely dull or run of the mill. Taken as a whole, however, it is not clear that this collection justifies its existence as a book. This is in effect, to ask whether this is really a unity, or just a loosely related sample of Geuss's recent work. There are indeed 'over-lapping themes'. Some of these are obvious and need no further explosion. Readers will develop others for themselves, given that there is plenty of scope to allow essays to spark off

each other. But there may yet be a case for asking Geuss to expand further on exactly what he thinks the nature and implication of those over-laps are. There are numerous implications of these arguments that are left undeveloped, and not least in terms of the relationships that Geuss could establish between the various thinkers that he discusses. An introduction or conclusion developing the common themes would have significantly enriched the collection. (One final, minor but niggling point of criticism. Geuss has the habit of referencing German sources only in German, and ignoring standard English translations. This is most irritating in the case of Hegel, where he references volumes of the collected works, without noting which works are contained in a given volume. If you have not got access to the Suhrkamp edition of Hegel, then tracking down a reference is near impossible.)

Andrew Edgar

University of Wales at Cardiff

Leo Groarke, ed.

*The Ethics of the New Economy:
Restructuring and Beyond.*

Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press
1998. Pp. ix + 332.
Cdn\$29.95. ISBN 0-88920-311-3.

To many, the 'new economy' is a euphemism for ongoing corporate and government downsizing, with lay-offs, cutbacks, outsourcing, and replacement of full time by part time workers, all defended in the name of economic necessity imposed by debts loads, market competition, or the demands of the growing global economy. The pattern is epitomized by Bell Canada's recent announcement of lay-offs of thousands of its low-paid female workers in Canada, with the non-comforting assurance that they would be eligible to take up new telecommunications positions in the U.S. at less than half their current wage rates. Less known is the case of Hewlett Packard, where executives absorbed a decline in demand by developing an inclusive strategy in which everyone took a 10% cut in pay and everyone from the president down took every second Friday off. The result was no layoffs, the retention of the company's stock of skilled employee knowledge, the preservation of employee morale and productivity, and the avoidance of severance and buy-out costs.

This example, discussed by Vincent di Norcia in one of the papers in this collection (149), shows that restructuring in response to economic changes poses an array of choices and raises important ethical issues. These include questions about what an employer's obligations to employees should be

during such periods of change, whether restructuring can be undertaken responsibly, who should be entitled to develop new configurations and objectives for an organization, how the negative social and personal consequences of restructuring can be minimized, and what larger responsibilities to community and public should be respected in an ethically defensible restructuring process.

It is surprising how little these questions have been investigated by philosophers, given the environment of pervasive downsizing and restructuring through which we have been living. This volume, edited by Leo Groarke, is a valuable exception to the relative philosophical silence on these topics. He has brought together papers by academics and other professionals in philosophy, business, education, health sciences and social policy formation, encouraging a reworking of these in order to create a unified volume in which a well-ordered set of ethical questions about restructuring are posed and explored. The readings move from comprehensive general assessments of the restructuring economy to more specific ethical questions raised by particular methods and examples of restructuring, the processes followed in restructuring, and some risks of these. Each section is prefaced by a clear, accurate and easy to follow editor's introduction, which summarizes the readings and brings out their links with what has preceded them. Some stand-alone case studies are included, along with a thoughtful concluding overview by Wesley Cragg. The resulting collection expresses a variety of perspectives on the questions addressed, and should make the materials accessible to policy makers and business professionals as well as to teachers of applied ethics.

Both critical and supportive assessments of restructuring are represented. Ken Hanly holds that the practice of downsizing is not economically necessitated but is politically motivated by a desire to dismantle the welfare state and establish a new social dynamic favoring corporate interests and commodification of services through privatization. It aims to alter radically our understanding of society and its obligations to workers and to the less advantaged, by replacing community-based conceptions of social life with a market paradigm. This position is rejected by those who think there is a place for restructuring as a necessary adaptation of business to change and to preserving employee prospects over the longer term. Wayne Cascio shows that there many alternatives to eliminating positions, and that companies can anticipate and prepare for change in ways that recognize that it is their employees and suppliers who enable them to operate well, so responsible change should respect these interests. He draws on real life histories to show how this has been done in business (63-71), by initiatives involving all employees, keeping the information and communication lines open, re-educating and redeploying workers, developing new competencies and new marketable skills in the workforce, instituting voluntary leaves of absence, and having senior management absorb the highest pay cuts.

The methods adopted for restructuring raise a range of ethical issues. Internal restructurings run the risk of being skewed by conflicts of interest, especially where they are undertaken by members whose interests will be

affected by re-organization; Leo Groarke (111-24) shows that people often protect their own interests in a restructuring exercise whether this is the best outcome or not. So difficult questions, with moral dimensions, need to be addressed about who is properly placed to make restructuring decisions that will be in the best interests of the organization and those they serve. Many restructurings also entail a new prioritizing of needs and objectives to be met by a refashioned program. These involve moral and not just economic questions.

The volume contains several strong papers in addition to those by Cascio and Groarke. Vincent di Norcia (143-54) argues that employers have a responsibility to provide good business governance; that means not simply benefiting shareholders, but showing care for employee welfare, sharing productivity gains with them, and including them in their decision-making processes. David Drinkwalter explains the general responsibilities of managers facing change, arguing that there is an unwritten contract between employer and employee which needs to be acknowledged as a ground for decision (170-6). This includes an employee expectation of job security, recognition of their value and contribution, fair access to evolving opportunities and development in return for a job well done. His paper offers a precise and balanced conception of what constitutes good business practice in implementing change effectively. Conrad Brunk discusses the dangers of treating risk assessment lightly. In the case of Dow Corning silicone breast implants, corporate failure to take seriously the management and communication of risk affected the public's perception of how ethically responsible the company was, with devastating financial consequences. Louis Groarke and Nebosja Kujundzic explore several ethical questions about the increased use of part-time, and contractual one-time agreements in employment. They argue that many of these amount to forms of underemployment that are not only inadequately reported, but fail to receive the entitlements of fair pay, job security, reasonable working conditions and benefits that should accompany forms of skilled work. They illustrate this convincingly with a discussion of how part-time, non-tenure track positions in universities impose a two-tier system of employment by denying their holders job security, paid holidays, continuous health insurance, access to research funds, secretarial help, recognition of research productivity, achievement of status in the profession and the possibility of promotion. As they show, this disparity in benefits between part-time and full time teachers is unfair and exploitative, on any of several widely accepted accounts of justice.

This book shows well how ethical thinking can engage with the economic realities in which we work and live, and how it is important for a clear understanding of those realities.

Brenda M. Baker
University of Calgary

Kwame Gyekye

*Tradition and Modernity — Philosophical
Reflections on the African Experience.*

Don Mills, ON and New York: Oxford

University Press 1997. Pp. xii + 338.

Cdn\$31.95; US\$19.95. ISBN 0-19-511226-1.

In this text University of Ghana philosopher Kwame Gyekye examines the contemporary African experience from the standpoint of its historical past and its prescriptive expectations for the future. What sets this text apart from others that study the same topic is that it is written by a philosopher who examines the contemporary African ethos from the standpoint of the present. Gyekye's task in this text is specifically to offer prescriptions on how contemporary Africa should make the transition from societies influenced by the colonial experience to sociologies positively consonant with those of the modern industrial-information age world.

In this regard there are useful discussions on the topics of traditional African social structures, ethnicity, nationhood, African socialism, political corruption, and modernity. In his discussion Gyekye argues for a moderate communitarianism as optimal for contemporary Africa in response to those who argue that the communitarian culture of traditional African society is preferable to the assumed individualism of the modern West. Gyekye argues that his support for a moderate communitarianism 'is in many ways at variance with the views expressed by those scholars, which insist on the moral primacy of the community and reduce individual rights to a secondary status' (76). Gyekye's concern about strong communitarianism leads him to argue that such can lead to 'tyranny, political intolerance, and authoritarianism' (ibid.).

It is this idea of African communitarianism that has also prompted the development of the concept of African humanism which, in turn, served as the foundation for that variant of socialism known as African socialism. Although Gyekye endorses the idea of 'the humanist norms of traditional African society' as 'expressions of concern for human welfare,' (159) he does not link this ethos with African socialism as an economic and political system. The purported link between African humanism and modern socialism of the African variety formed the basis for the modernist stances of important African theorist-politicians such as Kwame N'Krumah and Kenneth Kaunda. Gyekye cites N'Krumah thus: '“the aim is to remold African society in the socialist direction; to reconsider African society in such a manner that *the humanism of traditional African life reasserts itself* in a modern technical community” and that “the restitution of Africa's *humanist* and egalitarian principles of society *requires* socialism”' (159).

But Gyekye rejects this connection, for he believes that African humanist principles 'may require some form of the capitalist system, the system that historically has been most successful in the creation of wealth, fundamental to the fulfillment of human needs and well-being' (159). Socialism, according

to Gyekye, cannot be the basis of such an economic system. It is a fact that capitalism as an economic system has produced wealth, but at a great cost historically. The development of commercial and industrial capitalism in Western Europe and North America was accompanied by the exploitation of labor in all the world's continents, especially Africa and the Americas. The forced labor of Africans in the Americas and the 'free' labor of Europeans in Europe are what compelled economic theorists such as Marx to question the virtues of capitalism. In more recent times the imbalanced impact of capitalism on human society is what caused theorists such as Lenin in Europe and African socialists such as Nyrere and N'Krumah to question the phenomenon of capitalism. Capitalism, it is true, creates wealth but it is wealth generated in a zero-sum game context: some acquire great wealth at the expense of others.

Given the very evident inequalities between the technological and financial stocks of Europe and Africa, there is no basis for the belief that an unqualified African adoption of capitalism would lead necessarily to wealth production consonant with humanist principles. The best economic model for the moment is one which yields societies such as those of Scandinavia: mixed economies with varying combinations of state and private capital invested for productive purposes.

It is true that traditional African societies were quite variable in terms of the public and private ownership of land or capital and quite variable too in terms of class structures, but the general emphasis on collective concerns is what led many African theorists to argue that traditional African society was humanistic in its basic premises.

In the interesting chapter titled 'Political Corruption' Gyekye correctly points out how personal 'taxation' by public officials corrupt the public process. Gyekye argues that the problem of corruption (in Africa and elsewhere) stems mainly from lack of moral probity but I take a more pragmatic approach: well-paid public officials who operate in a fair and incentive-driven system would be less tempted to break official rules. To argue otherwise would be tantamount to making claims that moral probity is a function of genetic endowments. This could not be the case given the rapid cultural and social transformations that societies are capable of.

The key section of the text, no doubt, is that concerning how African nations could make the transition from its colonial and pre-colonial structures to modernity. In terms of existing examples Gyekye could easily point to non-Western nations such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan that have successfully made the transition. We could also point to some of the nations of Eastern Europe that are now also set to make the transition.

There are important questions concerning the issue of modernity given the ongoing debate as to whether modernization and Westernization are quasi-synonymous. Many nations, in deference to their own sense of history and traditions, would prefer to modernize without Westernization because most of their citizens view Westernization as incompatible with their own cultural autonomy. Gyekye defines modernity as 'the ideas, principles, and

ideals covering a whole range of human activities that have underpinned Western life and thought since the seventeenth century' (264). Gyekye then goes on to argue that 'humanism, the fundamental principle and the intellectual, perhaps also ideological, engine of modernity, placed the ultimate value in individual humans and in their rationality' (265).

With respect to the question of modernity and Africa, Gyekye then poses the question of whether Africa can modernize without Westernizing. Gyekye equates modernism with technological science and capitalism but argues against this principle with regard to individualistic ethics and anti-supernaturalistic metaphysics. Gyekye's theoretical goal here is to argue that Africa cannot modernize without adopting modern technological science and capitalism, while eschewing what he views as the Western cultural values of 'individualism' and 'anti-supernaturalism.' The reason for this is that Gyekye believes that African culture cannot retain its identity without embracing supernaturalistic metaphysics and variants of communitarianism.

But Gyekye is incorrect in his argumentation because he assumes that modernity as practiced in the West is necessarily accompanied by an individualistic ethic and anti-supernaturalism. The cultures of countries such as Sweden and Finland are strongly communitarian in their sociological structure while Italy is noted for its strong commitment to the rituals of Catholicism. Such rituals are assumed to endorse belief in supernaturalistic phenomena such as miracles and exorcism. After all, belief in the principles of Christianity (virgin birth, resurrection, holy trinity, etc.) strikes one as an epistemological commitment to supernaturalism.

And again Gyekye's necessary linkage of modernity and capitalism cannot be supported. One cannot really describe the societies of Japan, Norway, and Sweden as strictly capitalist, nor would one categorize the erstwhile Soviet Union as non-modern in the sense of its impressive technological achievements.

Contra Gyekye I want to argue that Africa can attain modernity without fully embracing market capitalism, individualistic ethics, and anti-supernaturalism. But it must embrace modern science and technology. Gyekye's rhetorical question (248) as to whether Africa's traditional cultures militate against a sustained interest in the sciences should be answered thusly. Since most students in Western universities do not specialize in the sciences the argument that most African students do not specialize in science because of some putative anti-scientific disposition of African culture cannot be sustained. Improved pedagogy at all levels in Africa's schools would be most helpful in this regard.

The upshot of my discussion of *Tradition and Modernity* is that while Gyekye believes that Africa cannot modernize without embracing market capitalism and modern science, I argue that the only necessary condition for African modernity is modern science and technology. Thus the issue of whether modernism entails Westernism is an ideological one particularly for those who assume a Eurocentric view of things. But I would be remiss in my

appraisal of *Tradition and Modernity* if I did not state that the important questions concerning Africa for the new millennium were posed and answered by Gyekye in his lucid and engaging style.

Lansana Keita

Fourah Bay College
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Grace M. Jantzen

Becoming Divine:

Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion.

Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1999.

Pp. 296.

US\$59.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-253-33526-4);

US\$24.95 (paper: ISBN 0-253-21297-9).

If feminism is centrally motivated by the struggle for women's justice, how does this translate into a philosophy of religion? According to Grace Jantzen, the traditional philosophy of religion is the self-realization of the male subject, the projection of the male subject and his desires onto the universe. Jantzen's task is to identify the sources of oppression and injustice for women implicit in the tradition. In her critique the target is mainly the philosophy of religion as practiced in the Christian West and its descendent, the Anglo-American analytical approach dominant in the second half of the twentieth century.

The main features of this tradition as seen by Jantzen and other deconstructive critics are by now well known. Its logocentrism in effect amounts to the male appropriation of rationality and discourse. 'Masculinism has dominated language, the symbolic, and the civilization, which it reflects and perpetrates. And for women to get on in that civilization, it has all too often been required that they become men in drag.' So the traditional philosophy of religion did not let women speak, silenced them, and even if they did speak a little, they had to 'speak in our father's tongue' — inevitably. The problem was not that women do not or could not have a language but that men refused to listen.

Jantzen's method is Derridean deconstruction, the thrust of which is to destabilize the sharp dichotomies or binaries that constitute the core structure of Western culture: reason versus passion/desire, mind versus body, nature versus nurture, the divine versus the human, the real versus the transcendent, the spiritual versus the material. The dismantling of such dichotomies opens up the possibility of thinking differently in the philosophy

of religion. In particular, the reason versus passion/desire binary is false since without the desire to be rational the project of 'pure reason' could never get off the ground. Every passion has its quantum of reason, and desire, she argues, is the repressed other of rationality in traditional philosophy. Most relevantly to the philosophy of religion, 'it is the lack of desire, not a lack of knowledge, that keeps us from the divine. If we do not have God, it is because we do not want of God, not because the evidence for God is inadequate.'

One significant feature of the tradition is its presumptions of the 'view from nowhere', of objectivity, of truth. Jantzen is suspicious of this 'God-trick' of having no point of view, yet seeing everything, having no interests yet speaking for everyone's interests, being disengaged yet identifying with everyone. The traditional philosopher of religion pretends to have no body, no gender, no sex, assumes a universalizing tone, while in fact he has all of these. We can recognize the face of ideology in this figure of pure reason: the totalizing gesture of power. This posture of the view from nowhere conceals the deeply conservative politics of the religious tradition, excluding, often by means of the required propositional credo, diversity and difference: women, gays, lesbians, the not 'fully rational,' marginalized victims.

Suffice it to say then that according to Jantzen 'the Western cultural/philosophical imaginary is sick, and a symptom of its sickness is its refusal to acknowledge its condition.' This sickness is associated with a moral/social malaise discernible in the so-called problem of evil, since the traditional approach to the problem has been to project a source of good and evil onto the universe, and justify God in the face of evil. Crucial questions such as who perpetrates the evil, who are its victims, and how to remedy such problems, are wilfully ignored and this provides an escape from our responsibilities.

If the philosophy of religion of the tradition is the projection of the deepest desires of the male, aiming at the self-realization of the male, then a feminist philosophy of religion will be the projection of the deepest desires of the female, aiming at the divine self-realization of the female subject. The following contrasts of approach and attitude shape Jantzen's emerging feminist philosophy of religion. First, jettison the master's misguided priorities, and make ethics, rather than metaphysics/epistemology as first philosophy. Second, a feminist philosophy of flourishing 'takes seriously embodied sexual selves, situated in communities, limited, finite, connected with other animals past and future generations.' This sharply contrasts with the tradition's picture of the rational subject as disembodied, impartial, detached, self-identical, with a view from nowhere. Third, a feminist philosophy of religion is committed to an imaginary of natality and nurture, as opposed to the traditional philosophy of religion which is heavily invested in the masculinist imaginary of death and necrophilia. 'What if we begin, unlike the tradition, with birth and the hope and possibility and wonder implicit in it? How, if we treat natality with the same philosophical seriousness and respect than mortality?' If the religious symbolic is seen as grounded in natality and nurture, then there is an opening to understand the divine as a creative

possibility for fecundity and flourishing. Jantzen's suggestion is that the philosophy of the west would be radically different if women's experience of motherhood were taken seriously philosophically. For a woman 'who has had a new life grow within her, at first identical then different, utterly dependent, a part, yet not a part, requiring years of nurture,' is 'unlikely to be invested in a symbolic of the self-contained, sovereign, self-identical.' The latter symbolic could have been developed only by males who forget or deny their status as natals, who are radically self-deceived. From the perspective of a symbolic of natality, 'it is more promising to take responsibility for our small portion of infinity,' rather than to suppose ourselves, through vaulting ambition, 'promoted to responsibility for all that is not-I,' like the tradition. Fourth, a feminist projection of god will be pantheistic, seeing god as embodied in the world, hence immanent. God is best thought of as 'godding', as a process of which we are all part, as involved in our sufferings and struggles, as inseparable from solidarity with human suffering. Such an approach is in sharp contrast to the traditional ontological perspective of God as a disembodied, transcendent Being, as well as to analytic philosophers' approach to the question of religious language as ascertaining 'the precise sense and reference' of God-talk. Such a 'good old god' is dead, but a 'recognition of the divine as a horizon of becoming, exploring the embodied, earthed female divine as the perfection of our subjectivity,' this god is well worth bringing to life through us and between us as the projection of ultimate value, as enabling women to become divine.

Jantzen's critique of the traditional and analytical philosophy of religion is often insightful and powerful, especially in showing how narrow the dominant conception of the discipline has been. However, ironies abound. Even though she professes to be against logocentrism and essentialism, as well as being skeptical about truth, reason and justification, her own book and argument relies on structure, reason and justification to be compelling. Besides, as she unfolds her story of the victimization, marginalization and silencing of women by the tradition, Jantzen herself uncovers evidence and truths which justify her complaints, hence the author herself must assume regard for truth, respect for consistency even as she rightly complains of their distortions. So, in a nutshell, the irony is this: a book of this sort requires argument, has a thesis, has adversaries, even as the author repudiates adversarialism, logocentrism, and truth. Nor is it clear how her pantheistic flourishing encourages a struggle for justice rather than an indifference to injustice.

Furthermore, although the author is against essentialization, she manages to essentialize quite a few things herself. For example, she seems to essentialize men as well as women when she speaks, on the one hand, of man's necrophilia, appetite for killing, desire for mastery, and on the other hand, of woman's mothering and nurturing nature, when in fact many women are neither. Again, she essentializes and homogenizes the tradition when she reads it as 'one text,' neglecting its many stranded fabric of diverse texts. This hardly promotes an accurate or fruitful reading, the two criteria

for evaluation Jantzen favours. Perhaps most importantly, there is something deeply paradoxical about her assertion that the tradition is in principle committed to the domination of the phallus when it comes to religious language. For it is an integral part of the tradition, as well as the force of negative theology, that the God of Judaeo-Christianity and Islam is supposed to be beyond all language, since the divine cannot be named or adequately represented. So, if it isn't necessary to talk of eyebrows when we speak of the eye of God seeing everything, nor is it necessary to speak of God's gender or sex when we speak of the Creator.

Jantzen sees any philosophy of religion or religious framework as a projection of deep desires and interest, i.e., as bound to be an ideology. But as soon as this is made explicit, readers may be puzzled as to how a feminist philosophy of religion, or for that matter, any philosophy of religion can possibly fare. How are we to hold on to faith or religion if we are conscious of its status as a mere product of wishful thinking or self-deception shaped by narrow partisan interests? To argue, as Jantzen does, that what we need is to become more deliberately conscious of what we project rather than eschewing projection altogether seems to render the claim even more paradoxical. To strike a note which has a Sartrean resonance, doesn't a faith or a religion that is bad faith, or religion for a few, tend to collapse beneath our gaze?

Moreover, how does Jantzen's version of a feminist philosophy of religion differ from a thoroughly secular social ethics committed to the nurture, care and flourishing of 'the other'? As presented by her, a feminist philosophy of religion is reductionist in the sense that it is a more or less effective instrument for a positive social/political ethics. While such concerns are necessary, they cannot by themselves constitute a philosophy of religion since the distinctive religious categories of revelation, reverence and worship, as well as the sacred and the holy seem to have been eliminated or lost in translation.

Kenneth McGovern

Campion College
University of Regina

Béla Szabados

University of Regina

John Lachs

*In Love With Life: Reflections on the joy of
living and why we hate to die.*

Toronto: Scholarly Book Services; Nashville:
Vanderbilt University Press 1998. Pp. xii + 125.
Cdn\$29.75: US\$17.95. ISBN 0-8265-1328-X.

In the opening passages of *In Love With Life*, John Lachs describes two purposes. Recounting some personal history, he says: 'While discussing some moral problems connected with ending life, a person once asked me why we so hate to die. Before I could think of a circumspect answer, I heard myself saying, "Because we are in love with life"'. His response, he suggests, is '... particularly helpful in trying to understand our complicated and intimate relation to existence' (xi), and his defence of his response is his contribution to an understanding of our relation to existence. This contribution is one of his purposes.

Lachs' second purpose for the book is suggested when, having said again that '... we simply love being alive', he says, 'this book is as much an expression of that love as a chronicle of it.' Then, acknowledging that there are times when '... we face, if not a dark light, at least an endless, insipid, gray afternoon of the soul', he says that 'At those times, reading the pages that follow may be of help' (xi), and such help is the second of the purposes he has for the book.

In his efforts to 'be of help', Lachs' expression of *his* love of life suffuses chapters four, five, six, and seven, entitled, respectively, 'Choosing Activities', 'Distorted Choices', 'Tiredness with Life', and 'Death and the Rebirth of Energy'. Along with showing his zest for life, Lachs provides 'advice for living' — advice that might be provided by any thoughtful person who has lived a long and reflective life. For example, Lachs tells us that one of the keys to a happy life is choosing those activities 'that our talents and opportunities permit us to undertake, so long as they are satisfying, varied, and not severely at odds with what is socially acceptable' (70). Elsewhere, Lachs encourages us in our (possibly) 'biologically-based' quest for variety, contending that enjoyment of variety is possible only against a background of stability, and cautioning against 'excessive variety' which can 'wreak havoc with our lives.'

Acknowledging that much of what we do is routine, Lachs tells us that we can 'see our daily chores as obstacles to enjoyment or as rich sources of it,' and 'we must not expect too much; small activities give small satisfactions' (95). In considering those who have led rich, successful, satisfying lives (here, as in many other cases, across personal anecdotes), but have become 'tired of life', Lachs tells us that 'all it takes to overcome tiredness with life is to open our eyes' (105). As the quotations suggest, Lachs' endeavors here tend toward the platitudinous. But, when it comes to 'advice for living', platitudes are the norm, and felicity of expression is the measure of success. Lachs is successful by this measure.

The contribution that Lachs makes to our understanding of 'Our complicated and intimate relation to existence' consists largely of his defence of his answer 'because we are in love with life' to the question, 'Why do we hate to die?' in the first three chapters of the book. In the first chapter, 'Loving Life', Lachs tells us that being in love with life means 'first and foremost ... to be in love with the activities of which life consists'. Also loving life means 'enjoying what life provides' (8), and it means 'wanting more of it' (14). Since 'obviously, not everyone loves every activity' (4), and 'there is no reason to suppose, of course, that we love everything we must do' (7), in the second chapter, 'Hating Life', the thesis that *we* are in love with life is defended against claims to hate or to be indifferent to life or some element of them. In chapter three, 'The Rat Race', the thesis that we are in love with life is further defended against the 'struggle for success and money' that drives so many 'people caught in the grind of daily life ... to ask themselves what, if anything, in their existence is worthwhile' (39).

There is a great deal in Lachs' discussion of 'our love of life' that needs far more scrutiny than Lachs himself has provided. To raise just one line of questioning, Lachs *assumes* that 'we hate to die' characterizes, in some general way, our attitude toward death and focuses only on explaining why this is so. But, that we 'hate to die' is not at all obvious; this claim, as Lachs makes it, seems far too general. It is true that we *pursue* things that keep us alive, but for the most part, doing these things does not seem to be a matter of 'hating to die'. I eat, not because I want to stay alive, but because I am hungry; I rest because I am tired, I treat wounds, because they hurt, I seek help to deal with illness because I feel bad, and so on.

Lachs' *assumption* that we hate to die slants his response to the challenge that people claim, from time to time, to hate their lives. If the fact that people dislike parts of their lives does not show a hatred of life, but only 'dislike of some bit of life' as Lachs suggests, it is not at all clear why our like for positive episodes in our life shows anything more than that we *love* 'some bit of life'.

Helpful advice for living is wherever one finds it, and perhaps some will find such help in *In Love With Life*. The aspect of 'our complicated and intimate relation to existence' that Lachs chooses to examine — our general attitude toward our life and our death — is a proper subject for the scrutiny of professional philosophers, but this subject requires a good deal more scrutiny than Lachs has provided in this book.

Benjamin F. Armstrong, Jr.
Central College

Peter Loftson, ed.

Readings on Human Nature.

Peterborough, ON and Orchard Park, NY:

Broadview Press 1998. Pp. xi + 564.

Cdn\$34.95: US\$29.95. ISBN 1-55111-156-X.

In his brief three page introduction, Loftson describes *Readings on Human Nature* as an accompaniment to his *Theories of Human Nature*. The collection of readings can stand on its own, though, as an undergraduate anthology for use in intro philosophy courses or in courses focusing on human nature.

The reader contains forty-five selections ranging from an excerpt from Plato's *Republic* to excerpts from the cultural anthropologist Marvin Harris's two books *Cultural Materialism* and *Our Kind*. They are 'discussions of human nature within a broadly Western perspective' (xi) and Loftson interestingly arranges them into eleven sections: 1) Ancient and Early Modern Views of Human Nature (five authors); 2) Christian Views of Human Nature (seven authors); 3) Liberalism (six authors); 4) Conservative Individualism (six authors); 5) Dialectical Theories of Human Nature (four authors); 6) Biological Theories (two authors); 7) Freud (one author, two excerpts); 8) Behaviorism and Non-Self Theories (five authors); 9) Feminism (5 authors); 10) Some Contrary Voices (Sartre and Camille Paglia); 11) Twentieth-Century Views in Sociology and Anthropology (2 authors).

The readings are skillfully selected; one gets a broad sense of many of the fundamental tenets of Western philosophy because the readings have many crosscurrents between them. For example, in reading the Luther selection one can detect Butler and Kant, and in reading the Butler selection one can detect ideas for which Smith, Kant, and Hume are known as well as ideas from Plato and Augustine. In Kant's 'What is Enlightenment?' essay we encounter ideas on freedom which might be regarded as Millian and in Condorcet we can detect ideas about history for which Hegel is known. An index would facilitate our uncovering these cross pollinations but unfortunately the anthology does not contain one.

In addition to the authors that one would expect to find in the section 'Ancient and Early Modern Views of Human Nature,' like Plato, Aristotle and Descartes, Loftson also includes less well-known figures such as François de La Rochefoucauld and the Earl of Rochester. These two cynical and satirical selections helpfully balance out the optimistic and confident readings of Plato, Aristotle and Descartes. Rather than assert the beauty, the significance or the unique substance of the soul these two authors emphasize the self-interested and haughty dimensions of human nature.

The decision to group Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Locke, Butler, Kant and Bonhoeffer together in a section entitled 'Christian Views of Human Nature' has two advantages: 1) it allows the natural inclusion of medieval thinkers without having a special section called 'medieval views of human nature'; and 2) The section usefully connects medieval thinkers to thinkers not necessarily seen as Christians such as Locke and Kant. Kant, by the way,

is also included in the 'Liberalism' section. He is the only author who appears in two sections.

The excerpts from Plato and Aristotle deal with the tripartite soul, virtues, the similarities and differences between men and women, slavery, and the origins of society. These themes are picked up in other readings in the anthology as well: a good feature for an introductory philosophy course that would most likely include some study of Plato and/or Aristotle.

The length of each excerpt varies considerably: some are three pages long (like the Descartes selection), while some are almost thirty pages long. Perhaps the reason Loftson kept the Descartes selection to a minimum is that he was deliberately trying not to equate theories of human nature with theories of human mind. As he says in the introduction, 'a theory about human nature is not the same as a theory about the *mind*, or *soul*' and 'A theory of the nature of mind (or soul) is not *as such* a theory of human nature. Because of considerations like these many of the classic philosophical theories of mind will not be found represented here' (x, xi). The fact that Loftson thinks theories of human nature should be more than theories of human minds most likely influences his decision to put more emphasis on the social, moral and political readings. Instead of Aristotle's *de Anima*, for example, we have *Nicomachean Ethics*. Here we have Aquinas on virtue, Locke and Kant on religion, and readings from Butler, Mill, Rawls, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Oakeshott, Rousseau, Marx, Wollstonecraft, and de Beauvoir, all of whom straddle the lines between theories of human nature and social, moral and political theories.

This emphasis inspires the unique organization of selections into 'Liberalism,' 'Conservative Individualism' and 'Dialectical Theories of Human Nature'. Even if these labels may be overgeneralized, as Loftson admits in his introduction, they provide an interesting initial starting point to think through the approaches to human nature at hand. For example, tracing liberalism from Kant to Mill to Rawls and tracing conservatism from Machiavelli to Hobbes to Michael Oakeshott connects large strands of thought in a way that I think even undergraduates, who like to know they're not merely studying outdated philosophical theories, would appreciate.

Although there is a decided emphasis on the moral, social and political dimensions of human nature, yet another nice feature of this anthology is the inclusion of scientific approaches to human nature. We get an idea of how theorists in biology, psychology, sociology, anthropology and cognitive science understand human nature.

In section six, 'Biological Theories,' we have a lengthy excerpt from Darwin's *A Descent of Man* and a lengthy excerpt from E.O. Wilson's *On Human Nature*. The 'Behaviorism and Non-Self Theories' section traces themes from Hume and de La Mettrie into the twentieth-century psychological and cognitive theorizing of J.B. Watson, Margaret Boden and Daniel C. Dennett in a way that makes pedagogical sense.

At the end of each selection there is a bibliography of recommended readings and before each excerpt there is a short introduction. These intro-

ductions orient the reader to the salient features of the excerpt. Loftson claims to have used four criteria in selecting the theories to include in his anthology: 'the theory should be interesting, original, plausible, and have believers' (ix). Each of the individual introductions in some way addresses these four criteria, alerting the reader to the main points for which Loftson included them in the anthology.

On the whole it is a commendable anthology. It is expansive and engaging, filled with an instructive assortment of classical and contemporary readings, and contains just enough little-known, off-the-beaten-path selections (James Boswell, Samuel Johnson, Simone Weil, and Camille Paglia, etc.), to pique the interest of most any veteran instructor or beginning student.

John Mizzoni

La Salle University

Arabella Lyon

Intentions: Negotiated, Contested, and Ignored.

University Park: Pennsylvania State

University Press 1998. Pp. 215.

US\$45.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-271-01797-X);

US\$17.95 (paper: ISBN 0-271-01798-8).

This book is part of a *Literature and Philosophy* series. Lyon holds that intentions aren't 'artifacts behind the text or processes locked in the mind,' but 'are our engagement in the world'; they 'create personal identity, power, and the life-world' (11). Intending to stay 'within the historical domain of deliberative rhetoric,' she desires to 'return rhetoric to a more situated and publicly engaged practice and to question the use of studying ideal interpreters rather than rowdy audiences' (7, 111). Identifying as one of her own 'prejudices' a Wittgensteinian suspicion of theory, L says that she 'necessarily resist[s] making broad claims (though I offer explanations and generalizations)' (111). L's perspective is feminist and postmodernist.

The book's first half critiques the theories of intention of Richards, Booth, Fish, and Gadamer, and sketches an alternative view based on Kenneth Burke. The goal here: to develop an analytical framework for discussing rhetorical intentions. The second half centers on Wittgenstein, focusing on the ways that three of Burke's 'forms' — negativity, narrative, and metaphor — are read by philosophers (Russell to the present) reading Wittgenstein. The goal: 'an analysis of intention as rhetorical by seeing its play between interlocutors' (105). L aims to 'find the forces of multiculturalism, diversity,

and power differentials in philosophical discourses,' and thus to 'destigmatize them, show that failed understanding and the struggle to engage difference are normal, and document further that the political cannot be evaded by bracketing it in the institutions of politics' (105).

Richards' too-limited conception of rhetoric, says L, is 'quite possibly due to his fear of debate and concern for existing power structures' (38). It manifests a 'drive to control the standards of interpretation as well as education, justice, dialects, and the language of different cultures' and privileges Britain's patriarchal traditions. Booth's view of interpretation 'places meaning in the transparent intentions of textual production' and hence 'evades the problematic of ideology and hegemony' (47). His view that 'understanding is the goal, process, and result whenever one mind succeeds in entering another mind or succeeds in incorporating a part of another mind' (Booth, *Critical Understanding*, quoted by L) is read by L to mean that Booth wants 'to guarantee consensus through docile, colonized readers' (46). Booth's talk of 'one mind entering another mind' is 'a conceivably sexual aggression' (46). Fish's description of the interpretive community as an 'engine of change' is 'clearly a mechanistic metaphor at odds with a diverse, sometimes cross-purposed group of actors' (51). The quality of the argumentation here is not high. But L's discussion of Gadamerian hermeneutics — which she thinks useful but ultimately too conservative to stand up to postmodern critiques of meaning — is more substantial.

Burke's dramatistic approach to intention, hence to interpretation, fits L's politicizing, postmodernist perspective better. Burke's view of interpretation can, L thinks, 'respect the multiplicity of possible meanings for the audience and the rhetor and acknowledge the social contracts, bargains, and betrayals within meaning,' and challenge 'false dichotomies, like those between internal and external, and individual and social' (97).

L's first Wittgenstein chapter contains a difficult discussion of Burke's notion of negativity, a category or 'form' that includes but goes beyond either propositional or term negation; a discussion of the folklorist Susan Stewart's work on nonsense which attempts to apply its categories to the *Tractatus*; and a short excursus on Iser's reader-response theory. Russell's Introduction to the *Tractatus* is criticized for slighting that work's ending, but praised for imitating the work's 'form', thus achieving 'at least some recognition of otherness'; his interpretation of the *Tractatus* is said to give support to Toulmin's thesis that 'incommensurability exists at the level of aims' (133). L's 'findings' in this chapter are: that communitarian reader-response models like those of Fish may be supported over inter-active text-reader models like Iser's; that 'prejudices are hard to risk' (Russell on the *Tractatus*); that the 'simple correlation between the resisting subject and a revolutionary figure' is undermined; that there is a problem in any broad claim of negativity as the discursive ground for change (138-40).

A chapter on Wittgenstein's little parables is equally wide-ranging. Two feminist film critics, including de Lauretis, who holds that 'sadistic desire is inherent in storytelling and hearing,' are criticized. Norman Malcolm, and

legal theorist on judicial interpretation are discussed (160). So is an APA symposium on Wittgenstein: a paper by Crispin Wright, 'Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy of Mind' is said to 'recognize otherness,' because it has a narrative form — this in the minimal sense that Wright speaks throughout the paper of 'the user of a private language' and 'the friend of privacy' (189). Two provocative and under-defended claims: i) Wright's argument 'depends on an extended narrative involving two characters'; ii) 'Wittgenstein demonstrates the failure of philosophical narratives to explain satisfactorily even the most basic communication' (153). The overall structure of the chapter's argument is somewhat hard to make out.

Chapter 6, 'Metaphors as Enthymemes,' discusses some philosophers (Rudder-Baker, Cavell, Lyotard) on two Wittgensteinian metaphors, form of life and language game. L holds (170) that 'the importance of metaphors is situational ... their formation and extension are based on the motives of a specific community and the purposes of particular audiences' — a thesis she correctly says is not new. Metaphors are, L holds, enthymematic, since they 'work because of the shared, unstated assumptions of the audience' (170). Said to be Searlean, this quite broad conception of metaphor is not spelled out in detail.

The range of L's reading is wide. Her project is ambitious and worthwhile. She is sometimes suggestive, sometimes predictable. Given the book's emphasis on Kenneth Burke, its style of argument, its rhetorical flavor, and its many, often unelaborated, references to the writings of rhetoricians and literary theorists, that audience will find it more accessible than (many) philosophers will. A fair number of philosophers would probably find its idiom unfamiliar, its rhetoric-to-argument ratio on the high side, and its negative attitude towards more analytical philosophical approaches off-putting. They would probably be impatient with the small amount of space devoted to the clarification and careful defense of key theses and arguments.

Thomas Adajian

James Madison University

Michael J. Murray, ed.

Reason for the Hope Within.

Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans

Publishing Company 1999. Pp. v + 429.

US\$28.00. ISBN 0-8028-4437-5.

This collection of articles attempts to shore up the intellectual respectability of certain beliefs held by some Christians. It is one among a number of recent books, written by evangelical academics, which seeks to 'challenge' contemporary secular society with the truths of Christianity. There is a short forward by Alvin Plantinga, as well as a favorable review on the back cover by William Alston. For his part, Alston describes this book as 'a brilliantly executed distillation of recent philosophical explorations of basic themes in the Christian faith.'

This book is comprised of fifteen separately authored chapters, each taking up a subject deemed central to the truth of Christianity. Some of the topics discussed include: a review of the traditional arguments for the existence of God, the problem of evil, a critique of various arguments for atheism, the relations between faith and reason, religion and science, and Christianity and ethics. Some other chapters involve a more specific defense of Christian doctrine, such as the resurrection of the body, the existence of heaven and hell, the incarnation and the Trinity, and the authority of scripture.

Irrespective of the fact that Alston and Plantinga give favorable reviews of this edition, philosophical sophistication is clearly lacking in some of the articles. One of the authors has atheists maintaining that the concept of God is incoherent because it entails paradoxes such as the 'paradox of the stone', namely, 'Can God make a stone so big that he cannot lift it?' (26) Another rather startling claim is that 'the existence of God is a fact on par with the fact that the earth is round' (27). A different author wonders out loud: 'if experience of God's presence is *really* analogous to seeing the earth's shape from space, why think any argument is needed for God's existence?' (42; emphasis his)

It is unfortunate that a book intended to serve as a bridge between differing views ostracizes, instead of engages, the skeptical, but curious reader. Given the subject matter of the various chapters, and that this text is intended to be the basis of 'apologetics' (vii), this work will be of interest only to a select few.

G.E. Dann

University of Waterloo

Stephen Nadler

Spinoza: A Life.

New York: Cambridge University Press 1999.

Pp. xiii + 408.

US\$34.95. ISBN 0-521-55210-9.

Stephen Nadler has written the first full length biography on Baruch Spinoza in over a century, the very first in English. His aim is not to provide either an intellectual biography of the influences on Spinoza nor a definitive study of his ideas. Rather, he seeks to explain how the various aspects of Spinoza's life came together 'to produce one of history's most radical thinkers' (xiii).

In the opening chapters Nadler tells the fascinating story of the Sephardic Jewish community of Amsterdam in which Spinoza grew up. It was founded in the early seventeenth century by Jews from Portugal who had been forced to convert to Christianity over 100 years earlier. As a result, when they arrived in the Protestant United Provinces, where they were allowed to practice their own religion, they knew little of the laws and rituals of Judaism. Spinoza's own father, Michael d'Espinosa, was born in Portugal in 1587 or 1588, and probably arrived in Amsterdam about 1623 via Nantes. Like most members of the community, he was a merchant involved in overseas trade through *conversos* who stayed in Spain and Portugal and their colonies in the New World.

There is very little record of Spinoza's early life and education and Nadler weighs the truth of various stories that have come down to us. It is known that his mother died in 1638 when Baruch was six years old. Nadler assumes that, like other Sephardic children, he was educated in the Talmud Torah school which had become renowned for its excellence at the time he would have been there. From ages 7 to 14 he would have studied 'the basic religious, cultural, and literary material that any educated Jew was expected to know' (62). Nadler points out that the community was rocked by doctrinal controversies and charges of heresy long before Baruch's own excommunication in 1656. He stresses that excommunication, or at least the threat of it, was used widely to maintain discipline and enforce conformity in the Sephardic community (125). He discredits claims by earlier biographers that Spinoza trained to be a rabbi: it seems clear that he was working in the family business by the time his older brother died in 1649.

Nadler speculates that, in spite of his business activities, Spinoza continued to study Torah after the end of his formal education, and it is to this that he attributes his good knowledge of scripture and the Hebrew language. He took over the family business with his younger brother Gabriel after his father's death in 1654. It was also at this time that his 'education took a decidedly secular turn' (102). He studied Latin, the literature of the classics, and modern science with Franciscus van den Enden, a former Jesuit who himself later gained a reputation for being an atheist and a Cartesian. Van den Enden also held views in political philosophy very similar to those later espoused by Spinoza. Nadler also thinks that it was

perhaps through van den Enden that Spinoza first gained knowledge of the writings of Descartes.

The direct evidence regarding the reasons for Spinoza's excommunication from the Talmud Torah congregation at the age of 23 is scant. Nadler explains the vehemence of the proclamation by assuming that he was already espousing some of the heterodox views about religion which he later published, such as the view that the five books of Moses are not of divine origin, that there is no personal immortality of the human soul, and that God is a material extended being. It is less likely that they were wary of Spinoza's liberal republican views, since, at the time, the republicans under Johann de Witt were then in power in Amsterdam; nevertheless, Nadler speculates, the Sephardic Jews had fresh memories of their persecution in Iberia and feared reprisals from the return of the semi-monarchic rule of the House of Orange which was supported by intolerant Calvinists. They were concerned to keep in check any radical views of the members of the community.

While there are not a plethora of documents, the second half of Spinoza's life and of Nadler's book are based on far less speculation. The next five years, after he left the Jewish community were key in Spinoza's intellectual development. During part of this time he attended lectures at the University of Leiden where Cartesian Philosophy continued to flourish in spite of an official ban. His circle of friends in Amsterdam — the Collegiants — met regularly to discuss philosophical and religious ideas. Particularly important were Koerbagh whose death in prison for heresy in 1669 pushed Spinoza to publish his *Theological-Political Treatise* and Lodewijk Meyer — later director of the Amsterdam Municipal Theatre — who 'more than anyone else was responsible for bringing Spinoza's writings to publication, both while Spinoza lived and after his death' (171). Nadler argues that Spinoza began writing his work on politics and tolerance before 1661 and also completed his *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* before this year.

Nadler argues convincingly that Spinoza was anything but the recluse which biographers sometimes portray him as being. He was a member of the Dutch scientific community and, while he himself made no major scientific discoveries, he was well respected as a lens grinder and maker of microscopes and telescopes. In 1661 he met Henry Oldenberg, soon to become Secretary of the Royal Society of London, and from this meeting their correspondence flowered. He discussed intelligently some of Boyle's chemical experiments with Oldenberg as well as questions about other philosophical topics. 'He had several close and devoted friends whose company he enjoyed and valued, and many acquaintances, with some of whom he kept up a lively and philosophically fruitful correspondence' (193-4). He made regular visits to Amsterdam, sometimes staying for weeks at a time. His friends included Burchard de Volder, later to become Rector of the University of Leiden, and Nicolaus Steno who later wrote that during his time in Holland he became well acquainted with 'the many Spinozists in the Netherlands' (195). Reports from those who knew him give every indication 'that Spinoza had a fairly charismatic personality' (195). As Spinoza's writings on God, Nature and human happi-

ness took form, the group of friends which had originally met in Amsterdam to discuss Cartesian philosophy now met to discuss Spinoza's own philosophy, which they read in manuscript (202). Of that philosophy Nadler writes: 'Despite Spinoza's theological language and what look like concessions to orthodox sentiment ... there is no mistaking his intention. His goal is nothing less than the complete desacrilization and naturalization of religion and its concepts' (190).

Much of the second half of the book consists of descriptions of Spinoza's published writings. Nadler summarizes the themes of the *Ethics* and argues that it was completed as early as 1665. In discussing the main themes of the *Theological-Political Tractatus* — toleration, the limits of political authority, the status of Scripture, the election of the Jewish people — he stresses their relation to the turbulent political life of mid-seventeenth-century Holland. It is clear the philosopher who, above all, taught that one should follow the calm life of reason was writing in the context of a world filled with violent passions.

From Nadler's portrait, Spinoza comes through as a model of a philosopher and courageous human being.

John P. Wright

Central Michigan University

**Thomas M. Powers and
Paul Kamolnick, eds.**

*From Kant to Weber: Freedom and Culture in
Classical German Social Theory.*

Melbourne, FL: Krieger Publishing Company
1999. Pp. xv + 202.

US\$18.50. ISBN 0-89464-992-2.

A 1995 NEH Summer Seminar on 'Freedom and Culture in Classical German Social Theory,' hosted by the University of Chicago and directed by Chicago sociologist, Donald N. Levine, served as the stimulus for Powers and Kamolnick's collection of essays. '[O]ur mission as editors,' they state, 'has been to craft a sophisticated but accessible text geared towards advanced undergraduates or graduate students in the fields of social theory, philosophy of the social sciences, and intellectual history,' whose central narrative is 'a coherent account of the main contours and issues animating the German tradition in social thought from the late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries' (xi). As per mission, the essays indeed prove accessible: each clearly written, well-organized into terse, thematic sub-sections, with informative references to major primary and secondary sources. But frequently they lack the philosophical sophistication that a graduate student might wish. As per narrative,

it would be more accurate to emphasize the 'certain story' (ibid.) they do in fact tell drawn from the German sociological tradition. Theirs is a story of crucial importance; but given its omission of Marx, it cannot claim to be a complete account of the 'main contours' of this tradition as a whole.

Their story revolves around a defining tension for classical German thought in general. Ever since Luther, the idea of individual freedom, often struggling against cultural determinism (or the 'objective' social realm), has motivated German thought and has found powerful expression in epoch-making theological and philosophical systems. Here the editors' intention is to show how the non-reductionist (i.e., non-naturalist, non-materialist or interpretivist) social theories of German philosophers and sociologists from Kant to Weber grew out of this tension. They culminated in the distinctive approach encapsulated by the '*Verstehen*'-thesis: the attempt in the human and social sciences to understand their phenomena 'sympathetically' (101), 'from within' or 'on their own terms.' As a result, more than half of the book is devoted to treatments of Wilhelm Dilthey, Georg Simmel and Max Weber — each in their own way *Verstehen*-social theorists. Nine of the eleven, compact essays focus primarily on an individual thinker, while the other two explore a movement (neo-Kantianism, ch. 4) and a theme (the *Verstehen*-thesis, ch. 6), respectively.

The first three chapters, on Kant (by Kamolnick), Herder and German Romanticism (by Ingeborg Baumgartner), and Hegel (including a brief, Marxist critique by Paul Gomberg), respectively, develop the historical background to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century thinkers. They each receive fair and fairly standard treatment, but links with them tend, however, to be obscured in the later chapters.

Gary Backhaus offers a look at neo-Kantian attempts to ground the human and social sciences in the aftermath Hegelian Idealism. His chapter sets the stage for Wilhelm Dilthey's struggle to ground the human sciences (ch. 5 by Ronald Schultz). Dilthey was the first in this tradition to explicitly distinguish them from the natural sciences by means of a *Verstehen*-method.

Given Levine's own scholarly work on Georg Simmel, it is not surprising that fully three chapters of the text are devoted to the latter. They are the strongest of the book and do possess an air of missionary zeal. Essays focusing on Simmel's theory of conflict (ch. 7 by David W. Felder), theory of society and legal conflict (ch. 8 by Nathan W. Harter) and *The Philosophy of Money* (ch. 9 by Kamolnick) present a concerted attempt to introduce (to a North American audience at least) the work of a sociologist whose 'contributions are frequently neglected in sociological theory courses, or if taught, often trivialized' (ch. 9, 151). They stress how Simmel sought to understand social phenomena in non-materialist terms by means of some traditional distinctions (e.g., between form and content of social interaction) but always with a keen eye for their idionomic structure. His relevance for the post-Marxian world consists in his descriptions of Marxist problems such as class conflict absent Marx's otiose normative and political framework.

Value-neutrality is again emphasized in the concluding two essays (ch. 10 by Randall Halle and 11 by Felicia Briscoe) on Max Weber. Weber's own controversial relationship to the political and social actuality he sought to objectively understand receives adequate treatment; his relationship to Simmel is explored effectively by Briscoe.

Ultimately, the lack of a chapter devoted to Marx, to the profound influence that he and his followers have exercised on the German sociological tradition, is a critical omission. Such a chapter would have helped the reader understand why, for instance, both Simmel and Weber strove to establish explicitly non-Marxist forms of social inquiry. Thus, Marxism could easily have been interpreted within the framework of this book as a powerful attempt to transcend the tension between freedom and culture, thereby exposing the limits of *Verstehen*-oriented social science.

Stephen Lake

Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium

Guy Robinson

Philosophy and Mystification:

A Reflection on Nonsense and Clarity.

New York: Routledge 1998.

Cdn\$105.00: US\$75.00. ISBN 0-415-17851-7.

Guy Robinson has been described as a rather muscular species of Wittgensteinian. The description is apt. Robinson's muscularity consists in his ability to never simply ape his masters (Aristotle, Marx, and Wittgenstein) but to put them to use. This is especially true in the case of Wittgenstein. Many Wittgensteinians ironically turn Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as an activity of clarification (hence having no real subject matter) into something that does have a subject matter: Wittgenstein's own writings. Robinson avoids this tendency. His own use manifests itself in the three chief aims of the book: (1) to rethink *why* modern philosophy mystified its own vocabulary; (2) to understand *how* this modern mystification transpired in the first place; and (3) to demonstrate *why* and *how* this process of mystification seemed sensible, possible, and even necessary by the founding fathers of modern philosophy. In this sense this book is historically sensitive and informed. While the book deals with many topics of mystification (necessity, skepticism, science, the foundations of geometry, and miracles), in this review the topic will be Robinson's examination of set theory and its logic.

What makes the Aristotelian distinction between the potential/actual infinite crucial for all future discussion of the infinite is the underlying assumption that it makes sense. With the work of Bolzano and Cantor in the nineteenth century you get a serious challenge to the Aristotelian notion of the potential infinite as the correct conception. This challenge was presented via the Cantorian definition of the infinite in terms of a one-to-one correspondence between elements within two sets. What remains in place here is the semantic appropriateness of the underlying distinction. Cantor changed the Aristotelian terminology by writing about the *improper* and *proper* infinite and demonstrated that the proper infinite is the actual infinite by the now famous diagonal argument. This argument supposedly proves the actual existence of transfinite numbers (in the same way as Gödel's incompleteness theorem proves the existence of true but unprovable mathematical propositions). The metaphysical picture at work in both Cantor and Gödel is the same: platonism (for the mathematical masses). What gives sense therefore to this entire line of discussion is the further assumption that the finite use of the term 'variable' can be simply applied to the infinite without semantic difficulty (Cantor held that infinity was a variable finite, a quantity which grows beyond all limits). The question then concerns whether one can cross over regions of discourse in this way, whether the sense of the term 'variable', previously established within one grammatical set of mathematical rules, retains its sense within another set of mathematical rules. Cantor himself in writing about *aleph-null* suggests that this number, defined as a kind of limit, is unlike the previous numbers which precede it. One would assume, then, that if it is unlike the previous numbers, one should use words differently than in the finite case. At this point you seem to have crossed a line.

In explaining all of this Robinson is right to point out that one of the great legacies of Wittgenstein is that he liberated philosophy from the notion that in order to know the sense of a word there must be a concept for us to know which regulates it, and from thinking that for a word to have sense it must refer to something independent of it. But these two notions (conceptual content and independent reference) are entrenched in the Aristotle/Bolzano/Cantor rendering of the infinite as potential/actual, improper/proper. In questioning this Robinson points out that the mystification of the infinite has been nourished by placing it within a semantic context which itself lacks any sense. It lacks a sense because it lacks a use outside of a certain set of grammatical rules. With this in mind Robinson states that while Bolzano held that a 'variable quantity' is not properly a quantity at all but only the 'notion of a quantity', it must also be held that a 'variable quantity' is not improperly a quantity either. Nor is it the 'notion of a quantity'. The very notion of variable is not applicable here at all. It is grammatically unfitted to the job of providing a definition of infinity because infinity is not a species of referential device, it is not an attribute of that to which quantity applies, and not a way of referring to number in general or to any number in particular. As Robinson states: 'A variable is in fact a

referential device of mathematical grammar analogous to a pronoun in ordinary grammar ... [but] a variable is no more an "indefinite" quantity than a personal pronoun is a person of no fixed character (whose proper name, I suppose, would have to be "Someone")' (66).

One way to describe Robinson's method of demystification is as follows. The dialectical character of the various solutions in philosophy, solutions which render them dislocated from a dependence upon the empirical usage of words, suggest where the trouble lies. It lies not so much with these various solutions but with the factors which determine the very statement of the problems which generate them. Robinson demonstrates that the way out of philosophical mystification is by a reconsideration of the notions which generate the problems in the first place. The book then is less a defense of this Wittgensteinian line of analysis and more of an application of it to particular instances.

Rory A.A. Hinton

University of Western Ontario

David Lewis Schaefer, ed.

*Freedom Over Servitude: Montaigne,
La Boétie, and On Voluntary Servitude.*

Westport, CT: Greenwood Press 1998.

Pp. viii + 252.

US\$59.95. ISBN 0-313-30527-7.

In *Essais* I/28, 'On Friendship', Montaigne celebrates his friendship with Etienne de la Boétie and tells us the next chapter will present his friend's 'On Voluntary Servitude' ('OVS'); however, by the end of I/28, apparently because 'OVS' had been published surreptitiously by Protestants, he gives us twenty-nine of his deceased friend's sonnets as I/29. But who in fact wrote 'OVS'? In 1906 Armaingaud argued that Montaigne was its author. Who really wrote the sonnets? This volume contains Schaefer's translation of 'On Voluntary Servitude' and Randolph Paul Runyon's translation of the sonnets, as appendices, and five chapters discussing these authorship questions, but more importantly their themes of friendship, tyranny, and servitude.

The strongly anti-monarchical, pro-republican 'OVS' needs this investigation in light of the 'Memoir on the Edict of 1562', which is strongly supportive of monarchy in general, the current French King, and the wisdom of suppressing Protestants with state terror. This Memoir is widely accepted as

written by La Boétie in about 1562, a year before he died. How could La Boétie have written this in 1562 and then the 'OVS' within one year's time?

Schaefer (Ch. 1) argues that Montaigne not only wanted 'OVS' in the central place in Bk. I of the *Essais*, but also that he had to attribute it to his deceased friend because the religious and political climate in France would have prohibited publication of the *Essais* and perhaps even his own imprisonment or execution for sedition. Michael Platt (Ch. 2) explores what we know about the two famous friends, how they discuss the link between life in a republic and the virtue of friendship, and how they approach the question of tyranny. Platt does not discuss the 'Mémorial' at all. Rather, he finds Montaigne to be led by his love for his friend to reconsider his own thinking, and obliquely to make it the absent center of *Essais* Bk. I. Randolph Paul Runyon (Ch. 3) focuses our attention on the twenty-nine sonnets, revealing usages and structures akin not only to the *Essais* but also to the 'OVS'. He concludes that either Montaigne had the sonnets in mind throughout the *Essais*, or else he wrote them. Régine Reynolds-Cornell (Ch. 4) argues that the structures of the *Essais* and 'OVS' show that they are not written in different styles, but around the same structure, the latter within the former, and that only when that entire structure is examined can we fully appreciate how and why Montaigne built the whole as he did. For Daniel Martin (Ch. 5), the theme of freedom over servitude dominates the *Essais*, which exhibit 'mnemonic and calendric structures' relying on Greek and Roman mythology as place-holders for concepts vital to the struggle between freedom and servitude within the soul and within the community. 'OVS' reveals the same structures for the same reasons. La Boétie's 'writings' were a necessary mythic construction, a ruse enabling articulation of the beauties of friendship and republican virtue, sewn here as seeds for a later germination in European life.

Careful readings give us worthy arguments toward the thesis that Montaigne wrote the 'OVS', and others against it, all centered on the classical and neglected theme of the virtue of friendship and what kind of civic life enables friendship. The 'OVS' emphasizes that we cannot explain the power of the tyrant, his or her subordinates, or their bureaucratic functionaries, except as a pyramid built on our own 'voluntary servitude' allowing our love of freedom and need for friendship to be stultified.

The authors aid the reader by agreeing to cite the Thibaudet/Rat Pleiades edition of Montaigne, followed by the Frame translation citation (or their own revisions of the latter). Martin provides a valuable chronology of the two friends' lives and of the documents at issue here (179-87). A sentence seems to be missing at p. 38 between lines 29 and 30, and a very few typographical errors occur.

Some observations: first, how could La Boétie have written the memoir and the 'OVS', both, within one year? And since La Boétie wrote the memoir, how could Montaigne have ever become his friend, if friends are virtually 'seamless' in sharing a common soul? More puzzling, if mnemonic and calendric structure arguments 'built' all three books of the *Essais* as one unified, if

encrypted whole (including the 'OVS'), then what happens to Montaigne as a philosopher? Instead of his gradually weaning himself from Christian Stoic doctrine with its body/soul dualism, its presumptuous 'hauteur' and its apodictic judgments, in favor of an increasingly Socratic, integrated soul both open to variety and nurturing the 'art de juger' (as we see most beautifully in III/13, 'Of Experience'), we would now have to suppose that Montaigne somehow 'knew it all along'. Then the *Essais* do not really essay himself or anything else but skillfully deliver to us, with necessary encryption and mnemonics, a previously-achieved doctrine which we now can unravel by diligent seeking. But this supposition seems to be self-defeating, for it calls for the philosophic life, including the virtues of questioning, of friendship and of republic citizenship to be pursued by everyone except our author, who not only lost his 'friend' but also held strongly different views on tyranny, separately and secretly lived that life and found its fruits alone and prior to any philosophical writing. So Montaigne feigns friendship and philosophy, while cleverly causing us to inquire and to treasure friendship. We are given the fruits but none of the cultivation, only the catch and none of the hunt. Is that Montaigne? I doubt it, though I am inclined to think Montaigne did indeed write the 'OVS'.

One final hunch: though Platt finds no stylistic commonality between the 'OVS' and Montaigne's *Essais*, I am struck by the 'OVS' author's use of animal stories (198) to make his point. Montaigne uses similar stories in *Essais* II/12, the 'Apology for Raimond Sebonde', to argue that like effects should be given like causes and to show more kinship between ourselves and other animals than his more orthodox contemporaries could ever acknowledge. That the author of the 'OVS' turns to other animals as embodying the standard of freedom instead of servitude might, if more closely examined, provide another argument on behalf of the thesis that Montaigne wrote the 'OVS'.

Craig Walton

(Institute for Ethics & Policy Studies)

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

**Anita Silvers, David Wasserman and
Mary B. Mahowald**

*Disability, Difference, Discrimination:
Perspectives on Justice in Bioethics and
Public Policy.*

Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield 1999.

Pp. vii + 343.

US\$54.00 (cloth: ISBN 0-8476-9222-1);

US\$18.95 (paper: ISBN 0-8476-9223-X).

In this latest offering of the Point/Counterpoint series edited by James P. Sterba and Rosemarie Tong, philosophers Anita Silvers, David Wasserman and Mary B. Mahowald analyze overlapping and interlocking issues pertinent to justice for people with disabilities. The authors' discussions echo a common concern that many oppressed peoples, social activists and political philosophers must ponder: 'how to seek rights and what kinds of rights to seek' (Silvers 138).

According to Silvers, the heart of their debate revolves around their different perspectives on the 'moral rationale for social responsiveness to the "problem" of disability' (253). The 'problem' of disability, like the 'problems' of other categories of difference such as race and gender, reflects the conceptualization of its operative terms (72). The various models of disability influence how justice is sought. For example, the biomedical model, which defines disability as a physiological or cognitive deficit of the individual, attributable either to bad genes and/or inadequate health practices (59), locates the individual as the central site of disability. Thus, justice would involve restoring and/or assisting individual functionality (16). The social model of disability, however, locates disabling practices and environments as central causes in the oppressive experiences of disabilities (74-6); thus, justice here would demand social reforms.

The complexity of rectifying the injustices visited upon people with disabilities — discussed separately and somewhat jointly toward the end of the book — pivots on notions of disability, difference, equality and justice. Three central issues emerge: a) the importance of theoretical platforms in the envisioning and dispensation of justice; b) the uses of the term 'equality' to structure the foundation for anti-discriminatory claims; and c) the relevance of different standpoints to bodies of knowledge and personal and societal reciprocity.

All three authors differ in their choice and application of theory. According to Silvers, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is an adequate vehicle for justice. Theoretically grounded in the social model of disability, the ADA views people with disabilities as members of a minority group whose interests warrant protection from discrimination. For Silvers, the instrumental and revolutionary potential of the ADA lies in its anti-discriminatory basis. She views the ADA as 'primarily, a vehicle for formal justice in that it prescribes [social] reforms in discriminatory practices' (256). However, Was-

serman argues that formal justice as expressed through the ADA is inadequate since the ADA is subject to exemptions and qualifications and does not 'impose any constraints on the way jobs and tasks are structured' (181, 272). Wasserman prefers distributive justice over formal justice and presents various resource egalitarian views in his deliberation on the just distribution of society's primary goods. Mahowald also advocates an egalitarian approach in her *feminist analysis of justice and equality for people with disabilities*. She differentiates between equality and justice, noting the two are not necessarily linked.

Attention to how equality is conceived occupy significant portions of the book. Wasserman considers equality in terms of access, opportunity, capability and well-being. He moves to expand our list of primary goods to include elements that enable people with disabilities to flourish, such as accessing environments that nurture self-respect (192). For Wasserman, comprehensive measures of equality and acceptable disparities are crucial to justice. Mahowald examines a crucial dilemma concerning equality and justice: how does one satisfy claims for equality amidst salient differences (213)? To navigate these 'equality/difference' scenarios, Mahowald offers feminist analyses of difference along with principlism and casuistry as tools for identifying and assessing differences from a justice perspective (215). Significantly, Mahowald identifies differences among people with disabilities. She notes that disabilities differ with respect to the cause or etiology, time of onset, duration and type and apparentness of impairment (217-27). Attention to differences among people with disabilities is paramount, especially if we want to avoid exacting resources from people with disabilities to compensate other people with disabilities (Sillers 259-60). That is, a distributive justice scheme may result in the reallocation of resources without the correction of discriminatory practices. Hence, careful attention to differences is crucial in the deliberation of justice for people with disabilities.

To elucidate differences with an eye to justice, Mahowald offers her feminist standpoint, which aims to '[look] toward an equitable balance of both advantages and disadvantages, burdens and benefits, among all of those affected by decisions and policies' (227). Historically, feminist theory and practice have been grounded in the fight for equality in light of (gender) difference. As a non-dominant standpoint, Mahowald argues that a feminist perspective provides a 'corrective lens' to the 'myopia' of the dominant group (210). In response to Mahowald, Wasserman writes, 'it is unclear how we can do better simply by exposing ourselves to an array of actual standpoints...' for as Silvers suggests, 'people with significantly different backgrounds and life experiences are likely to remain...mutually opaque' (278). However, Wasserman has misinterpreted Silvers' comment. What Silvers takes issue with is the presumption that non-disabled people can, simply by imagining themselves disabled, judge the value of the lives of people with disabilities. In the Oregon Health Plan survey, many non-disabled people's fear of disability led them to conclude that they would prefer death over living with certain disabilities (43). Silvers also notes that people with disabilities may

make the 'cognitive mistake' of underestimating their own abilities at the onset of a disability. Silvers' stance, therefore, is not a wholesale dismissal of different standpoints. Rather, she cautions us to be critically conscious of our fears whether we are communicating our actual or imagined standpoints.

Although Silvers, Wasserman and Mahowald employ ideas around different standpoints, the role of standpoint theory is not discussed. With the rise of disability culture and the growing number of voices of people with disabilities, it seems remiss of us to not evaluate the role of standpoint theory in the deliberation of justice for people with disabilities. For example, what constitutes a 'disability standpoint?' For people with cognitive disabilities, our definition of 'standpoint' and 'self-knowledge' must be re-examined for any potential biases. A multitude of standpoints can work to enrich our understanding of injustice and justice much like Lawrence C. Becker's call for reciprocity in the book's afterword (293-303). If mutuality and reciprocity are integral to social cohesion and issues of justice for people with disabilities, should not only actions but knowledge be reciprocated? Perhaps one day, people with disabilities will argue the 'problem' of non-disability and its accompanying 'cognitive mistake' about physical and mental acceleration. But perhaps that is the future book for which this book provides an opening.

Ritz Chow

(Women's Studies)

Simon Fraser University

John Skorupski, ed.

The Cambridge Companion to Mill.

New York: Cambridge University Press 1997.

Pp. xiii + 591.

US\$59.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-521-41987-5);

US\$18.95 (paper: ISBN 0-521-42211-6).

The Cambridge Companion to Mill is, to the best of my knowledge, the longest volume to be dedicated to a philosopher in this series; this is fitting, considering the major contributions Mill made in numerous areas of philosophy and the fact that the significance of many of these contributions has been rediscovered only relatively recently. Overall, the book is a great success. Admittedly, there is no clear answer to the question of who its intended audience is. Some articles will be easily accessible to readers who are new to philosophy, while others require more background. Some will be of considerable interest to Mill scholars, while the material discussed in others will already be familiar to the specialist (often from a book by the same author). But then one is never quite certain for whom the *Cambridge Companion's*

are meant. This overall lack of direction is not a fatal flaw so long as most of a volume's individual chapters prove valuable to some audience or other; happily, this is sure to be true of this installment in the series.

John Skorupski contributes both an editor's introduction and a chapter on 'Mill on Language and Logic' (plus an extensive bibliography of secondary literature on Mill). The introduction tracks Mill's philosophical fortunes, which have risen of late, due in part to a resurgence of philosophical naturalism (Mill's thoroughgoing naturalism is a theme which runs through a number of chapters). Skorupski places Mill in a tradition of naturalistic thought less familiar than Hume's, viz., that of Reid; both Mill and Reid affirm that skepticism need not be taken seriously, because certain primitive belief-forming dispositions do not stand in need of validation beyond a determination of their primitiveness (though Mill recognizes considerably fewer such dispositions than Reid). Skorupski concludes with a brief but insightful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Mill's utilitarianism, and a comparison of nineteenth- and twentieth-century liberalism; he finds the earlier classical liberalism more compelling, since it affirms the truth of a robust 'romantic-hellenic' ideal rather than resting on a pallid 'epistemological neutrality' about the summum bonum. In the succeeding chapter Skorupski provides an overview of Mill's theory of meaning and his empiricist philosophy of logic; he defends the latter against critics ranging from Kantians to Husserl.

That Wendy Donner's essay 'Mill's Utilitarianism' opens with a defense of Mill's 'qualitative hedonism' will come as no surprise to those who are familiar with her 1992 book *The Liberal Self*. The latter half of the article focuses on Mill's criteria for morally wrong actions and the role he assigns to moral rules, including rules of justice. In the first four chapters of *Utilitarianism*, Mill's criterion for judging actions is apparently the familiar act-utilitarian one, combined with an account of moral rules as valuable rules-of-thumb; in the concluding chapter on justice, however, he asserts that an action is wrong only if it ought to be punished by the agent's conscience, and perhaps other sanctions as well. Strictly speaking these criteria are not mutually inconsistent, but they do not cohere well with one another; given Mill's utilitarian theory of punishment, and the connection between punishment (by both conscience and courts) and violations of rules, the 'punishability' criterion seems to take him in the direction of rule-utilitarianism. There is thus a significant tension within Mill's account of the moral evaluation of actions. Donner seems to agree that Mill advances two incongruent criteria for morally evaluating actions, and she comments that 'puzzles ... arise' as a result; nevertheless, because she does little to highlight this tension, and evinces approval for Mill at almost every step, the non-specialist for whom she writes may not realize its severity.

Jonathan Riley's contribution deals with Mill as a political economist; philosophers who write on Mill but who have paid little attention to his *Principles of Political Economy* (and no doubt there are many) will profit greatly from this chapter (no pun intended). Riley rightly emphasizes the fact

that Mill believes improvement to economic institutions and practices must occur gradually, both because some kinds of improvements will only be feasible when the people themselves have improved, which can only happen slowly, and because rapid change would lead to legitimate expectations going unfulfilled, which would, in Mill's eyes, constitute an intolerable injustice.

Mary Lyndon Shanley contributes a synopsis of *The Subjection of Women*. She sticks fairly closely to this text, however, and does not devote much space to what Mill (or Harriet Taylor) has to say elsewhere about the status of women. Nor does she add any commentary on Mill's own marriage in the course of discussing his understanding of ideal marriages; Mill scholars are already familiar with this union, but Shanley writes for a general audience which might find some biographical material interesting and helpful. She mentions some of the criticisms which nineteenth-century conservatives and twentieth-century feminists have made of the *Subjection* and briefly defends Mill, but here too she might have said more. In short, the article is a bit too short, although it is nevertheless a well-executed overview which could appropriately be assigned to students reading *On Liberty* in order to give them a more comprehensive understanding of Mill's social-political philosophy.

C.L. Ten's 'Democracy, Socialism, and the Working Class' would also be a valuable supplement to readers of *On Liberty*. Ten's overall theme is that although Mill is critical of the working class as he finds it, his expectations for its 'probable futurity' are high. In the initial sections of this (relatively brief) chapter, Ten explores Mill's views on democratic government. He adroitly summarizes Mill's efforts to devise a system of democracy which gives every citizen a genuine say in how government intellectually and morally advanced few to be drowned out by those of the selfish, short-sighted, and poorly-educated many. Later in the chapter Ten discusses Mill's support for worker-ownership of firms and his views on socialism and communism. This material is treated in more than one chapter (including Riley's, obviously), but the different discussions are generally complementary; Ten's is helpful because of the attention he gives to the schemes of worker cooperation, socialism and communism upon which Mill looks with the greatest favor. One surprise: although Mill's opposition to 'revolutionary' centralized socialism is mentioned, references to 'Marx' or 'Marxism' are conspicuously absent.

Terry Irwin's fascinating article on 'Mill and the Classical World' will be of considerable interest to Mill scholars, for nothing like it exists elsewhere. Irwin concentrates on Mill's treatment of the Athenian democracy and his reception of Plato. He emphasizes the influence on Mill of George Grote (although he also calls attention to several of their disagreements). Grote challenges the anti-democratic lessons which Tories (and Thucydides!) drew from the Athenian experience, and Mill celebrates the Athenians' ability to combine individual liberty with public spirit. Mill holds Plato's elenctic method in the highest esteem but has only contempt for his substantive positions. Irwin is perhaps unnecessarily bothered by the fact that Mill

rejects Plato's view that rational argument can establish that virtue is a part of human happiness, but nevertheless maintains that a person with a proper upbringing will believe that virtue is a part of her happiness. Does this mean that, according to Mill, giving a child a proper upbringing involves instilling a belief for which there is no rational ground? No. Virtue is a part of happiness only for those individuals who have received a proper upbringing, one which led them to form a mental association between pleasure and virtue. No rational argument can establish that virtue is part of every person's happiness, since this is false. Nor, according to Mill, will rational argument make virtue into a part of someone's happiness if it is not one already; offering up syllogisms is not the way to form the requisite association. But if I have benefitted from a proper upbringing then virtue *will* be a part of my happiness, and my ability to recognize my own desires and pleasures will provide me with a rational ground for believing this to be so.

While there is little to criticize about its execution, Peter Nicholson's 'The Reception and Early Reputation of Mill's Political Thought' may contribute less value to the collection than any of the other articles simply in virtue of its subject-matter. While the reaction of nineteenth-century thinkers to *On Liberty* and *The Subjection of Women* is an interesting topic, the point of Nicholson's discussion is not really the enhancement of our understanding of Mill. Furthermore, John Rees has written on the initial reception of the first of these works, and nineteenth-century commentaries on both works are readily available thanks to collections of reviews published by the Thoemmes Press and Liberty Fund's publication of Stephen's *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*. Still, the article is an interesting and worthwhile read. A particular highpoint is Nicholson's defense of *On Liberty* against early critics who maintained that nineteenth-century Britain was experiencing no shortage of individuality or eccentricity (Macaulay: 'He is really crying "Fire!" in Noah's flood'). As Nicholson observes, Mill seems to be both taking a longer view and operating with a more radical conception of individuality than his critics.

Alan Ryan's focus in 'Mill in a Liberal Landscape' is on 'the difficulties a late twentieth-century reader will have with Mill's liberalism' (497). The first section is a general overview of *On Liberty* and of Mill's (and, perhaps I should add, Taylor's) aims in composing the book. On the whole this discussion will prove valuable to readers who are new to Mill, although in places Ryan moves so quickly that it is difficult to follow him from idea to idea. In the final section of the article, Ryan compares and contrasts Mill's liberalism with those of Rawls, Dewey, the British Idealists and Berlin. Although personally I am satisfied to see Mill compared favorably with Rawls, I suspect that Ryan is not entirely fair to the latter; is it really accurate to say that 'Rawls writes as though the liberal project is to create a society of individuals whose primary commitments are to their own private well-being on the one hand and to their consciences on the other' (521)? Skorupski's comparison of these same two thinkers is the more illuminating.

It would take a philosopher of mathematics, and more space than remains here, to do justice to Philip Kitcher's lengthy 'Mill, Mathematics, and the

Naturalist Tradition'. Nevertheless, some mention must be made of this chapter, which may be the most important in the book. Kitcher's aim is that of rescuing Mill's naturalistic account of mathematics from the philosophical scrap-heap into which it has been placed by its transcendentalist critics, most notably Frege. While Mill's general approach undoubtedly stands in need of some emendation and development, its great advantage over its transcendentalist rivals, according to Kitcher, is its ability to explain the acquisition of mathematical knowledge, which it does in terms of interaction with the physical world. The chief problem it has to overcome is that of answering the question of what entities mathematical knowledge is knowledge about, and Kitcher argues that the Millian program has the resources for providing an answer.

While it is impossible to do more than list the remaining essays, there are grounds for praising each of them. They are: Geoffery Scarre, 'Mill on Induction and the Scientific Method'; Andy Hamilton, 'Mill, Phenomenalism, and the Self'; Andy Millar, 'Mill on Religion'; Fred Wilson, 'Mill on Psychology and the Moral Sciences'; and John Robson, 'Civilization and Culture as Moral Sciences'.

Dale E. Miller

Old Dominion University

David West

An Introduction to Continental Philosophy.

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Giving a lucid, systematic introduction to continental philosophy, let alone doing so without imposing a homogenizing interpretive framework, particularly at a time when the very dichotomy between continental and analytic philosophy is being challenged, is no mean feat. Yet this is just what David West has accomplished in his accessible account that lays out the historical context and main concerns of the various strands of continental philosophy and identifies their points of intersection and divergence.

The structure of the book itself embodies West's characterization of continental philosophy as 'self-consciously historical' (1). Its first two chapters provide the historical intellectual background for the middle three, which in turn serve as background for the final two. Continental philosophy begins, essentially, with Hegel whom West presents as attempting a synthe-

sis of Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment tendencies (34) — a synthesis which remains the elusive goal of continental philosophy by the end of the book. Hegel is more than an *eminence grise* in this text as each of the three following chapters returns to aspects of his thought. West identifies three trajectories of philosophical development originating in the nineteenth century: 1) Critical Theory, focussing on questions of social order and emancipation; 2) Phenomenology and Hermeneutics, focussing on questions of meaning, interpretation, understanding, and subjectivity; and 3) Existentialism, focussing on questions of the limits of reason. These correspond to the lineages of Marx via the early Frankfurt School to Habermas, Dilthey via Husserl and Heidegger to Gadamer, and Kierkegaard and Nietzsche to Sartre respectively. Of these, the first group clearly is the most and the third the least unified.

The final two chapters deal with post-structuralism and postmodernism. Derrida and Foucault are the focal figures of ch. 6. According to West, both retain connections to the Enlightenment project, even if their immediate historical roots are in Nietzsche and Heidegger. The final chapter gives the reader a sense of the current state of the art. Postmodernists seek 'a radical break with all of the major strands of post-Enlightenment thought' (189). As West acknowledges, there are 'conflicting views about what postmodernism is;' to that extent, one might say, postmodernism epitomizes continental philosophy. It is a reaction against twentieth-century fascism, the holocaust, and the fate of Marxism. Conceptually, it is shaped by the rejection of the philosophy of the subject and by anti-humanism. West closes with a discussion of a core issue of postmodernism: is it a genuinely radical or ultimately quietist position? True to Hegelian form, West returns to Habermas as a kind of counterweight to the postmodernists and ends by considering the proposed synthesis of the postmodernist and Enlightenment projects in Stephen K. White's attempt to marry Heidegger and Habermas.

The fact that West is a political theorist by trade is evident throughout. A major theme of the book is continental philosophy's concern with social and intellectual criticism. Not only does West begin and end with critical theory, he also introduces Husserl, for instance, as resisting 'the imperialist tendencies of natural scientific reason, particularly in the area of moral and cultural value' (86) and seeking to avoid Dilthey's historicist relativism (88). This approach foregrounds the fact that philosophy is about real issues and not just an idle armchair exercise.

No introduction of this sort can be perfect. There are some significant omissions. West acknowledges that post-structuralism and postmodernism are rooted in the later Heidegger's anti-humanist critique, but confines his exposition almost entirely to the early Heidegger. Merleau-Ponty is only briefly mentioned. In keeping with the emphasis on Habermas's connection to the Frankfurt School, West focuses on the early Habermas. This leads him to say that Habermas holds there are four — rather than three — 'validity claims' raised in communication (75). More importantly, one might note that Habermas's later work allows for a rapprochement between the continental

and analytic traditions. In addition to the usual postmodernist suspects like Lyotard and Baudrillard, West includes a cast of characters less readily expected in the category such as Iris Young, Claus Offe, and Anthony Giddens. To be sure, he does so in the context of 'other currents of political thought address[ing] postmodern themes' (Young) or of attempts to accommodate postmodern insights in politically effective theories. Nonetheless, this blurs the distinction between theorists of postmodern society and postmodern social theorists. Finally, West makes but passing reference to Deleuze and, oddly, there is no mention of Bourdieu.

Although the structure of the book favours a reconciliation of Enlightenment and postmodernism, West's overall presentation is even-handed and neutral, showing each philosopher in the strongest possible light. There are extensive references to secondary literature, especially in footnotes, and a thorough bibliography. (There is the occasional unreferenced mention of critiques of certain positions in the body of the text.) This is an excellent companion to undergraduate courses in continental thought. It is suitable background reading for surveys as well as for undergraduate or graduate courses on specific philosophers or movements.

Barbara Fultner
Denison University

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