

Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Postfoundational Phenomenology: Husserlian Reflections on Presence and Embodiment

JAMES MENSCH

University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001; 280 pages.

"[B]eginning in the 1920s ... Husserl ... focussed increasingly on embodiment.... [H]e sought in a series of largely unpublished manuscripts to describe presence, in particular self-presence, in terms of embodiment. What unifies his descriptions is the thought that presence and embodiment imply each other: to be present is to be engaged in some form of embodiment and vice versa. The self, taken as a place of presence, is formed by the entanglement of the two. Concretely, this means that things are present to us insofar as they affect us bodily. Similarly, our own self-presence is founded on our bodily self-affection" (2). In his *Postfoundational Phenomenology*, Professor Mensch joins Donn Welton (*The Other Husserl*) and Nam-in Lee (*Edmund Husserl's Phänomenologie der Instinkte*) in the study and presentation of this later and largely unknown Husserl—the Husserl "post" the Husserl of the "pure phenomenological observer" and the Cartesian style of phenomenology, the Husserl of the posthumous manuscripts, by way of a study of these manuscripts held in the Husserl archives in Louvain.

Mensch's book serves two purposes: first, and at its core, it is a window into the thought of the Husserl of the Nachlaß, and thus a work of historical scholarship (Chapters 2 through 5); second, it is an evaluation of the importance and implications of this later Husserl for contemporary philosophy (which attempts to move the historically interesting retrieval of the later Husserl into the heart of current philosophical debates), and thus a philosophical project in its own right (Chapters 1 and 6–8). Indeed, Mensch argues that it is Husserl, the apparent culmination of the modernist project, rather than the so-called "postmoderns," represented for Mensch by Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida, who overcomes modernism. The postmoderns, we are told, remain within the modernist problematic of the dialectic between ground and grounded by merely inverting, but not displacing, the terms presence and absence, and thus offer a new kind of foundationalism, the desire for which they share with the moderns. It is Husserl, so Mensch's thesis goes, who truly displaces the modernist project by thinking presence outside of the dialectic of ground and grounded, and does so precisely by thinking of presence as embodiment.

It is to an account of this relationship between presence and embodiment, at the root of the nonfoundational phenomenology of the later Husserl, that Mensch turns in what might be called his "expositional" chapters. The thrust of the thesis put forth here is that being is to be conceived as embodied functioning: "To do so is to say that being is present where it is materially 'at work,' where it functions by embodying itself" (11). "The contents of consciousness," on this analysis, come to presence as they affect an embodied consciousness that is already itself turned toward them as instinctual striving, and the self comes to self-presence as self-affectation, as the feeling of itself as being so affected. This coming to presence does not, therefore, rest upon any prior absence, but is primordial; it is the "welling up" of "life" itself, and that

is possible only in an embodied being—that is, one susceptible to, and oriented toward, affecting contents. At the root of consciousness, at the root of life (and thus of thought), is the correlation, the fit, between affecting contents and the affected consciousness (for that which does not “fit” never comes to presence, and is not therefore absent, but simply *is* not). It is only in the attempt to “retain” these affecting contents (those that meet bodily, instinctual needs) in the face of the presentation of ever new affecting contents, that the temporal stretching involved in retention and protention is constituted, and the “absence” of those contents now slipping into the past, and those anticipated in the future, comes to light—but only *after* their original “presentation.” The constituting ego itself, and the constituted “things” it intends as transcendent to itself, are both derived from this original “coming to presence”—such that for this later Husserl, on Mensch’s reading, the absence which the postmoderns take as constitutive of the presence of the ego to itself is itself derived from a more originary presence; indeed, alterity is introduced as the difference between presence (as the original coming to presence) and that which is presented (to an already derivative constituting ego): “The distinction, here, is between the borderless living presence in its welling up and the same presence located by the thematization of what wells up. Located presence has the being in time that allows it to be present as some entity. The presence that is so presented can be that of either an objective self or thing. The borderless, anonymously presenting presence is actually neither” (229).

More specifically, in the first of the four “expositional” chapters (Chapter 2), Mensch lays out the later Husserl’s analysis of the instincts as a necessary condition for the coming to presence of the self and things, by way of the constitution of temporality and reason. The obvious objection to this theory, that it employs, in its use of the “instincts,” the terms of the science of biology and thus is, rather than a phenomenology, precisely the kind of naturalism that Husserl himself always warned against, Mensch answers briefly—perhaps too briefly—in his introductory chapter, arguing that as a “descriptive idealism,” Husserl’s theory of the instincts avoids biologism—“abstracts from its biological basis”—insofar as “its attention to the phenomena is an attention to the connections it manifests, the very connections that must be present for presence to be constituted, [which] holds even when we speak about the emergence of consciousness” (17). In Chapter 3, Mensch lays out four classical requirements for freedom that he gleans from the history of philosophy and, by piecing together analyses from the later writings, shows how Husserl’s embodied self meets those requirements. This is followed by a chapter giving a more precise exposition of how the coming to presence of things and of itself is temporalized for the embodied self, and in particular how within this self a sense of the future is constituted. In the last of these expositional chapters, Chapter 5, Mensch attempts to use the analyses of the later Husserl to provide a solution to the problem of qualia, i.e., how we move from the possession of data to conscious experience.

The remaining chapters attempt to bring this postfoundational Husserl into critical dialogue with the postmoderns: Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida. In Chapter 6, the issue is language, and herein Derrida’s critique of Husserl’s distinction between indication and expression is reexamined from the perspective of the work of the later Husserl. After a close reading of Derrida’s critique, Mensch argues that Derrida’s

emerging position (that presence is a product of the process of supplementation as required by the pre-original absence inherent in the difference/deferral that is *différance*, and so necessarily excludes any primordial presence) effectively cuts language off from the world, and he counters with Husserl’s view that language requires *both* absence and presence. It is the retention of the *impressions* of contents as they are displaced by new impressions that thus continue to be present *as impressions*, even when that which left these impressions is now absent, and this provides language with its connection to the world. True, the presence of “things” to consciousness is constituted across the consistency (the fitting-togetherness) of retained, present, and anticipated contents but, as Husserl maintains, a constituted presence is still a presence.

In Chapter 7, the issue is the origin of ethics. Against Heidegger and Levinas, who base the origin of ethics in absence (in my absence from myself in the futurity of my death in the case of Heidegger, and the absence of the other in his or her mortality in Levinas), Mensch, through Husserl, wants to demonstrate that the origin of ethics is founded, rather, in a kind of co-presence of myself and the other. Mensch’s main polemic against Heidegger and Levinas is that the alterity of death, its trauma, even if it were able to present itself, would not solicit our attention, but would provoke flight. Furthermore, death, even on the terms of Heidegger and Levinas, could not present itself at all, and the supposed impetus to ethics proposed by these two thinkers is, in principle, incapable of fulfilling its alleged function. We are driven, then, on Mensch’s view, to seek the origin of ethics (which issues in conscience and the face to face relationship) in the coming to presence of the other for me in the welling up of life itself, such that ethics, for Mensch, needs to be oriented to life and not to death, to presence rather than absence. My instinctual “responsibility” to preserve my own life, here, extends to the preservation of the other who shares this life with me.

Aside from the possible objection that this correlation of Heidegger and Levinas masks the true depth of the Levinasian critique of Heidegger, and gives us a distorted reading of Levinas (for example, the alterity of the other in Levinas is not qualified by the inaccessibility of his past and future to me, as if his alterity were an epistemological limitation, as Mensch reads it, but is a calling into question of the *rights* of my epistemological grasping in the first place), one wonders whether the exclusion of death on phenomenological grounds is really effective here; is the point (especially in the case of Levinas) not rather the disruption of phenomenology itself? More generally, it is not at all evident to me, even after reading Mensch’s text, that absence functions for any of these postmoderns as a “ground,” as Mensch claims, at least not in any way that is genuinely analogous to the ground sought by modern philosophers, even if Mensch is correct in noting certain “formal” similarities between these two styles of thinking. Mensch reads the postmoderns as *anti-* (inverted or negatively) foundational phenomenologists, and therefore suggests that Husserl’s more thoroughgoing *postfoundational* phenomenology is the true antidote to modernism. But these postmoderns can be (and perhaps should be) more radically read as *postphenomenological*, where phenomenology itself (rather than the ground-grounded relationship) is taken as the actual continuation of the modern project. If a break with the modern is required, which strategy most effectively performs this task? Still, the question remains: does absence come first, as constitutive of presence (as in Heidegger,

Levinas, and Derrida, according to Mensch), or second, as derived from the present taken as the welling up of ever new contents for a pre-egological and pre-temporal consciousness (as in Husserl)? Do we seek the conditions of presence in absence or the conditions of absence in presence? Or, to put the question otherwise, how far down can phenomenology go? Can we answer this question itself phenomenologically? We may or may not be convinced by Mensch's polemical arguments against the ability of the absence introduced by death (my own for Heidegger, and for the other for Levinas) to bring about the constitution of the responsible self, as we may or may not find convincing the critique of Derrida's claim that *différance* underlies the possibility for language, but Mensch does at least give us a Husserl who suggests that the derivation of presence from original absence is not the only coherent philosophical option.

Mensch writes with remarkable clarity and with sufficient repetition to reinforce important points without belaboring them. Husserl scholars will have to judge as to whether the details of exposition and interpretation are accurate, but if one of the goals of this book is to introduce those of us acquainted only with the "standard" Husserl to this later, "other" Husserl, to give us a sense of his depth and potential significance for ongoing philosophical problems in dialogue with philosophers who have in many cases defined their own positions contra the standard Husserl, and to whet our appetite for further investigation, then Mensch succeeds admirably. As this book, among others, makes clear, Mensch is both a scholar and thinker of substance, and whether or not we are convinced by his thesis that it is the Husserl of the Nachlaß who provides the better way through the postmodern problematics, the challenge this book poses to a post-Husserlian, postphenomenological "orthodoxy" is worthy of long and concerted attention.

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Between Suspicion and Sympathy: Paul Ricoeur's Unstable Equilibrium

ANDRZEJ WIERCIŃSKI, Ed.

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The objective of this collection of no less than fifty essays, written by prominent North American and European scholars in hermeneutics, is not to reveal how a plurality of interpretations merges into a unified claim regarding Ricoeur's writings. Rather, the purpose of *Between Suspicion and Sympathy*, the third volume in the Hermeneutic Series of the International Institute for Hermeneutics, is to offer a variety of conflicting and complementary interpretations. A Festschrift in honor of today's most important representative of philosophical hermeneutics, this volume offers a variety of approaches toward Ricoeur's work, allowing differences to emerge so that they may give rise to new interpretations of his multifaceted œuvre.

The volume presents a number of perspectives on specific aspects of Ricoeur's philosophy and builds bridges between his thought and several traditions. Since a

detailed presentation of each essay, or even an exposé of the most provocative arguments, by far exceeds the scope of this review, I shall single out a few essays and comment on the general architecture of the volume.

The essays are organized into five sections which address the influences on Ricoeur's thought, the hermeneutics of selfhood, Ricoeur's writings on religion, his confrontation with structuralists and poststructuralists, as well as his socio-political philosophy. The Postscript offers an overview of Ricoeur's work and four interviews with Ricoeur, conducted by Tamás Tóth and Yvanka Raynova.

Philosophy and theology in Ricoeur's writings coexist as two disciplines separated by a rigorous methodological division. In order to understand Ricoeur's view of their relation, Andrzej Wierciński addresses five themes: (1) Ricoeur's appreciation of philosophy's limits is brought forth by situating him within the hermeneutics of finitude. The latter, however, is inseparable from the human orientation toward infinity, which shows itself in language as the unsaid which belongs to what is said. Hence the possibility to think finitude in relation to Divine infinity: *Verbum* mediates the human and the divine. (2) While addressing the three-stage hermeneutic arc (naïve understanding, objective explanation, appropriation), Wierciński pays central attention to the second, explanatory, stage. The latter signifies Ricoeur's distance from relativism; no interpretation may do violence to the text as it is structured. While there are many ways to construe a text, all interpretations are not equal, for the field of constructions of meaning is limited by the structure of the text. Ricoeur's hermeneutics supports a pluralism of interpretations, but it does not relativize them. (3) Wierciński examines Ricoeur's construal of philosophy as a modest endeavor—a philosophy that acknowledges its finitude and assumes a stance of agnosticism. While philosophy should suspend the question of God, theology should refuse the temptation of a crypto-philosophical foundation. (4) The agnostic stance secures the autonomy of philosophy. (5) Finally, the primacy of reason that Ricoeur grants to philosophy is what prevents him from taking up the mantle of a theologian.

The first section, "Influences and Retrievals," brings Ricoeur into confrontation with some of the thinkers who have most profoundly influenced his work. It addresses themes in Kant, Bergson, Marcel, Jaspers, Nabert, and Gadamer that have been most significant to the development of Ricoeur's thought. This section also deals with some general issues in hermeneutics: its relation to phenomenology as well as its ontological and ethical implications.

Addressing the question of unity in Ricoeur's work, Domenico Jervolino points to the notion of *homme capable* which Ricoeur himself had identified as a thread that binds his works together, where all of his work is configured as a philosophical anthropology, an exegesis of the capabilities that make people human. Jervolino identifies a thematic unity in this expression, which points further toward the stylistic and methodological unity illustrated by Ricoeur's famous metaphors of "the grafting of hermeneutics onto phenomenology" and of the "long route" of reflection. Jervolino identifies a spiralling pattern in the development of Ricoeur's thought where the latest works signify a return to the investigation of the will which had inspired his early writings. Certainly, a spiral is not a circle: "there is no coincidence between beginning and end, but rather an enriched juxtaposition" (5).

The early hermeneutics of symbols and the more mature hermeneutics of texts are the generally acknowledged stages in the development of Ricoeur's thought. His more recent texts, Jervolino suggests, indicate the existence of a new hermeneutic phase, which can be characterized under the sign of translation. The paradigm of translation does not displace but completes the other two. The progression of the three paradigms is governed by the expansion in language areas addressed—the linguistic sign, discourse, and languages within their historical diversity. Translation is a model for all human diversities, for while revealing plurality it points to the imperfect, yet always perfectible, unification of humanity based on an ethics of hospitality and conviviality.

Olivier Abel's essay stages a fourfold orientation of hermeneutics: critical, ontological, poetic, and ethical. Critical hermeneutics attempts to uncover the implicit question that underlies the text; it therefore addresses the linguistic and historical contexts of the text. Ontological hermeneutics is directed toward the most originary, fundamental question to which all answers belong. Poetic hermeneutics grants autonomy to the text and explores the possible worlds proposed by the poetic structure of the text. Finally, hermeneutics possesses an ethical orientation where the text outlines a form of life which the interpreter grasps because the text refers to her existence. While the first two orientations are marked by the attempt to decipher meaning "behind" the text (meaning is a function of the question to which the text responds), it is characteristic of the other two to seek meaning "in front of" the text (the text does not respond to the same question as the one the text opens up to and to which it refers). According to Abel, the latter two orientations in this general topology keep Ricoeur apart from the hermeneutic school. Ricoeur redirects hermeneutics toward a poetics of meaning: "Here there is something like a post-hermeneutics and post-critical philosophy" (19), which holds more affinities with Gaston Bachelard than with Heidegger and Gadamer. We are to see circularity within this topology of hermeneutics, where an infinite and vital (rather than a vicious) circle never allows one to return to the same point.

Paul Fairfield's essay addresses the underdeveloped theme of the attitudinal posture of practical judgment. The problem can be best stated in the words of Thomas W. Bush: "Gadamer has a notion of 'good will' but not of 'bad faith,' and yet ... his hermeneutics calls for something like the latter." Perhaps the same critique can be addressed to both philosophers with whose names the entire tradition of philosophical hermeneutics has become virtually synonymous: Gadamer and Ricoeur. Although Ricoeur's distinction between the "hermeneutics of recovery" and the "hermeneutics of suspicion" does not constitute a complete answer, it offers a significant contribution to the issue at hand; "bad faith," or, at any rate, an attitude of suspicion, is to be incorporated within hermeneutics. Practical judgment, no less than any other variety of interpretation, should be capable of both affirmation and the identification of deception. Although Gadamer and Ricoeur succeed, partly at least, in describing the constitution of suspicious interpretation, they are silent as to when the latter is called for. Fairfield gestures toward an answer that holds true to the spirit of Ricoeur's dialectical thought. One may conceive of the ground of suspicion in communicative terms. While "good will" presupposes the coherence of the content of what is said

and the style of its saying, suspicion is evoked by the breakdown of this coherence; where the "what is" is not as it appears. If interpretation is to remain oriented toward the disclosure of meaning, we must reconcile the style and the content of the object of interpretation, so that "what is" stands in the open.

The second section, "The Hermeneutics of Selfhood," reveals the specificity of Ricoeur's hermeneutic stance, especially in contrast to other French thinkers such as Derrida and Levinas, by paying central attention to the monumental *Oneself as Another*. Addressing the issues of alterity and ipseity, this section reveals a real transformation from text to action by thematizing the ethical stance of Ricoeur's diacritical hermeneutics. Today's challenge, writes Richard Kearney, is to acknowledge a difference between self and other and, at the same time, avoid a schismatic division that would not allow any relation between them. In contrast to the mainstream metaphysical tradition which largely ignores the question of the Other, and in contrast to some postmodern thinkers who externalize alterity to the point that there can be no communication between self and other, the central hermeneutic task is that of "building paths between the worlds of autos and heteros." Hermeneutics discovers the other in the self and the self in the other; it supplements the critique of the self with the critique of the other. It distinguishes between different kinds of selves and others, such that "Not all 'selves' are evil and not all 'others' are angelic" (150).

Ricoeur's hermeneutics has become indispensable to the study of religion. The third section, "The Hermeneutics of Testimony: Hearing the Message," addresses issues of empathy, affective knowledge, and understanding in theological discourse by situating Ricoeur within the Christian tradition. Central attention is granted to the relation between theology and philosophy, to Ricoeur's interpretation of revelation, and to his contribution to new approaches in Christian ethics.

It has become quite common in North America to distinguish between two central strains of postmodern thought, the first stemming from Nietzsche through Heidegger to Lyotard, Foucault, and Derrida, and the second from Husserl and Merleau-Ponty to Gadamer and Ricoeur. The relation between hermeneutics and deconstruction constitutes the central theme of the fourth section, "Critical Openness to Sign, Symbol, Metaphor, and Narrative." The topics include Ricoeur's conception of metaphor, his understanding of textuality and of self-narrative, as well as the significance of hermeneutics in the interpretation of the visual arts.

Shaun Gallagher brings Ricoeur's hermeneutics into dialogue with cognitive neuroscience while addressing three issues: (1) Can an account of the narrative self remain non-reductive and be consistent with discoveries in neuroscience? (2) How would such an account relate to an embodied-enactive approach to questions of self-identity? (3) Does such an account involve dimensions of intersubjectivity? According to Gallagher, a Ricoeurian notion of the narrative self remains consistent with a neuroscientifically informed materialist account. To defend this claim, Gallagher explicates four internal conditions for self-narrative which are reflected in the proper functioning of a variety of cognitive capacities necessary for the generation of self-narrative: temporal integration of information; minimal self-reference; episodic memory; and reflective metacognition. These conditions, while necessary, are not sufficient.

and should be complemented with external conditions (e.g., the embodied sense of self-agency and self-ownership as well as the social context of action).

Ricoeur's social and political philosophy, his critique of psychoanalysis, philosophy of law, as well as hermeneutics in dialogue with Confucianism and feminism are the central themes of the volume's final section. The task of philosophy today, writes Gary B. Madison, is to reveal how cultures can enter into dialogue with each other while attempting to discover values common to all. Hermeneutics assumes this task by asking how to reconcile universality with particularity. This question is central to Ricoeur's social philosophy, which can be characterized as an attempt to reveal how national cultures can preserve their own heritage while participating in the progression of globalization. The hermeneutic task of reconciling the idea of a single humanity with the notion of cultural difference demands that we acknowledge that certain norms possess transcultural validity. A global ethic suited to our age requires a deconstruction of the opposition between dogmatic ethnocentrism and relativistic culturalism. This is achieved with Ricoeur's notion of "contextual universals," a notion that reconciles universality with particularity by means of a "dialogue of civilizations." By seeking to bring Ricoeur's hermeneutics into dialogue with Confucianism, Madison himself contributes to this dialogue. Madison's essay also criticizes Ricoeur on two issues: the distinction between ethics and morality, as drawn in *Oneself as Another*, and Ricoeur's early views on economics.

Much remains to be said about this voluminous collection of essays. Considering the astonishing range of themes, *Between Suspicion and Sympathy* cannot be entirely accounted for in a brief review. As Wierciński points out, this volume is a true "celebration of the confusion of voices and the fusion of horizons." This multiplicity of voices is indeed a major strength of a volume dedicated to a philosopher who, in some seventy creative years, has left behind more than 1300 articles. Undoubtedly, this collection of essays, representing the reception of Ricoeur's work in eleven countries, contributes enormously to contemporary hermeneutic scholarship.

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Edith Stein: Patrona d'Europa [Edith Stein: Patron Saint of Europe]

ANGELA ALES BELLO

Edizioni Piemme (Religione), Casale Monferrato (AL), 2000.

On the occasion of Edith Stein's canonization by Pope John Paul II on 21 November 2000, Angela Ales Bello wrote: "[T]he themes that I have treated briefly in this book are intended as mere openings on the vast ocean of her thought, and an exemplification of her analyses, which I hope to be of help in knowing her works in a deeper way" (9). No better description of her *Edith Stein: Patron Saint of Europe* could be given. This book is a synthetic, clear, careful selection of issues excerpted from Stein's rich collection of writings, the originality of which Ales Bello highlights. In this sense, her intellectual biography of Stein (1891–1942) represents a critical anthology of

some of the highest theoretical achievements of the Patron Saint of Europe, and a historical commentary on their importance, with special regard to the philosophical context within which they came to light.

Ales Bello's book moves along two tracks, one theoretical and the other historical. The two tracks intermingle throughout the text, combining sketches of Stein's speculative accomplishments, references to the philosophers with whom she exchanged ideas (such as Edmund Husserl and Hedwig Conrad-Martius) or by whom she was influenced (St. Augustine and St. Thomas), descriptions of the personal reality in which her major philosophical insights took form, and cross-references to her many writings. In addition to this, a third element lies clearly in the background of Ales Bello's *Edith Stein*—and this is hagiography. Ales Bello aims at reconstructing the itinerary that led Stein to become a Saint of the Roman Catholic Church. Her selection of issues exhibits a preoccupation with unveiling the close connection between Stein's philosophy and her mysticism. This tight link between reason and faith does not imply that Stein's philosophy has no value, but rather that if one tries to probe the motives, the interests, and the tasks that characterized Stein's activity, it is necessary to appreciate the religious dimension present in all of her work. Philosophy, in other words, is just one kind of intellectual exercise, in which Stein proved to be exceptional. This exercise of philosophy belonged to an all-encompassing spiritual experience, within which philosophy worked as an instrument the better to understand the many faces of the Christian tradition, as well as a tool to verbalize mystical knowledge.

The first chapter of Ales Bello's book is devoted to phenomenology. It is in fact within this school of thought, and precisely under the guidance of its founder, Edmund Husserl, that Edith Stein grew as a philosopher. As Ales Bello stresses, however, in spite of this direct supervision, there existed major theoretical differences between Stein and her mentor. Already with her earliest studies on empathy, Stein had moved beyond Husserl. More precisely, Stein claimed that the human disposition toward intersubjectivity carried relevant ontological implications that Husserl had not recognized. Stein proposed a fundamental reconsideration of the ontological assumptions of phenomenology, and this eventually led her to join the Goettingen group, who were working out a realist interpretation of phenomenology. Bello stresses Stein's adherence to phenomenological realism, because this departure from Husserl's position shows a deep concern for the existent or, in Stein's own terms, for "the constitution of an evident nature [in which] there are a physical nature absolutely evident on one side, and a subjectivity structured in a certain manner on the other side" (42). Stein wanted to move beyond the scepticism of the phenomenological epoche and the idealism that Husserl saw as the only solution to this scepticism. She wanted to achieve something more real and worthy of commitment than the transcendental epistemological structures that Husserl hypothesized. This "something" became the goal of her entire life, says Ales Bello, a goal that Stein assumed not only in the name of the natural but, more ardently, in the name of the supernatural.

Chapter 2 introduces Stein's theology and her mysticism. As an expert on St. Augustine's thought—and even more, as a member of the Carmelite Order—Stein realized that modern philosophy had too quickly and cavalierly dispensed with the experience of God that human beings can attain in their lifetime. Instead of rejecting

it on strict and perhaps narrow-minded epistemological grounds, Stein stressed that it is necessary that such an experience be fully explored by the philosopher. If faith is kept constantly in the background as the prime source of enlightenment, then philosophy can become an extraordinary tool of inquiry. Consistently with this picture, Stein took the unprecedented step of applying phenomenological analysis to mystical experience. Teresa d'Avila and the Fathers of the Church became accessible to her philosophical scrutiny, which accepted the peculiar evidence of faith as intellectually admissible.

The third chapter deals with a second, apparently odd, field of philosophical scrutiny: solidarity. I say "odd" because solidarity has only recently become a fashionable term among philosophers, whereas it was scarcely considered in Stein's time by her colleagues. The novelty of the issue did not prevent Stein from pursuing this kind of study, which Ales Bello considers a direct consequence of Stein's original works on empathy. According to Ales Bello, empathy was for Stein an undeniable human phenomenon that necessarily entailed intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity required certain fundamental assumptions regarding the ontology of the human being. As a realist, Stein was ready to make such assumptions: intersubjectivity implied the acceptance of a community of individuals as a starting point for phenomenological research. Having accepted this as a starting point, an entirely new field of concepts could be explored by the phenomenologist (e.g., person, community, society, subjective and objective interrelations, state and politics). Solidarity was eventually to be analyzed in relation to such concepts as these, and Stein concluded with the discovery that a fundamental openness toward others underlies the development of all human behavior.

The book's fourth chapter introduces a further original topic in Stein's philosophy: femininity. In this regard, Ales Bello underlines the personal motives that made Stein aware of the need for a systematic reflection on the condition of women. As an academic, as a nun, and as a Jew converted to Catholicism, Stein had known many forms of discrimination, all of which had the same root: gender. Moreover, from her work as an educator of adolescents, Stein acquired sufficient evidence to furnish detailed gender typologies which could be used to explain, condemn, or even justify many of the various forms of division and characterization existing between the sexes. Once more, Stein used phenomenological analysis in a new way. Her starting point remained Husserl's anthropological phenomenology, but she supplemented this anthropology to construct a "dual anthropology" (68) in which she described the "two species [of] the human essence ... the male species and the female species" (69). Both species were provided with an identical set of faculties, but they were distinguished by the way these faculties were utilized—the male tending to select single specific faculties and maximize them against the others, the female tending to unify the various faculties and implement them harmonically.

Chapter 5 outlines a second major theological topic of Stein's: the teachings of Thomas Aquinas. This time it was not a new topic to be discussed, but rather an old topic to be rediscovered and revisited. Stein believed that only a serious reconsideration of the great authors of the Christian tradition could supply an effective response to the process of secularization that Europe was undergoing at the time, as well as to the pervasive atheism that was spreading across the continent. Philosophy and theology

were to be developed together, and Stein rethought the notion of truth under this double light. In fact, she identified two forms of philosophy: "pure" and "mixed." Pure philosophy did not accept any external influence and, consequently, remained within the limits of natural reason. Mixed philosophy, on the other hand, faced problems that lie beyond the scope of natural reason, without rejecting the illumination provided by faith. Stein obviously proceeded along the line of the latter form of philosophy, pursuing a harmonization of reason and faith, in the true spirit of Saint Thomas's thought. Stein thought it necessary to reevaluate the notion of transcendence through a phenomenological analysis of the self. As anticipated in the first chapter, Stein took into consideration the particular, religious, or mystical evidence that individuals might attain by reflecting on their own inner experiences. She argued in favor of the cognitive validity of this internal ground of proof, from which she derived a number of most dramatic ontological consequences, including the existence of God.

The sixth chapter deals with Stein's "adversary": Martin Heidegger. Ales Bello portrays Heidegger in this way not only with respect to the theoretical challenge that Stein posed to his philosophy, but also for biographical reasons, since Heidegger was probably responsible for Stein's exclusion from German academia. Ales Bello argues that, from the speculative point of view, Stein and Heidegger embody two antagonistic attitudes toward the notion of being: the former is convinced of the constant presence of being behind the existent, while the latter stresses the oblivion and remoteness of being. The question of the limits of philosophy is also perceived quite differently by the two authors. Stein favors a pluralistic and open solution, i.e., by relying on the contributions of other disciplines (such as biology and religion). Heidegger instead inclines toward a declaration of the "death of metaphysics," a passive acceptance of the impotence of philosophy—yet waiting for a new revelation of being operated by being itself. It would seem that both Heidegger and Stein are trying to find a way out of the limitations of philosophy by referring to some form of revelation, but they have two very different ways of "listening to" this revelation of being: Stein thinks that it is present and accessible while Heidegger places it in an undetermined future. Stein also offered an interesting criticism of Heidegger's notion of Dasein. Sketching it briefly, Stein noted that Dasein's related notions of "affective condition," "thrownness," "understanding," and "authenticity," which play a fundamental role in determining that which Dasein is like, imply the characterization of Dasein as a person and, a fortiori, the institution of a philosophical anthropology, which Heidegger claimed to have avoided in *Being and Time*. Stein offered a further criticism of Heidegger's philosophy with regard to the notion of community. She accused Heidegger of endorsing an overly negative characterization of it. He depicted community as the place of inauthenticity, dejection, and alienation of the self. Stein replied that a community is required to develop the self and to sustain the self before, during, and after the achievement of full self-consciousness. After all, if authenticity must be gained through the angst connected with the experience of mortality, then such an experience, and the intellectual resources necessary to face it, can be found by the self only within the context of the community of which the self is a member and in which such an epiphany takes place.

Chapter 7 briefly summarizes Edith Stein's ontology. Ales Bello starts again by distinguishing between Husserl, who was primarily concerned with the transcendental conditions for human knowledge, and Stein, whose work aimed at finding a way out of his phenomenological idealism. In this direction, Stein revisited medieval debates on the essence of being; she came to criticize the notion of essence as mere generality, endorsing a strongly realist position. Essence has a double essence: essentiality and essence in the actual world. The former responds to the usual nominalist characterization of essence as generality, or as an intellectual archetype. The latter is instead the equivalent of a classical Scholastic form, i.e., the organizational principle of a substance, or its distinctive quid.

The eighth chapter sketches Stein's epistemological exploration of the phenomenon of human consciousness. Revisiting the Cartesian doctrine of the cogito, Stein individuates three immediate findings attainable through the act of *cogitatio*. First, there is a being, and a being that is thinking. Thus, in the second place, there is a thinking. But then, together with these two determinations, there is a third element, which has been neglected by most modern philosophers: a "spiritual motion" (125) or "vital force" (127). In other words, together with a cogito, there is also a *vivo*. Following St. Augustine's teaching, Stein starts from this *vivo* her itinerary *ad Deum*, for within the self lies the road from "the finite being" to "the eternal being" (123).

The ninth and final chapter comments more extensively on Stein's mysticism. In Stein's view, Teresa d'Avila's *Internal Castle* is, on faith's side, what St. Augustine's exploration of consciousness is on reason's side. This text she regards as a fundamental testimony of the most peculiar experience that the believer can have during its mortal life: the experience of God within oneself. As already mentioned, such an experience Stein regards as relevant evidence for the supernatural, which cannot be easily discharged by the philosopher on the basis of materialistic prejudices or analogous intellectual preclusions derived from alternative epistemological faiths. Of course, in the case of the philosopher who intends to scrutinize this area, natural reason can play only a partial role since faith still constitutes the main ground.

In sum, Angela Ales Bello illuminates several theoretical and historical aspects of Stein's intellectual life and provides a rich account of the religious, theological, and mystical concerns pervading Stein's work. The religious element is at the forefront of Bello's study; the audience for whom she writes this book is not philosophers alone, but also, if not primarily, believers who wish to be introduced to the intellectual and religious endeavors of Edith Stein. This explains why the author limits herself to a sketch of the main points of Stein's work, leaving it to the reader to approach Stein's texts directly.

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A House Divided: Comparing Analytic and Continental Philosophy

C. G. PRADO, Ed.

Amherst, NY: Humanity Books (Prometheus), 2003; 326 pages.

A volume that promises to "compare analytic and Continental philosophy" has a difficult—some will say impossible—task ahead of it, yet several essays in this collection do an impressive job of bringing into fruitful association not whole traditions of thought but manageable portions thereof. If intelligent comparisons, for instance, of postmodernism and analytic epistemology are unlikely to succeed, then perhaps something approaching genuine rapprochement is possible by bringing into dialogue—or a dialogue of sorts—individual thinkers on both sides of the divide. Thus, essays in this volume compare, for example, Gadamer and Davidson on interpretation, Foucault and Searle on truth and realism, Heidegger and Quine on logic, and Davidson and Wittgenstein on social justice. "The aim[s] of this collection," in the words of the volume's editor, C. G. Prado, are "to explore differences and similarities among philosophers in the 'analytic' and 'Continental' traditions," and "to reconsider the often facile characterization of major thinkers as belonging to one or the other tradition, and the problematic conception of the two traditions as incommensurable" (9). A key premise of the volume is that "[g]eneralities about traditions are less useful than better understanding of the work of particular seminal thinkers. The articles that follow compare individual philosophers who have had major influence in the analytic and Continental traditions with a view to clarifying just how and where they differ in the conception of the issues they address, but also where and how they complement each other's work" (9–10). *A House Divided* comprises eleven essays and an editor's introduction; the contributors are (in order of appearance) Richard Rorty, Barry Allen, Babette Babich, David Cerbone, Sharyn Clough and Jonathon Kaplan, Richard Matthews, C. G. Prado, Bjørn Torgrim Ramberg, Mike Sandbothe, Barry Stocker, and Edward Witherspoon. I shall discuss briefly a few of the more notable essays below.

Among the latter is undoubtedly Rorty's contribution, titled "Analytic and Conversational Philosophy." Rorty is at his provocative best in characterizing the rift between analytic and Continental philosophy as a product of academic parochialism and of imperatives related more to professional advancement than the demands of scholarship. As Rorty puts it, "[t]he majority of philosophy professors in every country never move far beyond the horizons that were set for them by their teachers.... Ideally, we philosophers are supposed to be constantly questioning our own presuppositions. In fact, we are no better at doing so than anybody else" (19). If there is any genuine difference between the two (sets of) traditions, it lies, Rorty maintains, in competing conceptions of philosophy's self-image. Analysts continue to conceive of philosophy on the model of the natural sciences, to train graduate students as technicians, and to eschew approaches that too readily resemble mere "intellectual history" or literary criticism, while Continentalists (including Rorty) accentuate philosophy's conversational dimension. If the former still aim to "get it right," to identify stable meanings and concepts of the kind the Greeks first sought but in the manner (however approximately) of modern science, the latter are concerned with "suggesting changes in the uses of

words, and ... putting new words in circulation—thereby breaking down impasses and making conversation more fruitful” (22). The image and the point of the kind of philosophy that Rorty prefers, and which he attributes (with as much accuracy as such generalizations allow) to Continental thought, is neither to place human thought on the secure path of a science nor “to find out what anything is ‘really’ like, but to help us grow up—to make us happier, freer, and more flexible. The maturation of our concepts, and the increasing richness of our conceptual repertoire, constitute cultural progress” (22). For Rorty, the salient distinction is no longer between analytic and Continental philosophy, but between philosophy as quasi-scientific analysis and as conversation.

Babette Babich, on the other hand, argues strenuously in favor of preserving the analytic-Continental distinction and for the merits of the latter over the former. Undoubtedly the boldest, and in my view the strongest, essay in this collection, Babich’s “On the Analytic-Continental Divide in Philosophy: Nietzsche’s Lying Truth, Heidegger’s Speaking Language, and Philosophy” argues that the distinction turns upon whether we conceive of philosophy fundamentally as deflationary analysis or as critical questioning, or “thinking”—including in Heidegger’s sense of this term when he famously declares (in *What is Called Thinking?*) that “We are still not thinking.” “Continental philosophy,” Babich writes, “differs from analytic philosophy in its openness to questioning, which also means that it is less concerned with solutions than it is with critical questioning (including the question of its own presumptions or prejudices). But this focus on critical questioning also means, at least ideally, that Continental philosophy does not aspire to take its rational warrant from science itself as analytic philosophy does do” (65). After proffering no fewer than twenty-two claims about, and against, analytic philosophy, Babich goes on to argue that the effort to jettison the analytic-Continental distinction is often far from innocent, being motivated in the main by the desire of many analysts to annex Continental themes and figures while squeezing out of their texts everything that is genuinely philosophical, beginning with their complexity and ambiguity. As cases in point, Babich points to the increased interest in Nietzsche, Heidegger, and more recent Continental thinkers within analytically oriented philosophy departments. What this represents, she argues, is not a Continental turn within analytic philosophy but its veritable opposite: an annexation that does violence to both the texts and the traditions from which they emerge. It ignores that “Continental philosophers tend less to answer or conclude inquiry than to compound their own (and our responding) questions—adverting to ambiguity, unclarity, complexity and all the detail that ultimately is required to begin to think philosophy as the meaning of life” (91).

Also among the more noteworthy contributions to this volume is Barry Allen’s “Carnap’s Contexts: Comte, Heidegger, Nietzsche,” in which Allen locates this key figure in analytic philosophy within the contexts of positivism and the reception, and gross misrepresentation, of Heidegger and Nietzsche. It was such misreadings, Allen remarks, that created “the metaphilosophical myth of a woolly ‘Continental’ tradition in philosophy, distinct from the austere precision of ‘analysis’” (34). It is Heidegger in particular whom Carnap takes to task in his polemic against metaphysics, failing utterly to comprehend what Heidegger was doing—even failing to realize

that Heidegger had pronounced his own critique of metaphysics, and more tellingly—while Nietzsche is commended, after a fashion, for having abandoned philosophy for poetry in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Allen very correctly points out not only Carnap’s profound misreadings of Nietzsche and Heidegger, but the manner in which such misreadings informed, or misinformed, the course of positivist and later analytic philosophy. Allen also points out “an underappreciated continuity between the original positivism of Auguste Comte and the austere formality of the later logical positivists, from whom analytic philosophy largely descends” (37). Carnap’s views that science could be foundational for philosophy and that logical analysis and “language planning” might put a decisive end to metaphysics have their source in this “original positivism,” traces of which remain with us. Allen’s essay concludes with some interesting remarks on the fascination with order within positivist thought, noting that “[o]rder, control, predictability, may be by-products or side-consequences of knowledge, and contribute to the practicality of its pursuit, but they are not what drives knowledge forward, least of all where it is experimental and inventive” (54).

This unique volume is important both in its inspiration—to place on speaking terms philosophers on both sides of the analytic-Continental divide—and for what, for the most part, it accomplishes. As with any edited collection, some contributions are more noteworthy than others, but the overall quality of its eleven chapters is relatively even. If a sizeable portion of contemporary philosophy, not all of it Continental, endeavors in a serious way to build bridges between traditions, many of which speak to each other only with tremendous difficulty, then what is needed is more volumes of this kind—ones that foster productive exchanges that do not deteriorate into overly facile “compare and contrast” essays. Analytic and Continental philosophers alike will find much of interest in this collection.

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The Grace and the Severity of the Ideal: John Dewey and the Transcendent

VICTOR KESTENBAUM

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002; 261 pages.

À propos the merits of vagueness in philosophical discourse, Hans-Georg Gadamer once remarked that “It is not so terribly easy to speak in such a way that many ideas are awakened in a person without his being hammered on the head.... It may be a cultivated thing to eat with a knife and fork, but that is not the right approach to philosophy.” This emphasis on interpretivity over transitivity, on awakening ideas rather than conveying propositions, is especially useful when one considers a philosophical movement such as pragmatism, which is so easily and frequently oversimplified as “cash-value” thinking.

Victor Kestenbaum’s *The Grace and the Severity of the Ideal: John Dewey and the Transcendent* is a subtle, evocative and—in Kestenbaum’s own word for Dewey’s writing—“painterly” consideration of the place of the ideal in Dewey’s philosophy.

More interested in the "lights and shadows" than the "lines and boundaries" (9) of Dewey's thought, Kestenbaum trains his gaze less on arguments "posed, defended, won, or revised" (9) than on the spirit of Deweyan pragmatism, a spirit that can be overlooked when one focuses exclusively on what his texts say, and never on what they do not or cannot. Kestenbaum rejects the old "from-to" story in which the young Dewey sows his oats with the Vermont Transcendentalists only to find pragmatism and ultimately to reject idealism in favor of naturalism and instrumentalism. Instead, in a series of studies that range from close readings of Dewey's texts to reflections inspired by them, Kestenbaum argues that concerns with the transcendent run threadlike through Dewey's writings on ethics, aesthetics, religion, and education well after his famous break with Hegelianism at the turn of the last century. He adumbrates this position by bringing Dewey into fruitful dialogue with such figures as Gadamer, Michael Oakeshott, Hannah Arendt, Iris Murdoch, and Wallace Stevens.

Early on, Kestenbaum makes the provocative claim that "transcendence is built into pragmatism" (36). In essence, Dewey's idealism never disappeared; it merely went underground, subtly shaping his thought in the form of a dynamic tension between the immanent and the transcendent, the seen and the unseen, the present and the absent. Indeed, it is difficult to deny that such Deweyan notions as habit, staking, and striving gain both complexity and robustness in the face of the transcendent, that is, that which is "significantly discontinuous with the ordinary, the everyday, the taken-for-granted and which eludes verification" (227 note 1). The project is clearly an important one for Dewey scholarship. It is, however, a project that Kestenbaum undertakes with mixed results.

On Kestenbaum's view, the transcendent for Dewey is not a full-fledged external *telos*, but a *conatus* toward the "better" and the "better still." We catch glimpses of the ideal in our own willingness to stake what is actual and seen on that which is only imagined. Ideals are always connected to the human while drawing us toward a new horizon. They are thus intimately bound up with practice, habit, and the actual. Thus, Kestenbaum argues, "there can be no experience of transcendence for human beings which involves [he quotes Stevens] 'more than human things' or 'more than human voice'" (209). This decidedly human-centered transcendent, however, is not easily reconciled with Kestenbaum's "significantly discontinuous" experience, and it shows. Throughout the book, Kestenbaum offers a series of lists intended to elucidate transcendent experiences. We are opened to transcendence in "a violin sonata, a thank-you note, a photograph, a conversation" (25); in "a sunset, a recurring anxiety, a melody from a Haydn quartet, a two-year-old's hands" (96); in "a May morning, an act of gratitude, the carpenter's or surgeon's skill" (120). The lists go on. Taken individually, an encounter with any one of these examples might easily take one by surprise in such a way that one sees suddenly and briefly in the finite an intimation of the infinite. Any one of these could be a koan. However, presented in lists as they are here, these examples are as life-changing as a greeting card shop full of tastefully inscribed koans. Transcendence starts to look like just another consumer good.

Something similar occurs in Kestenbaum's tendency to "mass market" key phrases. Himself a lyrical writer, Kestenbaum has a sharp eye for a well-turned phrase, if not an addiction to them. When he discovers a particularly powerful expression, he repeats

it until it becomes a dull cliché. Thus, in his chapter on education, he quotes William James on self-identity: "The traditional psychology talks like one who should say a river consists of nothing but pailsful, spoonsful, quartsful, barrelsful, and other moulded forms of water. Even were the pails and pots all actually standing in the stream, still between them the free water would continue to flow" (126). In the remaining eleven pages of the chapter, Kestenbaum refers no fewer than fourteen times to pailsful or potsful or moulded water.

This combination of perfectly apt expressions with editorial intemperance reflects a larger unevenness in the text as a whole. *The Grace and the Severity of the Ideal* has some very good moments. Chapter 2, "The Pragmatic Struggle for the Good" evinces—to borrow Kestenbaum's description of Richard Poirier's literary criticism—"careful and wonderfully discerning attention" (59) to Deweyan texts. There are passages here where Kestenbaum not only shows us how to read Dewey, he shows us how to read. Likewise, Chapter 4, "Humanism and Vigilance," is a revelation, offering in place of dogmatic, creedal humanism, vigilant humanism, where vigilance is the space we create through our attentive balancing of openness and commitment. However, Chapter 6, "The Undeclared Self," takes an overly romantic approach to pedagogy in its vision of the humanities as "soul-making" disciplines. Depending upon one's definition of a "soul"—and Kestenbaum never offers one—there is simply no obvious reason why an intermediate literature course should be more "soul-making" than the course in intermediate accounting that Kestenbaum offers by way of contrast. As well, readers of Gadamer will be disappointed by Chapter 7, "Meaning on the Model of Truth: Dewey and Gadamer on Habit and Vorurteil" in its reductivist account of truth and fore-understanding in Gadamer.

Overall, however, what stands as both the greatest merit and one of the weaknesses of Kestenbaum's text is the subtlety of his language and thought. On the one hand, Kestenbaum's approach ensures a care and fidelity to material that is itself complex and elusive. On the other, there are moments where his eloquence does little to illuminate his subject. This is a shame because the questions Kestenbaum raises are important ones, and ones that richly deserve the attention Kestenbaum gives them.

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