

## COMPTES RENDUS / BOOK REVIEWS

### *Schelling's Dialogical Freedom Essay: Provocative Philosophy Then and Now*

Bernard Freydberg

Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008; 144 pages.

The latest instalment in the ongoing Schelling renaissance in Continental philosophy, Bernard Freydberg's *Schelling's Dialogical Freedom Essay*, provides a fresh reading of Schelling's notoriously difficult masterpiece. What sets this book apart is how the author reveals Schelling's text to be an engagement with the history of philosophy, especially Plato and Kant. Freydberg begins by identifying three paths the book will follow. The first and third both treat the relation between Schelling and contemporary Continental philosophy, but are only discussed in the introduction and the conclusion. The second path makes up the substance of the book; it is the path along which Freydberg pursues his reading of Schelling's *Freedom Essay* as "a series of provocations that drive the investigation to higher and deeper regions." (90)

The book's subtitle, "Provocative Philosophy Then and Now," provides the reader with a clue about two of Freydberg's major theses. First, Schelling's thought was and remains "provocative." This is not because it provokes new perspectives, but because it is "untimely." Indeed, Schelling's concerns are somewhat anachronistic today, but readers of German Idealism and Romanticism may wonder how Schelling could be considered untimely. As an example of this, Freydberg points out that while "Schelling never abandons rule order and form as world characteristics...he is attuned as well to the dark subsoil beneath the surfaces upon which we tread." (111) But these themes mark Schelling's dual commitment to Idealism and Romanticism, two currents that shaped the thinking of so many in Schelling's time, and with which Schelling's philosophy grapples. The second thesis is more viable. By calling Schelling's thinking "provocative," Freydberg points to the "dialogical" structure of the *Freedom Essay*. (5) The essay is modelled after the "inner dialogue of the thinker" as he moves through contradictions to ever-higher levels. (3) The strength of this notion of provocation is that by pushing readers to

look for moments of provocation in the text, it provides a map for Schelling's discussion and encourages a careful study of the text.

The first chapter orients the reader to the basic problematic of the contradiction of freedom and system, a provocation that "calls forth *philosophy*" by calling forth the philosopher to provide it with a coherent *logos*. (14–15) Working through this contradiction demands not that we take sides, slinging polemics at our opponents, but that we recognise the living force of the contradiction in our own lives. The second chapter traces Schelling's novel interpretation of pantheism. Here again, Freydberg seems to want to call Schelling an untimely thinker, asking why he focusses on pantheism when the idea had lost its prominence after the pantheism controversy of the 1780s. Again, readers familiar with post-Kantian Idealism will be confused. As a result of the controversy, pantheism had become a hot topic, and Schelling was not the only one to have been enchanted. Still, Freydberg offers an intriguing reading of Schelling's interpretation of pantheism. The issue in this chapter is Schelling's analysis of the law of identity, or how his careful attention to "the fundamentally creative character of even the most prosaic material connection" (26) imbues the lifeless *logos* of pantheism with *eros*. On Freydberg's reading, what Schelling has added to pantheism is the notion of a *creative act*. This interpretation places the law of identity and the law of sufficient reason on an equally primordial plane: God is the analytic compound of God and God's attributes, and God is the sufficient reason for God's attributes. It is this move that allows Schelling to re-think radically human freedom, the topic of the next two chapters.

In Chapters 3 and 4, Freydberg couches Schelling's discussion of evil and freedom in terms of the possibility/actuality distinction. Chapter 3 deals with the *possibility* of freedom and evil, whereas Chapter 4 deals with their *actuality*. Perhaps the strongest in the book, these chapters make sense of Schelling's discussion of the life of God as an attempt to ground the possibility and actuality of human freedom. Freydberg traces Schelling's provocation to think of God as a living unity of ground and existence. Again, Freydberg sees Schelling's emphasis on creativity playing a central role. God cannot be a simple identification of ground and existence; God must be a creative unfolding in time. To explain this, Freydberg insightfully draws on Kant and Platonic myth. Freydberg argues that the ground/existence distinction can be traced back to Kant, who assumes their separation. Freydberg interprets Schelling as working

within this Kantian framework, but arguing ultimately that the separation of ground and existence already assumes a prior unity, something that only mythical speech is capable of articulating. What makes human freedom possible is the act of creation, whereby ground and existence are separated. In creation, God places God's existence in human hands, and this is what makes freedom *possible*. Humanity becomes "the site of God's self-revelation." (67–68) Freedom becomes *actualised* when humanity participates in the creative unfolding of God's life in time, when the possibility of freedom is *acted* upon.

Drawing on his earlier discussion of the law of identity and the principle of sufficient reason, in Chapter 5 Freydborg nicely explains Schelling's terribly confusing claims about the unity of freedom and necessity. The human being is determined by an atemporal free choice that is always playing out in time. Such a choice, Freydborg rightly stresses, is not predestination, but it does determine human action according to the principle of sufficient reason. Freedom and necessity are identical because human action always proceeds necessarily according to an atemporal free act that is perpetually playing itself out in every finite human act.

Chapter 6 discusses Schelling's famous account of evil as false *logos*. The strength of this chapter consists in the way in which Freydborg shows that while Schelling is concerned to provide a definition of evil that does not efface its terrible reality, his ultimate goal is to understand how humanity can come to choose good over evil. The Kantian notion of duty cannot properly account for such a choice because it cannot account for the moral agent as an agent in the revelation of God. According to Freydborg, the problem for the Schellingian moral agent is not how to motivate the right choices, but how to cultivate an instinct for goodness.

The last two chapters provide a fresh reading of the final sections of Schelling's essay. While these sections have often been considered unnecessary appendices, Freydborg interprets them as further provocations that only deepen Schelling's investigations. On Freydborg's reading, when Schelling says that God too is a life, that God too is a personality, this is a provocation to think of God's freedom to create the world not as absolute, but as "thoroughly unaccountable and unprovoked," thus pointing to "the irreducible unaccountability of life." (89–90) The strength of Freydborg's analysis consists in that it shows Schelling's text to be concerned not only with human freedom and moral psychology, but

also with the ontological conditions that make human freedom possible. The system of the world is finally unaccountable, *ungrounded* in any purpose.

A disappointing feature of an otherwise thoughtful book is Freydberg's concluding remarks on Schelling studies. Freydberg claims that philosophy on both sides of the Atlantic has found itself "eviscerated," and that a "return to Schelling...provides a source of rejuvenation." (113) Freydberg never really explains this, but he seems to want to reserve Schelling's mysterious power for the Continental camp, suggesting that the appreciation of Schelling requires subtle textual exegesis, for which he thinks the analytic tradition is not equipped. Supposedly, the return to Schelling on the Continental side is a "recognition" of "a certain disorientation," a sign of the health of the movement as a whole. (113) At least in the scholarship on German Idealism, this divide has become less meaningful in the past few decades, and Freydberg's dismissal of Anglo-American philosophy only serves to invigorate the divisions that many of us working in German Idealism thought were evaporating.

In sum, my reservations about *Schelling's Dialogical Freedom Essay* mostly concern the lack of attention to the issues shaping Schelling's own time. This is not a substantive or immanent criticism, but I wonder whether it has implications for how we understand Schelling's significance today. In so far as Schelling's attempt to think the possibility of system together with freedom is a response to debates about the limits of reason that had been raging in Germany since the 1750s, Schelling is perhaps not best understood as an untimely tonic for the rejuvenation of an "eviscerated" spirit, but as an indication of the conciliatory power of philosophy to bring together heterogeneous ideas and think them together in systematic concert.

*Jeremy Proulx, McMaster University*

***Nietzsche's Ethical Theory: Mind, Self and Responsibility***

**Craig Dove**

**New York: Continuum, 2008; 162 pages.**

Nietzsche, according to Dove's argument and thesis, has been misinterpreted. He is neither the *Über*-critic of morality, as he is typically por-

trayed, nor is he a nihilist. The *Übermensch*, philosophising with a hammer, war and the warrior, etc., are positive suggestions that are not as untenable, repugnant or crazy as it might seem on a shallow reading. Understanding Nietzsche, Dove reasons, requires an appreciation of the subtleties of his ideas; it requires a reading that appreciates his complex and positive views on self-consciousness and on the themes of becoming self-aware and the responsibility that this entails. (1–2) It is this reading that *Nietzsche's Ethical Theory* seeks to bring to light.

In order to attain such a reading, Dove takes a rather unconventional approach: he turns to contemporary philosophy of mind (CPM) and argues that Nietzsche's take on ethics can best be described in terms of CPM, as there are important points of contact between the two. Dove explains his CPM foray into Nietzsche as such:

The work being done in cognitive science and philosophy of mind gives us a better understanding of consciousness, and has the potential to redefine meaning itself, and thus to redefine ethics along Nietzschean lines. Nietzsche's ethical theory demands that we cast off the responsibility that has been placed on us by traditional morality [and] forge our own understanding of the world in which we take responsibility. (10)

Theorists of CPM, he explains, seek to describe and explain accurately consciousness, and in this sense they share many underlying presuppositions with Nietzsche's ethical position—a position that Dove situates within the question: “How can we understand and use our consciousness in such a way as to make it serve the instinct of life?” (4) The deflationary and physiological approach CPM takes to describing consciousness' immanent nature and origin, Dove claims, is consonant with the Nietzschean position that mind is neither a separate substance nor a mystic property, but “*something*” about the body (Dove quotes here “The Despisers of the Body” chapter from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.) (4)

Especially amenable to Nietzsche and his understanding of ethics, Dove writes, are the works of Paul Churchland and Daniel Dennet. The former, through a look at the brain itself, is said to offer a radically reductive view of consciousness, supposedly echoing Nietzsche's comparison between consciousness and digestion. The latter is said to use a doctrine of materialism in order to eliminate the residual dualism of the

Cartesian theatre, following, so Dove claims, a similar course as Nietzsche, who disparages the will and refers to mental entities as illusions and mirages. Both contemporary authors play a primary role in the text. Also appearing in *Nietzsche's Ethical Theory* are Quine, Sellars, Goodman, Sterba and Held.

*Nietzsche's Ethical Theory* is composed of six chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the work—much of which I have summarised here. Chapter 2 provides a detailed analysis of Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence. Chapter 3 addresses and analyses what Dove argues is the positive content of *amor fati*, as it appears in the work of Nietzsche. Chapter 4 offers an explanation of Nietzsche's perspectivism and its basis in an understanding of the self. In this chapter, Dove also addresses how useful and insightful Nietzsche can be for contemporary philosophy of mind and illustrates a way in which Nietzsche's account of meaning can be understood. In Chapter 5, Dove demonstrates how too-social an account of ethics fails since it cannot give a useful account of the self. Dennet's view of the self is used by Dove to provide a proper theoretical background for the recognition of the self, a self which is said to mirror the Nietzschean version. Chapter 6, the final chapter, addresses Nietzsche's positive view of responsibility and ethics, and articulates what such a view entails.

*Nietzsche's Ethical Theory* could be a valuable contribution to the exploration of Nietzschean philosophy and ethics, that is, if it remained with the general premise that Nietzsche requires a careful and subtle reading, a reading that appreciates his complex and positive views of self-consciousness, self-awareness and responsibility (for, in this, Dove's text is significant.) But in its non-typical fashion of considering the perspective and place of Anglo-American philosophy in relation to Nietzsche and ethics, the text does little to help scholarship as it pertains to either. In fact, Dove himself may have provided the best assessment of his project since at one point he admits that the subject matter of CPM is foreign to Nietzsche, and its understanding of the "truths of the world" rests quite uneasily with Nietzsche's ethical perspectivism. Dove's interpretation is original, but, in my view, unsuccessful, primarily because it proceeds from a dubious if not untenable position when it simply equates Nietzsche and contemporary philosophy of mind.

*James Czank, Independent Scholar*

***Briefings on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology***

**Alain Badiou**

**Translated, Edited and with an Introduction by Norman Madarasz  
Albany: SUNY Press, 2006; 181 pages.**

With the passing of the massively influential French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, Alain Badiou has risen to the rank of “current master figure” of French philosophy, or so said his friend and colleague Slavoj Žižek at the recent conference “On the Idea of Communism” (Birkbeck College, London, UK, March 13–15, 2009). None of his peers seemed to disagree. Badiou’s contentious reworkings of classical concepts, such as Truth, Subject and Event, along with his brazen polemics, have set the course of his increasing popularity on a trajectory reminiscent of the French titans of the recent past.

Although Badiou’s earlier work, *L’Être et l’événement* (1988), published as *Being and Event* in 2005, may have changed the landscape of contemporary Continental philosophy, it was not received without challenge. For example, in the edited collection of critical essays *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy* (2004), Peter Hallward, perhaps the brightest star among young Badiou scholars, questions Badiou on several points relative to the abstract non-relationality of his ontology. Hallward argues that, in *Being and Event*, Badiou is able to give an account of what *is*, pure multiplicity, but not an account of the properties of multiples counted-as-one, or of how the count-as-one relates to other “ones” or even how it is situated within a context.

*Briefings on Existence* is representative of Badiou’s “middle period,” as we are told (xi), that is, the period between his two major tomes *Being and Event* and *Logics of Worlds* (2009.) As such, readers will frequently find questions in place of the bold answers characteristic of Badiou’s earlier work. These questions allow readers to see the germination of new seeds in Badiou’s thought. The fruit, his major statement in response to earlier challenges such as those presented by Hallward, is presented in its mature form in his second opus, *Logics of Worlds*. In this text, Badiou lays out his phenomenology, which accompanies the ontology of *Being and Event*, marking out the domain proper to logic, or logics (of worlds).

Along with Badiou’s preliminary discussions of Logic—“Category” and “*topos*” theory—to which I will return, we find in *Brief-*

ings significant reflections on, and dialogue with, major figures from the history of philosophy: Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Kant and, of course, Deleuze. Interestingly, the prologue is titled “God is Dead,” which was the title chosen for the German translation of the book. Both the German and the English titles are far from the original French. Madarasz did keep an English rendering of the original French (*Court traité d’ontologie transitoire*) as his subtitle, “A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology”; the main title, “Briefings on Existence,” was chosen because he thought it would “ring better in a consumer market.” (5) This is strange given that Badiou himself tells us in his introduction to the English edition that his book *Ethics: An Essay on Evil* (2001) was a best-seller that made its way around the world (xi), and that at the time of *Briefings* he had been “leaping from best-seller to best-seller!” (x) To be fair, the full extent of Badiou’s influence in the English-speaking world had not been felt at the time of this translation’s publication, although by 2006 Badiou was well on his way to his now burgeoning popularity.

This curiosity aside, and although *Briefings* has its share of minor editing blemishes, as does Madarasz’ translation of Badiou’s *Manifesto for Philosophy* (1999) from the same series, it is generally a fair presentation of Badiou’s work at this time. While there are some editing and/or translation issues, readers are fortunate that many of the chapters of *Briefings* (six of fourteen, to be exact) have been published in *Theoretical Writings* (2004), where they are translated by Ray Brassier and Alberto Toscano, allowing for a comparison of the translations. Still, it seems to me that Madarasz’ translation will be found adequate by all but the most fastidious of readers.

As the bridge between Badiou’s ontological thinking in *Being and Event* and his recent phenomenological thinking in *Logics of Worlds*, this text is significant for more than Badiou’s expert historical reflections. Those who have read nearly any of Badiou’s works prior to *Briefings*, especially *Being and Event*, as well as the many summaries of his ontology to be found in the introductions to most of the English translations of his books, will be familiar with Badiou’s claim that all that can be said of Being *qua* Being can be said in terms of mathematics. In other words, mathematics is ontology, and Set Theory as the grounding of mathematics is the centrepiece and basis for Badiou’s ontology. In his essay, “Some Remarks on the Intrinsic Ontology of Alain Badiou,” (*Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*), early critic



Jean-Toussaint Desanti called for Badiou to account for his philosophy in a way that is consistent with advances in contemporary mathematics, especially with respect to the challenge that category theory poses to the primacy of Set Theory. It is to this challenge that what is really novel in the pages of *Briefings* is directed.

While accounting for the changes in the mathematical landscape, Badiou must find a way to either dismiss the relevance of Category Theory for his philosophy or to integrate it. Badiou opts for the latter, but he maintains his commitment to the ontological primacy of Set Theory, positing Category Theory as the logic of appearing. The addition of Category Theory opens the door to a thinking of phenomenology, and forces Badiou to come to terms with the relationship between mathematics and logic, ontology and phenomenology, a project that only comes to completion in *Logics of Worlds*. We find discussion of these points scattered throughout the many historical reflections, especially “Platonism and Mathematical Ontology” and “The Aristotelian Orientation and Logic.” The most sustained discussions of the relation of mathematics and logic fill most of the final six chapters, culminating in the impressive “Being and Appearing,” where Badiou offers his first direct account of the relation between ontology and phenomenology.

Since, for Badiou, ontology is mathematical and phenomenology a matter of logic, the chapter “Being and Appearing” is largely a discussion of the relation between mathematics and logic. Setting things up this way implies a clear separation of phenomenology from ontology (of course, this clarity will become muddled in the details). For the tradition extending from Kant through Heidegger, this is a novel separation. It is no surprise that, having already argued at length that all we can say of Being *qua* Being we can say in mathematical terms, Badiou positions mathematics as the more fundamental term in the relation. As he suggests, “logic is from within mathematics the movement of thought explaining the being of appearing, that is, of what affects Being as it is Being-there.” (164) And he continues, “appearing is nothing but the logic of a situation,” where a situation is simply an ontological structure. (164) In *Briefings*, Badiou does not provide a fully detailed account of the logic of appearing, nor does he satisfy the need to demonstrate fully how the logic of appearing is rooted in his set-theoretic ontology. Still, he does tell us that “the event,” perhaps the fundamental concept in Badiou’s work on the whole, “occurs when the logic of appearing is no longer apt

to localise the manifold-being of which it is in possession.” (168) This concluding thesis, a coming-together of his ontological and phenomenological thinking, remains undefended within the pages of *Briefings*, and thus ought to be read as a kind of promise.

The fact that this book is a tentative intermediary in the genesis of Badiou’s thought, along with the long shadow cast by his major works, may lead to *Briefings* being under-appreciated. Perhaps Madarasz was right to worry about marketability. Still, this book reveals a great deal about the development of the ideas that have begun and will continue to occupy the debates within Badiou scholarship and Continental philosophy more generally. That said, this book is probably not the best for someone coming to Badiou with a casual interest or a general curiosity about his work. For those readers, titles such as *Ethics* and *Metapolitics* (2005) or other more polemical works such as *Polemics* (2006) and *The Meaning of Sarkozy* (2008) would be a better start. The task posed to scholars is to work through *Briefings* and the major work that follows to see if Badiou delivers on his promise.

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***Emmanuel Levinas: His Life and Legacy***

**Salomon Malka**

**Translated by Michael Kigel and Sonja M. Embree with a Foreword by Philippe Nemo**

**Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 2006; 330 pages.**

It may surprise a reader familiar with the *philosophy of the face* to know that Levinas was as famously irascible as he was attentive, nurturing and delicate with people. (90, 93, 94, 237) The day that the principal of the *École Normale Israélite Orientale* (ENIO) was seen storming around the school halls after a “soup riot” in the student cafeteria was not an uncharacteristic occurrence, nor, however, was attentiveness to individual interactions out of the ordinary for him. Regarding the latter, a former student recounts, “He [Levinas] set a high standard for responding to whoever [sic] happened to be the interlocutor. He responded to a student as he might have responded to Cassirer.” (95) Focussing his work through the lens of the places Levinas inhabited and the people with

whom he interacted, Salomon Malka's biography of Emmanuel Levinas places Levinas' philosophy in the context of a life deeply wounded by the Holocaust and engaged in a continual dialogue—from his early days as a student in Strasbourg until his death in 1995—with a veritable honour roll of 20<sup>th</sup>-century philosophical and religious thinkers.

As the first full-length biography of Levinas available in English, this book fills a hole in the accessible literature. Malka meticulously traces the whole course of Levinas' life through reference to both archival research and interviews with the many people with whom Levinas came into contact over the years. He places particular emphasis on the relationship between Levinas' Jewish thought and his philosophical thought. The book is arranged into two sections. The first, "Places," tracks the moments of Levinas' life through the physical centres of his activity during various stages of his life. The second, "Faces," proceeds more so than the first section by firsthand accounts of the people with whom Levinas lived and engaged. All of this is interspersed with short, atmospheric, firsthand account snapshots of Malka's—himself a former student of Levinas' at the ENIO—own memories of interactions with Levinas and his wife.

The strength of this biography lies in placing Levinas' life and philosophy in context: the context of his life as a naturalised French citizen, the context of living as a Jew in Europe before, during and after the Holocaust, the context of the phenomenological movement and the various intellectual circles in which Levinas participated, and finally the context of a dialogue between Judaism and philosophy. Malka's research is both extensive and penetrating, and his firsthand accounts of engagements with Levinas demonstrate his perspicacity. The weakness of the book, however, stems from the very thing that makes it strong. Malka sometimes, particularly in the first section, gets bogged down in details. The first couple of chapters are a dry mass of facts about Levinas' early life and the environment into which he was born. So much is squeezed into this early part that attention is not always paid to drawing out the essentials of a particular historical event or making explicit the relevance of a comment in a particular testimony. There are also stretches of the text that read more like working notes than a woven, fluid narrative (e.g., Chapter 5, where one finds a catalogue of testimonials without any real transition between them). This greatly improves as the book goes on, however, particularly in chapters that deal with a single testimony such

as the wonderful interview with Derrida in the chapter on his relationship with Levinas. The dryness of the early chapters is a small price to pay for the whole of the work. The picture that Malka paints of Levinas throughout the course of the book is made vivid by the varying and plentiful testimonials that he pulls together, and the connections he draws between the different events in Levinas' life provide depth to the account of his character.

While a sophisticated reader unfamiliar with Levinas' writing could no doubt profitably read this biography, it is likely more rewarding for the familiar reader. Malka assumes acquaintance with Levinas' work and builds from there. He very occasionally makes explicit reference to Levinasian philosophical terms and for the most part is concerned with making the picture of the man whole. In this Malka is extremely successful and it, of course, has direct bearing on our understanding of Levinas' philosophy. As Malka notes, when Levinas' children speak about him, his work and life bleed together as if "these were inextricably mingled and one of them could not be mentioned without the other one being automatically evoked." (234) This harmony of movement is characteristic of Levinas. What becomes clear throughout the book is the necessity of Levinas' Judaism for his philosophy and of his philosophy for his Judaism. As Malka writes, this is an "infinite dialogue" in which "the two worlds touch and sustain each other without merging." (279)

Malka has provided an important resource for understanding Levinas' thought more fully, but in the process he has also shown the reader a rich tapestry of places and people. The intellectual and social climate of the places in which Levinas dwelt are vividly evoked, as are the people with whom he interacted. For anyone interested in the intellectual environment of 20<sup>th</sup>-century France specifically and Europe more broadly, Malka provides the intimate access offered by Levinas' life and engagements. He brings together Heidegger as he was at Davos in 1928 during his debate with Cassirer, the later debate on Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism (and Levinas' break with him), the meetings of *Le Collège Philosophique* organised by Jean Wahl, the Friday evening meetings at Gabriel Marcel's house, the annual colloquium of Jewish intellectuals in France, the Castelli colloquia, the Castel Gandolfo meetings organised by Pope John Paul II, a portrait of the enigmatic talmudist Mordechai Chouchani, as well as interviews with Der-

rida and Ricoeur, among others. This book is a valuable companion to the study of Levinas' work.

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***Étude sur la phénoménologie de Heidegger. L'être et le phénomène***

**Tania Basque**

**Paris, L'Harmattan, 2008 ; 275 pages.**

Dans cet ouvrage qui constitue la forme publiée de sa thèse de doctorat, Tania Basque nous présente une étude approfondie de la notion heideggérienne de *phénomène* telle qu'on la retrouve dans *Sein und Zeit* et dans les cours de Marbourg qui ont contribué à son élaboration. L'interprétation proposée ici s'oppose toutefois à l'interprétation courante partagée par bon nombre de commentateurs français, allemands ou américains pour qui le phénomène heideggérien consiste en *ce qui ne se montre pas*. Ces commentateurs s'appuient notamment sur le très célèbre passage du §7C de *Sein und Zeit*, où Heidegger écrit : « Qu'est-ce donc que la phénoménologie "fait voir" ? Qu'est-ce donc qu'il faut nommer "phénomène" en un sens signalé? [...] Bien évidemment ce qui est tel qu'il ne se montre pas de prime abord, tel qu'il reste caché face à ce qui de prime abord se montre, mais qui est également quelque chose appartenant essentiellement à ce qui se montre de prime abord, de sorte qu'il en constitue le sens et le fondement » [*SuZ*, 35]. De même, les tenants de l'interprétation courante vont invoquer la différence ontologique pour soutenir leur position, en posant la différence de donation entre l'étant et l'être comme une différence entre l'apparaître et l'inapparaître.

L'opposition de Tania Basque à cette interprétation débute par une analyse méticuleuse du §7 de *Sein und Zeit*, où le propos central de sa thèse va aussitôt émerger. En effet, des quatre sens de phénomène qu'y relève Heidegger (le manifeste, l'apparence, l'apparition au sens courant et l'apparition dans son usage kantien), c'est le phénomène entendu comme *Schein* (l'apparence) qui doit s'imposer comme le sens *proprement phénoménologique* du phénomène heideggérien. Comme on s'en souviendra, le phénomène entendu comme *Schein* est présenté par Heidegger comme ce qui se montre, *mais tel qu'il n'est pas en lui-même*, c'est-à-dire comme ce qui *prétend* être ce qu'il n'est pas en vérité

(comme l'or faux prétend être de l'or véritable). Heidegger distingue par ailleurs la notion d'apparence de celle d'apparition, car si la première se montre telle qu'elle n'est pas, la seconde *ne se montre pas*, telle la maladie qui ne se manifeste qu'à travers certains symptômes sans jamais se montrer elle-même. Or au §7 de *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger est tout à fait explicite quant au rapport entre phénomène et apparition : les phénomènes ne sont *jamais* des apparitions. Aussi Basque voit-elle un danger évident dans l'interprétation courante du phénomène heideggérien, qui tend dangereusement à le réduire au statut d'apparition en le décrivant comme « ce qui ne se montre pas ». Pourtant, Heidegger ne définit pas sa phénoménologie comme un « faire voir ce qui ne se montre pas », mais bien comme un « faire voir à partir de lui-même ce qui se montre *tel qu'il se montre à partir de lui-même* ». Or selon Basque, seul le phénomène compris comme *Schein* permet de rendre justice à cette définition d'allure tautologique. En somme, il s'agit pour la phénoménologie de « déjouer » la structure d'apparence du phénomène, en le faisant voir tel qu'il se montre à partir de lui-même, mais tout en *s'assurant constamment* qu'il le fait bel et bien à *partir de lui-même*, et non à partir d'autre chose, d'où l'aspect redondant de cette définition.

Par ailleurs, Basque voit dans les deux *tâches* que Heidegger assigne explicitement à sa phénoménologie dans *Sein und Zeit*, c'est-à-dire l'analytique du *Dasein* et la destruction de l'histoire de l'ontologie, la confirmation de sa thèse principale. En effet, comme elle le développe dans le second quart de son ouvrage, le recours même à une analytique existentielle serait la conséquence directe de ce que Heidegger conçoit le phénomène (et donc l'être) comme *Schein*, car cette analytique devra démontrer comment l'être du *Dasein* (et plus tard l'être lui-même) se montre *au sein* de la structure de son existence, *alors même* que cette existence en recouvre les traits propres. Semblablement, la phénoménologie heideggérienne devra affronter les recouvrements qui bloquent l'accès du *Dasein* à la question même de l'être, grâce à une destruction de l'histoire de l'ontologie. Or cette tâche de « destruction » répond aussi du phénomène comme *Schein*, nous dit Basque, car la phénoménologie devra se réapproprier les concepts même de l'ontologie qui, bien que donnés par la tradition, *se donnent pourtant tel qu'ils ne sont pas*, c'est-à-dire sous les traits de l'évident ou même du trivial. Et à ce titre, Basque verra en la réappropriation par Heidegger du concept de vérité, qui en déplacera le sens traditionnel d'adéquation à la chose vers celui d'ouverture existen-

tiale du *Dasein* à son monde, l'exemple parfait d'un effort de destruction phénoménologique guidé par le principe du phénomène comme *Schein*.

C'est donc toute l'architectonique de *Sein und Zeit* qui découle du phénomène compris comme *Schein*, avance Basque. Or une telle position rend incontournable l'analyse des cours professés par Heidegger à Marbourg, lors de la genèse de *Sein und Zeit*. Consacrant ainsi la seconde moitié de son ouvrage à cette tâche, Basque décèle tout d'abord la présence de cette notion dès le cours du semestre d'hiver 1923–1924, intitulé *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, où Heidegger nous introduira à sa propre conception de la phénoménologie. C'est ainsi qu'à travers une analyse étymologique du terme « phenomenology » retournant à ses racines grecques (et surtout à Aristote), Heidegger conclura d'une part que certains phénomènes peuvent se donner *dans l'obscurité*, et d'autre part que le langage est toujours *factice*, c'est-à-dire toujours en rapport avec un monde qui tend lui-même à se dérober au regard du *Dasein*. La facticité du langage apparaîtra ainsi comme la source du faux, inscrite à même l'être du *Dasein*, et toute vérité devra nécessairement être conquise sur cette non-vérité constitutive du *Dasein*. Cette non-vérité constituerait d'ailleurs la raison pour laquelle Heidegger s'intéressera à la *Rhétorique* d'Aristote et au *Sophiste* de Platon dans les cours du semestre d'été 1924 et du semestre d'hiver 1924–25, en tant que textes portant spécifiquement sur le faux et l'apparence. La rhétorique émergera ainsi comme la forme originare du *logos* chez le *Dasein*, c'est-à-dire comme l'explicitation du *Dasein* concret par lui-même qui, pour se saisir authentiquement, devra constamment affronter l'apparence (*Schein*) sous la forme de la *doxa*.

De son côté, le *Sophiste* retiendra l'intérêt de Heidegger en tant que traitement singulier de la question de l'être, en *confrontation* avec un étant concret (le sophiste) *prétendant* s'y connaître en toute chose alors que ce n'est pas véritablement le cas, donc se présentant précisément sous le mode du *Schein*. Ces deux textes soutiennent ainsi l'idée que l'être se montre *même* à travers le faux, donc tel qu'il n'est pas en lui-même. Tania Basque va ensuite porter son attention sur le cours d'hiver 1925–26 traitant de Kant. Or aux yeux de Heidegger, Kant se serait mû dans une véritable problématique phénoménologique en comprenant que le *temps*, bien que toujours donné *conjointement* aux étants à titre de condition de possibilité de leur expérience, ne pouvait apparaître *de la même façon* qu'eux. Autrement dit, Kant aurait pressenti que le temps se

donne comme *Schein*. Heidegger se réappropriera cette découverte tout en modifiant le rôle joué par le temps en l'assignant à l'être du *Dasein* lui-même. Par ailleurs, cette différence de donation soulève la question de la différence ontologique, qui se retrouvera au cœur du cours de l'été 1926 traitant de la naissance de la philosophie. De ce cours, Basque retiendra que Heidegger y fait la démonstration que l'être, de la philosophie milésienne jusqu'à Aristote, *ne fut jamais posé en exclusion de l'étant*, mais toujours *conjointement* à ce dernier, au risque même d'être confondu avec lui. Aussi Basque conçoit-elle la différence ontologique à partir de la notion de *Schein*, en tant que différence entre *l'explicite* et *l'implicite*, plutôt qu'entre l'apparaître et l'inapparaître (comme le soutient l'interprétation courante).

Avec *L'être et le phénomène*, Tania Basque nous offre ainsi une interprétation tout à fait originale de la notion heideggérienne de phénomène, qui vient par ailleurs combler une certaine lacune à ce sujet au sein de la littérature secondaire. Les propos de son ouvrage sont clairs et son argumentation est à la fois étoffée, cohérente et convaincante. Remarquons toutefois la curieuse absence, à notre avis, d'une discussion sur les rapports entre le phénomène comme *Schein* et l'expérience fondamentale de l'angoisse, où l'être du *Dasein* apparaît justement *dans le dévoilement le plus total*, c'est-à-dire en l'absence de toute structure d'apparence. Enfin, mentionnons que la conclusion de son ouvrage nous a laissé sur notre faim, car Basque ne fait qu'y résumer ses positions, sans discuter des implications plus globales de son interprétation pour la compréhension de la pensée de Heidegger, ou pour la phénoménologie en général. Or que devient la notion de *Schein* après *Sein und Zeit* ? Affecte-elle encore la pensée de Heidegger suite au « Tournant », par exemple ? Cela dit, si Tania Basque n'a pas répondu à ces questions dans son premier ouvrage, elle aura clairement démontré qu'elle possède toutes les capacités pour le faire.

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***Kierkegaard et Lequier. Lectures croisées***

**André Clair**

**Paris, Cerf, 2008 ; 208 pages.**

La philosophie moderne s'est construite sur la découverte de la subjectivité. Les Lumières ont investi le plus gros de leur capital dans ce concept, de Kant à Hegel, alors que la réception des systèmes idéalistes a valorisé d'une tout autre manière le sujet, notamment en le remettant en question. Deux auteurs singulièrement moins connus que les précédents ont cherché à repenser la subjectivité en crise au XIXe siècle, c'est le cas du danois Søren Kierkegaard, un luthérien, et du français Jules Lequier, un catholique. Si la métaphysique demeure le cadre de référence, Kierkegaard la critiquait tandis que Lequier travaillait à l'intérieur de ses présupposés, en cherchant notamment ce que signifie le mot « liberté ». Ces auteurs atypiques ont une valeur pour l'histoire de la philosophie parce qu'ils ont pensé la subjectivité sans sacrifier son fond affectif (au profit de la seule raison), ni la fonder sur elle-même. Dans ses *Lectures croisées*, André Clair, qui connaît bien ces auteurs—il est spécialiste de Kierkegaard et il a publié *La Recherche d'une première vérité* (PUF, 1993) portant sur l'œuvre de Lequier—entend approfondir les deux philosophies originales érigées sur l'existence de la subjectivité.

Dès le début, Clair établit le cadre d'une comparaison féconde entre ces auteurs. Sous le titre « La métaphysique à l'épreuve », le premier chapitre montre les points de contact entre les deux philosophes qui, malgré leur contemporanéité, ne se sont pas connus. À l'étude, l'œuvre de Kierkegaard apparaît plus complète et surtout plus achevée : elle engage une méthode pseudonymique et s'impose comme une œuvre multiforme composée d'ouvrages et de papiers personnels (*Papirer*). Lequier, pour sa part, a peu publié de son vivant. Tournée vers la recherche d'une première vérité, son œuvre reste inachevée et ne peut rivaliser avec le nombre de tomes des œuvres complètes de Kierkegaard, ce qui ne saurait en rien entacher son génie et son originalité. Si Kierkegaard, par sa méthode et ses concepts limites, remet tôt en question la métaphysique (il en accepte certes la place), Lequier l'investit désespérément. Le travail de ce dernier s'accomplira dans un conte, un récit biblique, proposant une exposition du problème de la liberté, alors que la mise à l'épreuve de Kierkegaard, existentielle en un sens différent de celle de Lequier, sera plus directe et multiforme.

Or, concentrons-nous d'abord sur l'œuvre kierkegaardienne. Dire que le penseur de l'existence s'engage dans une mise à l'épreuve directe, ce n'est cependant pas oublier que Kierkegaard se présente comme poète religieux. La distance qu'il maintient avec ses écrits est celle du poète. (44–45) Le religieux se dit chez lui par les mots du poète, et ce, du début jusqu'à la fin. Aux limites de l'herméneutique, le poète donne une forme nouvelle à la parole dans son rapport à la vérité. Penseur de l'appropriation, Kierkegaard a développé un art poétique unique qui pourra le rapprocher de Nietzsche, ce que n'est pas le premier à souligner Clair. S'il étudie le rapport poétique à l'existence, l'auteur pourrait aller plus loin en relevant le caractère rhétorique du travail d'écriture de Kierkegaard. On pourrait montrer en effet à quel point la rhétorique est décisive—c'est l'art de persuader par le langage—dans l'écriture d'un auteur qui, s'il sait critiquer les excès de cet art, sait la mobiliser et l'utiliser au maximum. S'il retient la poétique face à la rhétorique, Clair demeure fidèle au texte kierkegaardien et ne développera pas toutes les conséquences de la rhétorique dans son rapport à la poétique. (50–57)

Si Kierkegaard est un philosophe de l'existence, il est aussi celui qui a donné un tour philosophique au concept de tribulation (*anfægtelse*). Mettant à jour ses analyses sur la tribulation—il avait montré à l'aide du *Post-scriptum* que la tribulation est un discriminant entre l'éthique et le religieux—, Clair se penche sur le caractère critique de la catégorie. On verra alors que la pensée de l'existence trouve dans le sentiment la limite de son discours et de ses concepts. Comme catégorie critique, la tribulation se distingue de la tentation (*fristelese*). Ici, l'exploration de la catégorie se fait par la constitution d'une famille de concepts apparentés. Dans un passage peu connu d'un article publié dans *Fændrelandet*, Kierkegaard rapprochait les concepts de crainte, de tressaillement, de tremblement, de tribulation, d'angoisse et de tourment. Or, on peut distinguer ces concepts et les faire travailler ensemble pour désigner les liens entre la tentation et la tribulation : la tentation séduit, alors que la tribulation effraie. (65) La lecture de *Crainte et tremblement* ajoutera enfin des précisions à une lecture convaincante qui permet de classer la pensée éthique du Danois dans les doctrines du sentiment moral. (78)

Mais la philosophie retient également de la pensée de Kierkegaard le concept d'exception. Clair entend éclairer les liens subtils entre le paradigme et l'exception. Si le paradigme est sans exception, il provient des exceptions. Pour le montrer, une interprétation de la méthode in-

directe sera efficace. Comme chacun sait, le concept d'exception (*Undtagelse*) apparaît dans *La répétition* où il traduit les limites de l'*Aufhebung* hégélienne. L'exception et le général chez Kierkegaard, au lieu de se synthétiser, voit l'exception résister au général et le renforcer. (96) Quant au paradigme, il s'étudiera facilement dans l'*École du christianisme* où il joue un rôle clef. Le livre d'*Anti-Climacus* posera en outre la catégorie religieuse qui est presque frappée d'une contradiction interne. Saisir la catégorie présuppose une compréhension des concepts parallèles comme l'omniprésence de Dieu et la révélation. L'étude que mène l'auteur montre ainsi que le paradigme est indirect.

Clair revient ensuite à la confrontation annoncée puisqu'il s'intéresse, au cinquième chapitre, à l'affirmation de la liberté chez Lequier. Là, c'est à une étude du libre-arbitre que nous sommes confrontés, Lequier demeurant dans le cadre d'une métaphysique de l'action. L'interprétation de Clair, qui repose sur les documents du « Fonds Jules Lequier » de la Bibliothèque de l'Université de Rennes-I, établit les liens entre les pensées de Lequier et de Fichte, qui l'a beaucoup influencé, mais aussi Pascal. On apprendra que *Abel et Abel*, un texte d'atmosphère, est une reprise de l'interrogation sur la liberté, mais sous une forme lyrique en soumettant à l'épreuve de la tentation deux jumeaux. Si Lequier est confronté au problème de la relation entre la liberté et le dogme catholique de l'omniscience de Dieu, il n'en continue pas moins de penser la liberté et la responsabilité dans un « faire ». L'objectif qui consiste à faire ressortir les complicités conceptuelles entre Lequier et Kierkegaard est pleinement atteint lorsque Clair présente et explique l'utilisation des concepts de redoublement, d'angoisse et la reprise, par Lequier, du sacrifice d'Isaac par Abraham. Et s'il fallait rattacher encore des penseurs de l'existence, Lequier, comme Nietzsche—sur qui Clair reviendra à la fin de son ouvrage—s'est intéressé à l'énigme. (148–150) On en conclura que le travail comparatif réalisé ici, basé sur les concepts et les textes seulement, est précis, structural et stimule la réflexion.

Mais les meilleures pages du livre ne sont pas, selon nous, consacrées à Kierkegaard et Lequier, mais plutôt à Nietzsche. À la fin, l'auteur, dans le sillage de Jaspers, revient sur ceux qui brillent par leur proximité. Le poète-dialecticien Kierkegaard demeure près de Nietzsche, le poète-herméneute. La relation entre deux des plus grandes figures philosophiques du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle est à évaluer selon le « pathos de la distance », explique Clair. Si Kierkegaard n'a pas connu Nietzsche, ce der-

nier a connu le « cas » Kierkegaard par le critique Georg Brandès, d'où l'importance de revenir sur deux concepts assurant une rencontre marquante et profonde : le paradoxe et l'énigme. La catégorie du paradoxe est existentielle chez Kierkegaard, alors que l'énigme se distingue comme mode d'écriture chez Nietzsche. Mais encore, c'est par leurs conceptions du temps que ces auteurs se complètent : non seulement ont-ils pensé l'instant (le lien entre le temps et l'éternité), mais ils ont voulu saisir le sens de l'histoire. La richesse de leurs pensées n'est pas séparable de leurs destinées, exceptionnelles et uniques, Kierkegaard ayant eu une vie courte et engagée, Nietzsche plus longue et aussi solitaire. Tout cela pour dire que les proximités sont à interpréter à partir des différences et que celles-ci, nombreuses et marquées, fondent des rapprochements.

Cet ouvrage doit absolument être lu par les passionnés de la philosophie de l'existence. Il permet, grâce aux comparaisons éclairantes de l'auteur, de comprendre ce qui unit et distingue Kierkegaard de Lequier et de Nietzsche. Il va sans dire que Kierkegaard a un fin commentateur en André Clair, celui qui sait mieux que quiconque rendre la pensée existentielle vivante, tout en lui restituant sa rigueur, de même que la précision de son appareil conceptuel.

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***Kant's Transcendental Arguments: Disciplining Pure Reason***

**Scott Stapleford**

**New York: Continuum, 2008; 152 pages.**

Scott Stapleford's book, *Kant's Transcendental Arguments: Disciplining Pure Reason*, is positioned squarely in the debate surrounding transcendental arguments in analytic philosophy. Rather than definitively determining the nature and scope of transcendental arguments, Stapleford adopts the more modest task of reassessing their role in the context of Kant's critical project. He recasts the dialectical features of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and portrays Kant's transcendental arguments in a manner that tempers their application while allowing them to respond to certain brands of sceptical claims. Of the book's four chapters, the first addresses Kant's susceptibility to Barry Stroud's famous objection to tran-

scendental arguments as a class. The second chapter looks at the scope of the transcendental method as a whole, applying Kant's methodological directives to an interpretation of the Second Analogy of Experience. The third chapter analyses and advocates a phenomenological reading of the most significant of Kant's transcendental arguments, the Refutation of Idealism. The final chapter considers the extent to which transcendental arguments can be construed as a level of discourse that contributes to the composition of a Carnapian "framework" of knowledge.

Stapleford begins with a recapitulation of the impact of Stroud's noted paper "Transcendental Arguments" and a summary of its two-pronged argument. First, Stroud objects that even though transcendental arguments prove the impossibility of sceptical claims, it is still impossible to deduce the necessity of the material world from this. Second, he contends that the success of transcendental arguments against the sceptic depends on a verificationist principle within the argument that renders its transcendental quality superfluous. Stapleford rejects Robert Stern's attempt to recast Hume's normative justificatory scepticism as Kant's target in order to mitigate Stroud's objection. Seeing no evidence, Kant wished to address the viability of a belief-forming norm that justifies the belief in the existence of an external world. Stapleford sees such justificatory concerns as rather *unKantian*, and he points out that Kant's gripe "is that the *objectivity* of outer representations can only be *inferred* if representations are interpreted as being the effects of things existing in themselves behind the appearances...wearing no marks of objectivity on their own faces." (22)

Kant wishes to show that objectivity lies in the phenomenal realm, not behind it, and so his target is the view that doubts that our experience is indeed of outer objects. Far from being antagonistic toward the concerns of scepticism, "Kant hopes to achieve the same goals as scepticism...[but] wants to do so 'scientifically'" (25), through a principled application of sceptical objections. If this is the case, then Stroud's objection is relevant to Kant only insofar as one understands Kant's argument in a manner that distorts his intentions. After all, Kant leaves any issues regarding outer objects independent of their appearances outside the scope of reason. Stapleford argues that transcendental arguments indicate the way we must conceptualise appearances in order for us to have experience at all. Therefore, these arguments are not simply dispensable

once a verificationist principle is adopted, and so Stroud's objections do not include Kantian transcendental arguments in their scope.

In the second chapter, Stapleford specifies the role of transcendental arguments in the *Critique's* overall programme, arguing that they allow Kant to navigate the double requirement of going beyond conceptual analysis, without those intuitions needing to be given empirically. (41) Stapleford refers to "possible experience" as the mechanism that gets Kant beyond that impasse and offers an interpretation of the Second Analogy in light of this, such that two concepts (like "event" and "cause") may be intentionally different with respect to the pure concepts, yet have the same extension; they are reciprocally co-instantiated with each other in the object: "if it turns out that the instantiation of some *a priori* or empirical concept presupposes the simultaneous instantiation of another concept in the same intuition, then perhaps we could come to recognize this by simply reflecting on the way that manifold has to be ordered in the imagination if it is to count as a possible instance of either of those concepts." (51)

A significant consequence of this is that the critical usage of concepts is contradistinguished from their dogmatic usage since they can only be applied to phenomena and not to things in themselves independent of any possible experience. They "cannot even get started if they do not restrict their scope to the empirical world" (61), and in this manner the transcendental method is self-restricting. In terms of Stapleford's overall argument, this outlines what it means to Kant for a concept to have objective validity and allows him to argue for such objective validity while leaving the issue of objects' existence independent of experience untouched (if not to affirm that it is irrelevant altogether). Nonetheless, the conflation of "possible experience" with "possibility of experience" (46) leaves the question of the difference, for Kant, between the nomological connection of two concepts and the necessity of one concept in the cognition of another, underdeveloped.

Stapleford examines the Refutation itself in Chapter 3, arguing against the claim that its addition in the second edition of the *Critique* is evidence that Kant changed his position in the interim. The contention is that the argument, which holds that my consciousness of my own existence as determined in time is conditioned by something persistent in perception outside of me, commits Kant to a realist position with regard to this persistent object whereby it exists independently of us even

though its *characterisation* is not independent of us. (70) Stapleford challenges this interpretation, advocating a phenomenological reading of the Refutation instead, which holds that the objects in question are both empirically objective and spatially “outside” us, but avoids commitment to a realist ontology with respect to them. In spite of the *possibility* of such transcendently external objects, “there is no reason to think that the transcendently external thing makes inner time determination possible. It is more likely that the sensible representation *of* this correlate makes inner experience possible, not the unknown correlate itself” (73–74), thus supporting the phenomenological reading. What is required instead are “object[s] ‘outside’ of us” (74) which “*qua* spatial, are known to be only phenomenologically distinct from the subject.” (75)

Stapleford takes Kant’s “outside objects” in a sense closely allied with the notion of spatiality developed in the Transcendental Analytic. Being transcendently ideal itself, Stapleford makes clear that objects that are spatial are, in a qualified sense, “ideal.” What makes Kant’s argument a *refutation* of the idealism of his predecessors is its denial that outer perceptions are less immediate, less available or more uncertain than their inner analogue, which in fact presupposes outer perceptions. However, Stapleford admits “in so far as the enduring objects are spatial, and thus in so far as they are *appearances*, they imply at least the thought that *something* appears. That is just a principle of critical philosophy.” (80) The difference between the positions rests on an ambiguity in Kant’s writings between “spatial” and “distinct” objects. While the difference may be overstated, Stapleford argues convincingly against Guyer’s claim that Kant’s stance is that of a metaphysical realist as it is commonly understood, by detailing the extent of Kant’s commitment to the idea that such predicates cannot be ascribed to objects.

In the final chapter of his book, Stapleford draws a comparison between Kant’s critical discourse and Carnap’s idea of a conceptual framework. What Stapleford implies as the most fruitful point of comparison is the manner in which “a critical analysis can disclose its necessary conceptual and intuitive presuppositions without our having to suspend their effects on our experience.” (124) In other words, with a properly critical approach, one can talk *about* the framework (its necessary concepts or its limits) without our overstepping our rights by having to refer outside of that discourse. He therefore compares Kant’s goal to set determinate limits to our knowledge with Carnap’s declaration of the “ut-

ter bankruptcy of ‘external questions.’” (123) This chapter argues that, for Kant, *a priori* concepts are the framework for our experience and apply exclusively to objects of experience and that transcendental arguments are what allow Kant to say this. So, while the Refutation does not refute idealism in a straightforward sense were one to pose the question ontologically, Stapleford’s point is that “to give a straightforward answer to this question is to perhaps miss the point.” (128) Kant is able to speak like a realist on the empirical level, arguing that it is fundamental to our experience to do so, but, critically, we are in no position to make judgments about the ontological status of those objects—how or what they are outside of how they appear to us.

Stapleford’s goal was to provide a timely commentary and historical corrective to conceptions of Kant’s transcendental arguments. In so doing, it contributes meaningfully to Kant studies and the growing literature surrounding transcendental arguments. Notwithstanding a few interpretive choices with which some Kant scholars may have issues, Stapleford succeeds on this point, but begs for an expansive assessment of the successes and failures of Kant’s employment of transcendental arguments.

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***Lectures on Logic: Berlin 1831***

**G.W.F. Hegel**

**Translated by Clark Butler**

**Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008; xxiii + 233 pages.**

Every translation involves making strategic choices, and it is all too easy for those who come along afterwards to second-guess these decisions. This danger is all the more obvious in the present case, for one of Butler’s major aims in releasing this volume was that “for some it may, for the first time, make the science of logic not only readable but teachable.” (ix) Many of Butler’s translation decisions are guided by the aim of producing a text that could serve to introduce Hegel’s logic to a broader non-specialist audience. It is thus tempting to complain that Butler’s translation falls short of the high standards set by the recent spate of Oxford translations of Hegel’s lectures and fail to recognise the virtues of



this text. This translation is certainly to be recommended on the grounds that it will be of value and interest not only to specialists but to any who would seek a point of entrance into Hegel's often overwhelming logic. Nonetheless, this recommendation is not unconditional, for Butler's translation is far from unobjectionable. After offering a brief overview of the text, I shall thus play the part of the critic—or rather the valet.

Hegel always insisted that his *Encyclopaedia* was meant merely to serve as a compendium to his lectures, and that it would only receive its proper explication and development there. It is for this reason that Hegel's initial literary executors supplemented this text with the so-called *Zusätze*, material gathered from students' lecture notes. Unfortunately, the willingness of editors to conflate the texts of various transcripts taken from different years of presentation has meant that the *Zusätze* were a necessary evil, for they often formed the only source for the elaboration of passages in Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* that would otherwise have been impenetrable. It is for this reason that the recent release and translation of student manuscripts of Hegel's lectures is so much to be welcomed. Granted, in the case of logic, readers were not so dependent on the *Zusätze* as with the other branches of Hegel's system, for it was possible to consult Hegel's own elaboration of this part of his system, namely, the *Science of Logic*, released in 1812 and partially revised for release in the second edition of 1831. Nonetheless, the *Encyclopaedia* version of logic is still important for two reasons. First, the *Science of Logic* is a long and often extremely difficult text, such that a supplementary briefer account that presents much the same argument in different words would still be highly valuable. Second, in the *Encyclopaedia* version of his logic, and even from the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia* in 1817 to the last in 1830, Hegel introduces some fairly major changes, particularly in the second division of the logic, namely, *Essence*. Since Hegel's second edition of the *Science of Logic* was incomplete, only extending to the first division of *Being*, it should be fairly clear why a manuscript of Hegel's final lecture on Logic, transcribed by Hegel's own son Karl, would be such a valuable document.

Hegel's presentation quite clearly follows the *Encyclopaedia Logic* (§§19–244 of the Third Edition) with only minor deviations. A comparison of the two texts is aided by the translator's decision to identify the parallel sections of the *Encyclopaedia* when these were not identified in the original manuscript. Although such a parallel reading is use-

ful, it may also quite fruitfully be read in isolation, for the lectures form a continuous and self-contained presentation of Hegel's logic. It is for this reason that Butler's translation of these lectures may usefully serve not only as supplementary text of interest to scholars, but also as a stand-alone introduction to Hegel's logic. Given that these lectures follow the *Encyclopaedia*, scholars will undoubtedly find much that sounds familiar here but also subtle changes of emphasis that, due to the looser style of Hegel's lectures, are frequently quite illuminating. The beginner, however, will find the text far more accessible than the *Encyclopaedia* and often far more illuminating than the *Zusätze*.

In order to render the manuscript readable, both the German editors and Butler himself had to insert a number of interpolations. The interpolations in the German text, however, are fairly minimal, mainly consisting in supplying missing articles and filling in fairly obvious lacuna where the manuscript resorts to shorthand. In producing his English translation, Butler has been far more liberal in his use of interpolations, attempting thereby to fill in those ambiguities and lacunae in Karl Hegel's manuscript that, although unproblematic for those already immersed in Hegel's works, would render these same passages inaccessible, or at least less clear, to non-specialists. In themselves, neither set of interpolations are particularly objectionable, and while Butler's approach is perhaps less to the taste of scholars, his interpolations should, for the most part, be uncontroversial, as they are easily confirmed by looking at parallel passages in either the *Encyclopaedia* or the *Science of Logic*. Moreover, such interpolations can easily be ignored when they are set off in brackets. And, yet, this is precisely where Butler's translation begins to falter, for not only does he fail to indicate the interpolations of the German editors, but by his own admission, he occasionally adds, without indicating that these are interpolations, "a few extra words [to] help the reader keep in mind what Hegel has referred to and is still referring to in the text." (ix)

The decision to inconsistently indicate interpolations is irritating, but the decision to include neither an index nor a translation glossary of translation terms is downright frustrating. The absence of a glossary is particularly troubling, given that the translation choices which Butler mentions and defends in his introduction are so idiosyncratic and questionable. Presumably in an effort to make the present text more accessible, Butler renders *der Begriff* as "the self-concept" so as "to make more

explicit Hegel's thought that the concept grasps itself in its object." (xviii) Although I take his point, this neologism is rather heavy-handed, likely to be irksome for those familiar with Hegel's philosophy and unnecessarily confusing for any beginner who would seek to go from the present text to any of the other standard translations of Hegel's works. Although Hegel certainly does give the term *Begriff* an unusual technical sense, this sense is hardly conveyed in such a simplistic manner, since it arguably takes no less than two-thirds of the *Logic* to arrive at an appropriate definition of the term. Moreover, if Butler's claims that *der Begriff* is elliptical and that his translation is true to the author's intentions were correct, then Hegel's objections to how Kant, for example, uses this term, would be quite senseless.

Even more bothersome is Butler's decision to translate the *an* in *an sich* as "upon," thereby replacing the standard translation "in-itself" with the awkward and misleading "upon itself." Despite Butler's rather peculiar argument to the contrary, "upon" does not capture Hegel's sense of immediacy, but entails a sense of distance and mediation that is inappropriate, misleading and results in such peculiar and awkward translations as the following: "What is merely upon itself is still bottled up inside itself." (76) Surely, if the aim is to make Hegel's philosophical system intelligible to the average reader, then such peculiar renderings should be avoided. One can no more sit upon their own lap than lift themselves up by their own hair, *à la* Baron Munchausen.

Finally, Butler decides to modify consistently Hegel's terminology by rendering such universal terms like *Bestimmtheit* and *Existenz* as "determination" and "the existent." Butler's justification for this proceeds from his claim that Hegel had admitted in his review of Göschel's *Aphorisms* that his style gave readers the mistaken impression that he was a panlogist, while to the contrary, according to Butler, these lectures "give us good reason for supposing that Hegel, far from being a panlogist, was in fact a nominalist." (xvii) According to Butler, then, his alteration of the text is simply the correction of "a mode of expression which [Hegel] himself criticized in 1830, but which still remained an ingrained habit of his in the 1831 lectures." (xviii)

In brief, then, while this is a valuable addition to the English translations of Hegel's works and should be of interest to anyone who

wishes to gain or deepen their understanding of Hegel's logic, it is a quirky translation that is less than neutral and thus must be read with some caution.

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***Critique and Disclosure: Critical Theory between Past and Future***  
**Nikolas Kompridis**  
**Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006; xv + 337 pages.**

With *Critique and Disclosure*, Nikolas Kompridis makes an impressive intervention in the self-definition of Critical Theory, an internal discourse dating back to Horkheimer's seminal "Traditional and Critical Theory." For some time, dissatisfaction with its overwhelmingly Habermasian direction has been growing, and Kompridis is no exception to this trend. His book is full of intriguing but controversial ideas, such that an adequate, balanced appraisal of the whole is impossible in this short space. I will, therefore, simply comment on those aspects that I took to be most crucial, noting, however, that its shortcomings as much as its strengths lead me to imagine that *Critique and Disclosure* will become a necessary reading for all those invested in the reinvigoration or, possibly, transformation of this tradition.

Most importantly, Kompridis endeavours to refigure the self-understanding of Critical Theory. He draws on Habermas' own insistence that Critical Theory is essentially dependent on the peculiarly modern form of time-consciousness in order to argue that the overly narrow, procedural conceptions of rationality and normativity dominating the theory of communicative action fail to respect this deep insight (which he actually traces at least as far back as Hegel). The opening and closing sections—titled, respectively, "What is Critical Theory for..." and "...in Times of Need," self-consciously echoing Hölderlin and Heidegger—claim that Modernity's time-consciousness is such that our historical relation to the past is so damaged as to fail to frame adequately our expectations for the future, which thus appears not as the horizon of the possible fulfilment of our hopes and projects but as threatening and deeply disorienting. The result is a sense of powerlessness and dispossession. We seem to lack, according to Kompridis, any stable sense of agency

that would allow us to take responsibility for the transmission of various practices from the past to the future; the issue is “knowing how to go on, differently,” insofar as we lack the normative resources to decide upon the “proportion of continuity and discontinuity in the forms of life we pass on.” (11)

Kompridis readily admits that, given Critical Theory’s essential dependence on its historical context, there is no “solution” to this problematic situation; rather, he is interested in Critical Theory with respect to its function—to use a pragmatic turn of phrase—of “coping with the situation.” And it is to the Heideggerian notion of “disclosure” that Kompridis turns as the most promising coping mechanism. This move, though not unprecedented, is nevertheless bold, insofar as the tradition of the Frankfurt School has been marked, from Benjamin to Habermas, by an understandable (if neither entirely justified nor entirely fair) hostility to phenomenology in general and to Heidegger in particular. Kompridis’ second and third sections are devoted, respectively, to defending Heidegger against Habermas’ allegation that fundamental ontology is, in effect, a theoretical propaedeutic to Nazism and to combating Habermas’ various criticisms, primarily in the *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, of so-called “disclosure theorists” (e.g., Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida and Castoriadis). These constitute the most thorough and plausible attempts at rehabilitating and appropriating Heidegger that I know of within the Critical Theoretic tradition, and draw out the internal tensions and alleged internal contradictions within Habermas’ own thought.

The crux of Kompridis’ approach here is to argue that Habermas’ conception of communicative rationality is inadequate to the temporally-indexed “needs” that call Critical Theory—and, as Kompridis ambitiously argues in Part V, philosophy in general—to respond, while “disclosive practices” at least serve as genuine responses. In general, Kompridis takes Habermas’ insistence on a fully “post-metaphysical thinking,” manifest in a conception of reason exhausted in formal argumentation and the universalistic procedures for evaluating such arguments, to betray the Kantian insight that reason is essentially self-determining; what we take to be rational remains open-ended. Habermas’ obsession with evaluating the validity of *truth*-claims, according to Kompridis, cannot reassure us “moderns” of our agency or provide us with normative guidance in terms of which we can take responsibility for the modification and transmission of our forms of life. Kompridis’ major

innovation is to argue that “disclosure” should be incorporated into a richer conception of rationality, specifically the “disclosure of possibility”; Kompridis would like Critical Theory to expand the realm of *meaning*, that is, to disclose the conditions of intelligibility constituted by various practical engagements so as to reveal how different possibilities of meaning—and thus of self-understanding and, accordingly, of “going on, differently”—are available to us. On this view, a conception of rationality inclusive of the disclosure of the realm of meaning—what Kompridis calls, riffing on Sellars, the “logical space of possibilities”—is more radical than, insofar as it constitutes the possibility of, the restricted “truth-tracking” rationality defended by Habermas.

Indeed, Kompridis invests some considerable theoretical energy into “romanticizing” Critical Theory; the dissatisfaction with Habermas is, at base, dissatisfaction with his “conservatism towards possibility.” The theory of communicative action is taken to unduly restrict the possibility of transforming social and cultural practices. While Habermas has certainly been criticised for a certain sort of conservatism or complacency, this has usually been motivated by a sense that he has “given up” the radical, total critiques offered by Benjamin, Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse, and resigned himself to the limited possibilities available for “justice.” Kompridis’ account is certainly unique, at least, in criticising Habermas for not being optimistic enough, for ignoring the *initiative* of human beings, the capability to “begin anew”; reason-as-disclosure, as Kompridis takes it, is to open a wealth of radically new possibilities.

As mentioned, Kompridis’ case for a fundamental reorientation of Critical Theory ought to provoke much discussion. Though I am no Habermasian, Kompridis’ approach to Habermas and the “disclosure theorists” he opposes is indicative of the shortcomings of the work (shortcomings which I hope will nevertheless stimulate Critical Theorists to address these issues themselves). The fifth part of the book argues for a revitalised conception of philosophy, which, though not bearing any cultural authority itself, is both freed from its subservience to the “reconstructive sciences” and characterised as a *response* to the crises of its time, a conception allegedly eschewed by Habermas. But a sympathetic critic might acknowledge that Habermas’ conception was shaped—at least in part—not only by the critical aporias of Adorno, Horkheimer and Benjamin, but also in response to the claims of the “disclosure theorists” that Kompridis would like to rehabilitate for Critical Theory. One might

think that Habermas' restrictive concept of reason is a concession to the deep criticisms of "philosophy" as such issuing from Foucault, Derrida and the later Heidegger, concessions necessary for any genuine discourse at all. Acknowledging this, I think, would call one to a deeper engagement with these individual theorists, drawing out a fuller account of disclosure, and more carefully mapping points of divergence from and convergence with Habermas.

In addition, while Kompridis' Heidegger is deeply Dreyfusian, the interpretations of disclosure both received and critiqued by, for example, Lyotard and Derrida, are marked by important differences, scepticism and approvals. A richer understanding of this history would complicate Kompridis' conception of philosophy as time-responsive insofar as various thinkers have markedly different conceptions of temporality; if one is to accept a notion of "disclosure," surely one must accept an accompanying notion of time. Thus, one would have to evaluate, for instance, those of Levinas, Derrida and Ricoeur. Kompridis hopes to draw the normative basis of Critical Theory—an issue dominating its recent history—from modernity's time-consciousness, but this is only sketchily presented, and one cannot help but think that a fuller notion of temporality would be necessary for his project to succeed.

What I hope this book accomplishes is a revitalisation of the discussion of rationality within the tradition of Critical Theory. To look to Heidegger in this context is a bold move, and potentially reinvigorating. But it also makes more perspicuous a direction that Critical Theory has long ignored, to its detriment: the philosophy of science. Habermas' *Knowledge and Human Interests* unfortunately equated philosophy of science with a naïve and pernicious positivism, even though it appeared years after Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, and there has been precious little engagement on the part of Critical Theory since. The eschewal of the philosophy of science becomes glaring, even, given the constant reference to the "paradigm-shift" in Critical Theory between subject-centred and communicative rationality. Kompridis even refers to the sorts of crises to which Critical Theory ought to be responsive as "epistemological crises," a term lifted from an essay by Alasdair MacIntyre concerning, among other things, Kuhn and the rationality of science. With respect to both the transformation of Critical Theory, and the sorts of ruptures within the "life-world" to which it is to respond, the discussions of scientific rationality in the wake of Kuhn and, importantly,

within a relatively autonomous French tradition of philosophy of science, surely hold resources for the critical theorist willing to break with orthodoxy. Hopefully, Kompridis has made this move easier.

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***Rephrasing Heidegger: A Companion to Being and Time***

**Richard Sembera**

**Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2007; 309 pages.**

Although two English translations of *Being and Time* have already been produced, perhaps now a third is needed. Sembera's systematic "rephrasing" of not only Heidegger's thought but, more basically, his technical vocabulary just might be the kick that gets such a formidable ball rolling.

Most of us are familiar with the most commonly used, 1962 translation of *Being and Time* by Macquarrie and Robinson, and perhaps less with Stambaugh's mainly stylistic improvements in 1996. But what most of us do not realise is that, concealed within these translations is an illuminating but flawed interpretation of *Being and Time*, one which has played no little part in establishing the predominant "existentialist" view of Heidegger common to most of the English-speaking philosophical world. More specifically, these translations have lent themselves to what I would describe as a popular "classroom" reading of *Being and Time*, according to which *das Man* or "the they" (third person plural) is an oppressive society against which *Dasein* exists *eigentlich* or "authentically" in a quasi-bohemian state; this *condition humaine* is overcome to the extent that *Dasein* grasps *den Sinn von Sein überhaupt* or "the meaning of Being in general," an "existential"(-ist) grasping that requires *Entschlossenheit* or "resoluteness" on the part of *Dasein* toward its own finite *Zeitlichkeit* or "temporality"; *Dasein* thereby maximises *Seinkönnen* or "potentiality of being." Now, the ultimate blame for such a socio-psychological, that is, *non-ontological* reading lies squarely on Heidegger's shoulders, a philosopher who failed pedagogically in his published writings. Nonetheless, the current English translations and their "existentialist" rapport represent an earlier stage of Heidegger scholarship, one which the English-speaking philosophical world is slowly outgrowing. And *Rephrasing Heidegger* goes a long way in freeing us from this en-



trenched “*Verstellung*” of Heideggerian thought, and it does so by uncovering the conceptual underpinnings of *Being and Time* through clear and unambiguous English for both the beginner and Heidegger specialist.

The author, who studied under von Herrmann (the editor of the most important volumes of Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe*), leads the reader onto this path of disentanglement by phrasing *Being and Time* anew (hence *rephrasing*) in three basic ways: retranslation, reordering and reinterpretation.

Firstly, Sembera retranslates Heidegger’s technical vocabulary in *Being and Time*. A few translations are especially noteworthy: *Sinn* is rendered as the more referential “sense”; *Zeug* and *Bewandtnis* as the more intuitive “tool” and “connection,” respectively; *Zuhandenheit* and *Vorhandenheit* as the more literal “to-handedness” and “at-handedness,” respectively; *das Man* and *das Man-selbst* as the appropriately neutral “the One” and “the one-self,” respectively; *Befindlichkeit* as the suitably vague “sensibility”; *Seinkönnen* as the more active “being-ability”; *Gewesenheit*, *Gegenwart* and *Zukunft* as the more radical “continuance,” “encounter” and “advent,” respectively; *Zeitlichkeit* as the more *Dasein*-like “timeliness”; and *Geschick* as the collective and, to be sure, less mystical “lot.” In addition to a German-English lexicon (Appendix B) cross-referencing Heidegger’s original German terms with his own translations, Macquarrie and Robinson’s, and Stambaugh’s, Sembera includes a glossary of technical terms (Appendix A) with an explanation of their meaning and a discussion of the various translations as well as a justification for his own. (Sembera also includes a third addendum, Appendix C, which summarises in table format all of the important conceptual divisions and structural parallels in *Being and Time*—a handy tool for any Heidegger scholar.)

Perhaps the only translation in which the author “streamlines” Heidegger’s vocabulary too much is his rendering of *Entwurf* as “plan.” Although here the problematic psychological connotations of Macquarrie and Robinson’s “projection” and Stambaugh’s “project” are avoided, were this a full translation of *Being and Time*, some confusion would occur on page 145 of the original, where Heidegger sharply distinguishes “*das Entwerfen*” from anything like an “*ausgedachten Plan*.”

Secondly, Sembera reorders the way in which *Being and Time* is presented. By “reorders” I speak not in terms of sequence but, rather, tidiness. In other words, Sembera brings a systematic orderliness to *Being*

*and Time* otherwise lacking on first exposure. Most notable in this regard is Sembera's making good on a criticism he lays against Heidegger and the latter's perhaps performatively consistent *un-ausgedachten* style: "one frequently discovers indispensable information, absolutely essential to the understanding of earlier sections, remarked in passing in later sections." (xvi) Two sections in particular stand out for their housecleaning: "Understanding versus Perception," in which Sembera introduces the reader to the ontological lynchpin of Heidegger's early thought—*Dasein*'s act of understanding—and does so, in stark contrast to Heidegger's own presentation, *before* discussing the question of Being; and "Heidegger's Concept of Phenomenology (§7)" in which Sembera assembles Heidegger's dispersed remarks on methodology (from §§7, 18, 32, 44 and 63 of *Being and Time*) in order to dispel the common mischaracterisation of Heidegger's phenomenology as purely descriptive. More positively in this latter section, Sembera argues that *Being and Time*, "being [itself] an interpretation, shares in the circular structure of understanding" (62); "works out the foundation of any possible ontology" (59) including the much neglected *Geisteswissenschaften*; "envisions [*läßt sehen*] phenomena" through the apophantic structure of *Rede* or "talk" (57); and thus that its method, far from being purely descriptive in nature, is in fact a much more radical, *hermeneutic phenomenology*.

Lastly, Sembera reinterprets *Being and Time* on the basis of his retranslation and reordering. Cutting through the obscurity and awkward neologisms often associated with Heidegger scholarship in translation, Sembera often pauses "to take stock of the results of our explanations" (43), "to reformulate our conclusions in more precise and more familiar...terms" (18), and perhaps a godsend to any first-time reader of *Being and Time*: "It is probably worth rephrasing this argument in completely non-philosopher's terms, since its essential sense can be preserved at a much simpler level." (153) Supplementing this reader-friendly style are many examples, a number of which are perhaps prime for becoming pedagogical classics; examples such as solving Zeno's "Stadium" paradox through phenomenological analysis (14–17), referentially understanding a piece of chalk in a classroom (36–37), Being as observability under laboratory conditions (39–41), restructuring one's comprehensibility of the world by defining a "zayzax" (96–97), and love as the usually implicit and, to be sure, disagree-*able* sensibility of a successful marriage. (113)

Structurally, *Rephrasing Heidegger* consists of an initial chapter on “The Origins of Phenomenology” and two further chapters containing detailed section-by-section analyses of *Being and Time*. Most important to the beginner is Chapter 2, “Hermeneutic Phenomenology as Fundamental Ontology,” in particular sections 2.5 b), “The One-self,” and 2.9, “The Primeval Structure of Dasein as Concern,” according to which authenticity is “not a question of eliminating the one-self” (82) but a “shift of emphasis” (88) onto *Dasein*’s selfhood, and thus ultimately “a question of *not being caught in the one-self as the only and exclusive way for Dasein to exist*” (82); inauthenticity and the one-self, however, are “a necessary foundation of any common enterprise” (124), the deciding factor for which is whether “giving up some of one’s own possibilities of existence...is done *from deliberate choice or without explicitly choosing*.” (124)

Most important to the Heidegger specialist is Chapter 3, “The Timing of Timeliness,” in particular the initial sections (3.1–3.4), in which Sembera works out in detail the oftentimes blurred because simplified connection between *existenzialem Vorlaufen* or “existential fore-running” and *existenzieller Entschlossenheit* or “existentic decidedness,” a connection which, according to Sembera, authorises [*bezeugt*] *Dasein*’s *eigentliches Ganzseinkönnen* or “authentic ability-to-be-a-whole,” and thus initially brings into phenomenal view the *zeitlich* or “timely” structure of *Sorge*, “concern.” In Sembera’s own words, “The authentic structure of the conscience *must* be linked with the authentic structure of being unto death in order to characterise adequately the essential, authentic, and primeval ontological structure of Dasein” (191), that is, *forerunning decidedness*.

Perhaps the only interpretation in which the author slightly diminishes Heidegger’s (overall) thought is his second “nominal” definition of Being as “that by means of which we understand the difference between existence and non-existence.” (44) My perceived diminution does not lie in the definition itself; rather, in it an opportunity is missed at bridging Heidegger’s later *seinsgeschichtlich* or “ontohistorical” thinking (to which the author admits he is largely unsympathetic) by pointing out the connection between *das Nicht* of (Being’s) *non-existence* (what Heidegger calls “the horizontal schema of absence” in *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*) and Heidegger’s more radical, ontohistori-

cally *geschickt* experience of *Seinsvergessenheit*, “the forgottenness of Being.”

In sum, then, *Rephrasing Heidegger* systematically retranslates, reorders and reinterprets *Being and Time* in clear and unambiguous English for both the beginner and Heidegger specialist. In so doing it lays the groundwork for future Heidegger scholarship in the English-speaking philosophical world, perhaps even a new translation of *Being and Time*. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in engaging Heidegger as a truly systematic thinker.

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***Kierkegaard's Instant: On Beginnings***

**David J. Kangas**

**Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007; 198 pages.**

This important book directly interrogates the relationship between time and subjectivity in Kierkegaard's early works. Kangas also provides a fresh interpretation of Idealism, using Kierkegaard's conception of “the instant” in order to show that Kierkegaard's critique of Idealism actually takes the form of an appropriation. According to Kangas, Kierkegaard in effect reads Idealism backwards by focussing attention on the continual beginning that the instant is. The instant is the “beginning presupposed in any beginning.” (183) As such, it is what gives birth to both past and present.

*Kierkegaard's Instant* primarily treats the individual's existential condition as a relationship to time. Kangas argues that, for Kierkegaard, the individual has an anarchic relationship to time, since her beginning always precedes her. Whereas Greek and Hegelian thought obscures this truth, Kierkegaard exposes it. According to Kangas, the instant “is the pre-eminently real event through which self-consciousness is opened up, or first of all born, again and again.” (5) The book focusses on how in Kierkegaard's early works the instant is understood as a continual beginning that never becomes present. Kangas examines the instant as paradigmatic for time, asserting that for Kierkegaard time is groundless. The instant is the point of contact between the temporal and the eternal, yet

each instant is the source of itself. This means that the subject must, in each instant, relate herself to groundlessness. Kangas additionally argues that Kierkegaard is indebted to Meister Eckhart for his thinking of time in terms of groundlessness. Without producing copious evidence to support the claim that Kierkegaard was directly familiar with Eckhart, Kangas nevertheless makes a convincing case.

The six chapters of the book each provide us with a nuanced and sophisticated reading of one of Kierkegaard's early philosophical works: *The Concept of Irony, Either/Or Book I, Johannes Climacus, Repetition, Fear and Trembling*, and *The Concept of Anxiety*.

According to Kangas, Kierkegaard's account of subjectivity leaves us with the imperative *Gelassenheit*, an Eckhartian concept which Kangas translates as "releasement." *Gelassenheit* requires that we be capable of paradox, that we acknowledge the groundlessness of our situatedness in time, and recognise that our own self-consciousness is both dependent upon, and undone by, the disjuncture of the instant. Existence requires that we hold ourselves open to the instant (that is, the temporalisation which dispossesses us from ourselves). In his treatment of *Fear and Trembling*, for example, Kangas argues that the description of Abraham is an instance of essential concealment. Relative to the "stages" described in that pseudonymous text, Abraham remains singular, interrupting all categories of description. Abraham thus represents the paradox of existence because his situation can only ever be pointed at indirectly; his existence precedes and conditions each stage but without ever being determined by any of them.

Kangas counters the teleological account of Kierkegaard's stages of existence, claiming that, because of the primacy of the instant, each stage is merely an aspect of existence. Existence is the very realisation by the self-conscious subject that she is not the origin of her own subjectivity, and that the origin she seeks only ever comes about in the instant. This encounter with groundlessness occurs in each instant as the subject must continually confront her own beginning. Any teleological ordering of the stages of existence would require a continuous temporality in which self-consciousness comes to know itself. This cannot be the case for Kierkegaard, since each aspect of existence must be understood in relation to groundlessness. Insofar as Kierkegaard prioritises the religious over the other so-called stages of existence, it is not because the subject realises her *telos* therein. Rather, the religious involves letting go of the

demand for a ground and holding oneself open to the infinite beginning that the instant is.

In this book, Kangas provides much needed scholarship on the Eckhartian threads in Kierkegaard's corpus; he also deftly traces the problematic of the instant that continually gives birth to its own beginning. This is a carefully written, insightful work that will be useful to all readers of Kierkegaard, as well as those interested in thoughtful commentary on the Idealist tradition and in existential analyses of time and subjectivity.

*Robyn Lee, York University*

***Edith Stein: Comunità e mondo della vita—Società Diritto Religione***  
[**Edith Stein: Community and the Lifeworld—Society, Law, Religion**]

**Eds. Angela Ales Bello and Anna Maria Pezzella**  
**Rome: Lateran University Press, 2008; 160 pages.**

Angela Ales Bello and Anna Maria Pezzella have put together a timely and well-researched collection of essays that focus on Edith Stein's philosophy of community. It would not be an understatement to claim that Stein's social and political philosophy, though now becoming better known, has not been sufficiently explored by philosophers and scholars. While working with and under Husserl, Stein began to develop a phenomenology of the social-political world that was largely influential on thinkers like Husserl, Gerda Walther and Hedwig Conrad-Martius. Though Alfred Schutz is often recognised as the thinker that largely developed Husserl's phenomenology within the field of sociology, it is Stein that was the first phenomenologist to carry out and elaborate a systematic phenomenological account of social and political objectivities. This volume amply demonstrates this. Ales Bello's extensive body of scholarly work has already mined the work of Husserl and Stein to draw attention to the enormous riches and potential that lie within the phenomenological tradition. Along with the work of Pezzella, this volume extends this philosophical itinerary.

The primary focus of this work is twofold: first, there is an exploration of various questions that revolve around the nature and role of community within Stein's philosophy; second, the book shows how Stein's view of community evolves as she progresses in life. We see an early form of community that is described within the strict context of Husserlian phenomenology whose latter senses and constitutive analyses are thickened with religious meaning, especially understood as stemming from Stein's own turn to Roman Catholicism and medieval philosophy.

Ales Bello's introduction sets the stage for the essays. She points out that Stein works firmly within the German philosophical tradition, which places a high priority on understanding communal associative relationships. She also notes, for Stein, that community is not only about certain external structures and conventions but also an accompanying state of mind or consciousness. For Stein, community is described as foundational: "[N]o domain of human living can be separated from a communitarian perspective, neither the research of culture and science nor juridical and political structures." (8) In other words, all aspects of human existence imply an operative understanding of the nature and dynamics of community.

The first essay in the book is written by Francesca Brezzi. She draws upon the biography and person of Edith Stein in order to set out the importance of raising once again the question concerning that nature of community. Two significant features are highlighted. First, Stein's philosophy of woman is most important in trying to understand what Stein means by community because here there is an emphasis on sexual individuation that carries with it important constitutive features that condition human existence and women's existence in particular. Second, Stein's later writings on community, with their emphases on the role of the divine in community, challenge us to recognise the fact that religion plays a huge role in the social and political ordering of the life world. The subsequent essay by Michele D'Ambra focusses on Stein's person to investigate how she lived various levels or types of community, ultimately arguing that Stein's concepts of person and personhood are vital for comprehending the foundation of her view of community. D'Ambra examines Stein's views of family, motherhood, friendship and even the philosophical community as lived through her experience of her beloved Göttingen Philosophical Society.

The next two essays in the book form, in my view, the key and most philosophically rich essays of the whole work. Pezzella's essay, "Community and People," provides a detailed analysis of Stein's noteworthy contributions to the treatment of the phenomenological problem of intersubjectivity. In particular, Stein extends the treatment of empathy she developed while studying under Husserl by postulating a theory of a lived experience of community. Here, the distinction is made between one mind entering into and understanding the lived experience of another mind and the lived experience of sharing in and understanding a communal experience. For example, and Pezzella focusses her essay on this particular experience, the experience of belonging to a community of people. The reference here is to the German notion of *Volk*. The Germans are a people, a distinct people. They have many cultural, intellectual and social ways of expressing their being German.

Unlike many of her predecessors, Stein never claimed that belonging to a people necessary resulted in an experience of community. Rather, quite the opposite is true: one could belong to a people and be very conscious of what it entails to do so, but one may never live the experience of community that Stein describes as one living within the experience of the other in solidarity. This being said, there is also the fact that belonging to a people may also result in a communal feeling. One can experience what it is to be a community of German people; this experience, however, is always lived in individuals. There is never a fusion or super-consciousness of community that somehow sublates, as in Hegel, individual consciousness. The super-individual world is always experienced within the mind of the individual person. (67) Pezzella highlights the fact that community implies a deep ethical relationship rooted in responsibility. Community is not only about consciousness but also about responsibility, one for the life of the other and vice versa. One of Pezzella's provocative claims is that the Nazi genocide can be accounted for as the degeneration of community into a mass, an unreflective, unthinking mass. But it should also be remarked that there can be communities of hate, a solidarity of hate that binds people in deep ways. These kinds of community are not ignorant or unreflective; rather, they are complex, developed and highly rational, as Victor Frankl rightly points out.

Throughout her essay, Pezzella focusses on Stein's *Introduction to Philosophy (Einführung in die Philosophie)*, an important text that has



received little scholarly attention. This text is important as it marks the culmination of Stein's early phenomenology just prior to her full encounter with Christian thought.

Luisa Avitabile's essay, "The Role of Community in Social, Political and Religious Life," is a remarkable piece because she treats the concepts of right and Stein's use of law in her political work. To my knowledge, this aspect of Stein's work has not been greatly explored other than from the traditional vantage points of putting it into relation with its sources, namely, the work of Adolf Reinach and Max Scheler. The great merit of this piece is the detailed and progressive analysis of law in Stein's political philosophy. Concepts like *a priori* versus positivist theories of law, collective will, sovereignty, formation of law, etc. are all addressed in this article. The author explains how law is vital for the formation and understanding of community. Successful is the rereading of empathy back into Stein's theory of law and the state. At one point, however, Avitabile claims that phenomenology can establish a non-utilitarian, non-economic and "impartial" privileged starting point rooted in free acts that draw from the juridical nature of the person. (112) One wonders how this is really possible, especially given the critiques of thinkers like Adorno and Foucault.

The last two essays by J. Turola Garcia ("Religious Community and the Formation of the Person") and P. Manganaro ("Religious Community and Mystical Communion") focus on the religious and mystical thought of Edith Stein. After her conversion to Roman Catholicism, Stein took up various teaching positions within the Catholic academic world. In 1933, after the promulgation of the Nazi anti-Jewish laws, Stein decided to pursue her religious vocation as an enclosed Carmelite nun. Both as an active lay person and a contemplative, she continued to write and meditate upon the nature of community. Garcia's essay concentrates on what Stein had to say about community within the context of religious life, whereas Manganaro's essay examines what it would mean for us to experience and understand mystical union. Here, mystical union is examined from two perspectives, namely, from the side of community between God and human beings and, from the other side, the union and community between the three persons of the Trinity, emblematically understood as a "We are."

This book makes a definite contribution to Steinian and Husserlian scholarship because it elucidates and contextualises very dense con-

cepts that one finds throughout the phenomenological tradition. Philosophically speaking, it challenges us to bring to the fore the meaning of community, especially from angles that are not readily accepted by mainstream philosophy, namely, the religious and feminist perspectives. Bello and Pezzella's work helps us greatly to think through the phenomenological sense or meaning of community from perspectives that can bear much fruit.

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***The Domestication of Derrida: Rorty, Pragmatism and Deconstruction***  
**Lorenzo Fabbri**  
**New York: Continuum, 2008; 150 pages.**

Despite Rorty's usual flouting of philosophical dichotomies, one of his more positive (and contentious) assertions is the need for a robust distinction between the public and private spheres. Whereas the former deals with the suffering of other people, the latter is concerned with individual projects of self-creation. For Rorty, Habermas is representative of the public realm while Derrida is consigned to the private sphere. It is precisely this consignment that Lorenzo Fabbri challenges and ultimately finds lacking. Fabbri's approach is twofold. First, he extrapolates what is most persuasive in Rorty's account, after which he proceeds to demonstrate the ways in which Derrida and deconstruction perpetually stave off domestication. The book concludes that an "infinite distance" remains between Rorty and Derrida. (127)

Chapter 1 begins with the backdrop to Rorty's reading of Derrida, specifically Rorty's multifaceted answer to the question, "What is philosophy?" For Rorty, there are two conceptions of modern philosophy. The first one—Kant's—began once science and philosophy had secured victory over the entrenched religious institutions. It retained the scientific method and specified itself in terms of epistemology for which the scheme/content distinction was central. This transcendental project permitted three responses—realism, relativism and ironism. The former two reside within the Kantian transcendental framework in the sense that they both accept the scheme/content distinction. The ironist, by contrast,

rejects it. It is this ironist move that constitutes the second conception of philosophy. It is thoroughly reactive to, or parasitic on, the Kantian conception and occupies itself with demonstrating the *contingency* of philosophical discourses. In this way, the category of the ironist is akin to that of the poet. Indeed, for Rorty, what is exemplary about the poet is her desire for autonomy; this is articulated in Ezra Pound's exhortation for the poet to "Make it new." There is also an element of anxiety present, namely, the poets' fear that they may be unable to shake off adequately the constraints of their time and place. This contrasts with Plato's belief that creativity emerges not out of fear, but out of astonishment.

Chapter 2 shifts to the weaknesses of Rorty's Derrida, which are baldly stated in Fabbri's claim that Rorty relegates Derrida to an unsustainable "double privacy." He writes, "Deconstruction is private because it breaks free from every metaphysical and transcendental demand, privatizing itself in a self-referential fantasizing, but it is also private because it deprives itself of any political pretension." (50) For Fabbri, both alleged privatisations are fundamentally unsound. Consider *Envois*. According to Rorty, this text—full of playful double entendres, puns and etymologies—best exemplifies Derrida's avoidance of the transcendental project. By running philosophy together with autobiography, Rorty thinks that Derrida has succeeded in historicising himself.

Fabbri challenges this reading on two fronts. First, he points out that Rorty's emphasis on the ironic facet of Derrida fails to appreciate his more serious side. Indeed, most American Derrideans—Norris and Culler, for instance—have criticised Rorty on this score. Rorty's strategy has been to downplay Derrida's quasi-transcendental comments as mere extravagances needing no heavy intellectual engagement. But Fabbri argues that one cannot divide the playful from the serious in Derrida. Second, Fabbri critiques Rorty's reading of *Envois* and demonstrates that no easy autobiographical interpretation is viable. For instance, there is textual evidence that suggests *Envois* is not even about Derrida. Therefore, it is not autobiography. Second, following de Man, the autobiography is a distinct genre and so texts purporting to be autobiographical must satisfy that genre's precepts. *Contra* Rorty, then, there is no easy reduction of philosophy to autobiography in Derrida. But is this a fair characterisation? Fabbri's criticism hinges on distinguishing, with regard to philosophy, between Rortyan reductionism and Derridean contamination. This alleged reductionism presupposes the meta-philosophical claim that phi-

losophy is contingent and consequently avoidable. This is in clear contrast to Derrida in that both his playful and serious works “testify to the incapacity of getting philosophy out of one’s mind, of breaking up with metaphysics and theory.” (74) It also reveals the full force of Rorty’s insistence that he is solely focussed on Derrida “at his best.” Derrida does not think one can ever circumvent philosophy; as Fabbri remarks, all of the attempts to accomplish this have so far failed. Rorty, to be fair, offers no guarantees, but insists that a heavy dose of Deweyan experimentalism is sufficient to justify the attempt.

The final chapter of the book discusses the political relevance of deconstruction. Fabbri traces the line of Rorty’s thought, from his early privatisation of philosophy as evidenced in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* to his later thoughts about the role of theory. One of Rorty’s notable habits is to assert extremely controversial claims only to carefully refine them thereafter. Such is the case with the public/private distinction. In later articles, Rorty assuages its rigidity and comes to appreciate that deconstruction does, and can, have a political dimension. According to Fabbri, Rorty’s actual target, once appropriately refined, is the banal claim that theory does not necessarily lead to social action. As he tells us in his “Hilary Putnam and the Relativist Menace,” Rorty himself has “complained over and over again about Heidegger’s and Derrida’s overestimation of the cultural importance of philosophy.” (*Truth and Progress*, 45) This is a site of deep division between Rorty and Derrida.

In drawing out the disagreement, Fabbri utilises Kant, Foucault and Derrida with reference to the concept of the university. Since Kant’s time, the model of the university has been predicated on a division between the higher and the lower faculties. Both the public/private and the performative/constative distinction can be inserted here. The task of the higher faculties—law, medicine, theology—was to serve the state, or more strongly stated, to engage in what Foucault conceptualised as governmentalisation. Kant, in want of preserving philosophy’s independence, consigned it to the purely constative realm. Whereas Kant differentiates the public and private realms transcendently, Rorty is content to reach the same differentiation *via* empirical evidence. Philosophy simply does not have much effect on society; furthermore, this should not be considered inherently regrettable. By contrast, and even though he problematises the performative/constative distinction, Derrida “professes the urgency to re-launch the legacy of a certain Kantian attitude and to safe-

guard the university as the ultimate place of critical resistance against hegemonic powers.” (107) This critical resistance is akin to Foucault’s concept of critique and results in an anarchic streak running through deconstruction.

The book confronts the full scope of Rorty’s position. It is best in the final chapter because it is only there that Rorty’s modifications of the public/private distinction are introduced. One wonders why they took so long to emerge. Moreover, Fabbri does not seem to appreciate fully that Rorty’s meta-philosophical critique and his bourgeois liberalism are logically distinct. In other words, one can accept the argument that the transcendental project ought to be left behind and still think that deconstruction offers a potentially effective means of critiquing society. The question of its political effectiveness is, for Rorty, a pragmatic one and it is not clear to me that Fabbri, or Derrida, have made a convincing case for deconstruction beyond it being merely *potentially* relevant. Nevertheless, the book provokes long reflection on the basic fruitfulness of Rorty’s position, and this alone is a clear virtue.

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***Speaking of Freedom: Philosophy, Politics, and the Struggle for Liberation***

**Dianne Enns**

**Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007; 183 pages.**

In this book, Diane Enns reworks what we can mean when we invoke the idea of freedom. As someone who is wary of speaking about freedom, I am relieved as much by Enns’ articulation of the problems of freedom-talk as by her suggestions for rethinking what freedom can mean. One of the most promising aspects of Enns’ analysis is her resolute placement of freedom at the juncture between idea and necessity—that is, precisely where it is most problematic for philosophy and, as she shows, for politics. Enns’ approach allows her to offer an account of how one might, philosophically, speak *of*, and not simply *about*, freedom.

Approached from the direction of philosophy, the realisation of freedom in the world requires that indeterminate ideas of freedom be translated into actions. But in the moment of action, set in the context of

worldly political circumstances, freedom limits itself, or worse, putrefies and corrupts itself. (10) We frustrate our best intentions of acting politically to actualise the idea of freedom. This is a problem for philosophers (and, Enns shows, for any thinker) who insist that philosophy be in and of the world, since there is, everywhere one looks, an “unshakable desire” for freedom (2) though its actualisation is not assured. Such frustration is exemplified by many liberation discourses (a number of which Enns considers in admirable detail), which show a tendency to reinscribe boundaries of exclusion, even as they seek to end domination. Approached from the direction of the political, supporters of determinate freedoms face philosophical thinking about freedom with anxiety, since it reveals the impossibility of living up to even limited ideals (which become corrupted in action). This anxiety reveals the absolute lack of certainty about the rightness, goodness and justness of one’s cause. The very desire for freedom, Enns demonstrates, is at stake in political considerations of philosophical freedom.

Instead of turning to a “politics of regulative principles,” Enns builds an account of the political as that realm of “inexhaustible encounters” of worldly beings and “unpredictable solutions” needed for their negotiation, an account that is at every moment tied to particular political struggles for freedom. (15) She deals with a history of what she calls “blueprints” (15), all (at least) partially inspired by Marx’s faith in a future free from oppression, beginning with French existentialist views of freedom.

This first blueprint is sketched with attention to humanistic assumptions—an ethic of sovereign subjectivity, and often the necessity of and full capacity for choice (Beauvoir’s and Merleau-Ponty’s concerns for *la force des choses* notwithstanding). But existentialist freedoms in practice exemplify the problem of freedom, not simply as a problematic idea, but as a problematic necessity. Without romanticisation or dismissal, Enns then reads the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s influenced by existentialist philosophy as developing the political values of self-determination, the right to autonomy and the force of identity claims. Her impressive grasp of the writings from movements of Northern African decolonisation (through Fanon and Memmi), “second wave” feminism (Millett) and black consciousness in South Africa (Biko) allows her to illustrate common themes across diverse histories and forms of oppression. Chief among these themes is an imagined place of free and

(newly) sovereign subjects, accompanied by an insistence on faith in their coming freedom. But the *internal* practices of these particular liberation discourses often appear insensible to the relationship of freedom and power, judging internal self-critique to be threatening or traitorous; they variously posit freedom as *outside* of power relations.

Enns finds that it is not only in political movements that a disjuncture between the idea of freedom and the promise of lived freedoms occurs. Joining the problems of identity politics inherent in existentialist social movements with Foucault's critical response to the humanist subject of existentialism, she articulates Foucault's blueprint of subjection of self through practices of identification as a way of finding freedom *within* omnipresent webs of power. But her intriguing suggestion is that there is a profound discord in Foucault's work between the powers involved in the discipline of subjects and the powers people struggle against when they live in colonies or under overtly repressive regimes. Foucaultian freedom is incongruent with his own experiences as a direct witness of the desire for freedoms (in Tunisia and Iran).

The final two chapters constitute, in my view, the most successful of the book. The fourth engages a response to Foucault's thinking about power: Derrida's "messianism without messianism" (121) describes a blueprint for freedom based on faith in the *à-venir*, the to-come. Dwelling on the moment of faith in political fights for freedom she considered in earlier chapters, Enns argues that faith in what is to come, faith "irreducible to knowledge," structures the seemingly irrepressible desire for freedom in the face of philosophical objections. (121) But it is also a freedom without innocence. The messiah, in this case freedom from oppression, is always possible, and always entwined in the risks of power. Enns draws on Derrida's articulation of the *interregnum* between will and action to describe a moment of "ungraspable" freedom, which always risks evil, domination, injustice in order to do or establish justice in the world and for others. (119) This moment, everywhere a part of human activity, provides the *à-venir*, the "opening of a gap between an infinite promise and the determined, necessary, but also inadequate forms of what has to be measured against this promise" (122)—the juncture of political and philosophical considerations about freedom, re-envisioned as a space of hope for a better future and faith in its to-come.

Enns successfully attempts to think freedom otherwise, not only philosophically and politically, but both at once—this book is a theoreti-

cal practice. She thus asks in the fifth chapter whether there are any examples of messianism without a messiah in the work or dreams of struggling people. This chapter also contains an interesting history of Latin American liberation philosophy, again showing the breadth of Enns' knowledge. Comparing the Zapatista movement based in Chiapas, Mexico, to the revolutionary movement of liberation philosophy, Enns finds an example of such a working dream. The Zapatista spokesperson, Subcomandante Marcos, calls their revolution a *preguntando caminamos*—"a revolution that walks asking" (134) or perhaps (as I might have it), we walk, together, asking.

Instead of invoking a dominant (and essentialising) discourse about subjectivity and identity, Enns' reading of the Zapatista movement is one of story-telling and continuous re-telling—history is told with the future, justice and "dignity" in mind, giving preference to multiplicity over identity. Importantly, she also takes her example to illustrate the inherent slipperiness of even a Derridean view of freedom, since each time the movement acts/moves to exemplify its dream, it singularises itself, re-inscribing the singularity it rejects—showing itself that its ideas of freedom cannot be so free in action. Through Marcos, Enns paints a picture of the world for Zapatistas as uncompleted and unfinished, their revolution as "ambiguous" and "paradoxical," and of its members asking one another as they walk. (142–43) She describes the movement of multiply entwined instances stepping forward, a movement acknowledged simultaneously as risky and inescapable for those who take freedom seriously.

By speaking of freedom as the desire for an incomplete justice (to-come), we show ourselves the necessity of acknowledging the inherent non-innocence of our intellectual and practical engagements with others in the world. Enns reminds us that the tasks of responding to oppression by "urgent action and slow deliberation," the Derridean "double injunction of lingering and rushing" (127), cannot escape the re-inscription of unfreedom.

Framing freedom in this way, Enns retrieves the language of freedom away from the self-defeating "sovereign, solipsistic subject." (155) The desire for freedom, she argues, must be a desire for that which we know is ungraspable, a desire without innocence of thought or action. But it is, perhaps, in this recognition that we can also help ourselves pre-



vent “cycles of resistance and disillusionment” in liberation movements (155), keeping faith in desires for freedom.

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***Sartre and Adorno: The Dialectics of Subjectivity***

**David Sherman**

**Albany: SUNY Press, 2007; 328 pages.**

David Sherman’s comparative study of the conception of subjectivity in two key thinkers, one from the Frankfurt School and one from French Existentialism, draws its strength from two key facts. First, Sherman examines the little-known fact that Theodor Adorno himself had substantial engagement with the same thinkers that were formative for Jean-Paul Sartre. Second, Sherman focusses on Adorno’s critical work on Sartre’s own writings.

Sherman’s work is important because it is the first English-language book I know of to examine the relationship between Sartre and the Frankfurt School—a relationship that curiously never developed beyond a brief interest in Sartre by Adorno and Herbert Marcuse—despite very similar concerns shared by Adorno, Max Horkheimer and the mature Sartre. Sherman begins by noting that Adorno’s engagement with existentialism and phenomenology, an interest that was “not unsympathetic to the concerns that motivated these philosophical movements,” spanned his entire life. (13) Unlike other writers examining Adorno’s corpus, Sherman focusses (in the second and third chapters of the book) not only on Adorno’s engagement with Heidegger and Husserl, but also on his *Habilitationsschrift* on Kierkegaard. Sherman does this, I believe, in order to set up the second section of the book wherein he discusses Sartre’s relationship to subjectivity and to mediations between subject and object.

In the second section of the book, Sherman examines Sartre’s relationship to subjectivity, and tries to show that Sartre avoids the problem of a static subject-object relationship that sunk the three thinkers discussed in the first section. (69) He does this by engaging texts not from Sartre’s later period, but principally *Being and Nothingness*. Thus, in Chapter 4, Sherman examines early Frankfurt School attacks on Sartre,

from Adorno's essay "Commitment," a response to Sartre's *What is Literature?*, and Adorno's comments on existentialism in *Negative Dialectics*, to Marcuse's critical review of *Being and Nothingness*. Sherman tries to show that Adorno's critique, building on traditional accounts of Sartre's indifference to the problem of the tension between subject and object, is wrong and that Sartre, in fact, does have a theory that "maintains the dialectical tension between them." (78) *Contra* Marcuse, whom Sherman accuses of having appropriated Adorno's critique of his own writing and of using it against Sartre, Sherman argues that Sartre does not confuse metaphysical and actual freedom, and that a detailed reading of *Being and Nothingness* would show Marcuse to be mistaken.

Chapter 4 serves to set up a series of responses to traditional critiques of Sartre, using the Frankfurt School as a foil. In Chapter 5, Sherman examines Sartre's relationship to the same thinkers discussed in the first section and to various existentialist and phenomenological concerns (Being, Knowing and Death). In the final chapter of this section, Sherman defends Sartre's theory of mediating subjectivity and builds a defence of Sartre's philosophy based on his criticism of the Frankfurt School's attacks.

If the goal of the second section of the book was to defend Sartre against the Frankfurt School, the goal of the third section is, first, to show that Adorno was, at least in terms of philosophical interests, closer to Sartre than previously thought and, second, that the post-modern embrace of Adorno is unjustified.

First, in Chapter 7, Sherman argues that the standard reading of Adorno as rejecting the Enlightenment theory of reason is wrong. He agrees that, in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer reject one of the Enlightenment's versions of reason; yet, at the same time, Adorno and Horkheimer embrace the reinvention, and not the abandonment, of the Enlightenment project: "the point is that the Enlightenment must consider itself, if men are not to be wholly betrayed." (183) Adorno's criticism of philosophy does not have as its goal the destruction of knowledge, but the release of its emancipatory potential (here, Sherman is also engaged in an attack on the second-generation Frankfurt School critique of Adorno). Second, Sherman argues that, in spite of the post-modern insistence that Adorno was interested in the death of the subject and rejected philosophical critique of actually existing subjectivities, Adorno, in fact, had a favourable view of efforts to

stress self-responsibility and self-determination. (175) Sherman accomplishes this by examining both Adorno's writings on Kierkegaard and his mature writings on Hegel in *Negative Dialectics*. In particular, he argues that much of Adorno's critique aims at unleashing true human freedom.

Beyond some minor points, for instance, the claim that Adorno actually sided against Horkheimer and rejected the view that social practices could produce valuable philosophical critique (204), a claim which I am inclined to doubt as it contradicts the standard view of the role of immanent critique in Adorno's work, I have three principal objections to Sherman's work. The first pertains to the idea that Sartre actually has an adequate theory of mediation in *Being and Nothingness*. My concern with Sherman's book is how to reconcile the idea of mediation in Sartre's early work with Sartre's professed concern that *Being and Nothingness* needed to be revised in light of his new-found Marxist sympathies. It seems to me that Sartre himself believed, *contra* Sherman, that his theory of mediation was insufficient (and this is why he wrote the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*). A more detailed defence of this assertion is needed.

My second and third concerns involve content. First, Sherman does not treat in any great detail either Sartre's work on Flaubert or, more importantly, Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. There may be programmatic reasons for not doing so; Adorno never (to the best of my knowledge) responded to those works. That said, Sartre never responded to any of Adorno's work, and that does not stop Sherman from examining the relationship between the two thinkers. Whatever the reason, it would be helpful to have a comparison of Sartre's writings from his Marxist period with Adorno's own Marxist-inspired writings. Secondly, it would also seem that an examination of Sartre's and Adorno's politics, especially during the post-war period when both were active, would shine a light on their respective philosophies and presumably on their sympathies. Adorno, as is well known, became substantially less radical and more pro-American (particularly in the 1960s) just as Sartre was becoming politically engaged. In my mind, there are important philosophical reasons, and not just biographical ones, underlying this that deserve to be examined.

There are, on the final tally, then, two very good reasons to recommend this book. First, Sherman does an excellent job using the Frankfurt School as a foil to develop a skilled defence of Sartre's early phi-

losophy. This analysis would be useful not just for researchers interested in the comparisons of German and French philosophy but also for anyone interested in the debates surrounding Sartre's work from the 1930s and '40s. Second, Sherman's unique interpretation of Adorno's existentialist commitments in the final section is an important resource for anyone interested in opposing the post-modern appropriation of Adorno.

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***Onto-Ethologies: The Animal Environments of Uexküll, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze***

**Brett Buchanan**

**Albany: SUNY Press, 2008; 223 pages.**

For readers of twentieth-century philosophy, psychology and biology, Jakob von Uexküll is a name that recurs, albeit sometimes faintly, in the writing of an astonishing array of thinkers. Despite the influence of his ideas on contemporary thought, relatively little scholarship has been devoted to his original writings, much less to their complicated reception. Brett Buchanan's *Onto-Ethologies*, which takes on the crucial task of elucidating the philosophical import of some Uexküllian concepts and tracking their fate in the work of three major later philosophers, is therefore both welcome and long overdue.

Buchanan is keen to place von Uexküll in the context of current philosophical interest in the "question of the animal," and his coining of "onto-ethology" amounts to a claim that a distinctive lineage in contemporary ontology emerges from the investigation of animal worlds that were conducted by turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup>-century biologists. This tradition was initiated in Germany by embryologist Karl Baer, whose pioneering work in developmental biology convinced him that a fundamental characteristic of life was its immanent *Zielstrebigkeit* (directedness). Though Baer's materialism marked his views as a significant departure from the vitalism of earlier biologists, his emphasis on orderly epigenetic unfolding put him at odds with the radically ateleological population biology of Darwin. The career of von Uexküll, who studied in the biology department built by Baer (University of Dorpat), can be seen as an attempt to supply a vaguely Kantian bio-philosophical groundwork for the Baerian

critique of mechanism. The insistence on biology's fundamental difference from the mechanical sciences of chemistry and physics is the thread that connects his four most important works: *Umwelt und Innenwelt der Tiere* (*Environment and Inner World of Animals*, 1909/1921), *Theoretische Biologie* (*Theoretical Biology*, 1920), *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen* (*A Stroll Through the Worlds of Animals and Men*, 1934), and *Bedeutungslehre* (*The Theory of Meaning*, 1940.)

Von Uexküll's first critical concept is *Planmäßigkeit* (conformity to plan), the notion that, in Buchanan's words, "nature accords with an overarching plan that has set parameters in which life-forms can interact (thus not entirely random) [and has] inclusive agents and forces other than the parental genes as developmentally constitutive for the organism (thus not exclusively materialistic or organic)." (19) This rule is "supra-mechanical," a designation that leads von Uexküll to flirt with (but never avow) a theistic ontology and also provides the basis for a supra-organismal, supra-specific biology (i.e., modern ecology). More interesting are von Uexküll's ideas about the conformity of specific organisms to plans that are wholly subjective and unique. For von Uexküll, following Kant, the singular objective reality of an organism's world (*Umgebung*) is unknowable, and it is, therefore, more profitable to speak in the plural of such worlds as *Umwelten* (environments) that do not pre-exist biological subjects but come into being simultaneously with them. *Umwelt* will prove to be the richest of von Uexküllian ideas for later philosophers, and Buchanan does a good job surveying the biologist's variously interpretable statements about it. When explained through the famous example of the tick, whose *Umwelt* in von Uexküll's telling is utterly defined by a very few stimuli (heat, butyric acid, smoothness), the concept can seem quite closed and mechanistic. The memorable image of the *Umwelt* as a "soap-bubble" blown around the biological subject likewise contributes to a sense of ontological isolation. Buchanan, however, is quick (and right) to point out that *Umwelt* is implicitly intersubjective.

The bulk of the book consists of four chapters on the afterlife of von Uexküll's concept of *Umwelt*, two on Heidegger and one each on Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze. These chapters meticulously survey the relevant portions of each philosopher, and accordingly contain much that will be well known to the average academic reader. The care with which the environmental ideas are unpacked, however, may make these sec-

tions very useful as teaching texts in advanced courses in the philosophy of science and science studies. Heidegger seized on von Uexküll's research as early as the composition of *Being and Time* and as late as his 1967 lecture on Heraclitus, but his most extensive engagement is recorded in the 1929–30 lecture series (*The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*). Approving von Uexküll's "insight into the relational structure between the animal and its environment," Heidegger felt compelled to distinguish the manner in which animals and humans (*Dasein*) relate to their worlds. (52) The result is his famous explication of the astructure as the defining characteristic of *Dasein*. Only humans can apprehend an object in their environment *as such an object*; animals, however, only relate to objects as what Heidegger calls "disinhibitors," or triggers for an unreflective response. This is the meaning of Heidegger's pronouncement that the stone is *weltlos* (worldless), the animal *weltarm* (poor in world), and the human *weltbildend* (world-forming).

Heidegger's attempt to maintain the abyssal separation of human and animal leads to further fine distinctions, for example, between the *Benommenheit* (captivation) and *Genommenheit* (absorption) of the animal whose actions are mere behaviour (*Benehmen*), on the one hand, and, on the other, the *Getriebenheit* (restlessness) that characterises *Dasein's* comportment (*Verhalten*) toward its world. Buchanan does a great service in contextualising these writings as reactions to the claims of contemporary biologists, pointing out some of their lingering contradictions in the process. Of particular interest is Buchanan's suggestion that Heidegger's recognition of the embodied animal's diachronic dimension (not captured by the atemporal concept "organism") led him to an impasse that later thinkers would address.

The chapters on Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze are less ambitious, confining themselves to explications of their Uexküllian inheritances. Merleau-Ponty is much less concerned with distinguishing human from animal being; his major project is to characterise life in general without relying on a reductive mechanism or an immaterial vitalism. His first significant attempt in this vein occurs in *The Structure of Behavior*, where the key term "behavior" (*comportement*) comes to "demonstrate a relational enclosure insofar as the organism is structurally united with its world." (120) Merleau-Ponty had evidently not read any of von Uexküll's works at this early date in his career, but Buchanan argues persuasively that his formulations came indirectly through his readings of

Buytendijk and Heidegger. In his late works, the “Nature” lectures of the late 1950s and the unfinished *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty explicitly engages with von Uexküll, and Buchanan makes the case that two ideas in particular, namely, the *Umwelt* and the living being as a “melody that sings itself,” significantly influenced his theory of the body, of the flesh, of chiasmus and of interanimality. Deleuze, on his part, pairs von Uexküll’s ethology with Spinoza’s to help define his key term *affect*, which goes beyond even Merleau-Ponty’s attempt to obviate the distinction between matter and form by emphasising the passage from one bodily state to another. In Deleuze’s hands, the organism that was the focal point of traditional ethology gives way to a heterogeneous situation in which any temporary accumulation of relations can be understood as a “body” with a particular capacity to be affected. This shattering of the “soap bubble” model of the *Umwelt* gives rise to a complex model of becoming that interestingly reverts to the musical idiom of von Uexküll (rhythms, melodies, refrains).

Given the incipient state of the scholarly conversation on von Uexküll, it is hard to fault Buchanan for not providing comprehensive coverage of his subject. Still, the structure of *Onto-Ethologies* tends to focus attention on the more famous philosophers who made use of von Uexküll’s ideas than the ideas themselves, flattening somewhat the significance of the latter. Buchanan misses the opportunity to delineate and reflect on the non-Darwinian bio-philosophical tradition so formative of figures like Callois and Lacan. A more significant problem is the brief treatment of von Uexküll as a founder of the field of bio-semiotics, the work for which he has received the most recent scholarly attention from the likes of Thomas Sebeok, Jesper Hoffmeyer and Kalevi Kull. Von Uexküll worked diligently to clarify the basic mechanisms of feedback that would eventually become the breakthrough concept in cybernetics and informatics. His diagram of the *Funktionskreis* (Functional Circle)—originating in *Theoretische Biologie* but revised repeatedly in later texts—relates the “sense world” (*Merkwelt*) in which a living organism receives signs to the “effect world” (*Wirkwelt*) in which it produces them. This dramatic reframing of life as semiosis (and biology as a kind of semiotics) has enormous consequences for bio-philosophy that might fruitfully have been explored. And although he is far from comprehensive on the subject, von Uexküll offers an internally consistent and historically influential vision of “bare life” (to name a common interest of

Agamben and Derrida) as a process of signification. At a moment when biology appears to have replaced language as the main topic of Continental philosophy, it would be well worthwhile to begin the process of exploring the original conjunction of these subjects. The excellent *Onto-Ethologies* should spur further investigations of the obscure Estonian biologist whose idiosyncratic ideas about the nature of life have proven more durable than those of his famous contemporaries.

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***Liberation as Affirmation: The Religiosity of Zhuangzi and Nietzsche*  
Ge Ling Shang  
Albany: SUNY Press, 2007; 198 pages.**

Ge Ling Shang's comparative study of Zhuangzi and Nietzsche provides a unique perspective on the deep affinities shared by two philosophers separated by an immense span of time and space. Shang moves beyond a superficial treatment of the similarities inherent in their deconstructions of metaphysics, language and morality to identify a common motivation behind their critical projects, namely, a deep concern with human liberation through the affirmation of life. Their shared religiosity, defined broadly as a profound appreciation for the sacred or sublime, is presented as the guiding thread orienting their deconstruction toward an ultimate purpose, preventing destruction from becoming nihilism. The book is straightforwardly organised in five chapters. After a brief introduction to the overall project, Shang devotes a chapter each to the examination of Zhuangzi and Nietzsche before moving on to a comparative study in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 explores the impact of their life-affirming philosophical strategy on post-modern philosophy and contemporary Chinese thought, and it elaborates the value of the concept of philosophical religiosity as a means of achieving a "fusion of horizons" between philosophy and religion. (161)

The stage is set with an analysis of the concept of Dao or the Way. In traditional Chinese thought, Dao is understood as the path or key to right living in harmony with nature, so that a thinker's conception of Dao constitutes the central premise or goal ordering a system of be-



liefs and practices. Dao quickly took on a metaphysical significance as the origin, principle or ultimate reality behind the apparent world of flux and the social disorder that characterised the intellectual golden age of pre-Qin China (600–221 BCE). Shang lays out his interpretation of Zhuangzi's philosophy against the background of a traditional Chinese reading that largely overlooks or misunderstands the radical divergence of Zhuangzi's concept of Dao from mainstream Chinese philosophy. Zhuangzi's thoroughgoing rejection of a metaphysical construction of Dao corresponds to an emancipatory project that sees fixation on any particular idea of Dao as an artificial constraint on human spontaneity, preventing us from living in harmony with our own true nature.

Through a close textual analysis, Shang argues that Zhuangzi's Dao, far from being a mere appropriation of Laozi's concept of Dao as the primordial Non-being that gives rise to the world of being, in fact represents a rejection of this metaphysical dualism and a collapsing of the dichotomies created by limited human perspectives to stabilise and navigate the constantly changing world we inhabit. Dao is not a transcendent reality opposed to the world of things; rather, Dao is simply the spontaneous becoming and transforming of things themselves, following their own nature (*ziran*) all by themselves. It is no-thing or no-nothing (*wuwu*) in the sense that there is nothing at all guiding or shaping reality behind the apparent world we experience, no secret nature that we must discover or to which we ought to conform. This in turn means that to live in accordance with the Dao is to act spontaneously, to avoid becoming constrained by the limited perspectives established by the pursuit of knowledge, the fixity of words and the conventions of morality. Thus, Shang argues, "Zhuangzi's deconstruction of metaphysics is actually motivated by his religiosity, his ultimate concern of freeing one's mind, rather than his philosophical interest." (29)

On Shang's interpretation, one can easily see the parallel between Zhuangzi's conception of Dao as identical with the totality of nature and Nietzsche's rejection of the "true world" posited by Western metaphysics and opposed to the actual world in which we live. Leaving Zhuangzi aside, Shang presents a thematic exposition centred on what he sees as Nietzsche's most fundamental project, his "revaluation of all values," employing the interpretive horizon of religiosity in order to bring out the spiritual tone of Nietzsche's work without embroiling it in contradictions. Returning often to the guiding thread of religiosity, Shang

contextualises Nietzsche's attacks on knowledge, language and morality and shows how they result not in nihilism but in the affirmation of the world of limited perspectives and of continuous change that we live in—the world that is denied when a metaphysical interpretation of the world sets up a “true world” opposed to the “apparent” one. This affirmation is crystallised for Shang in the story of eternal recurrence: “It is in this ‘great cultivating idea’...that I have found Nietzsche's religious or spiritual perspective, which has been hidden or invisible from most readers. The very meaning of the idea of eternal recurrence is to live and to affirm, to say Yes to life religiously and fervently.... What this idea of eternal recurrence intended to elicit is much more like a ‘religious’ commitment, an ultimate enlightenment and spiritual liberation, than merely a philosophical interrogation of *what* life *is* or is supposed to be.” (100–01)

Though he highlights the parallels between the two thinkers, Shang carefully preserves their differences both in absolute terms and against the background of their differing cultures. In Chapter 4, perhaps the most fascinating chapter in the book, Shang puts Nietzsche and Zhuangzi in dialogue, playing their alternate formulations and prescriptions off one another. The result is a seemingly effortless meditation on two possible responses to the same spiritual impulse in which the conceptual advantages of each approach can be brought to bear on the other. Shang's treatment of Chinese concepts and words deserves special recognition. Patiently teasing out the historical accretion of meanings associated with Chinese terms and explicating the particular philosophical context in which they are found, Shang is able to exhibit shades of meaning that allow us to grasp the subtle contrasts in Zhuangzi that result in radical divergence from the mainstream Daoist view. He then blends English grammatical features with clarified and multifaceted Chinese words in an intuitive fashion, bringing us closer to Chinese ways of thinking. Especially valuable for the Western reader is the way in which foreign concepts like Dao or *ziran* are made philosophically available through their application to a familiar context in Nietzsche.

*Liberation as Affirmation* combines clear exposition and precise textual analysis with a striking internal coherence based on the central theme of religiosity. Building on his comprehensive account of Nietzsche's and Zhuangzi's similar projects of life affirmation, the book goes on to offer an application of their insights to contemporary prob-

lems. In this suggestive final chapter, the motivation to human liberation is presented as a counterweight to the nihilistic tendencies of Derridean post-modern philosophy. Shang points out that by attending to the unconventional religiosity at work in Nietzsche and Zhuangzi, we gain access to the unique concept of the sacredness of life that lends passion to existence and aims at a liberation beyond what Derridean deconstruction can provide: “Deconstruction is an academic enterprise, not a philosophy of life, not a philosophy that has implications for human living.” (146) The book also opens up promising new avenues for Chinese thought. Philosophical religiosity, understood as a critical method in Nietzsche and Zhuangzi, can help articulate the philosophical and religious elements that are tied up together in the Chinese intellectual context, disentangling the conventional idea of Dao from its metaphysical underpinnings. Shang’s reappraisal of Zhuangzi’s spiritual orientation as well as his balanced account of Nietzsche’s anti-metaphysical project, often overlooked by Chinese scholarship (152–53), offers a range of new options to an ancient culture struggling to revise its identity while reconnecting with its past.

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