

REVIEWS



AVANT-TARD

Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby, Oxford, Polity Press, 1991. viii + 216pp., £35 hb, 0 7456 0772 1

Norbert Elias, *Time: An Essay*, translated in part from the German by Edmund Jephcott, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1992. 216pp., £35 hb, 0 631 15798 0

Is it ever too late to change your mind? One cannot but feel a certain grim satisfaction at the sight of Lyotard's back-peddling on the question of the postmodern. Having ended the 1970s with his famous diagnosis of the condition, Lyotard spent most of the 1980s explaining that what he really believed in was something rather more subtle: well, the modern, actually. Never mind those claims about the condition having been around 'since the end of the nineteenth century' (the first page of the introduction to *The Postmodern Condition*), or anyway, 'since at least the 1950s' (the first page of the main text). Once one thinks about it a bit, 'the pointlessness of any periodisation of cultural history in terms of 'pre-' and 'post-' (the book under review, from 1986) pretty much hits you in the face. After all, 'it leaves unquestioned the position of the "now", of the present from which one is supposed to be able to achieve a legitimate perspective on a chronological succession.' Quite. But don't expect an apology. It isn't his fault that everyone read the wrong book.

The Inhuman is a collection of sixteen talks from the 1980s, half of which have already appeared in translation, bound together by an introduction that fails to make up in philosophical modesty what it seems to have lost in time. Here and there, Lyotard's discomfort about the work for which he is fated to be known is clear. But mostly, he just tries to ignore it. This is a pity, since much of what he has to say bears on precisely that instability in the term 'postmodern' of which he has been the all-too-willing victim. (The claim in the blurb that 'this important new study' develops Lyotard's analysis of 'the phenomenon of postmodernity' – just the one? – is simply untrue.) 'Reflections on Time' is a fair enough sub-title at one level (time is fashionable at the moment), but the book's real topic is the philosophical defence of modernism, with the 'postmodern' as a moment within it, with which Lyotard has become associated since the debacle of the 'condition'.

Two things about this work are distinctive: the attempt to tie the philosophical structure of aesthetic modernism to the Kantian sublime (that is, to a certain paradoxical presentation of Ideas), and a willingness to apply these categories to the interpretation of contemporary painting. (Several of the pieces here first appeared in art journals or as catalogue essays – most notably, two essays on the American painter Barnett Newman.) The account of modernism itself is not new, since it follows in broad outline a position elaborated in far greater detail over many years by

Adorno. Where Lyotard differs from Adorno, however, is in rigidly distinguishing what he calls 'artistic work' from other 'cultural activities' in a quasi-neo-Kantian manner, as a distinction of 'orders of activity'.

The distinction maps onto Adorno's much disputed and often misunderstood opposition of 'autonomous' to 'dependent' art, but the way in which it is made is crucially different. For whereas Adorno's distinction is internal to the dialectics of a single theoretical account of the logic of cultural production that is articulated at a variety of levels (from the socio-historical back in one direction towards the ontological, and forward to the analysis of individual works), Lyotard provides no view of the relations between the two spheres that is more than merely empirical. (In practice, they are said to 'overlap'.) 'Art' is thus protected, transcendently, from consideration of the relations through which it acquires its existence as a social form. In this respect, Lyotard's understanding of modernism, while similar to Adorno's, is actually far more traditional. Not so much a post-modernist about art, one might say, as a classicist about modernism.

There are definite implications here for our understanding of *The Inhuman* itself as a cultural artifact. The affinity between philosophy and modern art is stressed throughout (the former asks 'What is thinking?', the latter, 'What is painting?' – essentially the same kind of question) in the context of an opposition of 'art' to 'culture' which opposes the high-mindedness of purely immanent inquiry to the response to social demand (virtual or real). But this is a book of 'commissioned lectures'. Is it really 'philosophy' at all, by its own petrified criterion? Thus is its author's integrity falsely preserved.

The point might seem a trivial one, but it bears on deeper issues than the publishers' liabilities under the Trades' Descriptions Act. One is the oscillation between pseudo-democratic gesture and authoritarian pronouncement in Lyotard's prose. Another is the tension (or rather, the lack of it) between writing and thought in the material itself. For what is at one level essentially a philosophy of writing, writing itself gets pretty short shrift here. What Lyotard has to say directly about time is restricted to one essay about the 'temporal condition of modernity' ('Time Today'). But, despite the occasional occurrence there of the term 'postmodern', there is no discussion of the temporal logic of the 'post'. The human/inhuman theme of the title is a thin skin laid over the whole thing in the introduction, in the manner of a certain kind of high-tech architecture popular in the early 1980s. Except that in this case, the skin, rather than reflecting back the image of the viewer, is disarmingly transparent.

If Lyotard's interest in time is topical, Elias shuns topicality in the interests of a developmental sociology directed towards those 'layers of the communal life that are relatively untouched by issues of the day': specifically, the structure of time as a 'symbol

of a socially learned synthesis'. In a way familiar from other recent literature on the subject (most notably Ricoeur's monumental *Time and Narrative*, but also the excellent *Chronotypes: The Construction of Time*, edited by J. Bender and D. E. Wellbery), *Time: An Essay* starts out from the shared inadequacy of the two main philosophical traditions on time: the 'objective' or cosmological tradition stemming from Aristotle and the 'subjective' or phenomenological one with its roots in Augustine. However, rather than seeking either a directly philosophical, or some kind of historiographical, mediation of the antinomy, Elias comes to bury philosophy, not to praise it, let alone to practise it.

Elias belongs to the tradition which offers sociological 'answers' to questions which are taken to have been previously mistakenly understood to be 'philosophical'. Such bracing positivism is occasionally refreshing, but its difficulties are far too familiar for it to convince for long. Although first published in German as recently as 1987 (when its author was 90 years old), *Time: An Essay* has all the marks of the sociological chauvinism of the 1950s. Not only does it suppose that the insight that 'timing' is a means of human orientation and social regulation abolishes all philosophical perplexities about the concept; it also presumes that historians 'fail to take account of directional long-term social

processes'. (Time is a 'mystery', we are told at one point, because sociologists have concerned themselves with it so little.) This certainly has the virtue of cutting down on the footnotes, but it can hardly be recommended as a description of the historiographical literature of the last thirty years, especially in France.

All of which is a great pity, because there is much of interest in this book. It is just that what it provides is sociological material necessary to any adequate thinking through of the issues at stake, rather than the pat solution to the philosophical problem of time which its author supposes. Indeed, at its most interesting, this material generates problems, rather than cutting down on them. Thus, while on the one hand, the argument that the emergence of 'long-lasting and relatively stable state-units' was a condition of 'the experience of time as a uni-directional flow' hardly rids us of the question as to whether we should claim that there *is* such a flow, however experienced; the location of different conceptions of time in different social needs raises a whole series of questions about the social conflicts that might underlie current debates about historical periodisation. Properly historicised, the developmental perspective may thus turn out to be more timely than Elias would have us believe.

Peter Osborne

WHOSE LIBERALISM? WHICH COMMUNITY?

Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1992. 302pp., £40.00 hb, £12.95 pb, 0 631 18377 9 hb, 0 631 18378 7 pb

Richard Bellamy, *Liberalism and Modern Society: an Historical Argument*, Oxford, Polity Press, 1992. 310pp., £45 hb, £12.95 pb, 0 745 60533 8 hb, 0 745 61070 6 pb

These books form an interesting and complementary pair, not least because the authors of each would probably repudiate the approach of the other. Mulhall and Swift offer an exegetical study of the debate between Rawlsian liberalism and communitarianism. Rawls's 'original position', in both senses of the phrase, is sketched, critical summaries are offered of Sandel, MacIntyre, Taylor and Walzer, before the new position of Rawls is discussed. In a final section Rorty's 'liberalism without foundations' is dismissed, and Raz's 'perfectionist liberalism' offered as the account with most to offer.

The book is that favourite of students, an accessible, condensed review of arguments originally developed at greater length (and more abstrusely) in primary texts. It exemplifies the virtues of anglophone philosophical criticism being clearly written, rigorously argued, and precise in its separation of issues. A good example of this last is the use to which a distinction between the community as the *source* of conceptions of self and the good, and the community as contributing to the *content* of the good is put. The conflation of these two has bedevilled most previous discussions of communitarianism.

Also welcome is the section on 'late' Rawls. Mulhall and Swift give a plausible overall coherence to a position which has been developed over time and in various articles – a position, moreover, which some critics pejoratively characterise as a retreat from the carefully constructed systematic vision of *A Theory of Justice*. In particular they do much to challenge the idea that Rawls has simply moved from a principled moral defence of

liberalism to an argument from political pragmatism to the virtue of stability.

The account of early Rawls suffers by comparison. It is, by their own admission, basic and serves only as an introduction to the concerns of the communitarians. But it is hard as a result to get a feel of the liberal convictions which underpin the work, and to understand why it so dramatically transformed English-speaking political philosophy.

There is perhaps an unavoidable problem in speaking about 'communitarianism'. The term is a somewhat expedient label applied retrospectively to a disparate group of critics of liberalism. There is thus something rather strained and artificial about devising a check list of communitarian criticisms and seeing how each critic fares against the list, when the list is itself an attempt to give some semblance of a shared outlook to widely different authors.

I am not sure that Rorty really merits inclusion, and he may be there for the sake of completeness. He is certainly brusquely dismissed. On the other side it is strange not to see Ronald Dworkin treated at any length. John Rawls is not the only contemporary philosophical liberal, even if he is the most notable. Dworkin has something substantial to say about all the items on the liberal 'agenda' which the communitarians challenge.

Finally, Mulhall and Swift are too quick to dismiss the pertinence to their study of an historical account of the liberal tradition. They simply view earlier liberals as progenitors of the present philosophical liberals and assume that the latter may be assessed in their own terms. Bellamy's claim is that putting Rawls and Dworkin in their historical place shows how far out of time they really are. For Bellamy liberalism started life as an ethical doctrine, a claim about the priority of individual liberty, buttressed by a conviction that a developed liberal society could harmonise the lives of its individually free citizens. Late nineteenth-century developments exposed the inadequacy of this ethical liberalism which was supplanted by an economic liberal-

ism. Bellamy traces the evolution of liberalism within several countries – Britain, which supplies in the work of Mill and Green the paradigmatic statement of ethical liberalism, France, Italy and Germany. The writings of Durkheim, Croce and Pareto, and Weber, respectively, loom large in each of these last three.

The study is wide ranging, extremely well-informed, and clearly written. It combines acute philosophical criticism with social history, and always clearly sets out the distance of its own conclusions from existing interpretations. It is refreshing to see the full lineaments of British ethical liberalism drawn with special reference to a guiding ideal of 'character'. Mill on this account is much more than a progenitor of Rawlsian liberalism.

A final chapter on the new philosophical liberalism and its communitarian critics accuses the former of a hopelessly misguided attempt to restate ethical liberalism in an evidently inapposite historical context. The conclusion of the book urges the appropriateness to our time of a democratic or political liberalism which renounces the ambition of securing a moral consensus, and limits itself to devising feasible political procedures which can manage the realities of contemporary pluralism.

The broad scope of Bellamy's approach and the sustained attention to social and political context are both to be commended. The book is certainly a useful corrective to the deracinated criticism of Mulhall and Swift. Nevertheless, I feel the last chapters move too fast. It is curious that no real attempt is made

to situate the work of Rawls. The debate between his liberalism and communitarianism is, in many ways, a very American one, essentially about the ambiguous legacy of the American Constitution, and provoked by the crisis of constitutional liberalism in the 1960s and its aftermath.

Bellamy also covers a lot of ground in these final pages and I am not sure he can always do justice to the writers he treats. A small, but perhaps telling point: he cites Susan Moller Okin as the source of the feminist critique of Rawls that justice should not be prioritised over the ethics of care (p. 239, n. 71). But Okin is actually sceptical about the validity and value of this sort of criticism, and the article of hers which he cites argues in fact for an extension of Rawlsian principles of justice to include women and the family – something she thinks Rawls neglects to do.

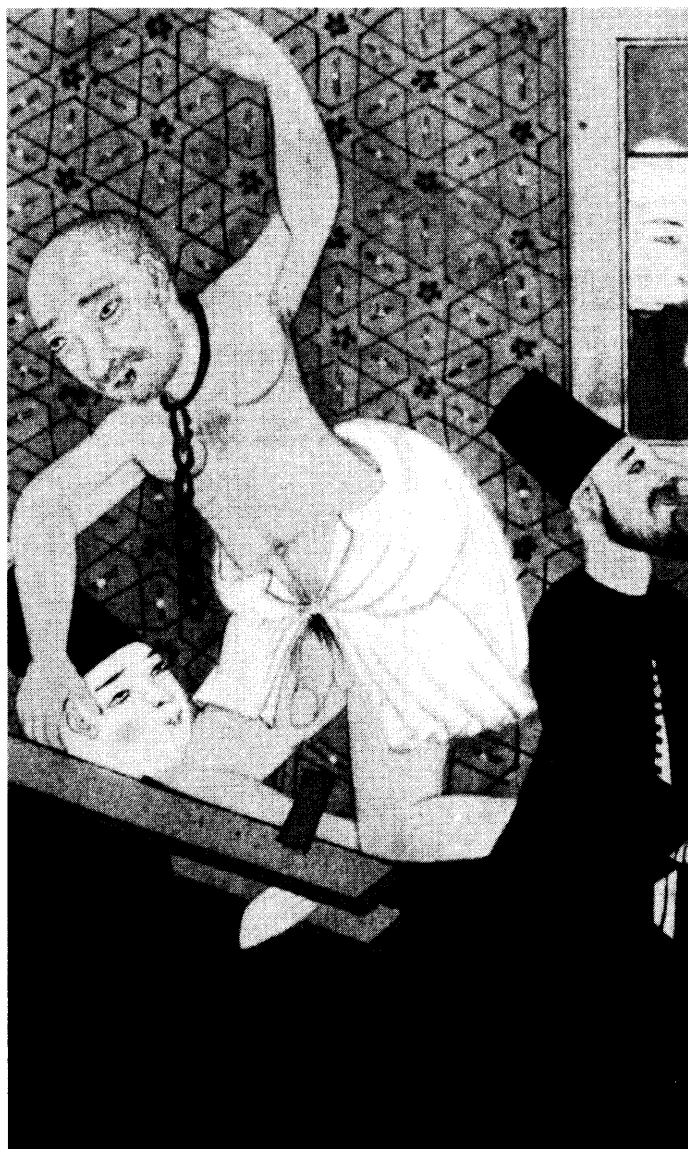
Bellamy's advocacy of a democratic liberalism is also regrettably brief. In essence he sees politics as best designed 'to arrange compromises amongst a plurality of often conflicting views, rather than to achieve a rational consensus upon a non-existent common good'. But Bellamy seems to view the rules and laws which determine the appropriate arrangement of compromises as those which fit the community in which we happen to find ourselves. They are basically *ad hoc*, meeting the needs of the here and now. Another community, another set of institutions and procedures.

The warrant for this approach is the fact of moral plurality, the lack of an agreed comprehensive conception of the good. My problems with this are fourfold. First, Rawls himself concedes the existence of moral plurality. Nevertheless he thinks that there is an agreed, non-comprehensive conception of the political good which has to do with the public justifiability of fair terms of social cooperation. I am not sure why Bellamy's pluralism has, as it were, to go all the way down. Second, the status of the 'fact' of plurality is equivocal. Bellamy seems to regard it simply as a feature of modern society. But how this relates to his account of historical development, with its emphasis upon industrialisation and the emergence of mass society, is unclear. Rawls too, as Mulhall and Swift observe, thinks moral plurality is a fact about post-Reformation Western history. Indeed it is with him an article of faith. Yet, as they add, he has nothing to say about what should be the case if there was no plurality.

Third, plurality does not imply scepticism, as Rawls recognises. Yet Bellamy appears to think that a philosophical liberal's appeal to the value of autonomy is undercut by the existence of groups within society who do not share this estimation. There is merit, I think, in Raz's decision to bite the bullet: if autonomy is valuable, then so much the worse for those groups within society who do not value it. Yet autonomy need not be the paramount value. Bellamy, and Mulhall and Swift, agree that, at the end of the day, the dispute with philosophical liberalism is about the value of autonomy in human life. We can then keep open the debate about what substantive ideals should found the polity. Political philosophy need not resign itself to an accommodation with how things happen to be.

But this means, fourth, that there is a need for political philosophy to display the ways in which the ideal becomes actual. As Mulhall and Swift show, underpinning MacIntyre's account of morality is a sense of how human nature (and society) could be if it realised its true end. And, as Bellamy shows, the British liberals were concerned with how to bring about and sustain a society which both reflected and nurtured the free individuality they so esteemed. These kinds of insight do not seem to be contradicted by the failures of any particular political philosophy. Politics need not then be disenchanted even if the world is. It can still offer a feasible vision of what might be, and not just a muted celebration of what is.

David Archard



BEYOND DECONSTRUCTION?

Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992. xii + 253pp., £40 hb, £13.95 pb, 0 631 17785 X hb, 0 631 17786 8 pb

The hostility directed against deconstruction is usually in the name of ethical and political values which are thought to be threatened by the spread of nihilism (or the irrational tradition of the Third Reich as Manfred Frank would put it), and yet here we find a book in which the words 'ethics' and 'deconstruction' sit happily together. It is to Simon Critchley's credit that he makes this strange alliance wholly convincing.

However, I am sure that many people interested in Derrida's work will ask what kind of ethics could possibly be allied with deconstruction, especially when we have statements on Derrida's part of his deep mistrust of ethics. Simon Critchley's answer to these sceptics lies in the ethics of the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. One of the great assets of this book, although it is not at all its main purpose, is that it gives to British readers for the first time an excellent introduction to this important thinker. No one should underestimate Simon Critchley's achievement in this respect, since Levinas's prose is notoriously obscure.

For many of those who are interested in the question of ethics, the ethics of Levinas can appear very strange. In a certain sense this is because his work is not about ethics at all, but is a *meta-ethics*. Levinas is not concerned with questions of morality, of wrong or right actions, but with the a priori condition of any ethics at all. (I am self-consciously using Kantian terminology here, because I think there is an interesting meeting point between Kant and Levinas, especially in the notion of respect for the moral law, where the moral law is somehow substantiated in another human being.)

Levinas finds this a priori condition in the relation between one person and another. He wants to claim that I am already, even before I make any ethical decision, obligated to that other person, and it is this obligation which is the essential moment of any ethics, from which all systems of justice originate.

All this is explained much better in Simon Critchley's book than it can be here, but I think that the important connection between Derrida and Levinas for him is this idea of the a priori obligation, because it describes an ethics which does not begin with any initiative of the subject, with its 'beautiful soul' or good conscience, but in its radical passivity to an unassumable demand. Critchley's thesis, which is backed up by a meticulous examination of Derrida's texts, is that deconstruction is opened up by the very same demand. In other words, if deconstruction is an ethics this is not because it preaches a new morality, which would obviously be absurd, but because it expresses the same structure of passivity that is visible in Levinas's meta-ethics. Deconstruction does not begin with a decision, but with an 'unconditional imperative' to affirm that which exceeds philosophy, by allowing that which is 'other' than philosophy to appear for the first time.

This similarity between the projects of Derrida and Levinas does not mean, however, that they are identical. Obviously Levinas is primarily concerned with the problem of human relations, whereas Derrida, thanks to the influence of Heidegger, is concerned with the history of metaphysics. Nonetheless, it is significant that in the trajectory of these two different thinkers, there is a convergence, which leads Critchley to assert not only that deconstruction is ethical, but that ethics itself can express itself only within deconstructive strategies. Thus, Levinas, from *Totality and Infinity* to *Otherwise than Being*, increasingly reads like Derrida, and Derrida in his latest work, such as the preface of

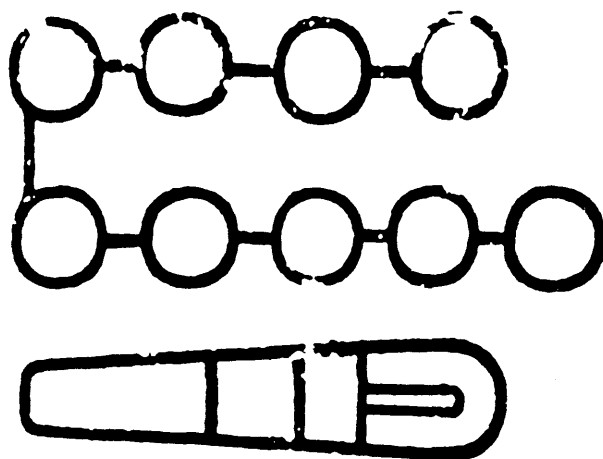
Du droit à la philosophie, reads increasingly like Levinas. Simon Critchley gives weight to this thesis by a careful examination of Derrida's recent essay on Levinas, 'In this very Moment in this Work here I am', and Levinas's own reply to Derrida's earlier work, 'Wholly Otherwise'. Both of these are fine examples of the rewards of patient commentary.

However, having proved this 'emerging homology' between Levinas and Derrida, what finally interests Critchley is the difference that still remains between them, which allows him, he believes, to break with deconstruction itself. This last chapter is the most interesting part of the book, but it also throws up the most questions, and this might be because it is only a preparatory elaboration of the problem of how a discourse that problematises transgression can itself be transgressed.

Critchley's criticism of Derrida is that because deconstruction stresses undecidability (indeed, the ethics of deconstruction is this undecidability), it can never offer a politics, since any politics rests on the possibility of making correct judgements. Its ethics, in other words, is always stranded in a formal meta-ethics, and cannot engage in real practical and political problems. Thus, Derrida's work is involved in the long philosophical tradition that begins with Plato, of the refusal of *doxa*.

In contrast, Levinas's work, Simon Critchley argues, does engage with the transition from a formal ethics to a practical ethics (or from ethics to justice, to use Levinas's vocabulary). What then is the politics that one can deduce from his work? The answer, Critchley claims, is democracy. However, I must admit that I find his description of democracy self-contradictory. He accuses Derrida, and his disciples Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, of an apolitical formalism, but his own account of democracy is just as formal. Surely if philosophy is to return to a politics of democracy, a historical analysis of democracy itself is required? For example, does it not trouble Critchley that the democracy in which we live today is linked to the domination of capital? Or maybe his concept of democracy is a Kantian Idea, an ideal towards which we aim, but which is rigorously impossible? If that is the case, then Critchley is saying no more than Glaucon and Socrates in the *Republic*, when they agree that the ideal city exists only in ideas and can be found nowhere on earth. In other words, the impasse that Critchley finds in Derrida's work, that it cannot produce a real politics, applies to philosophy in general. And maybe this impasse is not such a bad thing. Perhaps it is the real ethics of philosophy? Is there anything more dangerous than a philosophy which believes it can make our political decisions for us?

William Large



EASY FREEDOM

Stephen Houlgate, *Freedom, Truth and History: An Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy*, London and New York, Routledge, 1991. xviii + 253pp., £35 hb, £10.99 pb, 0 415 06658 1 hb, 0 415 01332 1 pb

In this book, Houlgate offers a comprehensive and accomplished reading of Hegel's philosophy while developing further the anti-formalist and Christian themes which characterised his *Hegel*, *Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics*. Here, he is less concerned with what Hegel was writing against and more with what he was standing for. Freedom and truth are the key issues of his interpretation. Indeed, the whole book is an attempt to demonstrate the 'profound commitment to freedom, openness and truth' which guides Hegel's philosophy.

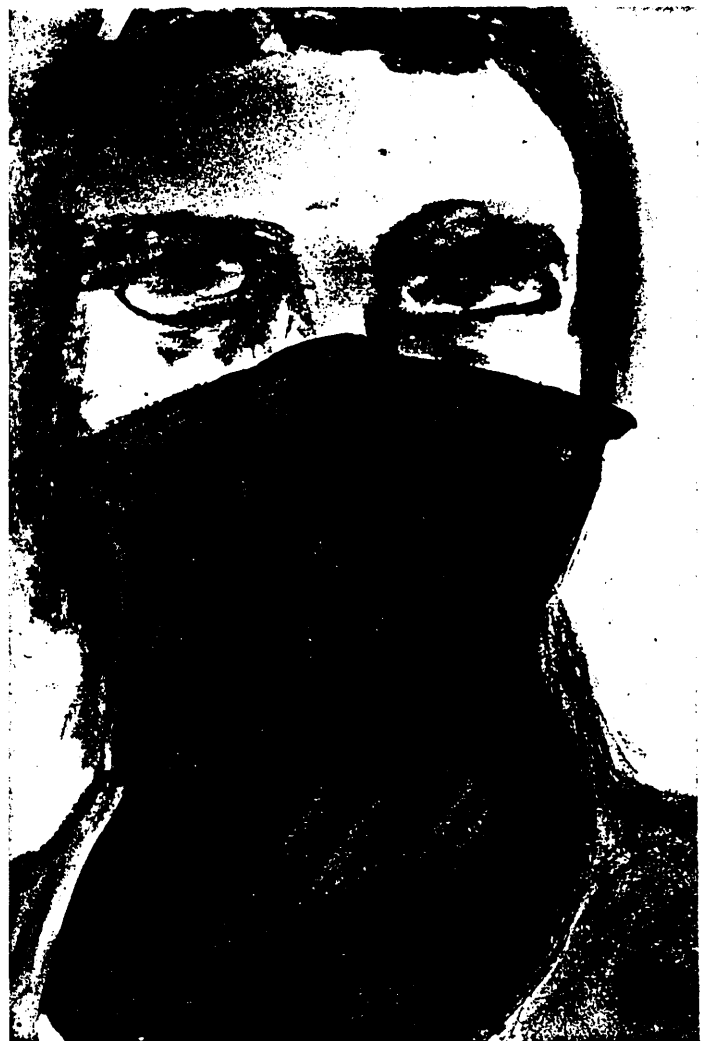
Houlgate builds his argument progressively and with admirable clarity, making frequent and insightful use of modern commentaries. He takes as his starting point the claim that there is no such thing as direct and unmediated experience. This allows him to appeal to a wider philosophical consensus before introducing the specifically Hegelian version of the claim, namely that the categories which mediate experience are themselves subject to historical change. Different societies at different times construe their objects, their aims and finally themselves differently. This, again, is a fairly uncontroversial point often used to introduce a relativist or worldview type of perspective. For Hegel, though, this variety and difference reveals a truth which holds for every society, and consists in the desire and capacity for self-determination. From this, he concludes that the essence of human activity, as displayed in institutions, art, and religious practices, is self-determination. In other words, there is truth in history not despite historical change but because of it. Similarly freedom is not incompatible with the need-oriented character of most human activity. Rather, it is achieved through the immediate intentions which spur people to action. Does that mean that we can go on attending to our selfish needs because freedom will materialise anyway?

Houlgate, following Hegel, stresses that the free essence of human activity is only realised in the process of our becoming conscious of it. This enables Hegel to judge progress in history according to how closely the institutions of a given society reflect its consciousness of its freedom. The problem now is to discover what is involved in realisation, because otherwise it can either justify quietistic interpretations or become a cypher empty of any normative content. Part of the clue lies in the *Logic*. Hegel criticises logical categories, the fixed determinations of the understanding, for not taking account of the developmental character of their objects. They are equally applicable to all sorts of objects and so their truth and objectivity depends on such extra-logical referents. The same problematic applies to the concept of freedom. If freedom is understood merely as absence of constraint, then we cannot justify in terms of freedom the choice of any particular course of action over others. A contentless freedom, for Hegel, is no freedom at all. It has to be bound to a commitment to pursue positive action rather than the option to abstain from it.

In the last chapter of the book, Houlgate examines the relation between philosophy and religion. At this point, and despite the care Houlgate has taken to steer clear of any ontological assumptions, some readers might feel that they have been drawn into accepting more than they bargained for. The idea of self-determination is more appealing than the, apparently inevitable, conclusion that the real is rational. However, this is not a case of relying

on the inherent rationality of things. Reason as much as freedom has to be realised, to be striven for. As Houlgate puts it, 'The process of natural and conscious development is *itself* the existence of dialectical reason.' But still this may appear too vague when it comes to dealing with the specific problems of action and interpretation involved in realisation. Not the least of these is the problem of the historicity of Hegel's own philosophy. To what degree are his views on the West's discovery of America, or his aesthetic judgements on Kleist, for example, essential to his general argument? If, as I believe, Hegel was fully conscious of the fact that particular aspects of his system (and even his *Logic*) would and should be open to revision, then the task of interpretation becomes more difficult. If we discard some things in order to respond adequately to the concern of our historical circumstances, then the grounds for affirming the centrality of others are underdetermined. A case in point is the link between Hegel's philosophy and Christianity. There is undisputably a profound and complex relation between the two, yet the necessity of committing oneself to this particular content is less obvious. On the other hand, a Hegelianism stripped down to the bare bones of dialectical method, runs the risk of being a new formalism not unlike the one Hegel criticised. On the whole, however, Houlgate has produced a balanced and thought-provoking defence of Hegel's philosophy which is both accessible and sophisticated.

Katerina Deligiorgi



THE FOUCAULT FUNCTION

Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, translated by Betsy Wing, London, Faber and Faber, 1992. 374pp., £25 hb, 0 571 14475 8 hb

Michel Foucault (edited by Sylvere Lotringer), *Foucault Live: Interviews 1966-1984*, translated by John Johnston, New York, Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series, 1989. 336pp., £7.95 pb, 0 936756 32 2 pb

Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, translated by R. James Goldstein and James Cascaito, New York, Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series, 1991. 187pp., £4.95 pb, 0 936756 33 0 pb

Michel Foucault finished his essay 'What is an Author?' by endorsing Samuel Beckett's words: 'What matter who's speaking?' In the opening lines of his biography of Foucault Didier Eribon asks whether Foucault's dismissal of the 'author' rules out the possibility of a biography of Foucault. He then distinguishes four different objections to writing such a biography. First, in reply to Foucault's rejection of the author, Eribon argues that in reality Foucault could not dissociate himself from a society which made authors of people who write books. Second, a biography of Foucault may cause a scandal because of Foucault's homosexuality: Eribon responds that Foucault made no secret of his homosexuality. Third, Foucault released no personal details in his lifetime: Eribon points out that this is untrue. Last, might Foucault not have 1,000 faces? Eribon answers that his biography will present the face he sees, which will not prevent others from emerging.

Foucault did not demand the death of the author but instead the analysis of the 'author-function'. He argued that the category 'author' is used to characterise the 'existence, circulation and operation of certain discourses in a society'. The 'author-function' is a way of organising texts in discourse and so should itself be analysed. Foucault also recognised his own status as an author and feared that a Foucault-author-function would bury the texts he produced. In an interview translated in *Foucault Live* he says that he wants to remain anonymous 'out of nostalgia for the time when, being completely unknown, what I said had some chance of being heard'. Foucault hoped his books would be read for themselves, despite his status as an author.

The first half of Eribon's biography, until Foucault's emergence as a politically engaged left intellectual in the early 1970s, is a valuable and concise account of his life and work. It traces Foucault's early life, his education at the elite Ecole Normale Supérieure, his times in Sweden, Poland and Germany as a French cultural attaché, his work on *Madness and Civilisation*, *Birth of the Clinic* and *The Order of Things*, and his growing intellectual influence.

Many interesting and hitherto unclear aspects of Foucault's life are brought out. For example, Foucault was a member of the French Communist Party for at least three and possibly five years, instead of the six months or so he sometimes claimed. There is Foucault's removal from Poland after being set up by Polish secret services with a young lover, who was in fact a secret agent. Perhaps most intriguing of all is Foucault's appointment to the committee which implemented Gaullist education reforms which are often held to have been an important cause of student unrest in May 1968.

Half-time arrives as Foucault is appointed to the Collège de France and participates in his first demonstrations and direct confrontations with the police in the early 1970s. Eribon claims

that because Foucault's life became so fragmented and crowded a continuation of narrative is impossible. So he settles for an examination of 'Foucault's life facet by facet, in relation to dominant themes or problems'. This period includes all of Foucault's work on power-knowledge and sexuality, and his involvement with left causes. Unfortunately, Eribon provides little except fragmented pieces of information because he offers no substitute for his previous chronology. There is no analysis of Foucault's theory of power in relation to his actual activism; there is just a brief summary of the former and examples of the latter.

The collection of interviews published as *Foucault Live* provides an alternative view of Foucault's development. Twenty-four interviews with Foucault on various topics, of varying lengths and depths, are arranged chronologically from 1966 to his death in 1984, thus forming a sort of disunified intellectual biography. *Foucault Live* brings out the changes in Foucault's assessments of his thought. The interviews start by addressing *The Order of Things* and then *The Archaeology of Knowledge* when there is no hint of politics. Then Foucault discovers power and the real subject of his early work is revealed to him. The bulk of the interviews then fit into this 'knowledge-power' period, but by the late 1970s and early 1980s there are also discernible hints of his later work. And in the final three interviews from 1984 there is a reorientation of his project, which becomes the exploration of the three domains of knowledge, power and subjectivity in order to examine how people tell the truth of themselves to themselves.

Some of the interviews have been published in English elsewhere and not all of these previous publications are listed in the sources. It should also be noted that anybody who has already read some interviews with Foucault will know the sort of information this book contains. But this is a wide-ranging collection which includes lengthy asides on film, homosexuality, architecture and other subjects.

Remarks on Marx is an entirely different matter. It is a series of interviews with Foucault conducted in 1978 by Duccio Trombadori, who was at that time the political and parliamentary correspondent for the daily paper of the Italian Communist Party, *Unità*. The result is an extended exploration of Foucault's thought at the time when he was centrally concerned with power and knowledge. It might be objected that the timing of the interviews means that they represent thoughts Foucault later rejected. However, it is when Foucault connected power to knowledge that he became relevant to left politics, and Trombadori pushes Foucault hard on political points, exploring his relations to Marx in considerable detail. For example, Trombadori draws out the connection between Foucault's conception of local politics and his exploration of power. In both cases Foucault argues for a limited view which pays attention, on the one hand, to the real functionings of power as they can be determined by empirical investigations and, on the other, to local actions addressed to specific problems. Foucault in this way connects his activism in prison groups to his analysis of disciplinary power, and counterposes both to the Marxism he encountered in the early 1970s. In addition to these concerns there are explorations of structuralism, the Frankfurt School and the transformative power of his books.

Eribon's biography adds a great deal of interesting detail on Foucault's life but adds little to an understanding of his thought. *Foucault Live* brings together a wide range of interviews, but also adds little to what is already known about Foucault. But *Remarks on Marx* is a sustained exploration by Foucault of the politics of his work.

Tim Jordan

THE EXPERIENCE OF INNOCENCE

Stuart Hampshire, *Innocence and Experience* (1989), Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1992. 195pp., £6.99 pb, 0 14 01 21749

Politicians, according to Machiavelli, have obligations of office and state that require single-minded ruthlessness: when necessary, to lie and kill with a smile. They cannot be expected to keep to the standards of decency and consideration we hope to meet with in day to day life. The statesman's proprieties can never be better than prudential, and if you would indulge yourself in earnest with 'ought' and 'ought not', you had better leave politics to others.

Unless one is happy to regard politics with unwavering hostility or cynicism, Machiavelli's advice has to be perplexing, even for those who are not politicians. If you believe that any good at all can come out of the political process, then you are going to have a moral interest in the means used to bring it about. Politicians are bound to have dirty hands, but the rest of us may have no intellectually honest way of keeping ours clean; no escape from the weight of ends and means. If you set well considered limits to what can be counted as acceptable political means, then you must own up to the horrors you would be prepared to countenance as a consequence of not going beyond them. If being effective in politics must prevent politicians from being good human beings, then the rest of us, seemingly, are damned with them.

Stuart Hampshire's aim is to identify and undermine the sources of this apparent schism between the political and the moral, to show that a 'good' (i.e. effective) politician need not be an inferior human being. The schism embodies an attitude that equates morality with moral innocence, and regards a good life as a blameless one. According to Hampshire this was the attitude of those who opposed British rearmament in the 1930s. Its consequences would be to allow politicians to disregard all moral considerations as unrealistic.

The notion that political realism is incompatible with living a good and decent life, according to Hampshire, has its philosophical source in the view that there is a good life for human beings as such. It is often suggested that Aristotle's belief in this was of a piece with his essentialist conviction that human beings have a definitive feature that determines what a good human life must be: the capacity for reason. By contrast, Hampshire claims that where Aristotle went wrong was in clinging to Plato's conception of harmony in the soul under the control of Reason. The picture of mental hierarchy that has been pervasive in the work of subsequent philosophers is borrowed from social relations, and shot through with 'metaphors of obedience and social conflict' with the consequence that "reason" is incurably tainted by its ideological and normative connotations'.

Set 'reason' aside, however, and look to what actually goes on in thought, and you will see that imagination – 'the capacity for non-argumentative thought' – is no less important and distinctive a feature of mental life. Much of Hampshire's argument examines the centrality of imagination: in memory, for instance, within which each of us has a deeply personal imaginative relationship to the past, and which is ineliminable for any individual in developing a sense of what is significant and valuable in life.

The Aristotelian picture of harmony and order within the soul produces a false ideal of all-round development, in which each of the moral virtues is given its due weight. Hampshire argues instead that each individual develops her own conception of the good, through reasoned and imaginative understanding of what is valuable to her. Each conception of the good must involve emphasising and developing some virtues at the expense of

others. Those figures who historically have been the most admired have not been all-rounders, but men and women who have excelled in some virtues, while perhaps being deficient in others. Such people realise particular conceptions of the good life from an array of possibilities. Morality is not the seamless whole of Aristotelian, Kantian and Utilitarian moral theory: 'conceptions of the good are, and ought to be, divergent and often conflicting.'

The existence of a plurality of goods, and the possibility of their realisation, requires universal recognition of a 'minimum procedural conception of justice'. There are substantive conceptions of justice that are tied to conceptions of the good, but procedural justice is independent of every conception of the good. It requires being prepared to negotiate with those whose conceptions of the good conflict with one's own, and 'gets its sense from a minimum fairness in established procedures of settling conflicts, national and international, by argument and negotiation and by quasi-legal reasoning'.

This conception of procedural justice is universal, and it is a major part of Hampshire's enterprise to counter relativist objections to it. He takes Hume as his principal opponent, and the infamous observation that it is not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the entire universe to the scratching of his little finger is rejected as resting on a conception of reason that is presuppositionless, abstract and unreal. Hampshire suggests that, while there are never conclusive arguments for moral claims, they are, for all that, capable of being true: true, that is, for good and all. Although there are diverse conceptions of the good therefore, it does not follow that we must accord them all equal truth: some conceptions of the good are indefensible, even demonstrably evil.

Hampshire argues that anyone, no matter what their conception of the good, should be able to accept minimal procedural justice, since it is unfair to force beliefs on those who do not share them. He considers the possibility that authoritarian moralists may have conceptions of the good that require them to refuse to give a hearing to heretics and infidels. This, he suggests, involves a rejection of practical reason in matters of morality that is unusual among European authoritarian moralists, and difficult to sustain consistently, because it involves an attitude of requiring others to 'observe duties and obligations, and to develop specific virtues, without providing them with any reasons for abandoning their previous conceptions of the good'. (This was not the attitude of the Nazis, according to Hampshire, who were distinguished not by having an evil substantive conception of justice and the good, but rather by their disregard for any conception of justice at all, and their quest for domination and conquest for their own sake.)

No doubt the difficulty of living peaceably with different conceptions of the good has impressed the need for minimal procedural justice on many European authoritarian moralists. At the same time, however, many of them may harbour a wish to be done with the alien presence and minimal procedural justice along with it. The person who heeds only faith may disregard all unbelievers when circumstance permits. Hampshire's problem is that if procedural justice is to be overriding, it must not contain ideas about fairness that are bound to a particular conception of the good, such as Liberalism. The problem can be resolved, it seems to me, by dropping the aim of having minimal procedural justice accepted as part of all conceptions of the good, and appealing instead only to those who accept a plurality of conceptions of the good as an inescapable feature of social existence. In that case Hampshire would still be seriously engaged with conceptions of the good that are held to by the vast majority of people on the planet.

There is another problem, however, that is less easily re-

solved. Within British politics during the last two hundred years procedural justice of a sort has been observed through abstention, *by and large*, from violence in resolving struggles and disputes. We might accept, after some qualifications, that this is a feature of British political culture. But it is premised on the security of existing property relations. Suppose, then, that you earnestly desire, as some of us do, to see an end to certain property relations, while at the same time believing that this would, in all likelihood, provoke an abrupt disregard for procedural justice on the part of the State: what then of its respect for procedural justice? And wouldn't prudence demand that your own attitude towards procedural justice be modified? The problem is, of course, an old one. It is soluble if one abandons goals of social revolution or large scale egalitarian reform, but to do that is to abandon certain conceptions of the good. And this is saying nothing about whether many conceptions of the good actually *do* get a fair hearing.

Adherence to a minimum procedural justice as an overriding virtue cannot therefore be regarded as independent of conceptions of the good. If you perceive that your opponent's adherence to procedural justice is only contingent on the continued failure of your goals and values, your own attitude to procedural justice will be apt to become partial and tactical in the short and medium term.

What then of politicians and their dirty hands? They should be fully aware, according to Hampshire, of their responsibilities in 'disposing of the lives of others', resolute in pursuing the 'reasonable interests' of those they represent, and prepared for dilemmas in which all alternatives are bad. The moral situation of the politician is that of experience and guilty knowledge. Hampshire contrasts this with the preference for innocence of those who aspire to virtues such as integrity, honesty and personal loyalty. This reflects a conception of the good that has a deserved place in society, but which is not better than the conception of the good that determines the goals and virtues of the politician. Hampshire draws a striking comparison between, on the one hand, the 'innocence' of the early Quakers with their emphasis on purity, simplicity and integrity, and, on the other hand, the 'experience' of the Vatican, with its splendour, its traditions, and its use of cunning and deception for higher ends.

According to Hampshire, Machiavelli was right in claiming that moral purity is incompatible with political effectiveness. But there are virtues of experience as well as of innocence, including 'tenacity and resolution, courage in the face of risk, intelligence, largeness of design and purpose, exceptional energy, habits of leadership'. In addition there is a requirement on politicians to respect procedural justice, which indeed is the means by which they must weigh competing goods. Just as there is no single good life for all human beings, so there is no single set of virtues that every one of us ought to aspire to. There is a place in society both for the virtues of innocence and for those of experience.

I suggested earlier that in the hope that our political representatives bring something good about, we seem to be implicated in whatever means they use to do it. As far as virtues such as integrity and loyalty to friends are concerned, however, we can properly count ourselves innocent of the misdeeds of politicians, because these virtues, and their corresponding vices, are personal in scope: a politician can only be disloyal to her own friends, not to ours. With other virtues it is less easy for us to consider ourselves innocent of bad political means. A Quaker might see the heavens fall rather than compromise with murder and deception, but if she relies on politicians to keep them there, she cannot really pretend to be innocent of the means they use.

The politician's dilemmas are those of many other servants, public and private, writ large. Work often presents very non-political people with choices between doing wrong and seeing wrong done. The option of innocence is for the sheltered few (and perhaps only because of their lack of imagination). Hampshire's

duality of innocence and experience might be the world view of the master of an Oxford College (he was Warden of Wadham College from 1970 to 1984): one who has the guilty knowledge of much compromise, and can savour the pleasures of intrigue, but who continues to value and aspire to the scholarly purity and innocence of his colleagues (it is admirable that, unlike many a politician, Hampshire manifests no bitterness towards those he regards as innocent). It is better, however, that we face up to being in the same moral boat as the politician who works to realise our political desires.

There are other criticisms to be made of Hampshire's arguments: among them, a lack of reflectiveness about whether existing politicians do act 'in the national interest' (and what it means to do so) or whatever they purport to act in the interest of. This is, nevertheless, a fine book. Its depiction of the reality and diversity of moral life has much to teach contemporary ethical theorists. And in its breadth of vision and wealth of ideas, *Innocence and Experience* brings a degree of imagination to political and moral philosophy not often seen. The central vision of peaceful coexistence of virtues, however, must be rejected. Experience is always better than innocence.

Kevin Magill

MOTHERHOODS

E. Ann Kaplan, *Motherhood and Representation: The Mother in Popular Culture and Melodrama*, London, Routledge, 1992. 250pp., £35 hb, £10.95 pb, 0 415 01127 2 pb

In *Motherhood and Representation* E. Ann Kaplan takes as her subject the special form of psychic relation that the bourgeois family produced between 1830 and 1970. Her focus on melodrama and the realm of popular culture is apt in this context. Not only did melodrama often act as the site of domestic feminist discourses but, as several critics have argued (notably Peter Brooks), melodrama helped to fill an ethical vacuum created by the privacy of the nuclear family, and exacerbated by the Industrial Revolution, by offering an arena for discussion of familial issues. Kaplan's historical periodisation allows her to draw links between nineteenth-century popular narratives – such as Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* – and twentieth-century films produced for a mass audience. She focuses partly on filmic representations of earlier melodramatic texts, but argues forcefully for a more general relation between early film and the popular nineteenth-century novel. This perspective allows her to draw interesting parallels between the two forms, as well as to analyse the reasons for specific plot changes required by the changing nature of social relations. However, she is forced to restrict her analysis to general narrative issues, ignoring or eliding technical matters involving form, and the specific relation created in novels and films with the reader and spectator, so that her claim that 'cinema is the closest analog in the realm of the symbolic to access to the maternal body' fails appreciably to affect her reading of films.

Kaplan aims to integrate two main paradigms into her reading of popular narrative and film – the historical and the psychoanalytic. Focusing firstly on 'the historical sphere', she divides the period from 1830 to 1970 into three phases: the 'early modern', which emphasised the mother's place as consumer and educator of her children within the modern nuclear family; the 'high modernist', which developed both in response to social processes such as women's entry into the workforce following the First World War, and to Darwinian, Marxist and Freudian discourses

about the family; and the 'post-modern' which, she argues, was a response to the electronic revolution following the Second World War, and which is characterised by a diversity of mother paradigms, as well as political and feminist ambivalences about such changes.

Kaplan attempts to integrate this historical perspective with psychoanalytic theory. She asks 'how far recent psychoanalytic theories may help us to understand what is happening on the unconscious, mythic level exposed in film representations, as it interacts with the historical sphere. I am here concerned both with psychoanalysis as describing an inevitable process of subject



formation (my "foundationalist" moment), and with psychoanalytic theory as a *discourse* itself producing certain powerful mother representations, particularly in the post-Freud period.' Yet there is a tension between these two aims which is not productively worked into the analysis of narratives and filmic texts. In a mostly schematic and derivative chapter Kaplan locates her 'foundationalist' moment in post-Lacanian psychoanalytic theories, particularly those which emphasise feminist reinterpretations of the pre-Oedipal stage for both mother and child. She regards theories which value the early mother-child bond as 'true' representations of human subjectivity, while post-Freudian theories of the ego are analysed as ideological responses to the increased autonomy of women following the First World War. However, Kaplan's analysis fails adequately to acknowledge the complex ideological underpinnings of contemporary psychoanalytic discourses, or to register the effects on her project (to investigate the 'unconscious mythic level' of mother representations) of the increasingly conscious level at which psychoanalytic discourses have been played out during the twentieth century.

It is the readings of mid-nineteenth-century texts and popular narratives which prove most fruitful for uncovering the unconscious aspects of ideological representations of motherhood. For example, in her analysis of *East Lynne* (popular for over seventy years with the reading and theatre-going public) she reveals how the mother's desire for 'fusional' union with a lover or with her children (rather than with her impeccably bourgeois and distant spouse) is a displacement of her thwarted desire for union with her now dead mother. In this case, despite the novel's ostensible acceptance of the bourgeois ideology of the family, which required emotional restraint from the mother while offering her little alternative gratification, the text (as opposed to later film versions which tend to represent the mother's dilemma in comic or parodic terms) registers an unease with the ideal of maternal sacrifice. However, as psychoanalytic ideas are increasingly taken up in the public and popular domain, such analysis of the unconscious levels of the text becomes ever more difficult to

sustain. Arguably, Kaplan's analyses of the ideological function of psychoanalytic discourses in 'high modernist' films are among the most interesting sections of the book, but it would be a mistake to claim that she is uncovering an unconscious level of the construction of human subjectivity, except in the most general terms. (Indeed, for her to carry out this promise would require far more historical analysis, of mothering and child-care practices for example, than she offers here.) As Kaplan asserts, the desire to confine the mother within restricted pop-Freudian stereotypes is itself a symptom of the increasing cultural threat posed by motherhood in the post-war period. In an excellent analysis of 'Now Voyager' and 'Marnie' she argues that 'Freudian psychoanalysis, as a discourse, was a means through which culture attempted to articulate and defray fears regarding the abject maternal. The angel and evil mother paradigms that Freud articulated were an easy and useful tool for representing deep unconscious fears of falling back into the horror of the mother's being, where boundaries are elided.'

The increasing familiarity with psychoanalytic discourses, both popular and academic, clearly has important consequences for contemporary representations of motherhood, which vary wildly from sentimental recuperations of the good and fulfilled mother (for example in 'Baby Boom'), to feminist arguments for and against reproductive technologies, to dystopian fantasies such as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. One of the most interesting questions raised in the book concerns the possibility of the radical alteration of the structure of the unconscious (and even its destruction) as a result of the electronic and technological transformation of modern social formations. As Kaplan reminds us, there is an increasing distance between feminist psychoanalytic theories, and theories of postmodernity, which seem to deny the possibility of any psychic depth of inner life at all. Feminists need to realise how problematic the attempt to produce a perspective which is both psychoanalytic and postmodern can be.

Clair Wills

CULTURE & SUPERCULTURE

David Roberts, *Art and Enlightenment: Aesthetic Theory after Adorno*, London, University of Nebraska Press, 1991. 249pp., £19.95 hb, 0 8032 3897 5

Many theories of postmodernism and postmodernity paint modernism and theories of modernity in broad brush strokes and then reject them in favour of a paradigm shift. The fact that Roberts's construction of a new paradigm for art emerges from a thorough interrogation of Adorno's portrayal of the antinomies of modernism, as put forward in *Philosophy of Modern Music*, together with a larger consideration of the relationship between art and enlightenment, lends his argument greater weight.

Roberts regards *Philosophy of Modern Music* as 'the most powerful and cogent of Adorno's aesthetic writings' because the whole paradox of the dialectic of enlightenment, whereby the domination of nature in the name of progress increasingly leads to the second nature of an administered environment, is revealed in the rationalization of musical material. For Adorno, advanced musical material contains, in terms of an immanent logic, a sedimented socio-historical dynamic. The material construction of the work is thus indicative of the society from which it emerged yet the work itself is an autonomous monad which is something

other than a purposeful rationality. The aporia which Adorno unfolds in *Philosophy of Modern Music* is that the rational advancement of material almost reaches a stage where it becomes an all-embracing principle which eliminates the subjectivity that the whole process of advancement sought to express. In Roberts's terms - which are indebted to Niklas Luhmann - the latency of the material is rationalized; it becomes manifest. From this contradiction arise the two extremes of *Philosophy of Modern Music*: Schoenberg's tragic continuation of the dialectic of construction and expression, in all its paradoxes, and Stravinsky's relinquishment of a single material in favour of primitivism and parody.

Roberts provides a penetrating and insightful exploration of *Philosophy of Modern Music*. Particularly interesting is the way in which he brings to light the extent of Adorno's unacknowledged debt to the Lukács of *History and Class Consciousness*. Following Adorno's own technique of immanent critique of the object, the paradoxes of Adorno's construction are brought out in their own terms rather than by external criteria. Yet the dialectical contortions which Roberts unfolds do not reveal any tensions of which Adorno was not himself painfully aware. But Roberts draws a very different conclusion. If the total rationalization of the material leads to an impasse whereby the material becomes indifferent to subjectivity and the traditional organic artwork becomes mere illusion, then why continue with the discourse of traditional art when it can only indicate that that tradition has finished? So significant does Roberts consider the disintegration of tonality in music and of representation in painting at the beginning of this century, that it heralds the epoch of the postmodern and of post-traditional art. 'Adorno's categories - freedom and necessity, form and content, essence and appearance, the latent and the manifest, progress and decadence - are canceled and suspended in the *modality of contingency*, which is to be seen as constituting the a priori of emancipated art.' Progress becomes stasis, essence becomes virtuality and necessity becomes contingency.

Following Luhmann, Roberts defines contingency as that 'which is neither necessary nor impossible: which can be seen as it is (was, will be) but which is also possibly other'. A contingent art is one which opens up the plurality of alternatives, of other possible solutions; an art which constantly reflects on its own possibilities as art. If the European tradition is dead, then this past tradition becomes a component of a world art, non-synchronous aspects of which can be alluded to in the synchronous full time (Benjamin) of the present. The environment within which art operates, therefore, is that of a museum without walls in which art concerns itself with the 'relation of relations both as self- and system-reference, the self-consciousness, that is, of the work as "possible world"'. A couple of difficulties arise irrespective of whether this model is a genuine alternative to Adorno. The fact that Roberts wishes to break down the distinction between authentic and unauthentic art makes problematic artistic practices which have carried on in the European organic tradition after the supposed end of this tradition. To place such practices in the museum without walls presupposes a functional error in the context from which this art arose. Further, it is not clear whether the end of the European tradition signifies a paradigm change, a museum without walls, for cultures which enjoy a living organic tradition. Roberts's argument does rather suggest that European progress, which led to the end of progress, becomes a universal for world art.

Certainly, contingency and the reflexivity of artworks constitute significant ingredients of modern aesthetic experience, but to treat them as the condition of artistic freedom is excessive. The fact that, for Roberts, the break with tradition is so absolute derives from his understanding of the dialectic of enlightenment

as a fatal embrace. Rather than looking at ways of thawing Adorno's negative dialectic, Roberts accepts as a premise Adorno's worst prognosis of the reification of rationality. Yet a notion of advanced musical material can be expanded to become materials at different stages of development, indeed Adorno's comments on Janáček and Bartók, in relation to the Schoenberg/Stravinsky framework, indicate the possibility for non-synchronous historical paths to co-exist. Further, it is this capacity for the components of music to advance at different speeds that allows Schoenberg to use the rhythmic techniques and phraseology associated with tonality long after the break with tonality itself. The indifference of the material is not as absolute as Roberts suggests: whatever the perils of serialism, Schoenberg's resistance to his own system ensured that expression was not annihilated by construction. The extremity of Adorno's Stravinsky critique does not prevent us from re-opening a dialectic of reified and emancipated subjectivity in his music. The style and idea dialectic which Roberts posits as central to the modernism/postmodernism debate need not be collapsed into style in order to accommodate Roberts's concept of contingency and reflexivity. In the music of Brian Ferneyhough, for example, the system is very much its own self-reflexive content, yet it is not antithetical to the notion of an unfolding idea, even if it is far from Boulez's conception of the multiplication of a single idea.

Whilst aesthetic discourse can roam free of artistic practice, the fact that Roberts's book is about art would lead one to hope that there might be more exemplification of emancipated contingent art than his against-the-grain reading of Brecht. Given the emphasis on music in this study, it would have been useful to have had some discussion of contemporary music which extended beyond the stereotyped images of the Cage of 4'33" and of Boulez mired in integral serialism.

On a more general level, it is difficult to see how any idea of political agency might come out of Roberts's model. Art, in Roberts's view, may problematize the representation of reality, but it is not easy to envisage how the possible worlds which it might prefigure can be anything other than reconfigurations of the same one, or whether one possibility might be more desirable than another. Roberts's post-Adornian landscape is rather overpowered by the richness of his own wide-ranging exploration of *Philosophy of Modern Music*.

Alastair Williams

CULTURE & SUBCULTURE

Antony Easthope, *Literary into Cultural Studies*, London, Routledge, 1991. 202pp., £30 hb, £9.99 pb, 0415066409 hb, 0415066417 pb

Steven Connor, *Theory and Cultural Value*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992. 275pp., £35 hb, £12.95 pb, 0631182810 hb, 0631182829 pb

David Harris, *From Class Struggle to the Politics of Pleasure: The Effects of Gramscianism on Cultural Studies*, London and New York, Routledge, 1992. 222pp., £40 hb, £12.99 pb, 0415062233 hb, 0415062241 pb

Two of the books under review claim to be about 'cultural studies', and yet there is very little overlap between them. Antony Easthope focuses on texts and readings. In his intellectual and academic genealogy of cultural studies, Raymond Williams is a

central figure, along with Barthes, Eagleton, and other theorists of signification: *Culture and Society* and *Mythologies*, claims Easthope, together 'initiate modern cultural studies'. David Harris focusses on social theory and, although acknowledging the impact on his thinking of Williams (among other figures of the 'old New Left'), he devotes his critical attention overwhelmingly, and indeed almost exclusively, to work from or directly influenced by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Whereas for Harris 'culture' means recent and present-day lived experience, and the forms and institutions which mediate, control and represent it, Easthope's 'culture' is narrower – though still wide enough: the field of representation, whether contemporary or historical (but in practice, as I argue later, Easthope shows a restrictive preference for the written text and for narrative).

I do not think it is only because my own background, like Easthope's, is in the teaching of literature that I find his book much more usable than Harris's. *Literary into Cultural Studies* is, whatever else, well written: Easthope develops complex arguments in lucid prose and reviews a wide range of material without getting lost in a maze of detail. Bold sketches of a 'new paradigm' invite scepticism, and his arguments are at their most vulnerable when he claims to define the future, but the destructive part of the book is always plausible and provocative.

Literary criticism – so the argument runs – established its founding 'paradigm' in the early 1930s, when Leavis, Empson and others moved it beyond the 'entirely ideological impressionism' which had reigned until then. But the academic discipline which they inaugurated now faces fundamental and probably fatal challenges. Neither its object of study nor its methodology are secure: popular culture has proved richly worth reading alongside high art (Easthope substantiates his point by examining *Tarzan*, 1912, in tandem with *Heart of Darkness*, 1899), and the development of literary and semiotic theory has fractured the unified authorial text. The demise of the unified text is also the demise of 'the modernist reading' – the close and exhaustive textual scrutiny and thematic exposition which have founded the pedagogy and critical practice of literary study. This 'dissolution of the literary object' is exemplified in a discussion of Hopkins's 'The Windhover', where 'the authorial reading' is juxtaposed to a range of alternative accounts – formalist, Marxist, gay, Lacanian... The text as object cedes place to the text as process and effect. Meanwhile, as there is no canon, textuality implies the entire field of signifying practice. To prove his point, and taking his cue from David Lodge's *Nice Work*, Easthope – on a rare foray into the sphere of the visual – shows how a Benson and Hedges ad can offer material for semioticians to show their paces.

Much of this is familiar, of course, but the arguments are assembled and deployed elegantly and energetically, within a framework which is chronological as well as theoretical and which pays due attention to questions of teaching and learning. Those who would like to defend another and more 'traditional' notion of literary studies now have a position against which to define their own, while anyone actively engaged in the shift which Easthope chronicles and advocates, away from the literary and towards the 'cultural', is bound to find his book valuable, even where they are moved to disagree.

Nonetheless, two major problems arise as he develops his position. In the first place his account of literary and aesthetic value, although careful and sustained, ends up by opting for a bland circularity: what is valuable is, simply, whatever we value. Easthope insists at some length that what makes for literary value has to be understood dialectically, as a property of texts as constant material objects and not just as their ever-variable effect. He thereby implicitly concedes – rightly, in my view – that the notion of aesthetic value which has founded the literary canon cannot just be dismissed, but must be rethought. However, in

place of more traditional, and wholly essentialist, categories he finishes by offering that uninformative circularity: 'Literature consists merely of some texts that seem more able than others to give rise to a variety of readings across history.' This laid-back formulation surely neglects that material specificity of the text which he has just been insisting on. It also says nothing to illuminate or justify the process of alternative canon-formation which goes on continuously within the academy. It would have been interesting to read Easthope's views on the design of courses in cultural studies. What goes on at this point is surely the substitution of other and more varied criteria of value (which are perhaps richer, even if mutually inconsistent) for the 'purely aesthetic' criteria formerly employed. We ask: what have these texts to say about x (usually, about gender/sexuality, class, and race), and how interestingly do they say it, and whose voice do they say it in, and how can all this be related to some sense or consensus about what was/is going on socially and historically? This seems a very different process than the one Easthope implies, by which we would merely (but how, in fact, would we even begin?) scan all texts to find out which 'seem more able than others' to communicate diversely today.

Steven Connor, in *Theory and Cultural Value*, explores some of the issues which Easthope neglects. The moment of value, Connor insists, is ineluctable: while any particular act or criterion of value evokes its own vulnerability to critique, it is equally the case that the refusal to value evokes the very act which it claims to banish. Connor deploys this insight – or plays, it sometimes seems fair to say, with this Derridean yo-yo – in many fields, including aesthetics, ethics, and feminist theory and politics. He wanders down some fairly remote byways of intertextuality, commenting on Simon Critchley's essay on Derrida's essay on Levinas or on 'Smith's dismissal of Derrida's reading of Bataille' (Derrida does crop up rather a lot). Such a level of detail can be unhelpful in the development of a general account of cultural theory and its appropriate pedagogy (it is a welcome feature of Connor's book that he, like Easthope, addresses the conditions and practices of academic work and teaching). At other times, however, and especially in the opening chapter on 'The Necessity of Value' and in his account of the ethics of discourse in Habermas, Lyotard and Rorty, it is easier to see the larger importance of Connor's arguments, and to welcome their philosophical engagement with issues which are often, in the main tradition of English literary criticism, settled with bland dogmatism.

The reference to 'gramscianism' in the subtitle of *From Class Struggle to the Politics of Pleasure* might encourage the hope that here too a philosophical interrogation would be brought to bear on the procedures of cultural studies. In the event, 'gramscianism' (the small g is Harris's) is never adequately expounded, defined or criticised: the term is simply a catch-all phrase to designate the Birmingham cultural studies project and its offshoots in the Open University (there is particular discussion of OU courses E282, School and Society, and U203, Popular Culture – the latter is also discussed by Easthope). The writing oddly blends incessant particular criticisms with a general acceptance that the 'gramscian' project was after all a major and valuable influence. Indeed Harris begins his concluding assessment by asserting that 'gramscian work has ... been responsible for the emergence of a critical sociology of culture and for the politicisation of culture' – a claim which obviously overstates the case (both non-gramscian writers and social history at large have also been 'responsible' for these developments). Given this generous acknowledgement, one wonders what the motive can be for the minutely detailed critical readings which take up most of this book. Where points are fairly scored (as when Harris laments the foolishly admiring stance sometimes taken towards some sub-cultural formations, or when he insists that claims about the reception of popular texts should

be, but usually aren't, backed up by empirical audience research), the shortcomings exposed can seldom if ever be related to a gramscian or more generally Marxist theory or methodology.

Even had the enterprise succeeded, it is not clear what might be importantly gained just now by analysing the deficiencies of a specifically Gramscian (or for that matter Althusserian) cultural sociology. What is at stake today is surely rather the validity of any kind of materialist cultural theory, as against non-Marxist discourse theory and postmodern celebrations of culture as culture as culture. Teachers of cultural studies will probably not attempt to resolve this issue, but will persist with a blithely eclectic 'theory', or mixture of incompatible theories. (Hostile philosophers may feel that nothing better was to be expected, at any rate in England, in an academic field whose chief tenants are sociologists and literary critics.)

Easthope does offer useful reflections of the theoretical and politico-theoretical underpinning of cultural studies. I sometimes wanted to dispute his particular views – to dissent, for instance, from his claim that Althusser is the best ally against lapsing into notions of culture as 'expressive totality' (a lapse of which Williams and Foucault are each found guilty) – but I was more generally disconcerted, as I have already indicated, by the narrowness of his effective definition of 'culture', and by the timorousness of his proposed expansion of 'literary studies'. For Easthope, this amounts in effect to reading the popular alongside

the canonical (or ex-canonical), and narrative genres are greatly privileged in his actual selection of examples.

I would agree that readings of texts, and debate about such readings, should occupy a central place within cultural studies. And, against the recently expressed view of Martin Barker that 'cultural studies has as its object the mass media of popular culture', I would urge that students should engage also with minority art and with the culture of the past. So the work of Foucault, or of Jeffrey Weeks, or of Penny Boumelha (whose *Thomas Hardy and Women* seems to me an exemplary instance of 'literary into cultural studies') would be high up on my own cultural studies booklist. But this extension of textuality involves not only, and perhaps not mainly, a redefinition of the literary (which is what Easthope essentially argues for); it involves a deliberate extension of textual enquiry beyond the confines of the literary, however defined. We might be looking (for instance) at travel writing, sexology, politicians' speeches, and the principle on which our texts will be selected will owe more to some here-and-now definition of what interests us than to some predisposition towards (what in Easthope's account is still) literary studies. In my opinion it may well be through such a radical dethroning of the 'literary' that the immense interest of many literary texts will be restored for new readers.

Martin Ryle

HEIDEGGER'S AFFAIR

Tom Rockmore, *On Heidegger's Nazism and Philosophy*, Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992. 382pp., £30 hb, 0 7450 1231 0

Richard Wolin, *The Terms of Cultural Criticism: The Frankfurt School, Existentialism, Poststructuralism*, 1992. 256pp., \$44 hb, 0 231 07664 9

In recent years revelations about Heidegger's involvement in the Nazi regime have been used to denigrate his entire philosophy. But, as in the case of the German legal and political theorist Carl Schmitt, the Heidegger affair raises an important question which many commentators fail to address: can the personal political judgements and beliefs of a thinker serve as the basis for an evaluation of their philosophical thought and its political possibilities? Initially, Tom Rockmore's book looks promising on this front (the title has obviously been carefully chosen). However, in spite of being thoroughly researched and philosophically informed, this attempt to show that Heidegger's philosophical thought and his Nazism are inseparable, and that he turned to National Socialism on the basis of his philosophy, fails to convince.

In eight chapters the book examines in detail Heidegger's infamous 'Rectoral Address', his refusal after the war to talk at length and openly about his involvement in the regime, the French reception of Heidegger's Nazism, and the topics of 'Nazism and Technology' and 'Being, the Volk, and Nazism'. The book also includes a chapter on the recently published work *Contributions to Philosophy (On the Event)* (published in 1989, but not yet available in translation). It is a fine, serious, informative and impassioned study. It succeeds in showing what Lyotard hinted at in his book on the same subject: that Heidegger's 'Nazism' was deliberate, profound, and persistent. However, the major claim of the book, that Heidegger's 'Nazism' is a permanent feature of his thought, is never established. (Rockmore's argument is that after

Heidegger became disaffected with actually existing Nazism he turned to an 'ideal' form of it.) It would, I think, be unfortunate if Rockmore's study had the effect of closing off debate about the political possibilities of Heidegger's thinking by stigmatizing it as intrinsically and irredeemably 'Nazi'.

Rockmore shows that Heidegger was always, first and foremost, a political philosopher, a thinker deeply concerned with the fate of the West, and especially the role of the German Volk in that fate. Given this, it is all the more regrettable that he never explores the relationship of Heidegger's thought to the tradition of political theory. At one point it is argued that the 'fundamental ontology' of *Being and Time* does not necessarily lead to National Socialism. But the implications of this are never pursued. By devoting his considerable skills to establishing the sincerity and profundity of Heidegger's Nazi commitments, Rockmore becomes blind to the question of whether it might be possible to develop a quite different political philosophy from Heidegger's destruction of metaphysics and questioning of technology. Like other commentators on the subject he has clouded his vision by adopting a predominantly moralistic tone. He is concerned to show that Heidegger was serious about his Nazism and that this poses tremendous problems for admirers of his work. While this is undoubtedly true, it cannot constitute the beginning and the end of the matter. Perhaps the worst aspect of the moralistic condemnation of Heidegger is that it narrows the debate, reducing it to a simple one between the commentator who has morality and humanity on his side, and the bad Nazi philosopher who is preoccupied with the fate of big, abstract Being and shows little regard for concrete human beings. Heidegger may have turned to the Nazis on the basis of his philosophical concerns, but that does not mean that it was a necessary turning. Heidegger's political engagement was much more complex than Rockmore's moralism is able to allow. His 'personal' National Socialism was so 'ideal' as to be quite different from real National Socialism.

The Heidegger affair also features in Richard Wolin's collec-

tion of essays on cultural criticism. It is split into three sections each containing three essays. The first section deals with the legacy of the Frankfurt School and reappraises the aestheticist and utopian strands which pervade Adorno's thinking. The second, entitled 'Political Existentialism', has essays on Schmitt, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and Heidegger. The third and final section has essays on Rorty, Foucault, and Derrida.

In his preface Wolin affirms the seriousness of the essay genre, citing remarks by well-known practitioners of the art of essay writing such as Adorno and Lukács. But while there is instruction in these essays, several of them are quite superficial. For example, the portrait he provides of Schmitt's work is simplistic and tendentious. Its effect is to render the left's interest in Schmitt perverse, which is surely an unenlightening conclusion to reach. Another example is his treatment of Heidegger's 'Nazism' (he published a book on Heidegger and the 'politics of Being' in 1990). Like Rockmore, he finds the post-war reception of Heidegger in France to be disingenuous and ahistorical. However, by adopting the tone of moral condemnation he ends up presenting a caricature of the defence of Heidegger proffered by the likes of Derrida and Lacoue-Labarthe, who claim (scandalously for both Rockmore and Wolin) that Heidegger's endorsement of Nazism in 1933 can be explained in terms of his commitment to a mode of thinking which had not yet sufficiently

disengaged itself from metaphysics. I agree with Wolin that the attempt to explain the rise of Nazism in terms of a history of Being rather than the peculiarities of German history is problematic. But his cavalier treatment of the issue means that he misses the radical challenge that Heidegger's critique of humanism presents to Western thinking, and wildly simplifies Derrida's position. Derrida is not simply trying to exonerate Heidegger from any 'authentic' personal involvement in the Nazi regime, but seeking to show that the standard humanist critique of his political commitment raises complex questions about human subjectivity and human values. The effect of Wolin's moralistic reading is to place a closure on this kind of *critical* thinking.

Wolin defines the task of the critical theorist today as enlightening the 'Enlightenment'. In the preface he argues persuasively that it is only by sustained reflection on the way in which Enlightenment precepts and goals have historically miscarried that the spirit of enlightened criticism can be reunited with its original utopian aspirations. But, while he is an astute and instructive commentator on the vicissitudes of critical theory, his critical commentary on other intellectual traditions and figures often lacks real engagement and penetration. Wolin's attempt to portray the major theoretical trends of the twentieth century in essay form frequently smacks of intellectual tourism.

Keith Ansell-Pearson

WIDE OPEN

Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn and Kosmas Psychopedis (eds), *Open Marxism: Volume I, Dialectics and History; Volume II, Theory and Practice*, London, Pluto Press, 1992. Vol. I xx + 179pp., £12.95 pb; Vol. II xviii + 172pp., £12.95 pb

In addition to substantial contributions from each of the editors themselves, this international collection contains interesting papers by Hans-Georg Backhaus, Heide Gerstenberger, Harry Cleaver, John Holloway and Simon Clarke. There is also a piece of useless verbiage from Antonio Negri. According to the editorial introduction the papers are unified by their commitment to 'open Marxism'. At the most general level, this refers to the implications of Marxism being present within its object. Being thus itself mired in the contradictions of the times, theory must not preempt the future, or foreclose on practice, through adopting a determinist framework construed 'outside' its object, as does positivism. The openness of the categories is based on an understanding of social reality as constantly changing along with forms of struggle. The categories of Marxism are thus essentially 'incomplete'. The dualism of theory and practice must be overcome in 'the practical reflexivity of theory and the theoretical reflexivity of practice as different moments of the same totalisation'. What is disappointing is that no examples are provided of how Marxism has shown itself to be 'open' in the past (one thinks here of Lenin's and Trotsky's category of 'combined and uneven development'), or of what categorial innovations are necessary now to encompass the self-constitutive power of women's struggles, and to engage with ecological crisis. The book is strangely silent on these questions.

However, 'open Marxism' is held to have methodological implications; for example, Gunn's paper ('Against Historical Materialism') contains a critique of any 'general theory' of society: 'Whereas general theory stands back from its object and reflects upon it, Marxist theory situates itself within the object and construes itself as constituted through its object.' This means that

the changing forms of social life cannot be accommodated within a genus-species classification because that implies there is some unchanging essence behind social phenomena and an invariant pattern of transformation. Along these lines, Gerstenberger poses an alternative to the orthodox Marxist theory of the French Revolution, and Clarke questions the project of periodising capitalist development.

Contrary to their own principles, the editors treat certain categories, namely 'practice', 'the movement of contradiction', and, above all, 'class struggle', as if they were eternal essences. Class struggle, it seems, assumes many specific forms, e.g. the capital relation, the state; indeed, in general, 'social phenomena have to be seen as *forms* assumed by class struggle'. The contributions are united in their opposition to the idea of Marxism as a science which describes an objective reality complete with laws of motion, periods, structures, etc. Some trace the fault to Marx himself: for example Gunn considers *The German Ideology* and the *1859 Preface* an 'infantile disorder' of Marx's. It is certainly true that in the *1859 Preface* 'general theory' is given an outing, class struggle is unmentioned, and an 'activist' tone studiously avoided. It has been argued that this last may have to do with the circumstances of its publication (see A. M. Prinz, 'Background and Ulterior Motive of Marx's "Preface" of 1859', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XXX, 1969).

In some contributions, social forms are perceived as insubstantial objectifications of the eternal struggle; any attempt to take seriously their specific effectivity is denounced as 'fetishism', 'structuralism', 'positivism', or 'determinism'. Yet talking seriously the 'mode of existence' of today's class struggle merits precisely a close investigation of the genuine objectivity of the capital relation within which class struggle is inscribed. But it is not that class struggle 'takes the form of' struggle between feudal estates and between modern classes: the *specific differences* take precedence over the abstract identity of terms. But how can a form of struggle be specific except in virtue of the positioning of classes

in determinate structural relations? Yet these authors think that structure is *nothing but* the form taken by the 'struggle'. There is the sound of the stick cracking as it is over-vigorously 'bent the other way'. Thus Bonefeld says 'structures do not exist', and Gunn seems to believe 'society' does not exist.

Another way they put the point about genus/species classification is to contrast 'empiricist abstraction' with 'substantive' or 'determinate abstraction'. According to Gunn: 'Determinate abstraction is abstraction *in and through* which phenomena obtain, unlike empiricist abstraction which is *abstraction from* the phenomena concerned.' In the latter, particulars are united only through species; whereas determinate abstraction picks up an internal relatedness in virtue of which terms 'form and reform, or constitute and reconstitute, other terms'. This logically stronger conception distinguishes dialectical totality from mere reciprocal interaction.

As Gunn points out, an illustration of 'empiricist abstraction' is to be found in Bob Jessop's recent paper where he 'corrects' the expression value 'form' to 'meta-form' on the grounds that commodity, money, and capital, are all (specifically different) value forms (see Bonefeld and Holloway (eds), *Post-fordism & Social Form: A Marxist Debate*, Macmillan, 1991). However, 'the mode of existence' of value is grasped only in the *comprehensive concept* of a self-differentiating totality whose internal moments are commodity, money and capital, which are nested within each other and enfold one another in an ever-moving mediatedness. It is simply impossible to give a neat definition of the concept of value form; it requires an *exposition* of its self-development. Psychopedis correctly argues here that 'the central issue of dialectical method' is 'the problem of the *exposition* of the categories (*Darstellung*)'.

The most relevant test case for the method advocated is capital, obviously. There seem to be two points at issue: (a) its ontological status, especially what is meant by characterising it as 'ideal', 'fetishized', 'topsy-turvey', 'false', etc.; (b) whether its

law of motion is simply a question of struggle and response.

Open Marxism claims that 'the central category of openness is that of critique' and that this critique 'moves within its object'. Backhaus's paper argues that Marx's work 'moves at once within philosophy and science' because the exchange relation creates a reality which is itself abstract; thus 'it is something conceptual the logic of which is quite different from that of the natural sciences' (Adorno). Critique gains its foothold in the gap between 'objective concept' and 'material existence'. However, Backhaus is also inclined to see in the objectivity of capital a mere reification of subjectivity, whereas Marx insisted on the 'objective validity' even of the fetishistic face of capital. Many contributors here are reluctant to admit that in a 'topsy-turvey' world the false is a moment of the true (to reverse an aphorism of Guy Debord).

Some of the authors are suspicious of *Capital* itself for speaking the language of capital. Cleavere calls for 'an inversion of class perspective' in the theory. Interestingly, a recent book by Mike Lebowitz (*Beyond 'Capital'*, Macmillan, 1992) argued that this would have been achieved if Marx had been able to produce his planned book on 'Wage Labour', the sequel to *Capital*. With regard to the problem of the alleged laws of motion of capital, most contributors clearly wish this to be reducible to class struggle. Thus Holloway writes that 'the reproduction of capital is not automatic: it is achieved through struggle'. Lebowitz put the same point more strikingly: 'Capital ... must defeat workers; it must negate its negation in order to posit itself.'

There is a lot in this book on the 'self-constitution of labour' (Negri) but not much on the 'self-constitution' of capital, although its disorganising power is recognised. With the contributors from Edinburgh in particular (Bonefeld, Gunn, Holloway), the refusal to theorise lines of development, periodisation, etc., of capital, issues in a voluntaristic politics that has little in common with Marxism as usually understood.

Chris Arthur

NATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer and Patricia Yaeger, eds, *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, London, Routledge, 1992. 451pp., £40 hb, £12.99 pb, 0 415 90432 3 hb, 0 415 90433 1 pb

Edna Longley, *From Cathleen to Anorexia*, Dublin, Attic Press, 1990. 24pp., £2.50 pb, 0 946211 99 X

Gerardine Meaney, *Sex and Nation: Women in Irish Culture and Politics*, Dublin, Attic Press, 1991. 23pp., £2.99 pb, 1 85594 015 9

From rape, snuff movies and homophobic neo-nazis to napalm bombings and 'accidental killings', sex and nation have emerged as constructs of cruelty and persecution; immune to reason, compromise and reconciliation, violent energies are stimulated by historical claims to national identity.

As its title suggests, *Nationalisms and Sexualities* picks up from the seminal work of George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* (1985). Mosse's book broke the habit of treating sex and nation as mutually independent and explored the ways in which European nationalism and bourgeois sexual mores emerged together at the end of the eighteenth century. While reminding the reader of their debt to Mosse, the editors draw attention to an important theoretical nuance which distinguishes their project from his. They

maintain that, while Mosse saw how these phenomena impinge on one another, he did not sufficiently acknowledge how neither nationalism nor sexuality are transhistorical monoliths.

While this argument does give scope to cultural diversity, it could also be used by the representatives of a benevolent paternalism which has long marked the relationship between imperial powers and their colonies. For what other justification exists for intellectuals from imperial and ex-imperial powers who, while criticising nationalism in their own country, unambiguously affirm it in the colony? Doesn't a peculiar form of patronising logic inform this standpoint? Terry Eagleton's *Field Day* pamphlet *Nationalism: Irony and Commitment* (1988), while fails to address Irish nationalism critically and instead reiterates a stale romanticism, is paradigmatic of such paternalism.

Doubts as to the automatic progressiveness of nationalism in colonies and former colonies are raised by a number of the contributors in *Nationalisms and Sexualities*. Gayatri Spivak's 'Woman in Difference: Mahasweta Devi's "Douloti the Bountiful"' examines the intersection of political elitism and the nation in the context of work by the contemporary Indian writer. Spivak uses Devi's critical portrayal of post-independence India to discuss ways in which Indian nationalism parallels the imperial nationalism against which it rebelled. Criticising Black American nationalism from a similar position, Joyce Hope Scott argues that

a patriarchal view of Black power led to the marginalisation of feminist concerns within this movement. And in a similar vein, Mary Layoun's 'Telling Spaces: Palestinian Women and the Engendering of National Narratives' describes how Palestinian women's participation in the *intifada* may subvert the hegemonic narratives underwriting the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Stephen Tifft's contribution, 'The Parricidal Phantasm: Irish Nationalism and the *Playboy* Riots', brings a fresh dimension to the debate with an analysis of coloniser and colonised as caught up in an Oedipal situation. Using the initial Irish nationalist outrage at Sygne's *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) (which charts the response of a group of villagers to the hero's attempted parricide), Tifft explores how later Irish nationalism took up the policy of 'triumph in failure' and its associated mythology of heroism, blood sacrifice and martyrdom. Tifft also analyses the public outrage at the presentation of Irish women as lascivious and unsentimental. Since the nation-as-woman myth depended upon an image of woman as chaste, dutiful, daughterly and maternal, this threatened the bourgeois decency of the nationalist cause. How could good respectable Catholics honour the cause of nationhood by fighting on behalf of a wanton woman?

Edna Longley's *From Cathleen to Anorexia* is a pertinent attempt to demythologise the Irish nationalist ideal of the virgin soil of Ireland. Longley subverts Yeats's image of Mother Ireland as an old woman transformable by those devoted rebel sons into a seductive beauty (Cathleen ni Houlihan). Instead, Longley portrays Ireland as a terminally-ill anorexic, whose death drive has over-ridden any instinct for preservation or reality principle. Not surprisingly, Longley's image has proved unpopular in Ireland where the image of the fertile emerald isle still holds much romantic nationalist appeal. It is an excellent piece of iconoclasm, but a number of Longley's claims may be challenged: her tendency to fall into another sentimentality concerning woman as passive victim and her over-estimation of the virtues of Ulster unionism are but the most obvious. Opposition to abortion, an embrace of traditional family values, close ties with that most patriarchal of organisations, the Orange Order, are all anathema to feminism, but appear to get forgotten in Longley's relatively appreciative remarks on unionism.

One critic who draws attention to such issues has been Gerardine Meaney, whose *Sex and Nation* is written as a vehement response to Longley's pamphlet. While Meaney concedes that the images of suffering Mother Ireland sustain a marginalisation of women in Irish society, she argues nevertheless that if women's voices are to be heard in the Irish political arena it must be from the nationalist platform. Her arguments are rather ill thought out. At one point her position is a strategic one: if women criticise nationalism, they'll be left out of Irish political life where so much hinges on this issue. But does this mean that one should go along with all the priorities of the received political agenda, as Meaney implies? If Irish nationalism (as the author acknowledges) has failed to face women's issues since 1922, why should it suddenly change? Indeed, a group of nationalist intellectuals, the Field Day Theatre Company, whom Meaney admires, have recently demonstrated their insensitivity to feminism in their editing policy of a massive three-volume anthology of Irish male writing. As a concession one further volume of female writing is currently being appended! The status of woman as afterthought is worryingly symbolic. Furthermore, coming from a state with Western Europe's worst record on women's rights, Meaney's argument looks like wishful thinking. Meaney goes so far as to attack Longley's intellectual integrity, accusing her of hijacking feminism solely for anti-nationalist purposes: 'Precisely because nationalism has proved so hostile to women, feminism offers a convenient cover for those who wish to attack any attempt to understand Ireland's past and present in terms of colonisation and decolonisation.' While Longley's refusal to understand the Irish past and present as caught up in the discourses of colonisation and decolonisation is, indeed, problematic, she nevertheless does draw attention to profound problems for women in nationalist ideology (which, as *Nationalisms and Sexualities* shows, are also faced in Palestine, India and Africa). However, it is depressing that criticism of an ideology which, along with the other dominant ideology in Northern Ireland, has failed to address the political polarisation of a community which has lived through twenty-four years of tragic violence, is dismissed as covert right-wing propaganda.

Kathleen Nutt

THE MAKING OF THE BRITISH MIDDLE CLASS

Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, London, Yale University Press, 1992. 429pp., £19.95 hb, 0 300 05737 7

Recently John Major rallied the Conservative Party conference with a speech which alluded to Britishness no less than 52 times (I'm told). And few politicians in the UK would have the nerve to scoff at his idea of the British national character. British freedoms, as Major told his approving audience, stretch back more than a thousand years; and who would dare to scorn such a National Heritage?

However, as Ernest Renan observed, 'getting the history wrong is part of being a nation.' And the truth is that the formation of the 'one united kingdom of Great Britain' belongs to the Age of Reason rather than the Dark Ages. To be precise, it dates from the Act of Union of 1707. (Wales had been joined to England in 1536, and Ireland was annexed to Britain in 1800.) Britain is therefore scarcely older than the proverbially young United States

of America. But, until Linda Colley got to work on it, its origins were left largely to political mythologists. Serious historians have found the idea of Britishness so superficial and jingoistic that they have preferred not to get involved with it. (The excellent three volumes of *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, 1989, edited by Raphael Samuel range very widely indeed, but it was only very late in the process of their preparation that the 'pleasant' word 'English' was replaced by the more accurate 'British' in the subtitle.)

Britons draws on a large range of evidence – particularly paintings and cartoons, and fresh researches into popular fears of invasion – in order to provide a vivid portrayal of the 'forging' of Britain from the Act of Union to the accession of Queen Victoria. The composition of 'Rule Britannia' (1740); the first public singing of 'God save the King' (1745) and its adoption as a 'national anthem' in the early 1800s, at about the same time as Blake wrote 'Jerusalem'; all these, together with the invention of

popular royal pageantry (the Jubilee of 1809) are set in the context not just of politics but of theatre, art, and theology: Britain as the modern Israel, God's chosen nation.

Early Britishness as Colley presents it went through three phases. In the first, the idea of Britain was bonded with protestantism, trade and manufacturing, and personal liberty. It was the mirror image of the popery, luxury, and arbitrary aristocracy of the hated France, an enemy in almost unbroken decades of war. British victory was sealed in the Treaty of Paris of 1763. But, as Colley shows, this triumph led on to a crisis of self-confidence. Britain found itself at the head of an unwieldy empire far beyond anything that could be justified in terms of protestantism or trade or liberty: its subjects included not only Quebec Catholics but also numerous non-Christian, non-white populations in Asia. It seemed that the burden might be too much for Britain to bear; and it was just a year after the Treaty of Paris that Edward Gibbon decided to chronicle the decline and fall of the Roman empire.

In the second phase of Britishness the ruling class began organising itself into a national unit. Boys were sent away from home to be educated together at public schools; patrician families from distant counties were joined by ties of marriage. And above all the royal family was reinvented. The installation of the Hanoverian dynasty in 1714 had been a desperate fix to prevent a Catholic succession; and the first two Georges, with their marked preference for everything German, and their partiality to the Whig cause, left something to be desired as national leaders. But George III, who succeeded in 1760 and reigned in poignant ordinariness, madness and pain for sixty years, hit on a new and winning formula. His qualities, as *The Times* wrote on his death in 1820, were 'imitable and attainable by *all classes* of mankind'.

Still, Britannia suffered a humiliating blow when the American colonies achieved independence in 1783. And the American revolution was followed by a French one only six years later. At first this could seem like the end of history: France was at last being persuaded of the value of the liberties which Britons had as their birthright. (The parallels 200 years later hardly need to be underlined.) But in 1793 Britain was at war with France again. Drawing on government surveys of British popular opinion in 1798 and 1803, Colley reveals how men of all classes and regions were able to see war with France as expressing their deepest interests, desires and ideals.

In this period, a new version of Britishness was hammered out. One of its elements was anti-slavery. It was a popular cause and, as Colley points out, it enabled the British to present themselves as truer friends of liberty than the self-righteous French or American revolutionaries. Another was gallantry. The execution of Marie Antoinette, and the death of many women at the guillotine, afforded British men and women a gratifying spectacle of French beastliness. Increasingly, the image of British monarchy was decked with womanly and family virtues. There was affection for Queen Charlotte, the domesticated and prolific consort of mad King George; adoration for naughty Princess Charlotte and grief when she died in childbirth aged 21; and sympathy for Queen Caroline, the rejected wife of the disliked George IV. (Colley speculates that the woman-worshipping motives which have led to the cult of the Virgin Mary in Catholic countries may have been transferred, in Britain, to the monarchy.)

At Waterloo in 1815, Britain defeated its eternal enemy, and had to fall back on a new and less warlike nationalism. Radical reformers designated themselves as British patriots, and 'God Save the King' and 'Rule Britannia' were played at their rallies. The Reform Act of 1832 was itself seen as an expression of Britishness: Lord John Russell told the Commons that 'the reformers were the nation'.

It is disappointing that *Britons* stops in 1837, when the young

Victoria took over what had been called 'the Queendom'. But the truncation sharpens Colley's argument. Her survey shows how Britishness provided the first inhabitants of Great Britain with a sense of their situation reasonably adapted to some not ignoble values and interests. Their Britishness could be a basis for humane, democratic and libertarian politics.

Colley's attempt to rehabilitate Britishness will strike many readers as reactionary, if not heretical. Where, we ask, are the Yorkshire radicals who were the heroes of Edward Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class*? Colley's answer is that Yorkshire is the only English county which deviates from the general pattern of popular patriotism. To other doubts, she may not have so easy an answer. Her descriptions of the class incidence of British patriotism are, perhaps unavoidably, more impressionistic than those of its geography, and the outlaws of Thompson's eighteenth century might have lived on a different planet. Also, she could have distinguished more clearly between those who feared France and those who were committed to a positive idea of Britain.

A remarkable portion of recent work on the theory of nationality has been conducted in the British isles, and has taken them as a leading theme; but it has been biased by sympathies with Welshness, Englishness, Scottishness and Irishness, at the expense of Britishness. These ideas, it has been assumed, represent worthier and more agreeable nations than the shoddy forgery which is Britain. Colley's marvellous book suggests that the contrast is not so great as has been supposed; and the theoretical and political implications are profound.

Jonathan Rée



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George E. McCarthy, ed., *Marx and Aristotle: Nineteenth-Century German Society and Classical Antiquity*, Savage, Maryland, Rowman and Littlefield, 1992. xi + 379pp., \$55 hb, \$22 pb, 0 8476 7713 3 hb, 0 8476 7714 1 pb

This collection of twelve essays concentrates on the earlier thought of Marx and the Hellenic influences on his intellectual development. While complementing McCarthy's *Marx and the Ancients: Classical Ethics, Social Justice and Nineteenth-Century Political Economy*, this book offers a thorough examination of the classical reference in Marx's thought. McCarthy presents Aristotle as of special importance, noting an Aristotelian imprint on *Capital* and the praise which Marx gave to Aristotle throughout his life (the 'greatest thinker of antiquity').

Most of the essays focus on the study programme which Marx undertook at Berlin University between 1839 and 1841. The starting point in a number of the contributions (particularly those of Horst Mewes, Michael DeGolyer and Steven Smith) is the context of nineteenth-century social theory which, through the German Enlightenment, assimilated classical aspirations and philosophical expectations to contemporary concerns. Marx's doctoral dissertation *On the Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature* anticipates his later critique of the contradictions of classical political economy. It is interesting that the young Marx drew from Aristotle's *On the Soul*, *Metaphysics*, *On the Generation of Animals*, *Physics*, *On Becoming and Decaying* and *On the Heavens*, whilst his later studies mostly used the *Politics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

The book surveys the environment in which Greek thought took hold of the German intelligentsia around the close of the eighteenth century, instigating the *Griechensehnsucht* (longing for Greece) in German philosophy. This influence is recognised by David Depew and Steven Smith in the work of Hegel, the 'German Aristotle'. Smith offers a challenging discussion on the sources of the dialectic leading up to Marx through Hegel and including a crucial reference to Socratic and neo-Platonic thought – something which McCarthy neglects. In the second section Laurence Barovitch concentrates on Marx's dissertation, and Michael DeGolyer's essay 'The Greek Accent of the Marxian Matrix' summarises the central tenets of McCarthy's whole project by defining a theory of justice which runs from Hellenic philosophy through to *Capital*.

Section three focuses more problematically on self realisation (Martha Nussbaum, Philip Kain and William Booth) and the way in which Marx and Aristotle confronted both its individual and its social aspects. The tension is brought out in Aristotle's criticism of Sparta and the highlighting of the economic elements of Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* at the expense of other elements (Nussbaum in particular). This is also evident in Booth's comparison of the *oikos* (household) economy of the ancients, the factory system and communism. This approach presents Aristotle's 'economic theory' as a precursor to Marx's work.

The final section introduces a fruitful discussion on the good life as the expression of species being, challenging utilitarian and natural rights theories (Richard Miller). Alan Gilbert develops this critique by presenting Marx as a moral realist, relating this to Aristotle's theory of *eudaimonia* (happiness). This represents perhaps the most coherent argument in the book. A further step is taken by Joseph Margolis, who not only confronts McCarthy's thesis on the relationship between Aristotle and Marx, but also takes on Allen Wood's 'Aristotelian Marx' (from his *Karl Marx*), emphasising a theory of *praxis* and the need to overcome the essentialist reference in Aristotle's thought. The book concludes with Tom Rockmore's historical survey from Greece through to Marx via Christianity, Descartes, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, in which he reasserts the Aristotelianism of Marx.

In his introduction McCarthy states that much work is still to be done on Marx and the Greeks. Perhaps the most constructive exegesis in this project was offered by Margolis in that, in true Socratic style, he questioned McCarthy's thesis. For his sins he was left out of the list of contributors at the back of the book!

Gerard McCann

Oswald Hanfling, ed., *Philosophical Aesthetics: An Introduction*, Oxford UK and Cambridge USA, Blackwell in association with The Open University, 1992. xxvi + 483pp., £35 hb, £10.95 pb, 0 631 18034 6 hb, 0 631 18035 4 pb

Written for the Open University's 'Philosophy and the Arts' course, *Philosophical Aesthetics* is a collection of eleven essays, each devoted to one of 'the main areas of interest in the subject'. These are identified from the viewpoint of twentieth-century 'Anglo-Saxon' discussions. The two concluding essays by Stuart Sim on 'Continental' and Marxist aesthetics seem torn

between the urge for broad gestures towards views over the fence, and the constraints of conforming to the topic-based pattern established earlier.

Although grouped under the (rather predictable) headings: 'What is Art?', 'Art and Feeling', 'Art, World and Society' and 'Art and Value', individual essays are meant to be readable in isolation, and each seeks to establish its own initial purchase on the reader's understanding. There is a pleasing sense that the volume is trying to escape what used to be called 'the dreariness of aesthetics', and to avoid the sense of myopic burrowing, arbitrary aridity, and the tube-mapping of issues, which students persist in finding in even the best analytical writings in the area.

Pedagogical deployment has its costs, however. Lines of argument sometimes become diffused or displaced by the urge to give tours of the literature and establish pedigrees, and introductoriness can become tinged with complacency if it leaves the impression that the existence of a problem is more important than the need to solve it.

A bit more could also have been done to integrate the overall package without threatening either the volume's diversity or the independence of contributors. While, for instance, it is very nice to find a philosophy book with pictures in it (four of them in colour), not much use is made of them. It would surely be possible – and certainly more fun – for common agreement on a set of visual examples to make such illustrations into meeting points for a variety of issues (and such an accumulation might even turn philosophical insight into critical illumination).

The range of historical reference, to major philosophers and figures from the history of criticism, is wide but selective. From the high canon, Plato figures perhaps too much, Aristotle too little. Schopenhauer is prominent; Kant gets a place of honour, but little substance, as the complexities of 'The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement' are skirted. There is no mention of Hegel: a symptomatic omission since, despite names from the nearer and further past at every turn, history is present only in a very two-dimensional way. An unprimed reader could be forgiven the impression that historical differences offer only complication and curiosities, or early botched attempts at answering twentieth-century questions. There is only a pallid or intermittent awareness of theoretical thought originating in symbiotic relationship with the forms and preoccupations of the arts themselves, rather than a quest for retrospective definition. This loosening of the most vital connection between theory and practice cannot entirely be shrugged off as a matter

of differing philosophical predilections, since people come to the philosophy of art in order to learn about art, not philosophical technique.

There is also little in the volume relevant to such questions as the nature of innovation, change, progress, or the transformational character of art. One cannot have everything; and such omissions are not exactly uncommon in analytical literature. But they are especially regrettable perhaps in a textbook for today. One cannot get far in this area without either colliding or colluding with the thought that such things are uniquely exhibited within the arts of Western culture. By entering such an arena of real (and painful) issues a work like *Philosophical Aesthetics* would be well on the way to transcending, or at least examining, its own Eurocentricity.

Barry Camp

Julian Young, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992. 170pp., £27.95 hb, 0 521 41124 6

The fragmented nature of the Nietzsche corpus (not only its largely aphoristic character, but also the problem of the *Nachlass* and of the status of the *Will to Power* collection) not only invites, but rather demands systematic reconstruction. Julian Young does this with remarkable method and clarity. Young's strategy is diachronic. He follows the development of Nietzsche's aesthetics through four stages, each named after one of his books: *The Birth of Tragedy*; *Human, All-too-human*; *The Gay Science*; and *Twilight of the Idols*. The starting point of the development lies in Nietzsche's debt to Schopenhauer (the first chapter is an exposition of Schopenhauer's aesthetics) and the main argumentative thread is Nietzsche's fidelity to this intellectual origin, which he sought to eradicate in the intermediate stages, only to come back to it in the last stage. The main thesis, therefore, is controversial – it makes Nietzsche, in spite of several changes of heart, fundamentally a pessimist, and the Apollonian/Dionysian contrast in *The Birth of Tragedy* the key to Nietzsche's theory of art. The diachronic treatment of Nietzsche is welcome, as it prevents Young from bulldozing a synchronic interpretation through a variable and contradictory corpus. The single-mindedness of the thesis, even if on the whole it is convincingly argued, involves a few disadvantages: not only is *The Will to Power* excluded from the corpus (a standard practice since the Colli-Montinari edition, but one which makes it

difficult to read important older interpretations of Nietzsche, Heidegger's or Deleuze's for instance), but *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is hardly considered at all, which is more surprising. Definitely a book to read, if only for its exposition of the Schopenhauer-Nietzsche tradition.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle

Norman K. Denzin, *Symbolic Interactionism and Cultural Studies: The Politics of Interpretation*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992. xviii + 217pp., £40 hb, £12.95 pb, 1 55786 059 9 hb, 1 55786 291 5 pb

Symbolic Interactionist (S.I.) sociology is an amalgam of German idealist philosophy and American pragmatism. This book shows what happens when S.I. meets the structural and poststructural influences of cultural studies. It also provides a history of different trends within S.I. and a critical reading of classic interpretative studies within this tradition.

One of the strengths of this approach is its development of a notion of an intersubjective Other, through which understanding of the predicament of actual others, and therefore communication itself, is possible. As Denzin observes, however, it is a peculiarity of S.I. that it has little or nothing to do with those writers who developed the idea of intersubjectivity most thoroughly in sociology, namely the phenomenological current around Schütz. This is seen as a mark of its isolation from European influences, but also of its pragmatist resistance to European concerns with totalisation and the transcendental subject.

S.I. has traditionally focussed upon the predicaments of the socially marginalised, in small-scale social milieux: drug-takers, small-time thieves, jazz musicians, gangsters, asylum and prison inmates. It is Denzin's contention that such studies are in essence culturally unreflexive. Although the interactionist project is to see how 'underdogs' define their situation, the approach seems to fall into the same trap as positivist functionalism, namely that people's accounts are given only one meaning, to which the sociologist has direct access. The same problem arises in relation to the canonical texts of S.I. The disagreements about what G. H. Mead actually said, Denzin argues, rest upon the constitutive ambiguities of his writings, whereas the protagonists in these debates construe them as either correct or mistaken interpretations.

Contemporary developments in interactionism show a greater sophistica-

tion through theories of representation and textual analysis, for example, but these innovations are highly contested and, as yet, remain marginal to S.I. in the United States. Denzin is at his strongest in describing the advantages to S.I. of cultural studies in the tradition of Williams, Hall et al. These serve as a corrective to mainstream interactionist writing. In S.I. media studies, for example, as with the work of Adorno and Horkheimer, the individual is regarded as a passive recipient of meanings and values propagated by the larger structure of society, rather than as actively engaged in reworking or contesting dominant meanings.

Denzin attempts to shift away from the 'centred' subject. He tries to exorcise the paradox of individual creativity being mirrored by passivity, which has plagued S.I. since its formulation by Mead as a 'sociology of consciousness'. In this framework one person's defining is another person's definition. There is no possibility of resistance to labelling, and arguably S.I. is consistent in denying such ground, since to do so would raise the anti-pragmatic spectre of an ontology of selfhood. On the other hand, a cultural studies approach would, it seems, at least provide some place where the subject might *endure*, if only in 'narratives', 'texts' or other signifying structures.

It is clear that there is a strong affinity between the core concepts of cultural studies and interactionism in so far as both see social processes as constituted symbolically. However, for cultural studies, the 'decentred subject' *does* raise issues of social ontology, even if this takes the form of historical relativism. Denzin's reluctance to grasp this particular nettle suggests the continuing weight of the pragmatist influence in S.I. Moreover, his opposition to totalising sociology or 'grand narratives' shows the striking resonance between interactionism's on-going rejection of the possibility of grasping macro-structure and the 'postmodern', fragmentary moment of cultural studies. However, he suggests that intersubjective understanding is possible when individuals move from one cultural milieu to another because they *do* totalise new social relations in terms of the symbolic content of the old.

This is a courageous attempt to drag interactionism away from the backwoods of US sociology. It deserves to be read because it offers a good argument for a more complex and comprehensive approach to 'putting oneself in the place of the other'.

Howard Feather