REVIEWS

HEGEL CONTRA NIETZSCHE

Stephen Houlgate, *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, 300 pp, £27.50 hb

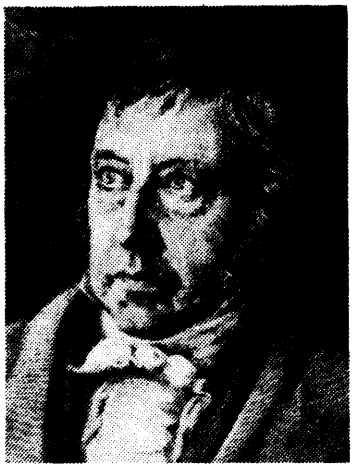
In this closely argued and ambitious book Stephen Houlgate presents an Hegelian critique of Nietzsche. The essence of this critique is that Nietzsche's thought is insufficiently dialectical at crucial points, with the result that he falls into the kind of metaphysical oppositions that he criticises so much in others, and which in some respects he had tried so hard to undermine. By contrast, Houlgate argues, Hegel succeeded in overcoming all such oppositions, so that it is he, and not Nietzsche, who really offers us a consistent criticism of metaphysics.

After reviewing the literature on the relation between Hegel and Nietzsche, and discussing Nietzsche's view of Hegel, in the third chapter Houlgate analyses Nietzsche's attitude towards metaphysics. The primary characteristic of metaphysical thinking which Nietzsche criticises is its hostility to becoming, and its consequent postulation of a world of being behind the world of flux and transience. Houlgate argues that the main thrust of Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics is aimed at overcoming this and other oppositions (for example, between substance and attribute), so that in this respect his thought has clear dialectical elements. Houlgate goes on to argue that it is Nietzsche's desire to sweep away the metaphysical dichotomy of being and becoming that leads him to his well-known critique of language, as in Nietzsche's view it is our linguistic forms that are guilty of reinforcing our misguided belief in the stable world of being. Nietzsche argues that language and consciousness are unable to do justice to the flux and movement of life and feeling, so that the 'truths' we express in language can be nothing more than fictions.

However, in opposing language and thought on the one hand to life on the other, Houlgate argues that Nietzsche is guilty of returning to the kind of oppositional thinking that he had criticised as metaphysical: 'Within his own terms, therefore, Nietzsche remains a metaphysical thinker because he employs a metaphysical distinction in order to reject metaphysical categories' (p. 90). According to Houlgate, although Nietzsche is pledged to overcoming the opposition between a 'real world' of being and an 'apparent world' of becoming, he only manages to do so by introducing a more fundamental opposition between life and language; and this in fact simply reinforces the original opposition between being and becoming that he had initially sought to overcome. In this way, metaphysical contradictions remain at the heart of Nietzsche's philosophy, so that his critique of metaphysics turns out to be neither consistent nor complete.

Houlgate then goes on, in the fourth chapter, to contrast Nietzsche's approach to that of Hegel. He argues that although Hegel shared Nietzsche's desire to get rid of the oppositional thinking of metaphysics, Hegel is better able to carry out a thoroughgoing criticism of this mode of thinking because he manages to overcome the opposition between language and life, and between being and becoming, that Nietzsche leaves standing. According to Houlgate, a major reason why Hegel succeeds where Nietzsche failed is that whereas Nietzsche had criticised metaphysics using the external standard of life, Hegel's critique of metaphysical thinking is immanent , allowing the categories of metaphysics to reveal their one-sidedness for themselves. Thus, Houlgate argues, Hegel does not proceed by contrasting the fixed and static categories of metaphysics to the flux and transitoriness of life, as Nietzsche had done; rather, he undermines the fixity of these categories internally by showing the contradictoriness of such fixity. It follows that whereas Nietzsche's critique had criticised metaphysics by relying on the kind of oppositional procedure that is itself metaphysical, Hegel's immanent critique sets up no such external opposition, so that his dialectical approach offers a real alternative to the dichotomies of metaphysics.

In the fifth chapter Houlgate looks at some of the details of this approach, with an analysis of Hegel's claim that his philosophy is 'without foundations', and a discussion of Hegel's conception of the speculative sentence. Then, in the following two chapters, Houlgate considers Hegel's treatment of the dialectical character of the judgement and of the modes of consciousness in the Phenomenology. Throughout Houlgate emphasises that Hegel's



critique of the unspeculative forms of judgement and of finite consciousness is thoroughly immanent. In the case of the forms of judgement, Hegel shares Nietzsche's view that the apparent distinction between subject and predicate in ordinary language leads to a metaphysical conception of the subject as a stable entity or thing; but, unlike Nietzsche, he undermines this conception by revealing the dialectical relation of subject and predicate in the judgement, rather than simply dismissing it as alien to the movement of life. In the case of forms of consciousness in the Phenomenology, Houlgate argues that Hegel's procedure is equally immanent, which again he contrasts to Nietzsche's method of external critique.

Now, although I go along with the contrast Houlgate draws between Nietzsche's method of criticising metaphysics and Hegel's, I am still not entirely convinced by Houlgate's attempt to undermine Nietzsche's position using Hegelian arguments. The main reason why I have some reservations is that it seems to me Nietzsche or a Nietzschean would not find enough in Houlgate's account to compel him to adopt the Hegelian method of immanent criticism. After all, there are many features of that method – its Socratic claim to truth, its rationalism, its absoluteness – that would clearly make it inimical to Nietzsche's cast of thought, and so unsuitable for him as a methodology.

Moreover, I do not agree with Houlgate's claim that the oppositions which remain in Nietzsche's thought – between being and becoming, and appearance and reality – do so solely as a result of his failure to adopt the Hegelian method of immanent critique. I would argue, for example, that Nietzsche retains an opposition between dynamic life and the language of being not simply because he fails to follow the Hegelian method, but because he believes there are good positive reasons why becoming cannot be captured in the categories of ordinary consciousness. In this case and in others, therefore, it is Nietzsche's reasons for retaining certain crucial antitheses that need to be carefully examined and discredited, rather than explained away as a result of his failure to follow Hegel's method of immanent criticism.

I therefore think a more promising line for an Hegelian to take against the Nietzschean position is one hinted at by Houlgate, but not fully developed by him: that is, to argue that Hegel is able to overcome Nietzsche's opposition between language and life because his dialectical analysis of the limited categories of metaphysics recasts language and thought into forms that no longer leave them in opposition to becoming, but in fact enable them to give full expression to the world of movement and life. According to this view, therefore, with Hegel's developmental and unified account of the categories of thought is no longer confined to being on the one hand, in opposition to becoming on the other; rather, his dialectical critique and transformation of the categories and forms of judgement enable thought to be united with the world of becoming, and so allow Hegel to overcome the fundamental metaphysical opposition between life and thought that in Nietzsche's philosophy had always remained.

In the final chapter of his book, Houlgate offers a comparison of the views of Hegel and Nietzsche on tragedy. Houlgate uses the contrast in methodological approaches that he developed in the previous chapters to argue that Nietzsche's oppositional thinking leads him to an asocial conception of the individual, whereas Hegel's more dialectical approach means he can unify Nietzschean subjectivity with a social view of the individual. According to Houlgate, this explains the difference between the analysis Nietzsche and Hegel give of tragedy, and in particular explains why for Hegel tragedy is essentially a critique of one-sidedness and individuality of the hero, whereas for Nietzsche such one-sidedness is beyond criticism. Though much of Houlgate's discussion here is acute and interesting, I am not entirely convinced by his attempt to tie their views on tragedy to the methodological differences between Hegel's and Nietzsche's criticism of metaphysics, as presented in the preceding chapters.

This book by Houlgate nonetheless offers an illuminating and insightful account of the difference between the critical methodologies of Nietzsche and Hegel, while doing much to establish that in some respects they shared similar objectives. Houlgate is most successful, I believe, in showing that from an Hegelian perspective Nietzsche was insufficiently dialectical in his approach to the criticism of metaphysics. He is less successful, however, in showing that Hegel in fact represents a self-consistent 'sublation' of the Nietzschean project: Nietzsche, it seems to me, is too idiosyncratic to be encompassed within Hegelianism in this way, and too different from Hegel in important respects to make this 'sublation' possible. Of course, this failure to 'sublate' a viewpoint different from his own would only trouble an Hegelian philosopher, and on anything other than these Hegelian grounds Houlgate's book may be counted a considerable achievement.

R. A. Stern

FEMINIST VOICES

Jean Grimshaw, *Feminist Philosophers: Women's Perspectives on Philosophical Traditions*, Wheatsheaf Books, 1986, 280pp.

This is an excellent book. Jean Grimshaw's careful and perceptive discussion both illuminates key concerns within philosophy and feminism, and provides a much needed resource for philosophers contributing to women's studies courses and those concerned with traditional philosophical questions (on human nature, the self, autonomy, ethical theory), who badly need the input of a feminist perspective. Her project, an investigation of the inter-action of philosophy and feminism, proceeds in two inter-connected ways. Firstly she considers the sense in which philosophy may be considered 'male', and the difficulties attaching to the view that there are distinct 'male' and 'female' voices in philosophy. Secondly, she identifies 'some central tensions in feminist thinking ... and some of the ways in which they have generated both a use and critique of philosophical theories and traditions' (p. 254). In the process she demonstrates how indispensable feminism and philosophy are for each other.

There are some obvious ways in which philosophy can be said to be male which Jean Grimshaw points out. Its professional practice has been predominantly by men. When they have addressed the question of women's nature they have given accounts in which women explicitly or implicitly are regarded as inferior, less fully human or moral than men. Moreover it is not always possible to detach the views which philosophers have held of women and leave the rest of their philosophical theories intact. (This is illustrated by reference to Locke's theory of property.) What, however, is much more problematic is whether it is possible to identify 'male' and 'female' voices in philosophy in the way suggested in some recent feminist writing. Such writing has two important components. Firstly it makes use of the work of 'object-relations' theorists, especially Nancy Chodorow, to suggest that distinctive male and female gender characteristics can be explained by the fact that it is women who raise children, and in relation to whom young children define their own identities. Secondly there is an assumption that from these distinct gender characteristics we can read off male and female approaches to philosophical questions. For example: male approaches stress individualism both in metaphysics and social and political theory, they pose a clear separation of mind and body, they set up oppositions between reason and emotion; female approaches stress interdependence, the connection of mind and body and the rationality of emotion.

Jean Grimshaw is rightly worried by such arguments. They assume an a-historical polarization of male and female gender characteristics; whereas, although gender is always a significant differential, the characteristics associated with men and women vary significantly both historically and across class and race. Moreover in philosophy there is no unified set of positions which can be considered male, or female. To insist otherwise is to do violence not only to the diversity of male and female viewpoints, but also to the history of philosophy. 'Whatever theme or opposition is identified as male, it is always possible to find male philosophers who have profoundly disagreed' (p. 66). 'Jane Flax, for example, picks out a denial of the social and interactive character of human development and a fear of sexuality and the body as characteristically male themes. But what are we then to make of Hegel, Marx or Bradley?' (p. 68). It might seem that we should conclude from this that there is no distinctive feminist perspective in philosophy; but this is not what Jean Grimshaw intends. Indeed the importance of such a perspective is displayed throughout the book. What exactly it consists in, I shall return to below.

In the second part of the book major philosophical questions are addressed in the process of exploring problematics within feminist thinking. In her discussion of 'Human Nature and Women's Nature', Jean Grimshaw sees the dangers and acute philosophical difficulties in espousing a view of an essential female nature (whether for anti-feminist or radical feminist purposes), and posing a strict divide between nature and culture. The difficulty facing feminists, which reflects the general philosophical issue, is that of arguing that certain social and political structures do violence to the humanity of women, without being committed to an authentic nature or self which will simply emerge if those structures are removed.

These concerns are re-echoed in the central tension which the book explores, which is the relation between the ideals of autonomy and inter-dependence found in feminist writings. In the work of some feminist writers (Simone de Beauvoir, Mary Daly) there is an insistence that women free themselves by a pursuit of their own individual and authentic interests, pursuing their own autonomy and rejecting the demands of altruism and self-sacrifice which have formed a key part of the mechanisms of their domination and oppression. This is, of course, a manifestation within feminist thought of liberal individualism. Other feminist writers, however, have seen the position of women as providing just the perception required to criticize both the psychological egoism and abstract individualism such a view of autonomy presupposes. Women, characteristically engaged in childcare, and caring for the

sick and needy see both the interdependency of people's needs and desires, and the problems faced by a model of society in which there is no indication of how the needy and dependent, especially children, are to be cared for at all. Such a critique Jean Grimshaw articulates and agrees with. It is however frequently accompanied, in feminist writing, by an assertion that the position of women in society gives them a set of values and perspectives which are theoretically and ethically superior to those of men, values and perspectives which derive from the ideals of nurturing and caring which result from their mothering role. This position is one which she finds problematic. It assumes, firstly, that there is a unitary

perspective and set of values that women adopt, ignoring the diversity pointed out earlier in the book. Moreover it ignores the fact that women's conceptualizations of their world and the strategies and codes of behaviour which they have developed to accommodate themselves to it have evolved from positions of *weakness*, and often reflect the dominant ideology of those in power. As a consequence our ideals of 'caring' need rethinking in a way that does not presuppose positions of exploitation, just as our ideal of 'autonomy' needs rethinking to avoid the pitfalls of egoism and individualism.

What such a discussion helps to make clear is the sense we can make of the notion of a feminist perspective, once we have rejected the claim that it consists of a unitary 'women's' voice. One way of articulating this might be the following. A feminist perspective tests the validity of certain theories (social, political, philosophical, ethical) against the characteristic and often diverse experiences and viewpoints of women. This is not to say that such experiences and viewpoints are necessarily self-authenticating. As Jean Grimshaw points out, given that they often conflict we could only accept their necessary authenticity if we abandoned all claims to validity and correctness. Our theories, however, need to be able to explain and accommodate what is contained in such viewpoints, and to do this we need to attend to them. This was displayed in the discussion outlined above. Women's characteristic labour puts them in a position from which flaws in certain ideals of autonomy become visible (which is not to claim that they are always seen). However, the ethical ideals which women, in a position to provide such a critique, espouse, are not themselves to be accepted uncritically. For when we attend to what determines their own disadvantages and address what is required for their well-being we recognize that their own ideals can work against them. What this indicates is that attending to the position of women require a reworking and re-articulation of notions of both autonomy and interdependence. Moreover, the theories which will emerge from such reworking will need to be worked for. No-one will have easy access to them, simply in virtue of being a woman. Such an account of what constitutes a feminist perspective owes much to Marxist claims that from certain positions in society dominant modes of conceptualization *can* (which is not to say will) be seen to be deficient. What needs emphasizing is that occupancy of such positions gives no easy access to the reconceptualizations required to correct such deficiency. Jean Grimshaw doesn't articulate what is involved in adopting a feminist perspective in quite this way, but her strategy in the book appears to conform to it. What is so impressive about her writing is her suspicion of crude polarities, in philosophical or feminist theory. Such polarities, on a range of issues over and above those considered here, the mutual inter-action, in her hands, of both feminism and philosophy, does much to dispel. This book should be read by philosophers, whether or not they consider themselves interested in the position of women. As one would expect from a feminist perspective, adopting it sheds light on more than just (just?) that!

Kathleen Lennon

LOGIC, PROGRESS AND HOPE

Raymond Boudon, *Theories of Social Change: A Critical Appraisal*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1986, 253pp.

Whereas the post-modern attack upon structuralism in France tends to attract our attention, there is also a strand of contemporary thought there which has adapted some of the tools of logical empiricism against the same target, and looks fruitful when the tools are updated and re-imported. So it is with Raymond Boudon's work. More sociological theory than philosophy pure and simple, its aims is to identify some logical space for an intellectual genre with a long and often politically radical history: theories of social change, or, as they were known in the past, philosophies of history. This genre has, of course, been in thoroughly bad odour since Popper used logic and individualism to construct a notion of social science that disinherited it. Yet Boudon, with a quite explicit respect for Popper, uses the same logic to redefine the theories' character and their role. He wishes to rehabilitate them because of the very persistence with which they are built and re-built in spite of being endlessly found wanting by comparison with the out-turn of events.

Boudon's strategy is to develop a typology of theories of change, demonstrate the risks of each version, and then argue that they must be only 'conjectural' or 'formal theories', rather than scientific ones in the acknowledged sense. The typology takes the reader through theories that focus upon trends, structural conditions, the form change takes or the special priority of certain types of cause. But whatever the type, the lesson drawn is that the habit of elevating theories of change to a scientific status which puts them, as it were, above their station only ends in their rout at the hands of a Nisbet or a Simmel.

The typological section of the book, with its painstaking account of numerous cases matched by a somewhat repetitive strategy for critique, can drag at times. But what follows is more interesting. One of the advantages, Boudon argues, of shifting theories of social change into a formal role is that room is then left for a 'well-tempered determinism'. This version of determinism takes its general inspiration from the strategy of René Thom's mathematicisation of the unpredictable in catastrophe theory. It then takes its particular mathematical model from so-called 'Cournot effects', whereby modelling the impossibility of closure in a situation is no bar to its formal representation. Boudon's point is to argue that there is nothing inherently unscientific in theorising unpredictability if that is the situation one has to deal with in the thing under study. Likewise, he goes on, social science can be perfectly scientific even where it constructs theories of change which preserve the possibility that the closed situation they portray may prove to be, or may become an open situation (and thus a matter of 'chance' in the real world) as it develops. 'Chance is therefore not *nothing*. It is a particular form that sets of cause/effects linkings *as perceived by a real observer* can take on' (p. 178).

The outcome of this reconsideration of theories of social change is that their ontological status is considerably altered; for the possibility that the enclosed system of the theory will be breached in the real world is willingly embraced. They are only formal theories precisely in order to allow that possibility of opening which has, according to Boudon, either to be written into the very terms or the general status of a theory of social change.

Boudon holds this loss of ontological solidity to be acceptable or even advantageous. We are left with humbler 'ideal models and categories which it would be hard to describe as valueless in the analysis of social change' (p. 211).

The chief theoretical loss is, of course, realism, particularly contemporary structuralist realism which holds that analytic structures set out in scientific theories refer to a real order apart from the merely empirical (though it is fair to add that Boudon would equally reject the naturalism which holds that the empirical is all there is for social science). Boudon's position leads to a quite explicit recovery of the anti-realist position of Weber and Simmel. What has to be asked, then, is whether this switch from realism to an idealism learnt from the post-Kantian dispensation of Weber is worth the price? What is the price? Opponents of Weberian idealism in social theory could cite the justifiably bad reputation of 'value-free' social science a decade or two ago; but with more modern accounts of what Weber meant and the advance of committed social thought since then, that particular unthinking aloofness of the social scientist now appears a thing of the past.

Advocates of realism, on the other hand, would argue that it offers two things not to be lightly given up: a general account of the status of knowledge in terms of its reference to a postulated reality, and a clear distinction between ideology and science with which to order the activity of the 'scientific' social scientist. For the first, the real substance of the supposed gains in realism is too broad an issue for the scope of a short review. As for the second, Boudon can easily draw attention to the corresponding evils which result from social science's being too rigidly set apart from the empirical world and ideology, and argue that this sort of realism reproduces in science one of the characteristic dangers of ideology itself. 'The illusion of realism is deeply rooted in social science,' he writes (p. 220), 'because it is an essential device in the creation of ideologies.' For such a rigid demarcation from common opinion may render it immune to lived social experience. Thus Boudon criticises Marxism, along with other 'structural' social theory, for a tendency to react to the trying difference between theory and the world by condemning 'the *unreasonableness* of the actors involved' (p. 113). The 'ideal models and categories' he commends, though they may sound feeble, are intended to achieve just that distance from given reality which is analytical and yet also flexible vis-a-vis lived experience and human agency:

> Properly interpreted – that is in a formal and not a realist way – the explanatory models provided by the social sciences are indispensable tools for the understanding of reality. Their effectiveness, however, does not come from any rejection of the claims of diversity, contingency and disorder, but from the fact that they *preserve* them. Refusing to recognise them is an essential feature of ideological thought (p. 221).

Here the echo of Popper's case against a science dealing with social change is at its most evident in Boudon's thinking. Yet so is his humanity, in the wish to facilitate both optimism and flexibility in our belief in social change. These virtues preserve the force and the progressiveness that Popper could once claim. Yet Boudon has perhaps too willingly taken on board the philosophical cast of Popperianism, which has its dogmatism too. It is strange that a full chapter on the difficulties of aggregating individual action does not deter him from his insistence upon methodological individualism. And it is ironic to find such a politically and practically laudable position sustained on the basis of a notion of sicentificity (Popper's) which has by now had to be virtually redefined out of existence by its proponents. Yet this remains an interesting attempt to make a place for the intellectual struggle to predict or master the direction of social change.

Noel Parker

SOCIALIST WAYS

Christopher Pierson, *Marxist Theory and Democratic Politics*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986, 229pp, £25 hb.

Pierson's chief aim is to explore the development of Marxist political theory from the 1840s through its adaptation to the actualities of (chiefly Western) social democratic governments in the 20th century. Over a third of the book reviews the 19th-century historical background, concentrating upon Marx but detailing debates between Lenin, Bernstein, Kautsky, Luxemburg and others. With respect to Marx, Pierson is chiefly concerned to deny (against Hunt, Avineri and others) that the young Marx was a radical parliamentary democrat, seeing his search for 'democracy' as considerably more utopian. After 1845 Marx vacillated between a radical decentralist model and a quasi-Saint Simonian centralized administrative model. His conception of the political path to socialism, too, can be seen as alternating between parliamentarism and a rejection of any pursuit of universal suffrage by the working classes. Marx's propensity to identify parliamentary institutions too closely with narrow economic interests, and the flaws of his subsumption of 'formal, political' rights under future productive administration are also discussed. Pierson challenges most of the root assumptions of Marx's notion of 'true democracy', and the weaknesses of his notion of representative institutions and democratic practices are also stressed.

Some of Marx's political ambiguity could be exploited by his later followers. Nonetheless the Bernsteinian break into socialist parliamentarism and gradualism was a clear departure from Marx's chief emphases, while Bernstein's chief opponents, Kautsky and Luxemburg, were themselves divided on the question of political tactics and theory, with Kautsky emphasising the parliamentary road to socialism and the shifting character of parliamentary institutions under working class control, as well as rejecting the need for direct legislative control and anti-centralist institutions, and Luxemburg denigrating parliamentary institutions as

fundamentally bourgeois. This debate was of course supplanted by the Bolshevik contest with Kautsky over the necessity for revolutionary and proletarian dictatorship, with Kautsky denying that anything but broadly-based democracy was compatible with socialism, and Lenin and Trotsky scathingly denouncing such regressions, and rejecting parliamentary institutions as 'essentially' bourgeois and merely one segment of the state to be dismantled in the future, to be replaced by something like the system of direct rule of the Paris Commune, and eventually by the complete abolition of any coercive apparatus. Nonetheless both Kautsky and Lenin are here taken to task for underestimating the historic achievements of both central and local democracy, and conflating the practice of 'politics' with the mobilisation of economic interests.

The second third of the book considers two local socialist discussions about the road to democratic socialism, the Italian and the Swedish. Here Pierson's aim is to show how the Marxist heritage has been adapted to varying national circumstances and strategies, firstly by concentrating upon the PCI's 'Third Road' to socialism, with a review of Gramsci, Togliatti and others which concludes that the Italian path is in fact akin to the classical Bernsteinian strategy, and secondly by briefly presenting Sweden's 'historical compromise' between capitalism and democratic socialism, and gradualist path of socialist development. Though the possibility of other types of developed socialist democracy might have been considered, this review of two influential models is useful.

In his final section Pierson tackles three questions: the problem of power in socialist theory and practice, the issue of socialist 'rights', and the credibility of a 'socialist politics' which is not a contradiction in terms. Alternative views of state power by Poulantzas, Offe and others are reviewed, and much of the recent English-language literature summarised, collectively, as denying that the state directly 'reflects' the economic interests of a single class, that it can be simply 'seized', or that it will 'wither away'. The wish to abolish the distinction between state and civil society is also condemned, as is the wholesale replacement of representative by direct democracy. The possibility of socialist rights is vindicated, and a stout defence offered of the viability of a socialist politics purged of utopian and anti-democratic assumptions. This is an excellent and compelling introduction to the subject, an exhaustive summary of the issues as presented in recent debates, and a persuasive case for the socialist rejection of much of the classical Marxist view of politics. It deserves to be widely read and reflected upon.

Gregory Claeys

UTOPIAN THEMES

Krishan Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987, 506pp, £24.50 hb.

The core of this book consists of detailed analysis of five modern works. Broadly speaking these can be divided into three utopias – Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, H. G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia*, and *Walden Two* by B. F. Skinner – and two dystopias, namely Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It is worth stressing the imprecise nature of this distinction, for one of the many merits of Kumar's work is its disclosure of the complex relationship between utopia and anti-utopia. The problems of definition (one person's utopia can be another's dystopia) or how, for example, they feed off each other, or how a single text can contain elements of both, or how the same author can oscillate over time between the two modes – these issues are all explored.

In the opening sections Kumar tackles the question of why people produce utopias. In what seems a rather restrictive definition he sees the utopian mode as a modern Western phenomenon. He explicitly rules out the idea of a classical or Christian utopia and of the non-Western utopia (conceding only that China comes closest in this respect). Ernst Bloch's 'principle of hope', as a ubiquitous human attribute, is for this reason rejected. Insofar as this represents a concern with historical and geographical specificity it is to be applauded. Elsewhere Kumar himself appears to be flirting with the idea of a 'utopian impulse', in the sense of a basic transcendent urge. The two notions can perhaps be reconciled by arguing that the formal utopia is one manifestation, determined by a distinct context, of a much older, wider, and deeper utopian aspiration.

One striking early section deals with 'America as Utopia'. It perceptively shows how the 'New' World became a focus for the utopian longings of Europeans from the time of the voyages of discovery and ultimately of the Americans themselves. Kumar thus sheds light on that potent mixture of small town golden age and frontierism which the American New Right has so successfully exploited. He also deals with the potent fusion of utopianism and socialism in 19th-century Europe, arguing that 'socialism was the nineteenth-century utopia, the truly modern utopia, *par excellence*' (p. 49). The actual worlds which emerged in America and Europe provided the raw material for the hopes and fears of Kumar's central authors.

Thus there is Bellamy with his sharp critique of modern capitalism but unattractive vision of a high-tech, authoritarian alternative; Wells whose passion for science produced science fiction nightmares like *The Island of Dr Moreau* where the tone is one of despair, as well as the rational, expert-ruled societies of his self-conscious utopias. There is Huxley with his 'conviction in *Brave New World* that practically the whole of modern Western development has been a steady descent into nightmare.' Progress has been a 'grotesque and cruel illusion' (p. 242), as Orwell, author of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, believed, a text Kumar shows to be much more complex than the commentaries anchored in Cold War liberalism would have us believe. Finally there is the 'behavioural engineering' of Skinner's odd little utopia. These works sensitively register, in a way conventional pieces of social science and philosophy cannot, the drama of the modern era and simultaneously interrogate this experience. They are, as Kumar shows, immensely privileged documents. Furthermore Kumar uses these authors as a springboard for developing his own ideas on a whole host of topics - he has, for example, a splendid section on how Skinner's ideas contain a radical critique of liberalism - such digressions add real spice to what could easily have turned into a rather dull exercise in exegesis.

Kumar's book is therefore a welcome addition to the growing literature on utopias and utopianism. He has produced a text which is both a pleasure to read and genuinely instructive.

Vincent Geoghegan

SHORTER REVIEWS

Duncan K. Foley, *Understanding Capital: Marx's Economic Theory*, London: Harvard University Press, 1986, 183pp, £16.95 hb, £7.25 pb.

This is a lucidly written introduction to Marx's economic theory covering all three volumes of *Capital*. As such it cannot fail to be at the same time an interpretation or even a reconstruction. Foley admits as much in his Preface, saying that he takes a controversial view on the treatment of prices and the value of labour-power; he also coins the terms 'value of money' and 'unequal exchange' in this context. Ingeniously he argues that his way of dealing with the theory has 'decisive pedagogical advantages' in that it offers a simple connection between the labour theory of value and the phenomenal world, and that 'a student who has grasped my interpretation will be in a good position to understand the arguments for other interpretations as well'.

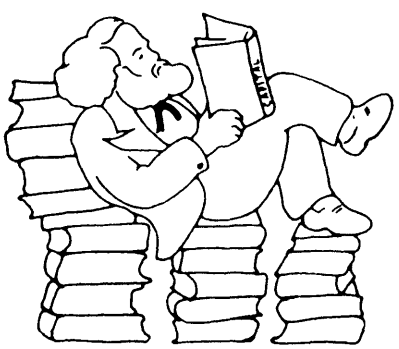
There is some truth in this; but there are costs. His distinctive strategy is to conduct most of the discussion at the level of *social aggregates*. Thus he says: 'the whole mass of newly produced commodities contains the whole expenditure of social labour in a particular period of time, and this value expresses itself as the money value added of the mass of commodities.'

From this he claims we can calculate 'a value of money, that is, the average amount of social labour time that it takes to add a dollar's worth of value to commodities' (p. 21). Now the strength of this approach is that dealing with aggregates enables us to avoid confusing imbalances amongst various prices, and to derive certain general theorems pertaining to the substance and magnitude of value applicable to the aggregate, or to the 'average' case.

The weakness of this approach is that it plays down the important question of the *form* of value, which arises *essentially* in the *relation* of one commodity to another. It is in this context, for example, that abstract labour arises; whereas Foley's treatment of this topic makes the exclusion of 'private' (thus - better 'domestic') labour quite unmotivated. Likewise the introduction of a 'value of money' above ignores the fact that Marx says such expressions are nonsensical. It is like trying to determine the weight of a gram.

In a way, the treatment is Ricardian in its concern with the mass of value and its distribution. Having registered this worry, I recommend the book nonetheless. It has a good first chapter on method, bringing out the importance of establishing a hierarchy of determinations. It has an original treatment of the reproduction of capital, establishing that the internal limits of its expansion lead to an increasing role for credit. A clear treatment of the transformation problem favours a solution in which added value, surplus value (and hence the rate of exploitation) are conserved. (But in equation 6.1 'c' should read ' v + c'.) As the author says, there is no substitute for reading *Capital*: but this is a useful companion.

C. J. Arthur



Derek Gjertsen, The Newton Handbook, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986, 665pp, £25 hb.

According to this valuable if slightly eccentric work, the Comte de Saint-Simon once proposed the establishment of a 'religion of Newton', in which regular public homage would be paid to the great philosopher. As we enter the year in which the 300th anniversary of Newton's m*agnum opus*, the Principia, will be commemorated in books, conferences and even postage stamps, observers might be forgiven for thinking that the Newtonian religion has already arrived. Gjertsen's book comprises his own idiosyncratic act of homage at the Newtonian shrine, though it is nonetheless useful for that; in effect it is an encyclopedia of every aspect of Newton, from 'Ancestry' to 'Death', with much else in between.

Gjertsen does not claim to have uncovered new information about his subject; his aim is rather to provide a comprehensive guide to what is known about Newton's life and works, arranged under several hundred headings. He certainly does supply valuable bibliographical information about all of Newton's writings, including many unpublished manuscripts. There is a comprehensive listing of works, with details of printings, translations, and scholarly commentaries, and of locations of those which remain unpublished (though the coverage of manuscripts does not embrace fragments and reading-notes). Aspects of Newton's life are also treated well: his researches in mathematics, mechanics and optics, his life in Cambridge, his career at the Mint and the Royal Society. There are good compilations of information on other topics as well, for example on biographies, portraits, and monuments of Newton, and on aspects of the 'mythology' which grew up around him: the apple-tree, his mental breakdown in the 1690s, his renowned chastity.

But there is also much information that anyone not obsessively interested in Newton's life must judge redundant. 250 biographical entries seems rather excessive for example, when for many of those listed only a single contact with Newton is recorded. Nor can one see the point of articles about his bedmaker, or his dog. While Gjertsen is fulsome with biographical minutiae, he is sparing with interpretation, and thin on context. Major contemporaries such as Descartes and Leibniz are discussed solely in their direct connections with Newton, and there is no attempt to provide a comprehensive treatment of 'Newtonianism'. More interpretation of the great man in relation to his scientific and philosophical context would have allowed for a more informed assessment of his achievement.

Despite its slightly narrow focus, occasional inaccuracies, and lack of complete cross-references, this is clearly going to be a useful book. Those studying Newton are going to turn to Gjertsen first for much of the information they need, before making their way to the library to consult the multi-volume works of scholarship on which he ultimately depends. There is also enlightenment and even amusement for the 'general reader' here, though she would have to be already an initiate of the Newton cult to want to persevere from **cover to cover.**

Jan Golinski

Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power* (Vol. 1), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 549pp, £37.50 hb, £12.95 pb.

The author's intention in this text is to present a history and theory of power from the beginning to 1760 as the first volume of a trilogy, the second volume of which will do a similar job for the period of industrial capitalism and the third will provide the theory. As a result this first volume is largely a detailed empirical history of pre-industrial power relations in agrarian societies. This takes up over four-fifths of the text and is absolutely superb. The secondary sources are right up to date and the history of many societies from Mesopotamia through the Greek and Roman empires to the decline of feudalism in Europe is clearly and elegantly presented, and this does not suffer from any over-interpretation in favour of Mann's particular perspective.

However this is where the problems lie. His theory of societies as multiple, overlapping and intersecting power networks is too briefly and sketchily developed to stand up to close scrutiny. Concepts are developed as Weberian 'ideal types' and severely qualified and hedged, and this fits with the rejection of any attempt at general theory making the whole framework rather slippery and eclectic. The key theoretical 'innovations' that are claimed involve the identification of four sources of social power: ideological, economic, military and political which in good Weberian fashion interact through history in complex ways with no single one being dominant for too long.

The weakness of the theoretical introductory and concluding chapters is also revealed in a variety of other ways. When the theoretical discussion has to move onto more detailed and perhaps contentious ground the reader is constantly referred to the forthcoming volumes. Some quite ridiculous claims are made in this vein where for example the consideration of gender relations is put off to the future volumes on the basis that the social relations of gender did not change significantly between the beginning of time and 1760 which left me quite incredulous. Another indication is the failure to consider some significant writers on power such as Foucault or major if contentious contributions to historical materialism such as that by G. A. Cohen. Indeed the marxist writings cited are, with few exceptions, classical texts or productions of the early 1970s.

The weaknesses of the theoretical sections mar what is otherwise a very stimulating historical text into which years of research have obviously been poured and it shows magnificently. Nevertheless if the theory is developed and defended more rigorously it will no doubt become a centre of debate in social theory. There's more than enough here to make me look forward to the next two volumes.

Paul Bagguley

J. Borreil (ed.), *Les Sauvages dans la cité: auto-émancipation du peuple et instruction des prolétaires au 19ème siècle*, Paris: Champ Vallon, 1986, 229pp, FF. 96.

This is a collection drawn from a conference in 1984 on popular education and the philosophy of the poor in the 19th century. It is loosely organised around the image of the proletariat, newly gathered in the city by industrialisation, seeking or being offered an identity as subjects of knowledge. Apart from a version of Jonathan Rée's article on 'Proletarian Philosophy' (published in *(RP*44), it contains a sample of the interesting meeting of post-1960s structuralist habits of social analysis, post-structuralist philosophy, and the history of 'mentalités' practised for some long time in France. For within papers on the iconography of the vagabond and Comte's public lectures on astronomy, one can discover sophisticated thoughts on the politics of education and of epistemology. 'Discover' one must, for the collection exhibits all the disparateness of papers assembled for a conference, compounded by the impediments customary in French publishing (no index, running heads that simply repeat maddeningly unrevealing sub-titles) and an elusive style of presentation that one recognises from the programmes of the College International de Philosophie, which was co-sponsor of the meeting (section headings such as 'impossible representation?' and 'the spark of an image').

Except for the Rée article, the debates are confined to France, where republicanism, from its very inception, encompassed the politics of education. This was therefore an established site of conflict for the control of the social order by the state, the industrial bourgeoisie or the people. The heritage of the Idéologues and the Saint-simonians was at work in publications offering self-instruction manuals for the working classes which showed, upon sensationalist foundations, how the poor might climb from within their own experience to the sophistication of the most advanced sciences. Academics, concerned by 'the social question' (of the integration of the new urban working classes), offered successful public lectures which portrayed the common heritage of universal positive knowledge or a universalist system of social justice independent of the politics of the contemporary élite. Utopians and socialists struggled to organise library clubs for the working classes. Educationalists tried to construct programmes of public education to adapt the people to the modern, secular world of work. Socialists, such as Blanqui and his disciples, included plans for re-education of the masses in their revolutionary projects.

In spite of its dense layout and style, the book has lessons of value, not least in illustrating what can be achieved by the meeting of the intellectual practices I referred to above. I can only cite examples. There is the general insight into how 'social' questions may also be epistemological ones. There is a critique of how Marx's view of Proudhon, swinging from enthusiasm to contemptuous critique under the influence of the failure of working-class movements back in Germany, left an anti-humanist legacy in marxism which, in opposing on principle all reformist notions of the unity of the human race, 'left the proletarian in his darkness, extinguished the hope, albeit illusory, "of being present at a new dawn of the flawless truth"' (p. 180). There is Jonathan Rée's view of the irony of 'common-sense' philosophy's respect for a caricature of that which the people most possessed of common sense wish often to emancipate themselves from. There is Jacques Rancière's analysis of how authentic working-class approaches to learning and self-emancipation from this period were not opposed to bourgeois individualism or to the discipline of learning, but rather to a certain kind of *socialis*t scheme intent on suppressing the family for the common good. And there is Derrida's elusive introduction discussing how Kant, in making it the duty of all to possess the metaphysics of liberty, also has to construct an abstract anthropology alongside it as a pedagogical vehicle to teach the practical outcomes of the unreachable metaphysics of liberty. Suggestive as this last is for the study of Kant, I was left with the feeling that it was a last-minute addition to the worthwhile study that was the backbone of the conference, and that as someone seriously studying the historical structure of ideas about the social order the better to understand the possibility of radical politics, I would not choose to start from there.

Noel Parker