Respect (or lack of it)

Peter Coates, *Nature: Western Attitudes since Ancient Times*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1998. viii + 246 pp., £45.00 hb., 0 7456 1655 0.

Tim Hayward, *Political Theory and Ecological Values*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1998. viii + 196 pp., £49.50 hb., £13.95 pb., 0 7456 1808 1 hb., 0 7456 1809 X pb.

It is a commonplace assumption of environmental writing that human beings – or at any rate human beings in the West – need to rethink their ideas about nature if they are to avoid ecological catastrophe. Yet what bearing exactly do the attitudes of human beings to non-human nature have on the form of their interaction with the latter, and are changes in attitude a precondition of improved ecological practices? In any case, what counts as 'improvement' in this area, and why, and how far, are what are deemed the 'right' or 'appropriate' forms of human response to nature conceived in terms of what is thought at that time to be ecologically desirable activity? Neither of these books ever quite directly addresses these questions, but both are rich in the kind of discussions that provoke us to think further about them, albeit in contrasting ways. In doing so, they help us to a better understanding of the ways in which our current ecological dilemmas are compounded.

Tim Hayward continues to press his case for ecological issues to be made more central to the enterprise of political theory. But whereas in earlier work Hayward has by and large been happy to go along with the conventionally established opposition between a more radical *ecologism* (caring for nature for nature's sake) and a more reformist *environmentalism* (caring for nature for our sake), in this work he challenges the core assumption of this framework: that there is a clear discrimination to be made between ecological values, on the one hand, and human interests, on the other. Indeed, one of the opening moves of the book is to shift the focus of ecological consideration away from the – well-nigh impossible – task of determining what, in a world of myriad entities and multiple processes, should count as ecological value, to the more manageable, if still complex, task of determining how far our existing values can be maintained in the face of ecological realities. This is further refined to become the question of what aspects of being human must be accommodated if a political theory is to avoid being 'unecological' – by which I take him to mean irrelevant because disengaged from ecological realities.

Hayward's answer is that there are essentially two aspects that have to be reconciled: that human beings are a part of nature, and that they are not generally motivated to do what is other than in their own interests. One of the corollaries of this first premiss is that our natural being places constraints on, but does not determine, what counts as good. (Hayward, rightly in my opinion, resists any form of naturalism that would derive our political or ethical values from nature, or look to non-human modes of being as offering normative guides for human affairs.) Another is that it places constraints on what is just and right. Distributive principles of justice cannot be developed in abstraction from the fact that we are natural and finite beings in a natural and finite word. A third is that human beings are constrained in their dealings with non-human nature. But it is only, Hayward argues, with this third corollary – or through the idea of natural relations – that the idea of human beings as one natural species among others properly begins to figure for political theory. And it is with a view to exploring how it can most defensibly do so that Hayward devotes the first part of his book to criticism of what he terms the 'two dogmas of ecologism': the dogma that respect for ecological values requires commitment to the 'intrinsic value' of non-human nature; and the dogma that it requires rejection of an 'anthropocentric' perspective.

The critique of intrinsic value is entirely sound, although it adds little to others that have gone before (except perhaps in respect of its point that denying intrinsic value to the non-human is not denying something we do grant to human beings, since it is not, Hayward argues, in virtue of imputing intrinsic value to humans that we think them worthy of ethical protection). Hayward also skilfully distinguishes between an unavoidable and even desirable 'anthropocentrism'

that recognizes that there would be no value systems or ethics at all were these to be unrelated to any human values whatsoever, and what he terms 'speciesism', on the one hand (inflicting pain on other creatures for 'morally arbitrary' reasons), and 'chauvinism' on the other (prejudicially resisting all evidence that other creatures might possess those features or capacities deemed to be exclusive to human beings). He also offers a reasonable case for viewing both these positions as wrong and eliminable, although by failing to say what counts as 'unavoidable pain' or as 'morally arbitrary' reasons for inflicting it on other animals, he invites us to think that the conceptual distinction between speciesism and chauvinism is clearer and more helpful than it really is. Spelling out what is or is not morally arbitrary inevitably requires us to make judgements about human species-specific characteristics, and these judgements will always be open to challenge as being 'chauvinistic' in Hayward's sense. What would count, for example, as a 'chauvinistic' rather than a reasonable resistance to someone making claims for the linguistic or rational abilities of non-human animals? Hayward's distinction remains too formalistic to offer any but the vaguest guidance on such issues.

He also, in this same context, makes the very dubious claim that while biocentrism (defined as 'giving moral consideration to all living beings') is quite consistent with anthropocentrism, eco-centrism (giving moral consideration also to the abiotic parts of nature) is not. But either this means simply that any value accorded to the life, say, of the AIDS virus is 'anthropocentric' because it is the value of a human valuer – in which case exactly the same can be said of any value accorded abiotic nature; or it means something like 'giving consideration of the right to life to any and every animate entity is consistent with respecting human values in a way that giving value to inanimate entities is not'. And this seems plainly unsustainable.

In the second part of his book, Hayward is almost exclusively concerned with defending his claim that ecological values are consistent with the pursuit of human interests. His argument has essentially two steps in it: one which would persuade us that the most fundamental interest of humans is in integrity, understood as 'wholeness, unity, and health in one's physical, mental, and spiritual being', and that this underlies all enlightened self-interest; the other being that enlightened self-interests can – and should – include an interest that he elaborates as 'wholehearted respect' in the good of non-human beings.

The first argument, which is developed in the course of some lengthy and rather earnest discriminations between egoism, altruism and self-interest, is, to my mind, undercritical of its central claim that the motive for morality is the desire for social integration. Hayward defends this against the objection that morality here is being identified with conformism to prevailing norms by claiming that anyone (his example is a 'conscientious' Nazi supporter) who thinks oppressive behaviour is appropriate towards certain outsiders, but not towards members of his own group, is suffering from a 'cognitive deficiency' of a kind that pre-empts personal integrity. But by invoking such an extreme example, Hayward avoids the much more awkward (and in many respects more relevant) instances of potentially oppressive interests in social integration. If

we were to apply Hayward's arguments to the case of men and women conforming to patriarchal norms in a pre-feminist culture, it would be odd to view these as cognitively deficient (just as it would seem odd to view those who contested these norms as displaying the exceptional heroic moral outlook of those who assisted the Jews under fascism). Hayward does not sufficiently recognize that a society does not have to be fascist to establish its identity or coherence through dubiously moral forms of social integration.

When Hayward proceeds to extrapolate environmental norms from his claims about the nature and foundation of enlightened self-interest, he offers much subtle and instructive commentary on the pros and cons of market-based versus deliberative approaches to this, and himself comes down in favour of a mix of each mode. But it is not entirely clear that ultimately he makes a case for much more than allowing that there will always be recognition of a distinction – and conflict – between more immediate personal consumer interests and interests in environmental welfare and long-term strategies for ecological conservation. He defends his claim that 'if after deliberations, citizens decide they have generalizable interests in preserving items attributed such values as existence value, aesthetic value and so on, then fine; if they do not then this is also fine' on the grounds that no one has a right to deny people their 'vital economic interests'. But what is to count here as 'vital economic interests'? If citizens decide to include the interests of the capitalist enterprise in remaining profitable as well as those of workers in their livelihood, then Hayward might seem to be endorsing something very like the status quo, with all its existing tendencies to sideline environmental considerations.

More to the point, it is not clear how this even-handed line on policy-making coheres with his defence of the idea that humans not only have an interest in promoting ecological values, but a moral obligation to give 'wholehearted respect' (i.e. an active respect which includes care) to non-human beings (beings which he appears effectively – without ever quite acknowledging it – to identify with non-human animals). Developing this position requires Hayward to respond to all the usual Kantian and Habermasian objections to the extension of full moral consideration to animals, which he does with the aid of Spinoza and some very agile and thought-provoking lines of argument of his own – all of them designed to persuade us that there is no reason to have more reverence for human 'rational nature' than for any other aspect of nature.

But I remained nonetheless unconvinced. Hayward nowhere to my mind satisfactorily answers the objection that if we respect rational beings more than, or differently from, non-rational ones it is because we recognize in them a source of reciprocal respect of our bodily and socio-personal integrity (and tend to respect them in fact *only* in so far as they do so reciprocate). With the possible exception of some domestic animals, this is not in any sense true of non-human beings, who in many instances will sting, bite or otherwise invade human bodily integrity without compunction, and who cannot but destroy the life of the other parts of non-human being upon which they prey. A further serious problem is Hayward's lack of precision both about what counts as respect (how much care does it include, for how long?) and about the constituency towards which we have the obligation of 'respect'. Hayward writes as if respect is owing to all beings which can be viewed as having interests or a 'good' or their own. But this would seem to include all biotic entities, both animal and vegetable, the ivy no less than the oak, the greenfly no less than the lion or the dolphin. Can Hayward really mean this, and if he does, how does he justify it without sliding towards the naturalism he appears to want to resist, and without imputing to all of nature something sounding very like the 'intrinsic value' he has earlier rejected as dogma?

Hayward's book reads as one whose thought has evolved in its making, and its gives a sense, too, that some of its component arguments have been pressed into a service for which they were not quite originally intended. This in itself is no criticism, but I did end up wondering how far the message of the later chapters remained faithful to the wisdom of the earlier. I also wondered whether there is not a certain vacillation running through the book between two related but distinguishable positions: that which maintains that catering to human interests is consistent with respect for ecological values, and that which claims that those human interests are only *fully* realized where they include a respect for the interests of non-human nature.

If Hayward conceives human attitudes to 'nature' primarily in terms of their forms of respect (or lack of it) for other animals, Peter Coates's tendency is to focus on 'nature' as landscape and environmental resources. Although prompting many conceptual reflections, this is not a work of philosophy but a cultural study of Western perceptions of nature conducted in the light of contemporary ecological concerns and responses. A main aim is to debunk views of pre-Enlightenment nature as benefiting, if not from overt

respect, at least from a benign neglect. Ecological destruction has always been with us, Coates wants to insist, and if contemporary eco-romantics were only to become more historically informed they would be rapidly disabused of their ideas about ecological innocence, whether conceived temporally (the period prior to the Industrial Revolution) or in terms of the supposed eco-friendliness of particular communities or cultural outlooks (native American Indians, Eastern cultures, Buddhism, etc.). In support of his case, Coates assembles a good deal of relevant – if mainly secondary – evidence and discusses it in readable ways. But much of the ground covered is now quite well trodden, and subtle as some of Coates's points are, they are seldom pursued very far. One senses a reluctance to engage with the implications of the historical critique for any contemporary ecopolitical agenda. Nor does Coates anywhere meet the objection of those who will simply point to the vast differences in the scale and quality of human ecological impact in the post-industrial period relative to anything that preceded it.

Indeed, the central conceptual weakness of the book is that it nowhere properly discusses what is meant by ecological 'destruction', nor offers criteria for distinguishing between benign and non-benign forms of human interaction with the environment. Paradoxically, therefore, given his historical sensibilities, Coates here lends himself to those ahistorical ideas about what constitutes human 'damage' to nature that are at work in the more naive forms of green romanticism. Too often his argument against the historical myopia of the latter develops only if we allow *any* human interference with the environment or use of its resources to count as ecologically 'destructive'. But it is precisely this tacit equation of human interaction with nature with 'contamination' of it that needs to be challenged if we are to avoid falling into conservative (in the sense of politically reactionary) modes of thinking about environmental conservation.

Kate Soper

How we make knowledge in science

Jan Golinski, *Making Natural Knowledge: Constructivism and the History of Science*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998. xiv + 336 pp., £37.50 hb., £13.95 pb., 0 521 44471 3 hb., 0 521 44913 8 pb.

In the last three decades, since the effective demise of logical empiricism and Popperian fallibilism, the history of science has flourished as never before in the English-speaking world. Golinski charts that flourishing, aiming, in this book, to delineate the new historiography of science from which it has sprung. As a primer in that new historiography, it can hardly be bettered. Key methodological issues are illuminated by critical discussions of major recent studies in the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK). Golinski, moreover, begins the long overdue and crucially important task of repositioning epistemology in relation to the historiography of science. His efforts only reveal, however, how important it is that philosophers, too, return to this topic, which is still subject to ritualized squabbles between 'postmodernists' and 'objectivists' – viz. the recent Sokal 'scandal' in the USA.

Golinski's title is wholly apt. There is no longer any hope for the formulaic, prescriptive 'method' of science long envisaged by philosophers. In its place he sets out how complex are the considerations which bear on historians of science coming to understand the collective achievement of conceptual advance in science. The question examined is not *whether* these are 'advances', and the outcome 'knowledge', but *how* these came about – how they were *constructed*. There is still a dire need for philosophical reflection here, however, because of the confusion that surrounds the notion of *narrative*, and its relations to modernity and postmodernism.

Golinski notes that practitioners of the sociology of scientific knowledge have tried a variety of narrative experiments, but SSK has increasingly focused on the specifics of one or another scientific controversy. This predilection for micro-history retains a properly concrete focus, but it does mean, as he laments, that very little examination has been made of the significance of the larger narrative of science in its wider historical context, since Kuhn's groundbreaking work. The notion of a 'revolution' has become commonplace, but, although it is plain, I think, that there *is* a 'grand narrative' to science, this narrative is quite unlike that envisaged by the Enlightenment, or by Hegel, Marx or their successors, for that matter. Despite embodying progress, it is a narrative *without a telos*.

It is a properly constructivist narrative – not a narrative of how something was *revealed*, was *discovered* or *emerged* from a *necessary*, *immanent dialectic*, but

a narrative of how the intelligibility of the world was *made* for the first time, or *invented*. Golinski takes Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* to be the watershed at which what he terms 'constructivism' begins and the old epistemologies bite the dust, along with the 'Whig' view of the history of science as a history of progress. The narrative of the emergence of the new history of science itself is as good a case study as any if we want to understand the philosophical significance of the rise of 'constructivism'.

At the height of the initial 'Popper–Kuhn debate' those who could no longer defend any version of objectivist or foundationalist epistemology nonetheless felt they could still refute the wholesale relativism of their opponents (e.g. Feyerabend and proponents of the 'strong programme') because the blanket denial that any truth could be firmly established is self-contradictory. Actually there was a double antinomy. Existing epistemologies implied that the history of science could not itself be a body of knowledge (only, at best, a compendium of *error*). So it seemed that the history of science, as a discipline generating an increasingly interesting body of knowledge, could only do so if it were to repudiate epistemology as such.

Two egregious *non sequiturs* lurked there. First, admittedly, relativism is not coherent. But demonstrating this does nothing to help empiricism escape arguments which show *it too* is incoherent. As a response to their tormentors, then, the objectivists' self-refutation argument was hardly better than 'Stop saying that or the bogeyman will come!' Second, the collapse of empiricism doesn't abolish the need to answer epistemological questions. Both sides (equally mistakenly) supposed empiricism to *be* epistemology, so their opponents, in effect, met the disconcerted positivists and Popperians with the gleeful riposte 'We *are* the bogeymen!'

Of course, they were not. They were diligent seekers after *knowledge*, but a knowledge empiricism must suppose not to exist. The implicit claim of Golinski's title is correct – the sociology of scientific knowledge *is* what the epistemology of science *must* be. This is why, with benefit of hindsight, the debate has now splintered into multiple layers of irony, which entirely belie the ostensible premisses of the original confrontation between relativism and objectivism. So:

(a) Golinski's book is a micro-history of a brief interlude of controversy in the history of science in which he bemoans the abandonment, by historians of science, of 'macro-history' of science for the micro-history of controversies. (The notion of 'science *as such*' is as problematic for relativists as the *history* of science had been for objectivists.)

(b) Golinski charts the history of the development of the historiography of science which effectively began in 1962, and maintains that, since the publication of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* the history of science as a discipline has made immense progress in uncovering the real bases on which science has been socially produced, by decisively rolling back the Whig myth of progress.

(c) The key contribution Kuhn made to the demise of empiricism was to show that the programmatic historiographies imposed on science by empiricist and fallibilist epistemologies are decisively refuted by the empirical evidence. (The hypothesis that science proceeds by the empirical refutation of hypotheses has been empirically refuted by the evidence adduced by historians of science.)

(d) The history of science is the history of *successes*. It is too, as a discipline, in-creasingly a success, in so far as it makes scientific success comprehensible, yet it has at its heart the methodological precept (which Golinski calls the 'symmetry principle') that all beliefs (those that fail just as much as those that succeed) must be treated impartially, as of equal worth.

(e) The history of science only has a subject matter if we can equally truthfully speak of there being 'science as such' *and* of its being 'socially produced'.

These layers of irony are not self-refuting conundrums

but real aspects of a problem which need to be reconciled. The notion of scientific progress (and of 'science as such') does not require any teleology to be imputed to its history if it is only possible to see an episode as 'progress' after the event. The fact that we cannot, in advance, prescribe a rational decision procedure for the resolution of scientific disputes does not mean that their resolution has to be *irrational* and cannot constitute progress. Who would suppose that the way to solve technological problems could be prescribed in advance? No one suggests that the social production of technology (how else should it be produced?) could possibly compromise the fact that it works (if it does).

Embedded in the narrative of scientific/technical progress must be such diverse facts as what happens when one does this (look at Faraday's experimental work), why someone should have thought in this way at that time (look at the background to Darwin in the political economy of the time), the power and relevance of such and such a mathematical technique (look at the work of Maxwell, Boltzmann or Einstein), and the development, dynamics and funding of particular kinds of institutions (from the Royal Society through the modern university to the Manhattan Project, NASA and Silicon Valley) – just for a start. Golinski has excellent chapters devoted to the diverse kinds of historical facts which must be relevant to the appreciation of scientific activity and its outcomes: disciplinary identity, the 'field' and the laboratory, the development of forms of rhetoric and discourse, the roles of experiments and models, and the relation to the wider culture.

The progress of science can be decoupled from theories of progressive social change. The *practice* of science may flourish in certain kinds of polity, and you could suppose, for instance, that there is more than a fortuitous connection between Nazis' anti-semitism and their failure to develop atomic weapons. Nonetheless, what emerges from successful scientific practice – that is, what atomic weapons *do* – has the same contingent connection with any social narrative as the assistance that measles and smallpox gave the Conquistadors. Just as they could, like H.G. Wells's Martians, have been wiped out by the diseases they found in Mexico, so science and technology could well end up abolishing humanity rather than scarcity.

In short, scientific progress, like technological progress to which it is allied, is still possible even if no teleology governs the outcome of scientific activities, and/or no prior decision procedure can be prescribed to resolve scientific disputes. What it unearths is contingent, and its impact has already been radically to modify human ends in ways that were not immanent in human activity prior to those discoveries. The great merit and value of Golinski's book is that he convincingly conveys the concrete richness of the enquiries of the sociology of scientific knowledge, and the impossibility that old-style epistemological prescriptions could do justice to the growth of science as such. But philosophers need to go beyond the fascinating Coda to *Making Natural Knowledge*, on the topic of narrative, to elaborate a non-teleological model of narrative which provides an epistemic description of the production of the intelligibility of the natural world. We do not 'discover' the sense the world already makes; we make whatever sense it contains.

Roger Harris

Rorty's ghost

Morris Dickstein, ed., *The Revival of Pragmatism: New Essays on Social Thought, Law and Culture*, Duke University Press, Durham NC, 1998. x + 464 pp., £47.00 hb., £15.95 pb., 0 8223 2245 5 hb., 0 8223 2228 5 pb.

This substantial, carefully edited and thought-provoking set of essays (deriving from a 1995 conference at the City University of New York) is not well served by its title or subtitle. The subtitle studiously omits any reference to the revival of pragmatism in philosophy, a phenomenon more than adequately represented by the book's opening group of essays, in which hitherto-unpublished work by Rorty, Putnam and Cavell appears, and which will therefore be of real interest to many philosophers. The title, with its use of the definite article and two singular terms, suggests that the various movements of thought in philosophy, social thought, law and culture examined in each of the collection's four main sections should be thought of as aspects of a single, unified intellectual system or method; but as the editor's introduction declares, and the essays themselves make clear, it is very difficult to see anything more than the most general kinds of family resemblance between what is called 'pragmatist' thinking in each of these departments of the contemporary American academic scene.

Nevertheless, it has to be said that anyone who chooses to read through the collection from beginning to end will feel that its various elements maintain a certain kind of coherence; but that is primarily because

many of the participants feel the need to orient their contributions by reference to – and hence reveal that they associate 'the revival of pragmatism' with – the work of one particular writer: Richard Rorty. This realization makes the collection as a whole seem rather more perspicuous or surveyable; but it heightens one's puzzlement as to why the book's title and subtitle make no reference to the section in which Rorty's work actually appears, and hence to the intellectual project from which the phenomenon it studies takes its departure.

The collection's implicitly Rortyan architectonic is not, however, obvious from its opening section, entitled 'What Difference Does Pragmatism Make? The View From Philosophy'. The essays which appear there tend more towards Putnam than Rorty as a contemporary reference point; and the debates they survey and continue (primarily concerning the relations between experience, language and the world) float pretty much free of those encountered in the collection's other three sections; largely because they stay far closer to the concerns of two (or at most three) of the four classical sources of the pragmatist movement in American culture – James, Dewey and to a lesser extent Emerson (Pierce's name appears more than once in these and other essays, but he receives no substantial attention anywhere).

Rorty devotes his essay to arguing that Dewey's tolerant attitude to religious faith is perfectly compatible with his pragmatist commitments, and proposes that his own neo-pragmatism can perfectly happily accommodate religion on similar lines – by consigning such matters to the sphere of private self-development, which must (so he has argued elsewhere) be sharply distinguished from the public realm of projects of social co-operation. We are encouraged to hail this as a major softening in Rorty's hitherto resolutely hostile attitude to religion; religious believers might be forgiven for thinking that accepting such an offer would unacceptably soften the very idea of faith, understood as embodying humanity's salvation.

Putnam's essay combines the suggestion that Rortyan anti-realism is incompatible with Jamesian pragmatism with an Austinian critique of the Jamesian notion of pure experience, in order to engender a plausible form of pragmatist direct or natural realism. But this intriguing sketch of an argument can hope to carry real conviction only when it receives the more lengthy backing that Putnam claims he will provide in a forthcoming book on the topic. Cavell's essay stands out from the others, both by focusing on the differences between James and Dewey, on the one hand, and Emerson (and Wittgenstein), on the other, and by demonstrating this through giving careful attention to the very different uses to which the same words are put in the relevant texts. In its company, the other essays in this section can seem all but oblivious to the contrast between their shared tendency to restate pragmatist theses about attentiveness to experience in a more linguistic key and the form or manner in which the words of their restatements actually work.

In this respect, Cavell's essay exemplifies a substantial link between the book's opening section and that with which it closes, by introducing both the primary concern and the familiar method of the essays concerned with 'Pragmatism, Culture and Art'. Here, Emerson is at least as important a point of reference as James or Dewey – perhaps most clearly so in Richard Poirier's short but dense and challenging essay on the differences between Emersonian and Rortyan visions of poets as minters of 'new' vocabularies. These differences, it seems to me, survive Louis Menand's ultimately unconvincing attempt, in his response to Poirier, to smooth them over. This section of the book also includes an essay by Ray Carney on Eakins as a pragmatist painter, in a sense of 'pragmatism' supposedly common to Emerson and James. It contains some interesting readings of specific paintings (partly in the wake of Michael Fried's recent work), but its general thesis is vitiated by its apparent assumption that any interest in the idea of mind and body meeting in labour amounts to a commitment to a pragmatist vision of life.

The literary interest in pragmatism's vision of strong poets is itself very different from the focus of the legal theorists whose work is represented in the book's third section, on 'Pragmatism and Law'. There, a pragmatist judge is defined and defended by Richard Posner as one who feels no duty to render judgements that are consistent with those established by other officials in the past. On such a definition, it is pretty plain that (as Thomas Grey argues in his essay) legal pragmatism needs no philosophical support from James, Dewey and Emerson; but it is also plain that it barely deserves the label 'pragmatist' at all. As David Luban demonstrates, such a view of best judicial practice could be the conclusion derived from any number of different legal and philosophical perspectives. And Rorty's brief intervention into this debate – primarily to contest in his familiar way Luban's further claim that legal disputes sooner or later always raise questions of ethical and metaphysicial import – does nothing to reduce this sense of conceptual attenuation.

In the book's other section, 'Pragmatism and the Remaking of Social Thought', the essays discuss two main issues: the connection between philosophical pragmatism and democracy, and that between philosophical pragmatism and critical cultural theory. Kloppenberg, Westbrook and Bernstein disagree over the claim, whose most famous defenders are Putnam and Rorty, that Dewey was right to see a connection between pragmatism's science-based conception of inquiry as the open-ended intellectual labour of an egalitarian community and the political practices of Western democracies. Only in the concluding essays by Alan Wolfe and John Patrick Diggins do we get any sense that Dewey's idealized vision of democratic institutions paid no serious attention to their dependence upon and vulnerability to economic and political forces whose impact typically has decidedly non-egalitarian consequences. Essays by Fraser and Posnock bring the further issues of culture and 'race' into this already complicated picture; but their general force is vitiated by a focus on individual theorists (Alain Locke and W.E.B. Du Bois respectively), and by their implicit assumption that any theorist capable of seeing that concepts of race and ethnicity can be given a genealogical account might usefully be categorized as a pragmatist.

A final puzzling aspect of this collection's structure returns us to the difficulties with which we began. Despite the fact that, if any single thinker's work haunts these pages it is that of Rorty, Stanley Fish is assigned the task of drawing together the threads of the collection in an Afterword. His contribution is entertaining, managing to respond to specific aspects of many essays in the book, but saying very little that is new about his own perspective on these matters. But the role assigned to him exemplifies the editor's strangely divided attitude towards the broadly philosophical roots of the neo-pragmatist revival with which the collection is concerned. Why declare, in the book's introduction, that it 'is not primarily concerned with philosophy', if the only thing that holds together the very varied understandings of pragmatism on display in its four main sections is Rorty's attempts to refashion aspects of the work of Dewey and James for his own purposes? Perhaps this is an implicit acknowledgement of Rorty's own divided attitude about his preferred location within the academic intellectual economy. If so, it may be worth remembering that justifying a Rortyan dismissal of philosophical discourse requires rather more convincing philosophical work than Rorty himself has yet managed to accomplish.

Stephen Mulhall

Take 3

Perry Anderson, *The Origins of Postmodernity*, Verso, London and New York, 1998. vii + 143 pp., £11.00 pb., 1 85984 222 4.

Reading Perry Anderson's recent book on postmodernity momentarily recuperated for me the experience of sitting through Hollywood sequels like *Halloween* and *Alien* (I, II, III). Both are devoted to keeping the story going. This seems to be consistent with a postmodern spirit that distrusts and discounts narrative as a condition of churning out one episode after another. The difference is that the Hollywood blockbuster, which now punctually invades our summers, is interested only in making money while Anderson's sequel is committed to rescuing a discursive tradition he has called Western Marxism. With this most recent chapter of the itinerary of Western Marxism in the twentieth century, continuing two earlier books on the same subject, he is concerned with resituating the texts of Fredric Jameson, principally his discourse on postmodernity, within the established narrative but under the sign of the tradition's 'culmination' and 'consummation'. Despite its kinship with the Hollywood sequel, Anderson's follow-up manages to provide an almost too coherent account of the history of the idea of postmodernity.

With Jameson's complex but critical assessment of postmodernity – the designated successor to an earlier modernism embraced by Marxists – Western Marxism, according to Anderson, has left its constrained geopolitical compound to be comfortably at home now with a world it had once denied, at the precise moment the West has lost its dominance (though if the West includes the North America that Anderson has identified as Jameson's platform, it is still a long way from losing its hegemony). By changing its address and

relocating in another neighbourhood, modernist Marxism renewed its lease on a life it had once known, and acquired a new but ambiguous identity. Part of the ambiguity of this narrative stems from the uncertain status of the postmodern itself: whether it is merely a chronological marker in some ongoing, unfolding political and cultural history of (Western) capitalism or a claimant with epistemological aspirations that seeks to exceed its geopolitical location. (This is a problem also dogging its contemporary competitor, postcolonial theory.) While Jameson clearly is convinced that it is both, depending upon which texts one is consulting, Anderson is less decisive and plays to his strength as a historian by supplying the chronology of a marker, which is somewhat different from assessing its status as a referent and/or theory of knowledge.

But the real problem with this book lies in its devotion to rescuing a narrative structure focused on the tradition of Western Marxism, which, according to Anderson, moved analysis in the interwar period from the political-economic to the cultural (excepting the lone figure of Antonio Gramsci), once it was recognized that the state was not going to wither away and political defeat was a certainty. The logic of Anderson's narrative necessitates finding analogies between the two moments of the 1930s and 1960s that will secure the kind of repetitious history Jameson is made to enact. As a result of the political defeats of the 1960s in France, Italy, Japan, Germany and the United States, accordingly, Jameson recombined the great texts of Western Marxism (especially in his brilliant and, I believe, most important theoretical work, *The Political Unconscious*), reconfigured its relationship to modernism, and remobilized them in the discourse on postmodernity. In Anderson's enthusiasm to situate Jameson as both the inheritor of a moribund modernist Marxism and its redeemer, he commits himself to a logic of analogy that may well exceed both Jameson's own purpose and the histories that produced two different moments.

At the heart of Anderson's narrative is the role played by political defeat as a condition of discourse in the two conjunctures. Yet despite his penchant for symmetry, it still remains a question whether the recognition of the political defeat of the interwar period is analogous to that experienced in the late 1960s. For one thing, the range of activity in the 1960s was distributed over a good part of the globe, while the setbacks of the 1930s were restricted principally to Europe and possibly Japan. However disappointing those failures in the late 1960s were, it is still problematic to put them on the same footing with those in the interwar period or to think of them as having constituted some sort of unity. For another, the political opposition of the prewar period derived its identity and unity, in large part, from the presence of a common enemy in fascism, while the various political movements of the 1960s often pursued different goals from each other, despite the loose cohesion offered by opposition to the Vietnam War. They lacked an analogue capable of supplying the ground for a unified political identity.

In order to demonstrate how Jameson's intervention fulfilled the desire of Anderson's narrative, and revitalized Western Marxism, it is necessary to show how his account of postmodernity was inspired by a 'logic of capital' that was empowered to move analysis from the 'sectoral to the general'. This operation entailed a magnification of Western Marxism that would make possible its reception in the great metropolitan centres of the globe. With this 'breakout' from the West, Anderson proposes, Marxism, as

re-emplotted in Jameson's theory of postmodernity, 'is no longer restrictively Western'. But not entirely so. Even though we must be grateful to Jameson's genuinely laudable interest in the world outside of Euro-America, it is still the case of a Marxist from the West bringing Western theory to Europe's outside. Among major theorists of our time, there are pitifully few like Jameson who have actually sought to engage the world outside of Euro-America. In that sense, his ecumenicity is far more expansive and profound than either the earlier modernists who flirted with motifs from China, Japan, Africa and Mexico or the current postmodernists who have simply presupposed the assimilation of the outside into an expanded Euro-America.

But what Anderson fails to recognize in his eagerness to analogize and assimilate Jameson's programme to the modernist Marxism of the prewar period is that the 1960s was a time of 'coloured Marxism', a Marxism that was being mediated by the experience and aspirations of the Third World, which often had little to do with the diverse defeats in the industrial West and Japan. If he allows himself to remind us (and Jameson) gently that Gramsci is missing in this combinatory, we are entitled to add, significantly, that Mao is missing from Anderson's thinking. While Anderson's interest in the Third World seems restricted to publishing a memoir about his father's service in the imperial Customs Union of China during a turbulent time, Jameson has, in the *Political Unconscious,* rethought the experience of cultural revolution in China at another troubled moment as a mode of cultural production to be applied elsewhere.

Although Western Marxism revealed the sign of failed promise with its fateful decision to move analysis to the cultural/aesthetic domain, these considerations were still never far from the economic categories enlisted from *Capital* which gave cultural theory its direction. Recovering the trace of this coupling from this ruined landscape, Jameson, who was convinced that Marxism was less political philosophy than a set of political practices concerning the economy, was able to rejoin political economy and aesthetics in the 1970s, which had remained until then as distinct spheres among the Left, by working Mandel, Arrighi and Harvey into his cultural analysis of postmodernity. Still, Anderson rightly wonders, what happens when the postmodern is sandwiched between aesthetics and economics? Missing in this mix is 'a sense of culture as a battlefield' that divides claims into a field of contest, which 'is the plane of politics, understood as a space in its own right'. What links culture and politics, despite the unevenness of the relationship, is the necessity of a critical practice that must evaluate artworks and discriminate the political conduct of states.

Although Jameson has rejected the emptiness of mere 'denunciation' and appeals to morality as forms of purposeful political action, he has, nonetheless, always engaged the materiality of real struggle even when he was accused of retreating from it. Yet this form of political intervention has always initially derived from the problematization of cultural production, which, with the postmodern, has expanded to the degree that it virtually coextends with the economy to raise rightly the question of the proper posture of the critic. For this reason Jameson's politics must always be seen in the practice of intervening in culture, which has always been his vocation. But, by the same measure, how are we to account for Anderson's own politicality, which warns against the hazard of 'conjur[ing] up renewed dangers of fascism, a lazy exercise of right and left alike today', in view of the sentiment he ascribes to Jameson, whose 'voice has been without equal in clarity and eloquence of its resistance to the direction of the times'? Perhaps it is only in a world of interminable sequels like *Halloween* that one imagines the existence of horrors greater than the renewed dangers of fascism today and envisages exercises more meaningful than dredging up spectral fears that seem to have been safely put to rest in the same completed past as Western Marxism.

Harry Harootunian

Smoking

Fredric Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, Verso, London and New York, 1998. viii + 184 pp., £19.00 hb., 1 85984 809 5.

Published at the fag end of Brecht's centenary year, 1998, *Brecht and Method* will be perceived by cigar-smoking observers and good sports alike as one of the most significant contributions to have been engendered by Bert's birthday festivities. *Brecht and Method* is to be welcomed as one of the few recent books on Brecht to make full use of the new Brecht edition – the *Große Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe* – and it cites much previously untranslated material, though readers without German (and Verso publishing house) should be aware that about half of its new translations are misleading or inaccurate. Jameson's essay consists

of twenty short, numbered segments configured into five larger units: a Prologue and Epilogue, and three main parts entitled (i) Doctrine/*Lehre*, (ii) *Gestus*, and (iii) Proverbs/*Sprüche* (this in itself is indicative of Jameson's perspective on Brecht, in that one could equally well have chosen Science and Laughter as major categories). The book's construction is, perhaps, surprising, in that for Jameson 'Brecht is modern first and foremost by way of his discontinuities and his deeper fragmentation'. Despite Jameson's focus on estrangement/*Verfremdung* in his account of Brechtian aesthetics, the overarching structure of *Brecht and Method*, with its gesture towards the well-made play which Brecht travestied and anathematized, is hardly decentred through montage techniques or narrative disruption (though Jameson's text is strongly marked by the rhetorical figures of digression and circumlocution).

Jameson's primary goal in *Brecht and Method* is to establish what is distinctive about Brecht's work. He argues convincingly and correctly that this goal cannot be achieved either by attributing a unique implicit subjectivity to Brecht's work or by subsuming it under standard categories of cultural and literary criticism. Jameson wonders, therefore, if there might be a distinctively Brechtian mode of thinking or even a distinctively Brechtian doctrine that could bring together the various strands in his output from the mid-1920s through to his untimely death in the mid-1950s. Unsurprisingly, Jameson lights upon Marxism as the most likely reagent to synthesize Brecht's ostensible disparities and discontinuities, noting that Brecht's Marxism was somewhat idiosyncratic with its inflections of Vienna School logical empiricism, American pragmatism and Karl Korsch. Indeed, fairly early on in *Brecht and Method* the key weapons in Brecht's philosophical panoply come to be pragmatism (hence Jameson's foregrounding of usefulness/*Nützliches*) and inversion, which turns out to be Brecht's variant of dialectical reversal.

So far, so good. Although antiquarian schools of Brecht criticism might by now have turned their backs on Jamesonian heterodoxy, and revisionist fudges of the 'sex for text' variety would be frustrated by his sequestration of sleaze, there is a strong case for arguing that Brecht's reception of the critical realism of Karl Korsch does indeed provide an appropriate starting point for any attempt to specify the substance of Brecht's theoretical position. Korsch had famously argued that Marx and Engels were primarily dialecticians, rather than materialists, as evidenced in their advocacy of the unity of theoretical understanding and revolutionary practice. From the early 1930s onwards, these are core questions for Brecht also, which might have set the agenda for subsequent criticism and scholarship: does Brecht ultimately presuppose the primacy of dialectical – rather than materialist – thinking? How, precisely, does Brecht construe the relationship between theory and praxis, in both political and cultural/theatrical terms? Is Brecht's 'method', with its typical gestures of inversion, internal dislocation, and hostility to metaphysics, logocentrism and individualism, fundamentally deconstructive? Or is that method always embedded in a broader and deeper sociological and political project?

It is not always clear where Jameson stands on these issues (to be fair, the same point can be made about Brecht), though he does evince a tendency to prioritize dialectic over materialism, and method over substance. It might also be claimed that any attempt to identify a unifying preoccupation in Brecht's work is misguided. We have already seen that Jameson himself notes Brecht's predilection for discontinuity and fragmentation, and *Brecht and Method* could perhaps have been more cognizant of contradiction, not so much as a substantive feature of Brechtian thinking than as a fissure that runs through it. After all, what if Brecht did *not* have a coherent and consistent grasp of such categories as dialectic, (historical) materialism, modernity and (contemporary) capitalism? What if the incompatibilities of Brechtian thinking were in fact a necessary condition for Brechtian pedagogy, as Jameson so aptly describes it? 'Teaching is thus showing … ; the dramatic representation of teaching is the showing of showing, the showing of how you show and demonstrate.' What if, ultimately, the Cainonical mark of Brecht's modernity is a sceptical Giddensian reflexivity, self-conscious to the verge of that corrosive self-doubt objectified in the sardonic encomium 'In Praise of Doubt'?

Pedagogical notions such as representation and showing were, of course, at the heart of Jameson's own theoretical endeavours in the 1980s, culminating in his proposal of a (Brechtian) aesthetic of cognitive mapping. The most suggestive and stimulating sections of *Brecht and Method* are those where the allegorical strategies of reading expounded in *The Political Unconscious* are reprised in detailed explorations of specific texts: on the one hand, the most popular works such as *Life of Galileo*, and on the other neglected classics such as *Me-ti* and *The Threepenny Novel*. These commentaries alone call out for sustained attention to *Brecht and Method* by Brechtians and anti-Brechtians alike. At the same time, and notwithstanding

their fulgurating brilliance, Jameson's meditations on representability and capitalism in Brecht retrace the theoretical dilemmas delineated in his own mid-1980s accounts of abstraction and postmodernism. Jameson's discussion of representability in Brecht begins by acknowledging the latter's critique of photographic realism in *The Threepenny Lawsuit*. But Jameson does not elaborate on the theoretical bases of that critique and, when he moves on to discuss Brecht's substantive representations of capitalism, tends to concentrate on the embodiment of capitalism in specific personages, whether they be members of the lumpenproletariat or individual proto-capitalists.

This, though, is to miss the point. The crux of Brecht's critique of photographic realism – and, indeed, of all modes of mimetic illusionism – is that the realities of capitalist modernity can no longer be represented on the basis of the direct experience of individual subjects. Like Piscator, Brecht construes capitalism in structural and relational terms, so that it can only be grasped – and aesthetically mediated – via processes of conceptual abstraction. Jameson, however, still appears to conceive of artistic representation in iconic terms, much as he had done in the mid-1980s, in a manner reminiscent of Althusser's *Letter on Art*: 'art makes us "see" "conclusions without premisses", whereas knowledge makes us penetrate into the mechanism which produces the "conclusions" out of the "premisses".' Brecht's position is more complex, but equally problematic. While the artistic techniques associated with estrangement/*Verfremdung* are meant to enable the spectator to 'penetrate into the mechanism' so as to produce political conclusions out of sociological premisses, Brecht also propounds a philosophical and aesthetic ethos of making visible/*Sichtbarmachen* that is sustained by his commitment to social behaviourism. Hence, the V-effect aims to estrange a societal *gestus* which *underlies* historical processes, yet is simultaneously the *palpable* expression of the nexus of societal relations in which individuals in a particular epoch are located.

Given that Jameson's own reflections on abstraction and representation were provoked by the need to theorize postmodernism, it is not altogether surprising that he concludes *Brecht and Method* by reminding us of Brecht's seemingly forgotten role as a progenitor of much contemporary theory, whether it be anti-foundationalist, anti-essentialist or poststructuralist. The mediating link between Brecht and contemporary theory is, Jameson avers, Roland Barthes (though some might argue that Althusser played an equally important part in establishing and transmitting a Brechtian legacy). Unfortunately, Jameson does not have the space to examine this aspect of Brecht's impact in the detail it undoubtedly merits, and he ends, perhaps tellingly, by gesturing towards a properly Brechtian modernism. Here too, though, Jameson's account of Brecht presupposes a theoretical perspective which is, arguably, misplaced. Brecht's modernism is said to be fundamentally different from 'the canonical aestheticizing type', but the historico-cultural environment of Brecht's encounters with – and practice of – artistic modernism was dominated not by aestheticism, but by those activist modernisms from Italian Futurism through to revolutionary Expressionism and anarcho-Marxist Dada. Perhaps the real lesson to be learned from Brecht – the demonstrable 'usefulness' that prefaces Jameson's investigation – is that *all* the canonical and cultural-philosophical categories of the past three decades need to be radically dismantled and then reassembled, in a Galilean process of 'complex seeing' which will render contemporary 'theory' truly pre-Copernican.

Steve Giles

The other side of language

Jed Rasula and Steve McCaffery, *Imagining Language: An Anthology*, MIT Press, Cambridge MA and London, 1999. xx + 618 pp., £38.50 hb., 0 262 18186 X.

It is a platitude to state that literary theory in the last twenty years has been mainly preoccupied with deconstructing the notion of literature. The theory wars, the move towards cultural studies, the Holy Trinity of class, gender and race have done their best to enlarge, replace or discard the old canon. All those deconstructive attempts, however, still have something in common with the antiquated, essentialist, human nature view of literature: a representative conception. By which I mean nothing so simple as a mimetic theory where the text 'represents' real or imaginary entities; rather the idea that author, characters and readers are representative of a group or groups (of gender, race or class) – the largest of such groups being humankind.

Hardly anyone (and certainly not this reviewer) regrets the demise of the quasi-religious concept of literature, from Arnold to the New Criticism; although

the practice of close commentary at least taught interpretative techniques now sadly lost. But this does not entail (and certainly not for this reviewer) an adherence to the dogma of representativity. The problem with that dogma is that, focusing on the contents of the work, it separates literature from language (best left in the care of 'scientific' linguistics): the materiality of language is a fit subject of study for technicians and scientists, not for the likes of us, who float on the clouds of ideology and social and political intervention.

But the dogma of representativity has always-already been contested by another tradition, where language and literature are inextricably mixed, a tradition which rejects the idealist postulates on which not only representative literary theory but also the science of linguistics are based (the transitivity of language on the one hand, the calculability of *langue* on the other hand). This is the tradition not of Saussure the linguist, but of the other Saussure, the demented seeker of anagrams: the tradition of the materiality, corporeality and intransitivity of language as the stuff literature is made of.

This 'tradition', however, has so far failed to become one, in spite of the rich and various nature of the texts that might belong to it, for lack of an authorized corpus. With Rasula and McCaffery's anthology, such a corpus, in all its diversity, is at our disposal at last. And it makes exhilarating reading. Not least because of the 'method' of the anthology, which reminds me of a Deleuzian rhizome rather than the systematic paths of a scientific treatise: mysterious titles ('Oralities, Rituals and Colloquies', 'Lost and Found in Translation') and a labyrinthine criss-crossing of references. For this is a wonderland of a book, for a falsely naive, Alice-like reader to meander through. She will meet characters every bit as exciting as those of Lewis Carroll: poets that play with language (like Morgenstern), modernist novelists (Joyce or Gertrude Stein), students of social or racial dialect (from Whitman on slang to Zora Neale Hurston), practitioners of sound poetry (from Aristophanes to members of Oulipo), glossolalists and false prophets (from Swedenborg to Helen Smith), literary creators of invented words or tongues (from Rabelais to Carroll), madmen whose symptoms are linguistic and whose delirium is sometimes metalinguistic (from Judge Schreber to Luria's patient, taking in the poetry of Christopher Smart), serious jokers who extract meaning from the text by tampering or subtraction (R. Johnson and his clipped version of Milton, Bob Brown and his pornographic censorship, Tom Philipps and his *Humument*, 'a treated Victorian novel'), assorted practitioners of transposition (from the *traducson* of Swift's Anglo-Latin letter to 'scientific' mnemonics or translation), mystics (and that includes Khlebnikov, the Russian Futurist poet), cryptographers (like Francis Bacon, with his double cypher) and spelling reformers (from President de Brosses to George Bernard Shaw). And, last but not least, a hodge-podge of authors who reflect on the materiality of signs (from Jean-Pierre Brisset to Fennolosa) and philosophers of the *clinamen* as applied to language and literature, from Lucretius to Serres.

This list seeks to do justice to the main quality of the anthology: its anti-systematic profusion. The book is obviously a labour of love, collected over many years. True, some names are missing, like Wolfson and Perceval (but these 600 odd pages are only a selection: the material that might have been included is infinite), and one can detect a certain hostility to the Lettrism of Isidore Isou. True also, the presence of others is bizarre and perhaps undeserved (I am not impressed by John Riddell's 'H', which is quoted *in extenso*). But the sheer bulk of what is there is overwhelming, in an entirely positive sense. Not least because from this construction of another tradition for language and literature, a number of conclusions may be drawn.

(a) There is such a thing as a practice of imagining language. Hence the ambiguity of the title: 'language is captured at the moments when it imagines' – language does not only speak in its own right, it has flights of fancy – versus 'it is a recognised literary and theoretical practice for a writer to imagine language'. At its most timid, this attitude implies that the writer plays with language; at its boldest, that she recreates language from scratch, even if this is notoriously impossible (poets and *fous littéraires, même combat*).

(b) The practice is immemorial, and found in all cultures. Even as the seminal study by A. Liede (*Dichtung als Spiel*, de Gruyter, Berlin, 1963) on games authors play covered the whole earth and went back to the remotest antiquity, this anthology has texts by Aristophanes, a third-century kabbalist, and includes a medieval Arabic mystical alphabet, and a Rongo-Rongo from Easter Island. And this is not a return to a WASPish universalism of human nature; this is a recognition that whenever humankind speaks (and it is a defining characteristic of the species *homo* that it is *loquens*), they imagine language, or are imagined by it.

(c) The practice is so pervasive that it crosses the usual barriers between language-games and genres, between the 'aesthetic' and the 'rational', for instance, or the playful and the serious. The result is a mixture as heady as the mixture of races and nationalities on

the Great Trunk Road in *Kim*: as we run along, we meet poets and painters (and even architects), philosophers and social scientists imbued with a spirit of universal benevolence, mystics and madmen and hoaxers (like George Psalmanazar, the eighteenth-century 'discoverer' of Formosan) – all the language-games that humankind has ever practised seem to be affected.

(d) As a result of all this, the achievement is considerable. Seen from the vantage point of the anthology, the whole landscape of the imagining language tradition (like the chess-board in *Through the Looking-Glass*) enables us to understand the apparently scandalous links between high poetry and *folie littéraire*, even madness *tout court*, between epiphanic encounters with God and hoaxes. What the anthology captures is, if not the essence of the literary, as there is no such thing, at least the fount from which our ever renewed desire for literature springs. There is a darker side to language, and this darker side is infinitely attractive and productive, and it is forever haunting the clearer side, which attempts – sometimes with success – to construct identity and convey information.

In a way, all this is already known (a host of French theorists are quoted in the introduction to the various sections, to comfort the philosophy of language that underpins the anthology). For this is not only a collection of quaint and curious texts: the book defends both a literary and a philosophical position.

The *literary* position (hence my *incipit*) concerns the going back to modernism as the model of literariness. The current *doxa* is very much centred on narrative fiction, as Angela Carter is better at identity construction than Gerard Manley Hopkins (and she helps us to reinterpret the poetry of Hopkins, or any poetry, as a form of identity construction). What the anthology does is displace narrative from its central position and go back to poetry as the model for literature. This is an attitude that, in spite of a number of celebrated modernist novels, modernism shares; at least this brand of modernism, where Eliot is of more importance than Woolf. The consequence, of course, is a retrospective construction of a tradition: it is therefore a tradition, in the classic Eliotian sense that is presented to us.

The *philosophical* position is based on the concept of *clinamen*, a term the eternal return of which organizes the criss-crossing of reference between the various sections. The concept, of course, goes back to Lucretius. As applied to language and literature, it produces a rationale for a theory of the other side of language, by insisting on the arbitrary character not of the sign, but of the text, on its capacity to develop independently of any author's intention, to construct its own meaning through automatic devices or mere semantic chance. Language in those texts exploits, in the sense of Grice, its own rules and potentialities. Hence the excess that pervades all those texts and accounts for their profusion: the excess involved in letting language speak, but also in letting a perfectly rational method (for the improvement of spelling, for instance) acquire a momentum of its own and escape its inventor into the production of *délire*.

I cannot too highly praise the anthology: it will provide a breath of fresh air to all those who, like me, have their doubts about the current *doxa* of identity.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle

His last bow

Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, Verso, London and New York, 1998. lvi + 221 pp., £14.00 pb., 0 86091 614 6.

This is his final book, published in France in 1993, two years after the appearance of *What is Philosophy?* (the last product of the long collaboration with Félix Guattari), one year after Guattari's death and two years before Deleuze's suicide. In 1991, Deleuze and Guattari sounded an autumnal, almost valedictory, note when they remarked that 'what is philosophy?' is a question to be asked late in life, when the time has at last come to speak concretely. The tone here is less melancholy, yet there is a sense that something is already over. Deleuze remarks that part of the greatness of the *Critique of Practical Reason* stems from the fact that Kant embarked upon it at an age when great authors rarely have anything new to say. Kant was fifty-four when he wrote the second *Critique*; at the time of writing, Deleuze was sixty-eight. And it is true that there is little here that is radically new. Of the eighteen essays included in this volume, eight are revised versions of pieces published from 1973 onwards, and a lot of the new material deals with familiar topics. It is as though Deleuze were talking about old friends, or visiting a familiar library. Even the title has a retrospective feel to it; 'critical and clinical' might have been the watchword that inspired the collaborative work of the philosopher, and the psychoanalyst and psychiatrist.

In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari described philosophy as the creation of concepts, and philosophers as the friends of 'signed concepts' such as Descartes's cogito and Leibniz's monad. Concepts are not, however, created by philosophy alone, or by philosophers alone. As Jean Hyppolite would have argued, philosophical thought always works with the non-philosophical. Concepts emerge from philosophy's engagement with science, medicine or the law. In the essays collected here, the zone of engagement is with literature, or at least a certain literature. The engagement has been a longstanding one. Deleuze's study of Proust appeared in 1964, and the Deleuze–Guattari essay on Kafka in 1975. It was in 1967 that Deleuze began to ask how it is that Sacher-Masoch's novel *Venus in Furs* eventually gave birth to the clinical concept of masochism. Here, he returns very briefly to the same question. A writer such as Sacher-Masoch is not a patient, but rather a physician who makes a diagnosis. And what he diagnoses is the world; he assesses the chances of health, the chances of the birth of a new man. For Deleuze, a writer such as Sacher-Masoch is a symptomatologist whose literary works describe or isolate a 'masochistic' mode of existence, which can then be named 'masochism.'

The authors in the library are familiar, and perhaps they are Deleuze's familiars: Raymond Roussel, Melville, Beckett, Whitman, Lewis Carroll, Jarry and Louis Wolfson, the 'student of schizophrenic languages' whose first book he prefaced in 1970. The 'sucking stones' of Beckett's *Molloy* were one of *Anti-Oedipus*'s desiring machines; Deleuze now savours them again in a particularly good essay on the suitably Beckettian theme of 'The Exhausted.' Deleuze's familiars constitute a personal avant-garde working at the limits of language, making it stutter with frustration as it encounters its own inadequacies and boundaries. The tone too is familiar, at once highly intellectual and slightly arch, and at times very funny. Just what is one to make of the piece on Alfred Jarry? His putative 'pataphysics' (the science of imaginary solutions) is supposed to extend as far beyond metaphysics as metaphysics extends beyond physics, but does this really make him, as Deleuze suggests, an 'unrecognized precursor to Heidegger'? Serious or not, the comparison does open up the truly intriguing, and not unattractive, possibility of a Heidegger-with-humour. And what would a conventional Spinoza specialist make of the claim that the *Ethics* consists of two books: the 'river book' of the definitions, axioms and postulates which 'develops its course', and the 'subterranean book of fire' of the scholia?

As in the great *Anti-Oedipus*, psychoanalysis is rebuked for its reductive tendencies and its insistence that everything is, in the first and last analysis, about 'mummy-and-daddy-and-me'. Marthe Robert is singled out for criticism: her *Origins of the Novel* reduces the whole of Western literature to the family romances of the Foundling and the Bastard. The stress on the definite article betrays the mania for the personal and the possessive that translates 'A child is being beaten' into 'My father is beating me.' As Deleuze, obviously an observant father, notes in his appealing essay 'What Children Say', children do not play at being 'the horse' or 'my father'. They play at being 'a' horse, at becoming 'a' father. Yet Deleuze does seem still to share something of psychoanalysis's vision of the literary, in that he does ground it in childhood. Fantasy and play are forms of 'becoming', and so too is writing.

Writing is a question of becoming, always incomplete, and always going beyond lived experience. In *Moby-Dick*, Ahab finally becomes the white whale he has been pursuing and, in striking the whale, strikes at himself. Deleuze then immediately departs from any form of psychoanalytic orthodoxy by insisting that 'we do not write with our neuroses'. Neuroses do not mark the passage of life; they are states in which the process of life is interrupted, plugged up and blocked. At times, Deleuze does seem to lapse into an almost apocalyptically romantic vision of the artist as outsider. Kafka and Beckett, a Czech writing in German and an Irishman writing mainly in French, demonstrate that great writers are always foreigners in the languages they use, even when they are their 'own' languages. Literature is 'an enterprise in health' in that the writer explores things that are too strong for him (*sic*), too big for him, and 'returns from what he has seen and heard with bloodshot eyes and pierced eardrums.' This sounds uncomfortably like anti-psychiatry's old hymns to the virtues of schizophrenia, and Deleuze and Guattari were among the singers of those Siren songs. The comment that we do not write with our neuroses recalls, however, that those partners in schizanalysis were also marked by the clinical-critical tradition that views mental illness as absence of freedom: we do not and cannot do anything with our neuroses, but only against them.

There may be little here that is new to any long-term student of Deleuze, but there are so many pleasures to be rediscovered that this is no real criticism. These essays are perhaps too brief and fragmentary to serve as an introduction to Deleuze, who seems to assume that his reader is already familiar with his concerns, and the 1977 *Dialogues* with Claire Parnet (published in translation in 1987) provide a much better starting

point. The broad overview provided by Smith in his 'Introduction' does, on the other hand, provide a good presentation of Deleuze, and thus gives the translation a much broader audience than the French original.

David Macey

Schopen for Giddens

Kenneth H. Tucker, Jr, *Anthony Giddens and Modern Social Theory*, Sage, London, 1998. 240 pp., £45.00 hb., £14.99 pb., 0 8039 755 3 hb., 0 8039 756 1 pb.

Stjepan G. Mestrovic, *Anthony Giddens: The Last Modernist*, Routledge, London, 1998. x + 242 pp., £45.00 hb., £14.99 pb., 0 415 09572 7 hb., 0 415 09573 5 pb.

These two books occupy the opposite ends of the spectrum in the assessment of Anthony Giddens. Tucker tries to present a balanced account; Mestrovic with no qualms uses Giddens as a vehicle to pronounce his own views on the postmodern world.

Tucker's book is divided into two parts. The first deals with 'The Reconstruction of Social Theory' (classical theory, Giddens's new rules of sociological method, and structuration theory); the second with 'Social Change and Modernity' (the state and capitalism, the culture of modernity, democracy, and feminism and identity). The chapters all have the same format: Tucker first runs through a quick survey of other sociologists on the issue, and then presents Giddens's view. Some of the chapters are thus wildly imbalanced; this is truly Giddens *and* modern social theory. The writing style is flat and unvaried: in the pages in Chapter 7 which do actually discuss Giddens, for example, there are 24 paragraphs, 17 of which begin 'Giddens believes' or 'Giddens argues', etc. – a simple juxtaposition of 'what Giddens thinks' with what has been already summarized. The book looks as though it is a compilation of card indexes strung together in no particular order. A mind-numbing experience. This might be explained by the fact that Tucker disagrees fundamentally with Giddens on just about every subject, but instead of providing a critique parades other theorists as alternatives, as if 'modern social theories' were goods on a supermarket shelf.

Tucker concludes:

> Giddens's proposal for a new politics points to an interesting tension in his work. He recognizes that damaged solidarities must be repaired, but they can only be (re)constructed on the basis of the autonomous, Promethean self.… Despite Giddens's attempts to overcome the structure/agency duality, he has not so much resolved this discrepancy as wavered between the two poles of society/individual.… This tension points to other difficulties.… Giddens does not develop a strong theory of culture and its role in shaping culture.… [J]oining these theoretical problems is the more concrete discounting of class issues.

If these are seen as crucial by Tucker, why is Giddens important? The answer is that his theory is not insular, and, contradicting what has just been said, it 'dispenses with old dualisms such as structure and agency,' and has a 'strong' commitment to 'moral and political action'. In other words Giddens's theory has no intrinsic importance.

The book by Mestrovic attempts to rescue sociology from Giddensian modernism. It is expressly not a 'critique' of Giddens. It aims to be a contribution to postmodern pessimism, to a tradition which moves from Schopenhauer towards Durkheim and Mestrovic, for the sociology Giddens represents is a heresy complicit with a new tyranny and totalitarianism. Mestrovic provides successive confrontational discussions of Giddens's theory, method, agency, politics, and modernity; but above all Mestrovic's concerns are not intellectual matters but the basic emotions of the heart. At the same time Mestrovic emphasizes that Giddens is not an easy target, but 'is really like quicksilver' and 'difficult to follow in general' but seems to be offering his readers the consumer equivalent of 'Bud Lite' – that is 'rationality lite, social control-lite, and other lite versions of modernism'. Giddens is seen to offer 'comfort' to the perplexed of the postmodern world.

The risk Mestrovic takes is the same as that faced by Tucker: merely to juxtapose one set of dogmas against another. The temptation in this book is to denigrate Giddens's work in every way possible while presenting it. If this is to be avoided some elementary methodological constraints would appear to be called for. Mestrovic, however, will have none of this and opts for honesty: my work, he says, will be dogmatic and repetitive. Appealing to the reader's good nature, he says, simply, at the beginning of the book: much here is redundant, but 'it could be that my own redundancy, already evident in this introduction, is meant to be a somewhat reflexive irony'. This is no careful and scholarly critique of Giddens. This book advocates the superior dogmatics of Mestrovic's postmodern sociology against the modernism of Giddens. The only irony found here is that of the fruit trader who steps on a banana skin. When Mestrovic hopes 'to enter into a dialogue with the reader in imagination and to provoke discussion' he already has both feet off

the ground: there is 'a third way' in theory, 'between modernism and post-modernism, namely, the engagement of the passions to overcome the bias toward cognition'. He thus sees modern sociology as polarized between Giddens's 'trite and superficial' modernism and Baudrillardian postmodernism, and both are too cognitive (though Baudrillard has uncovered some 'very real and disturbing tendencies'. Yet Mestrovic will not say what his position is: 'I do not specify my theoretical alternative … [a] separate volume would be required'.

So how does Giddens betray sociology? By neglecting the basis of Durkheimianism in the thought of Arthur Schopenhauer. The not inconsiderable problem here is that not only is this link absent in Durkheim's own explicit discussion of his sources, but he expressly disavowed it. Mestrovic, unabashed, cites evidence that Durkheim's students were reported to call Durkheim 'Schopen'. But how is Durkheim misread by Giddens? Mestrovic finds Giddens has not recognized the Schopenhauer genealogy through Wundt. Mestrovic notes Giddens's awareness of Durkheim's discussion of Wundt, but Giddens misrepresents the significance of the German school of *Volkerpsychologie* for the 'establishment of sociology as the science of morality' seen as 'the true origins of the social sciences'. The problem here is that Giddens always writes with great accuracy on the texts of Durkheim. When faced with the argument that the 'German input is overwhelmingly preponderant', Durkheim insisted that this was 'completely without foundation'. Indeed, he even went so far as to say that the most important strand of his work 'has no trace of anything German'. The significant influences, he repeated, were French (Comte and Renouvier) and English, adding, 'it is useless to point out at length the tendentious nature of such a line of reasoning'.

But how does this arcane point impact on other issues? What Mestrovic holds against Giddens is that he refuses to expose 'the hypocritical, oppressive, and defunct aspects of the Enlightenment project'. Paradoxically forgetting about his third way stance, Mestrovic presents Baudrillard's writing on Bosnia as a salutary alternative. As with the mutual unawareness between Weber and Durkheim, there is now, he claims, a problem of the 'mutual unawareness of Giddens and Baudrillard' (not aware himself that the two have appeared on the same platform and are very mutually aware). The whole issue hinges on Durkheim's concept of religion and anomie: Giddens mistakenly defines this as a state of normlessness, but, says Mestrovic, it is a state of unlimited desires. Mestrovic takes as one of his key illustrations the cognitive problem of anomic division of scientific labour: scientists are in a state of anomie 'when they focus so exclusively on "some propositions which have been definitively proved" that they lose sight of the sacredness of their task'. There is a 'clear allusion to the Bible' in Durkheim's discussion, he says. Actually there is no allusion to the Bible and none to the sacred or to unlimited desires or to emotions. This is precisely the moment when Durkheim's sociology explicitly both arises and departs from that of Comte, not Schopenhauer, with the key formulation of the political problems of solidarity, government and the emergence of (abnormal) forms of the (intellectual) division of labour. Any attempt to throw the division of labour back into, or to regulate from, a (pseudo-sacred) primitive unity would be, says Durkheim, a totalitarian disaster. Giddens realizes this. Mestrovic and indeed Tucker do not. This is why the urgently required critique of Giddens does not begin in the vacuous books under review.

Mike Gane

Dutch

Étienne Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, Verso, London and New York, 1998. xxiv + 136 pp., £14.00 pb., 1 85984 102 3.

Steven B. Smith, *Spinoza, Liberalism, and the Question of Jewish Identity*, Yale University Press, New Haven CT and London, 1997. xvii + 270 pp., £11.50 pb., 0 300 07665 7.

Both these books are about Spinoza's politics. Both pay a lot more attention to the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* than to the *Ethics*. In Steven Smith's case this is a question of subject matter: the title accurately reflects the book's contents. In Balibar's it involves a claim about the whole of Spinoza's work, even his metaphysics. Balibar aims to 'initiate the reader into Spinoza's philosophy *through* his politics'. This approach, which has already been attempted at greater length by Lewis Feuer in his *Spinoza and the Rise of Liberalism*, is a possible one, but carries with it the dangers which are shown by Balibar's remark that 'the dilemma which would have us distinguish between "speculative" philosophy, on the one hand, and philosophy "applied" to politics, on the other, is not simply meaningless, it is the *principal obstacle* to achieving wisdom.' This is far from the truth. Surely

we should have learnt by now from the many atrocious attempts to read metaphysical positions politically that such readings are unprofitable. For while metaphysical propositions can indeed enter into political arguments, they can only lead to political conclusions *along with* empirical propositions, and will lead to quite different conclusions in conjunction with different empirical propositions, so that every metaphysical position, if it is considered politically at all, is radically politically ambiguous. In fact this is not only true of metaphysical arguments: even political arguments will lead to diverse political conclusions according to which other arguments they are united with. This is illustrated by the relation between Hobbes and Spinoza, which this book gets wrong. Hobbes's central argument – for the legitimacy of any effective *de facto* sovereign – does not lead to monarchism, but to submission to the powers that be, whether monarchic, aristocratic or democratic. Hobbes has *separate* reasons for preferring monarchy, but these cut no political ice, since on Hobbes's view a preference for monarchy cannot lead you to attempt to change any non-monarchy into a monarchy. One could accept Hobbes's arguments for submission, but differ in preferring a democracy, and that is just what Spinoza does in the *Political Treatise*. He is no more favourable than Hobbes to the attempt to change monarchy into democracy, as his comments on contemporary English politics illustrate.

Having said all this, Balibar's book is surprisingly good for one with such a flaw in its project. It documents clearly, and brings to life, Spinoza's peculiarly ambivalent response to the position in the Dutch Republic: a liberal, but not democratic, bourgeois republic, crushed between the millstones of a monarchist gentry and a monarchist proletariat united by Calvinist fundamentalism against the (more or less secular) commercial republic; a state in which Spinoza, for all his democratic sympathies, was bound to throw in his lot with the liberal oligarchy who at least defended free thought.

Steven Smith's book gives an account of Spinoza as the first liberal democrat, which, in these days when liberal democracy is a stultifying orthodoxy, is a little disappointing. Nor is it completely true: Spinoza defended his native Dutch Republic, which was liberal without being democratic, while advocating on philosophical grounds a republic like Rousseau's (see *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus,* chapter xvi), which could be described as democratic without being liberal. (Some recognition of this last point is given by Smith, though under the rather unhelpful heading of 'positive liberty'.) And despite the commercial character of the Dutch Republic, there was also an anti-commercial strain in Spinoza's thinking, for instance in the preamble to *On the Improvement of the Understanding*, and as evidenced by his friendship with the communalistic Collegiant sect. Smith by contrast reads Spinoza's evaluation of the commercial life as in a wholly favourable light.

Spinoza, Liberalism and Jewish Identity does good work in showing us Spinoza's politics and their bearing on the question of the place of Jews in modern Europe. But as with Balibar's book I am left with the feeling that, while Spinoza was an important stepping stone between the political philosophies of Hobbes and Rousseau, he was not the equal of either; he was one of the four or five greatest philosophers of all time, but because of his metaphysics of the human mind, set out in the *Ethics*, not because of his praise of his native Amsterdam or his giving a democratic twist to Hobbes. His time and place are mainly of interest to us because he transcended his time and place.

Andrew Collier

Greek dreams

Stathis Gourgouris, *Dream Nation: Enlightenment, Colonization and the Institution of Modern Greece*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1996. 303 pp., 0 8047 2725 2.

Is the nation a real and historical social formation, a text, a discourse, a figment of our imagination, a narrative, or what? Stathis Gourgouris answers that the nation is 'a dream'. *Dream Nation* is a persuasive critique of the positivism that still lingers in some of the most pre-eminent studies of nationalism. Informed and inspired by the works of Freud and Castoriadis and in dialogue and discussion with Žižek, this study in comparative literature directs our enquiries to unsought sources in the study of nationalism. In fact, Gourgouris's book can be read as a critical reading of post-structuralism, to the point where the notion of 'a source' for the study of nationalism is put up for grabs, be it an institution, a text, or a discourse informed by texts. The author weaves through the fields of literature, Hellenic Studies, philosophy, psychoanalysis, and anthropology in order to avoid the essentialism of disciplinary boundaries. Gourgouris argues that the nation escapes analysis; that there is no 'source' for

it (in the positivist or disciplinary sense), because 'it' does not exist. Therefore, instead of proposing another 'where' for the nation, Gourgouris turns his gaze, in his formulation, 'elsewhere'.

But what does it mean to study the nation as a dream? Gourgouris places the dream within social-historical conditions. He studies dream-work as the infrastructure of Greek nationalism. 'Greece' is a dream, but it works to bring about reality. For Gourgouris, the dream is a driving force in the making of modern Greece. It is argued that 'the cultural image of a modern Greece was put into production with much greater urgency than was a political economic infrastructure'. Crafting a story of nationalism that moves further than the linear logic of capital, Gourgouris studies the 'dream' of Greece as part of the 'productive forces' that operated in its making.

'The dream' is located in the zone of a literary author, poet or fiction writer's creativity: between the conscious and unconscious thinking processes, between the states of sleep and waking. Freud coined the term 'secondary revision' for the segments of dreams which are akin to conscious rationalization. Gourgouris studies the writing of national literature and national history as 'secondary revisions'. The nation is neither here nor there, but emerges out of the in-between of dream-work.

Dream Nation makes a powerful contribution to the theory of nationalism: it guides us down a fresh avenue of thinking, beyond the sociology of ' imagined communities'. It is also a challenging reading of so-dreamed Greek literature. At the time of a nightmare in Kosovo, when such dreams are assuming genocidal proportions, one is left, in reading Gourgouris's book, rightly fearful of the dreadful reality, the terror and violence, that is forced out by such a 'dream'.

Yael Navaro-Yashin