

Mantra

Raya Dunayevskaya, *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx*, edited and introduced by Peter Hudis and Kevin B. Anderson, Lexington Books, Lanham MD, 2002. 386 pp., \$100.00 hb., \$24.95 pb., 0 7391 0266 4 hb., 0 7391 0267 2 pb.

Born in the Ukraine in 1910, Raya Dunayevskaya emigrated to the United States in her teens. By the age of twenty she was active on the American Left, her ability to read Russian giving her an advantage in interpreting the contradictory messages emerging from revolutionary Russia. She served as Trotsky's secretary when the exiled Bolshevik arrived in America in 1937, but broke with him over the Hitler–Stalin pact of 1939. Trotsky stuck to his analysis of Russia as a 'degenerated workers' state'; Dunayevskaya would not swallow the idea that a workers' state, however degenerate, could ally with a fascist one. Her subsequent investigations revealed exploitation by the bureaucrats and extraction of surplus value from labour; she and her comrade C.L.R. James therefore defined the USSR as 'state-capitalist'. Having formed the Forest–Johnson Tendency, named after their clandestine pseudonyms in the (American) Socialist Workers Party, they also abandoned the Leninist concept of the vanguard party. They then dissolved their Tendency, since tendencies only have meaning within a party's factional fights.

Dunayevskaya's economic analyses of Soviet statistics about Five Year Plans in 1942 run parallel to those circulated in 1948 by Tony Cliff, founder of the (British) Socialist Workers Party. Both used Marxist categories to diagnose capitalist relations of exploitation in Russia. However, reacting against the 'materialist' economism of the Stalinists, Dunayevskaya argued her case by calling for a return to Marx's *philosophy*. To distinguish it from both pre-1914 social democracy and communism after Lenin's death and Trotsky's defeat, Dunayevskaya named her philosophy 'Marxist-humanism'. Lenin and the Russian revolutionaries of 1917–23 were the sole exceptions in her universal condemnation of 'post-Marx Marxists' (including Engels and Lukács). Her involvement with Hegel's philosophy was not casual, and, despite harsh words about academics, she spoke at Hegel conferences and engaged non-Marxist Hegelians in lively correspondence. Nevertheless, her conviction that no one else had understood the last three syllogisms of

Science of Logic, and that these provide an opening into a new epoch for humanity, can sound slightly crackpot, especially when repeated (as here) in talk after talk, letter after letter. Her 'revelation' of 1953, when she grasped the significance of Hegel's Absolute, is returned to again and again with an obsessiveness worthy of Philip K. Dick. But – again like Dick – this obsessiveness is infectious, and at times moving.

Dunayevskaya's belief that philosophy must step out into the world unmediated by politics or concrete demands struck James as hopelessly unrealistic, and they parted ways. What had been a weapon for criticizing Stalinist residues in Trotskyism – revival of Hegelian dialectics – now became the core of Dunayevskaya's thought. Although influential within the New Left of the 1960s, she eschewed both academic and party positions until her death in 1987. There are tributes on the back of this volume from academics such as Douglas Kellner and Susan Buck-Morss, but she was proudest of her correspondence with worker-militants like Charles Denby and Harry McShane. By the 1980s her small circle of supporters resembled a cult; but, cult or not, it has provided excellent editors – the introduction and footnotes here are wonderfully informative, conscientious and accurate.

This collection allows us a glimpse of Dunayevskaya in action: how she attempted to communicate her new philosophy without the usual Marxist mediations of party, votes, leadership, theoretical journal, internal bulletins, newspaper and propaganda. The idea of taking Hegel straight to the masses is not as absurd as it sounds. When she spoke to students, auto workers and anti-war activists in Tokyo in January 1966, or to a similar audience at the Black–Red Conference in Detroit in January 1969, or after the Soweto revolt in South Africa in December 1976, her words have a conviction and clarity which is hair-raising. She may not have cited facts and figures about overtime rates and pay deals, which peppered the speeches Cliff gave to mass meetings of workers in the early 1970s, but she transmits an equally revolutionary message. Per-

haps the publishers were thinking of the anticapitalist movement and the publishing success granted Naomi Klein, Susan George and Toni Negri when they issued this collection.

Like her classic *Marxism and Freedom* (1958), this book is centred on Lenin's aphorism that a whole generation of Marxists had failed to understand *Capital* because they hadn't understood Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Dunayevskaya then caps this with the idea that Lenin himself hadn't gone far enough into Hegel because he stopped at the transition of Logic into Nature (Practice), rather than going on to the Absolute Idea (Freedom). Unfortunately, such a direct translation of philosophy into politics is only likely to convince those who have already discovered in Hegel and Marx a basis for collective political



action. Despite recent attempts by star intellectuals such as Žižek and Jameson, discussion of Lenin and dialectics without the democracy and decision-making of a Marxist party seems unreal and ungrounded. As the meetings of her followers attest, Dunayevskaya's ideas are mainly attractive to ex-members of various Marxist groups, united in their bitterness about past attempts to lead and orient them in the struggle. In other words, Dunayevskaya's polemics rely upon the very political practices and structures she declares she has transcended.

Dunayevskaya traces the American roots of Marxism, not to the General Congress of Labor in Baltimore in 1866, but further back to the abolitionist movement and the slave revolts which led to the Civil War. This is an excellent way of exploding

the reformist recuperation of Marx's writings on the United States. However, despite a plethora of good moments, the book as a whole lacks force. Away from her factional fights and debates, Dunayevskaya can appear to lack a strategic vision of the object of attack. Anticapitalism seems worlds away from her obsessive readings of Hegel, and orthodox Trotskyism too small and frail a boat – already riddled with holes, shot from both inside and outside – to rock with revolutionary conviction.

Nonetheless, Dunayevskaya's reading of Hegel is persuasive because it pours real history and political experience back into his categories. The manner in which she and C.L.R. James wrestled with Hegel was a breakthrough for radical philosophy, rescuing some of the most difficult texts in Western philosophy from the professionals. Dunayevskaya argues that the 'incomprehensibility' of Hegel is political in itself, due to his insistence that concepts are not inert counters in an eternal game of logic, but fluid, self-moving 'notions' with their own tendencies. History and change are therefore the substance of thought, not its corruption, as Plato believed. Lenin made the point that this fluidity, when not sophistry and subjectivism on the part of the thinker, results from the fact that notions reflect objective developments in the world. The unabashed and exaggerated manner in which Dunayevskaya revelled in Hegelian philosophy has something of the poet about it. Towards the end of her life, she used phrases like 'the Idea itself thinking'. This echoes the idealist climaxes of Hegel's great works, which have the soaring self-congratulation of prayers and wish-fulfilling dreams, a vertigo eagerly sought by poets. Beginning with Heine and on to Mayakovsky and Breton, authentic Marxism has always had a fruitful relationship with poets – but it also has a tradition of criticizing such formulations as 'idealist'.

James and Dunayevskaya were correct to see that disinterest in Lenin's ruminations on the *Greater Logic* were part of Stalinist suppression of the speculative, subjective side of Marxism, and that this side is crucial. Like Walter Benjamin's image of official communism's 'historical materialism' – hiding away the dwarf of theology inside a chess-playing robot – the claim that Marxism is positive science ('economics') rather than dialectical humanism has authoritarian implications. It also means that religious or mystical or idealist fads (psychotherapy, existentialism, Nietzscheanism, cultural studies...) come to occupy the 'soul'

vacated by its soulless materialism. The relationship of radical subjectivity and endless desire to capitalism is a concrete issue that Marxism ignores at its peril. As Dunayevskaya says, 'We can no longer, as did Lenin, keep "our" philosophic notebooks private.'

One frustration of Dunayevskaya's thought is that a certain puritanism – always a curse of the American Left – appears to prevent her relating to the French tradition of Charles Fourier, surrealism and the Situationists. Like her, these revolutionaries also talked about 'new passions', and the Situationists actually managed to turn Hegelian concepts into accessible slogans. Such a tradition might help to translate the extreme subjectivism of climactic Hegelian rhapsody into more materialist, Marx-friendly terms. When Hegel quotes Schiller at the end of *Phenomenology of Spirit* ('from the chalice of this realm of spirits/foams forth for Him his own infinitude'), the Freudian sees the autarchic sex act, or masturbation, but, unlike the radical feminist or Stalinist politico, does not immediately follow this up with moralistic outrage. In his 'avant-pulp' novels Stewart Home reminds readers of the affinity between Sadeian sexual fantasy and revolutionary thought. A Home-style sexual-reductionist interpretation of transcendentalism not only bursts the Hegelian religious afflatus; it also begs questions only pro-sex communism – proletarian and feminist – can answer.

'Rediscoveries' are the wellspring of Marxism. John Bellamy Foster recently made a strong case for a socialist ecology by reviving Marx's doctoral dissertation on Epicurus. Likewise, in order to do battle with the post-Deleuzian philosophers of 'desire', the new wave of punk writers represented by Home are surely right to revive the scurrilous irreligion and anti-moralism of *The Holy Family* and *The German Ideology* (whose forgotten invective versus Max Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* now reads like a prophylactic sally against Nietzsche and post-structuralism). Dunayevskaya's return to dialectics and subjectivity was an essential contribution to the Marxist recovery of the whole person travestied by the speciality of thought. However, deprived of the confrontational frankness of the Freudian Left, an insistence on Hegelian subjectivity easily becomes transcendent and unbelievable – in short, religious. The advantage of the psychoanalytic interpretation over the conventional Marxist charge of 'idealism' is that it is not driven by repression or moralism. Even if it uses terms which are anathema to Hegelians (and probably to many 'post-Marx Marxists'), the pro-sex faction can explain, even celebrate, Hegel's underlying impulse, rather than

invoke a taboo. When Wilhelm Reich called orgasm 'cosmic plasmatic sensation' he gave it an 'infinitude' no materialist can argue with. By reminding us that philosophical writing is a substitute for the ineluctable needs of the human body, a sexual interpretation restores the reader's sense of human equality (this was the thrust of Peter Sloterdijk's revival of Diogenes in *Critique of Cynical Reason*). A surrealist Hegel would provide just the ally Dunayevskaya needs, and could open out into a revolutionary interpretation of dreams, fantasy and the unconscious – and a critique of their exploitation by religion and the culture industry.

However, as shown by her curt dismissal of Freud in 1973 (*Women's Liberation* has declared him sexist, so we can bin him, it is declared in *Philosophy and Revolution*), Dunayevskaya would not be interested. Her direct line between Hegelian philosophy and contemporary political activism meant ignoring the ensemble of revolutionary ideas suppressed by Hitler and Stalin and World War II: the concrete manifestation of the 'spirit' of freedom she talks about. How was the family restored after the worldwide assault on bourgeois respectability in the 1920s? The banning of Freud went together with the attack on dialectical philosophy, working-class organization and women's rights. Although she corresponded with Marcuse and Fromm, it was always about philosophy, never psychoanalysis. (For all his failings over the characterization of the new ruling class in Russia, Trotsky was far more alert to the potential of psychoanalysis.) Dunayevskaya's uncritical embrace of new social movements – always superior in her eyes to the 'post-Marx Marxists', who are portrayed as a crew of unhip grumblers, ever 'fazed' by the new – finally threatened to unravel her Marxism completely.

This flaw (in Trotskyist jargon, 'movementism' or 'tail-endism') became glaring in late Marxist humanism. It was pinpointed in 1984, when Dunayevskaya said of participants in revolutions: 'Whether or not they were conscious of actually being the history-makers, they were exactly that.' Everything Dunayevskaya had said in *Marxism and Freedom* about Absolute Mind and Freedom revolved around *consciousness*. Every human being – capitalist, housewife or cop – 'makes history' simply by participating in society: the point of Hegel's 'what is rational is real', and Marx's uncovering of surplus value, is that they introduce the measure of *truth* and *consciousness* into politics and economics. By saying that the revolutionary masses can make history *unconsciously*, Dunayevskaya reduces the proletariat to the level of the bourgeoisie, participants in history who blindly create new conditions. Her

enthusiasm for social movements finally betrays her own philosophy: moralism replaces enlightenment.

All this means that for the anticapitalist searching for revolutionary theory, *The Power of Negativity* is not the place to start (unless one isolated 'Lecture in Japan on Hegel', 1966; 'Presentation to the Black-Red Conference', 1968; and 'Logic as Stages of Freedom, Stages of Freedom as Logic, or the Needed American Revolution', 1969; and the correspondence with C.L.R. James between 1949 to 1951, the high point of both their thinking – or had these pages excerpted by a canny pamphleteer). The earlier *Marxism and Freedom* is free of the repetition which makes *The Power of Negativity's* references to Hegel's Absolute Idea sound like a mantra. It is a more powerful and convincing exposition of Dunayevskaya's ideas.

Nevertheless, for socialists, *The Power of Negativity* will provoke soul-searching about party instrumentalism and freedom of thought. Dunayevskaya's brusque, unpretentious and exclamatory epistolary style is exhilarating. She articulates tenets about freedom and subjectivity that are well established in the cosmopolitan working class, though they may not yet have become ensconced in their vanguard organizations at the level of theory. Unfortunately, radical philosophy unsupported by political party, academia or celebrity is a thin – if occasionally head-spinning – broth to live by. If one baulks before the exaggerations and fancies of Dunayevskaya's later pronouncements, it is because one wishes to make actual her promise that we have entered a new era.

Ben Watson

Trust me, I'm a philosopher

Onora O'Neill, *Autonomy and Trust in Bioethics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002. 213 pp., £40.00 hb., £14.95 pb., 0 521 81540 1 hb., 0 521 89453 0 pb.

Onora O'Neill, *A Question of Trust: The BBC Reith Lectures 2002*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002. 100 pp., £25.00 hb., £9.95 pb., 0 521 82304 8 hb., 0 521 52996 4 pb.

Onora O'Neill's *Autonomy and Trust in Bioethics* comes with impressive credentials. There is her own formidable reputation in philosophy, in particular as an interpreter of Kant, and there is the distinguished history of the lecture series from which the book emerges. The Gifford Lectures have given rise in the past to such works of enduring interest as Whitehead's *Process and Reality* and Ross's *Foundations of Ethics*. A reader who approaches O'Neill's book with expectations raised by this background will, however, be disappointed. It is true that allowances may have to be made for the fact that her subject is bioethics, often thought of as a poor relation of philosophy, even as an intellectual shanty town that has sprung up alongside it in recent years. But this will hardly account for everything. O'Neill tells us that she has tried 'to link some serious philosophy with some consideration of institutions and practices' and attempts at serious philosophy deserve to be taken seriously. It is when one does so, however, that the chief doubts about her project arise.

The book's central concern is to diagnose a supposed crisis of public trust in the UK in matters of science, medicine and biotechnology. The crisis is, it appears, not adequately reflected in contemporary

bioethics in either of its two main domains of medical and environmental ethics. The reason, at least in part, is the dominance of the subject, and particularly of medical ethics, by a certain conception of autonomy, understood essentially as independence from others. This 'individual autonomy' belongs, in O'Neill's view, with rights and adversarial claims, while trust belongs with relationships and mutual obligations. There is, however, she believes, a more adequate conception of autonomy, derived from Kant, which so far from being in tension with relations of trust provides a basis for them. 'Principled autonomy' is 'the idea of acting on principles that we can will as universal laws'. It provides a basis for trust in that it yields 'robust ethical obligations', in particular the rejection of deception and coercion, which set 'demanding standards' for public policy. The way in which policies informed by these standards may serve to enhance trust, or at any rate trustworthiness, is explored by O'Neill in relation to such topics as genetic technologies, the use of human tissue and standards of bioethical debate in the media.

The obvious point at which a claim of serious philosophy might be made for the discussion is the account of principled autonomy and the derivation from it of

various ethical requirements. Misgivings about this may be focused by singling out the issue of deception, not least in view of its internal links with the trust it both presupposes and betrays. What should be noted here is O'Neill's insistence that the requirement not to deceive is not 'exceptionless', for some forms of deception 'must be accepted'. She offers no guidelines for identifying the cases where deception is legitimate, though some broad categories are mentioned: 'habits of civility, toleration of "white" lies, silence and discretion'. It may perhaps be assumed from these examples, and in any case would fit many details of the later discussion, that grounds for exception will be consequentialist in character. In pursuing her project, however, she deploys at some length a sophisticated argument which amounts to an individual reading of central themes in Kant's ethical theory. It sets her, as she makes clear, at odds with such commentators as Allen Wood, and, more generally, she implies, with a tendency of neglect in Kant scholarship of the truths to which she draws attention.

All this indeed amounts to serious philosophy but, unfortunately, only in the sense in which philosophy's way of being serious so often strikes non-philosophers as ridiculous. For a mountain of intellectual effort has given birth here to the tiniest mouse: the conclusion that we should generally, but not always, avoid deceiving others. The sense of incongruity arises in large part from the fact that we are likely to have significantly greater confidence in the conclusion taken by itself than in the complex and contentious philosophical arguments that profess to establish it. To avoid embarrassments of this kind, philosophers may need a sense of proportion and of their relationship to an audience, even perhaps a sense of humour such as Brecht claimed to find in Hegel and is surely no less present in some other great practitioners of the subject.

Whatever problems Kant's dealings with the issue of deception may give rise to, the insipidity of his conclusions is not among them. For, notoriously, he regards the requirement not to deceive others as a matter of strict duty that does not permit of exceptions, even to save a life. This ensures the interest and point of his philosophical efforts, whether they are ultimately successful or not. Stated generally, and in the terms used by O'Neill, their basic thesis is that the 'principle' of an act of deception cannot be willed as universal law. She fills out this thesis in an illuminating way. As if in reaction to familiar charges against Kant of excessive individualism, she stresses what might be termed his intersubjective aspect. His 'fundamental thought' on this reading is that 'reasons are the sorts of

things that we give and receive, exchange and refuse'. Hence it is that 'If anything is to count as reasoned it must be *accessible to others who are to be the audience for that reasoning*.' It seems all too obvious, however, that for deception to occur the 'reasoning' of the deceiver cannot possibly be accessible to the victim. If it were to be suggested by way of response that the victim should be excluded from the 'audience', this would surely be a transparently arbitrary and question-begging ploy. O'Neill's reading sheds particular light on the peculiar vehemence of Kant's denunciations of deception as an offence against 'the dignity of man as a rational being'. What it specifically offends against, it now appears, is the dignity that belongs to the proper exercise of reason in its central task of communicating with others. It seems hard to see how one may coherently combine acceptance of this insight with allowing an indefinitely large number of exceptions to the ethical requirement it grounds.

It is perhaps not surprising that, with the philosophical bets hedged, the consideration of practices and institutions should tend towards blandness. The tendency is carried still further in O'Neill's Reith Lectures, on broadly the same issues, though this is, of course, a series from which much less is to be expected. In her contribution, at any rate, the intellectual pressure seems deliberately set low, as if to illustrate a peculiarly British Faustian pact by which serious thinkers are assumed into the great and the good on condition that they give up thinking. Even in the Gifford Lectures the treatment of particular topics arrives again and again at verdicts such as the following: 'In short, we have strong reasons for claiming that carefully regulated practices for removing, storing and using human tissues are part of the ethically acceptable practice of medicine.' This suggestion of large intellectual resources needing to be at hand to ground a platitude is depressingly typical.

It is true that the discussion does decisively escape blandness at one stage, in the oddly authoritarian proposals for regulating the media. Here, however, it has become almost entirely disengaged from theoretical considerations, being content for the most part to moralize and indulge a high-minded distaste for low culture. This makes for a persistent uneasiness of tone, as when newspapers are said to need 'strong conventions' such as 'setting out the evidence, indicating its sources, and explaining its limitations'. What is required, it seems, is for your soaraway *Sun* to be equipped with footnotes to keep it tethered. There is also a point at which a hint of a deeper social analysis briefly emerges. This is in the suggestion

that the problem of trust may reflect ‘the everyday life of consumer society’ and ‘consumerist ideologies’ which ‘propose a breathtaking simplification of ethical justification’. It is surely possible to detect the spectral presence here of Marx, still the primary source of insight into the way the market systematically undermines traditional relationships. It vanishes, however, as suddenly as it appears, never to trouble the even surface of the discussion again.

O’Neill’s book has to be seen as a missed opportunity, the opportunity for a significant contribution from philosophy to the public culture in an area of great current interest. It would be wrong, however, to leave the impression that there are no compensations. Most all there are her acute comments on

the malaise of contemporary medical ethics. Their highlight is the demonstration that the cash value, so to speak, of the central notion of individual autonomy is informed consent and the cash value of informed consent is the right to refuse treatment. Moreover, in view of what was said earlier about the connection between philosophy and a sense of humour, it should be noted that there is a good, pre-emptive joke. Some examples are given of material in newspapers that will not need regulation because it ‘makes no claim to truth’, and into this routine listing of bridge problems, competitions and short stories there is unemphatically inserted ‘book reviews’.

Joseph McCarney

Therefore religion?

Phillip Goodchild, *Capitalism and Religion: The Price of Piety*, Routledge, London and New York, 2002. 260 + xvi pp., £16.99 pb., 0 415 28224 1.

Hent de Vries, *Religion and Violence: Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2002. 443 + xix pp., £38.00 hb., £17.00 pb., 0 8018 6767 3 hb., 0 8018 6768 1 pb.

What would mark a return to religion in philosophy? The two books reviewed here offer two distinct Christian models. Both conceive of the turn to religion as prompted by practical reason rather than theology; both are post-secular in that no mention is made of an afterlife or any metaphysical doctrine. Instead, de Vries’s *Religion and Violence* examines ecclesiastical religion as the paradigm for modern institutional politics in the changing public sphere created by immigration and new media technologies. In *Capitalism and Religion*, Goodchild transforms Nietzsche’s slogan into the ‘Murder of God’, performed by finance capital, which becomes the precondition for reconceiving religious experience free from dogmatics. This, in turn, is presented as the condition for a new ethics of thinking.

De Vries extends the analysis of his earlier book, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion* (1999), into the political domain. This turn, associated with the work of Levinas and Derrida, represents a twist in the ‘dialectic of enlightenment’ so that religion now has the ‘upper hand’. *Religion and Violence* presents a scholarly reading of Kant’s essays *The Conflict of Faculties* and *Religion with the Boundaries of Mere Reason* in the context of Derrida’s work on iterability, hospitality and responsibility. The fundamental claim of the book is that Kant’s two essays should be read

as a ‘Fourth Critique’, which present a theory of the institution under modern political conditions. De Vries argues that the complexity and current applicability of Kant’s project are misunderstood without an appreciation of the importance of these essays.

Kant’s essays develop themes from ‘What is Enlightenment?’ and sketch a critical relationship between sovereign government, the university and the latter’s higher and lower faculties as they define the space of public debate. Briefly, the higher faculties of the university – law, medicine and theology – are responsible for aiding the state in its maintenance of political order. Kant focuses on the role of philosophy as the lower faculty charged with criticizing the higher faculties. This criticism is only to manifest itself as argument within the confines of the university system – it is not to appear before the public, whose willingness to obey will be affected. The essays deal with the issue of censorship and the appropriate arena for debate on issues relating to the public good. De Vries unravels the niceties of Kant’s model in conjunction with his conception of historical progress and individual maturation. The establishment of a minimal state-sanctioned space for dissent will preserve the possibility of the gradual retreat of state power. De Vries has this as an ‘aporetic’ modern theory in so far as it represents an enlightened rejection of the

authority of revealed theology or unreflecting faith, while casting political space as negotiations of strife between competing interests. This 'critique of impure reason' is used to refute Kantian political theorists who promote an abstract universalism; de Vries also rejects Nussbaum's 'stoical' interpretation of expanding inclusivity.

Difficulties arise as de Vries attempts to move beyond the space of Kantian scholarship. The latter half of the book develops his anti-Habermasian conception by conjoining it with Derrida's and Levinas's work on ethics and the Other to produce a deconstructed conception of political authority and order which exceeds the ideal of infinite approximation to justice in favour of a more demanding 'tarrying with the worst on behalf of the best'. There can be 'no non-violent and non-arbitrary intersubjectivity'. There is always a necessary censorship. De Vries concludes:

As Kant already knew, respect for the best has no existence ... outside or independent of the many multifaceted institutional ... forms that punctuate the path of humankind on its postulated progression toward the better and the best. Of this, I have suggested, the history of religion forms the most salient example. In this history, in order to mitigate the propensity toward radical evil ... one must run the risk of indispensable yet disposable errors.

Religion and Violence is characterized by an expository style that leaves one in doubt as to the relation between the separate chapters. How far does de Vries describe Kant's 'Fourth Critique' and how far does he advocate it? It is not clear whether the later chapters correct or develop the first chapter, particularly in relation to Kant's conception of radical evil and the fallibility of the public. It is the exemplarity of the history of religion that is at issue. There seem to be four possible interpretations of this exemplarity present within the text.

1. The historical dialectic of revealed and rational religion in Protestantism provides a model for the management, or administration, of the cultural sphere transformed by multiculturalism and telecommunications. Certain spaces or niches would be censored differently from the university, and potentially from the philosophy faculty.
2. Alternatively, by finessing the first model, the history of religion is a 'shortcut to full, formal and concrete explication of ethical and political thought as it progresses over time'. That is, the history of religion is also the history of progress in ethical and political thought.
3. Intensifying the second model: democracy cannot survive without 'letting itself be inspired and called



forth by tradition that precedes it'. '[E]ven where the "religious" can no longer be identified as an integral and compelling system of belief ... it provides us with the critical terms, argumentative resources, and bold imaginary that is necessary for a successful analysis of contemporary culture.'

4. Finally, religion is the only realm that allows one to address and remedy radical evil. It is only religion that can animate a true desire for justice and hospitality. Or, there must be some ecclesiastical form of faith if the state is to have purchase on the aspirations of its people. (For de Vries there appears to be no tension in this formulation.)

This ambiguity is more than likely deliberate. But the stronger the claim that is made on behalf of religion, the more difficulties appear. The major difficulties revolve not only around this ambiguity but also around the valorization of the history of *ecclesiastical* religion.

Kierkegaard's, *Fear and Trembling* is a sustained attack on this conception of ecclesiastical religion as determined by a progressive rationalization. The presentation of Abraham marks a polemic against *Conflict of the Faculties*, where Kant argues that Abraham must have been deceived – for no good God would demand that sacrifice. Kant is a 'shrewd pate' who mollifies the *horror religiosus* that de Vries cites as an epigraph. For Kierkegaard, Kant is a good Humean so far as revelation is reduced to miracles, which serve to *encourager les autres*. An ecclesiastical focus must excise the prophetic, mystical and messianic traditions. Though de Vries continually attacks the notion of 'good conscience', this would appear to be the fate of a religion which effaces its anti-institutional tradition in deference to positivism. The tradition of radical Protestant communities, often suppressed by the Church, is evaded at several junctures. It requires a strange historical amnesia to take Kant's optimism about ecclesiastical history and progress at face value.

Second, it is not at all clear that what motivates any 'turn to religion' in Derrida is an enthusiasm for this model. The question that de Vries is unable to address given his flat, guileless readings of Derrida is the following: does Derrida build on Levinas's work concerning the Other or does Derrida salvage a revolutionary use value from the vogue for *Autrui* by transforming concern for the latter into concern for *les sans-papiers*? Or, more generally, does Derrida *espouse* a turn to religion or does he rescue from the realized unreason of sedimented religion an opposition to instrumentalist conceptions of politics (Habermas,

MacIntyre, Giddens, Blair etc.)? The texts central to de Vries's reading contain subtleties which undermine his project.

The methodology of de Vries is a blessing compared to the hasty readings found in *Religion and Capitalism*. Goodchild has no care for the sobriety that Derrida, quoted by de Vries, identifies as the character of philosophical works. In the preface, Goodchild asks that readers not be too quick to refute his presentation, 'so as to be stimulated to listen to the force of what is most worth thinking about'. But in that case, why choose to conduct this 'cry against economic reductionism' through the history of philosophy?

Although the materials arranged by Goodchild are names from the canon of philosophy, they are paraded and dismissed one by one in uncharitable circumstances. Only Bergson, Deleuze and Spinoza appear to escape the totalizing critique that all thinking to date has misdirected its attention away from what matters most: the suffering of the world that increases under the reign of finance capital. As a corrective to de Vries's optimism, Goodchild's excoriation of modern historical developments is welcome. However, the lack of argument in *Religion and Capitalism* leaves its formal status in doubt. The question must be asked: is this philosophy?

The thesis is as follows. Thinking is currently bound up in the world of capital. A new ethics of thinking (a 'critical piety') is required which must mine the immanent potential of thought to create a force equal to opposing the ideology of finance capital. This thinking directs attention to what is most important: the suffering of others and the limits of global capitalism. To survive the impending ecological threat, we need a 'new asceticism based on fear, care and generosity'. The latter is tagged a 'reevaluation of values', but it is hard to see anything novel in this formulation, or in the idea that the mutual suspicion of modern relations needs to be replaced by local community relations 'based on honour and trust'. It rings in harmony with the theorists of compassionate conservatism and communitarianism.

A rewriting of Marxist political economics reintroduces some distance: the relationship between capital and labour is replaced with the 'more fundamental' distinction between the 'householder', who aims to meet subsistence needs; and the 'financial speculator', whose capital and situation are more 'mobile'. 'Surplus value' is extracted through different experiences of time: the householder attends to the present of immediate need, the speculator to future returns on investment. Goodchild's solution does not

lack boldness in the face of positivism: 'those who struggle for subsistence seem pious before death'. Hence, capitalism, as 'consensual religion', appears to thrive on the materialism of the global populace. 'Once the thought of death appears as a simulation, then an immanent ethics of thought can be constructed which no longer treats death as the absolute source of meaning and value in ethics.' If this is developed from an aberrant reading of Heidegger, it is not clear from the text. It is only this shock which perhaps differentiates Goodchild from Bryan Appleyard or *Thought for the Day*.

Critical piety operates as a post-secular religious experience, attending to 'signs left by higher potencies of awareness': it is critical in that it does not collapse into dogmatic theology. That said, the ability of this attention to relieve suffering apparently points to a justification of it as a religious category. 'Attention' may be adopted from Bergson, but its workings are not analysed or explained and in effect it operates as a part of a broader folk psychology. Paraphrasing Lichtenberg, one might say that it is not what one attends to that matters, but what that attention produces. The apocalyptic tone is continually undermined by a residual liberalism. So 'the capitalist religion will be shattered by appreciation of the magnitude of the [ecological] crisis which affects us all. Death itself will murder the god of capital, who will die of lack of hope – the sooner the better, if a remnant is to be saved.' But if this *grand soir* is to be averted (or redeemed?) by critical piety rooted in local self-organizing communities, it must be protected. 'It is necessary to have an independent global religion, charged with directing attention, and redistributing civil honour in its alienated form as wealth.' This institution must be self-regulating and *not* accountable to any external powers; its hierophants a strange combination of 'spiritual leaders, ascetics, intelligentsia and investigative journalists'. An amalgam of the UN and the Catholic Church? Or maybe the team at the *Today* programme would suffice?

Thus, the prophetic stance of outrage yields to the liberal paternalism of de Vries; the overt agonies of Goodchild meld with the deconstructionist ban on good conscience. Both believe that progressive political change only comes from the top down. Both seek a theologically aware politics that would avoid liberation theology. Institutions are assumed to define spaces of control, directing the aspirations of a passive populace, since, concerned only with present needs, they, the public, 'adhere to the doctrines that demand the least self-exertion'. Radical evil becomes the refusal of

discourse within this hegemonic space, and critical piety is obliged to separate religion from the violence of 'religious terrorism'. We are still here within the Kantian political tradition: disagreement is possible so long as one obeys. That 'the public' might organize their own institutions of resistance, rather than waiting for the catastrophe or the ruling class's bestowal of maturity, escapes both authors.

Andrew McGettigan

Worse than Beethoven

Dave Beech and John Roberts, eds, *The Philistine Controversy*, Verso, London and New York, 2002. 314 pp., £40.00 hb., £16.00 pb., 1 85984 842 7 hb., 1 85984 374 3 pb.

That there is something suspicious about finding the word 'philistine' in a philosopher's mouth is more than mere idiosyncrasy. Nor is such suspicion reserved only for those mouths in which the term is a corpse, full of contempt for those who have 'never heard Bruckner's Ninth or Mahler's Eighth played properly' (Andrew Bowie). The fact that, in their third and final essay in this volume, Dave Beech and John Roberts have resorted to the term 'the counter-intuitive philistine' indicates perhaps not only the term's irremediable stigma, but also that a (philistine) intuition precedes and resists their attempt to redeem it.

Played out mostly in the pages of *New Left Review*, this 'controversy' originated with an essay by Beech and Roberts, 'Spectres of the Aesthetic', and responses to it, which make up the first part of the book; in the second part, other writers take the provocations as a point of departure. Beech and Roberts' thesis provoked what is more properly polemic than controversy because it was, in part at least, specifically targeted against what they labelled 'the new aestheticism': a perceived new consensus in the British philosophical Left since around 1990, centred on a 'return to aesthetics', with Adorno's newly translated *Aesthetic Theory* as its shibboleth.

While sympathetic to many aspects of 'new aestheticism', Beech and Roberts attack what they see as its jettisoning of the political achievements of the two decades previous to it (such as the new emphasis on gender, race and class brought by Cultural Studies), its hypostatization of aesthetic autonomy and disinterested



contemplation, its concomitant disdain for 'partisan' practices, and its idealistic and ideological overinvestment in the aesthetic realm in general as *the* arena of ethical and social critique. Against these developments, they deploy the figure of the philistine, plucked from the margins of Adorno's text, as the necessary but neglected point of coincidence for everything 'excluded or repressed by art's civil subjectivities and their institutions' – in other words, the embodiment of all extra-'aesthetic' comportment.

Over the course of two further essays, Beech and Roberts' position is developed and complicated in response to, amongst others, the 'new aesthetes' Andrew Bowie and Jay Bernstein. As Stewart Martin observes in his introduction, their dialogue is often defined by clashes in register (particularly between art criticism and philosophical aesthetics) and various selective deafnesses. Beech and Roberts seem to do more of the listening: they ditch their initial emphasis on the evacuation of 'the body' from 'the new aestheticism' in the face of some withering attacks, rethink

the philistine and cultural division as such through the early Marx's notion of alienation, and complicate the philistine's relation to the popular. Above all, they wish to go beyond the 'impasse' reached by Cultural Studies on the one hand (fixated on non-judgemental difference and an uncritical celebration of popular cultures) and critical theory on the other, which risks piety and elitism.

Adorno, whom they do not exempt from the latter, had already conceived of the philistine as the 'counter-concept to aesthetic comportment' and, refusing to dismiss it, urged that 'something in art calls for this response'. But, as Beech and Roberts are correct to note, 'Adorno assimilates the moment of philistinism to art; he does not assimilate the moment of art to philistinism.' Quite where that path not taken might lead, however, remains unclear. At the end of their second essay 'Tolerating Impurities', Beech and Roberts propose a genealogy of 'philistine modes of attention', not as the traits of actually existing art-haters but as a genealogy of exclusions, of 'cultural derogations'. This is important, because they do not wish, à la Bourdieu, merely to flesh out forms of (popular) taste which have historically been excluded: rather, the philistine is to be 'a real determinate absence' in

aesthetic ideology, a form of attention proscribed by official taste rather than an overlooked alternative. As an example, Beech and Roberts gesture towards changing attitudes to pornography since the advent of feminism as complicating the cultural status of images of the objectification of women. If this was simply about the changing status of desire and disinterestedness in art, we would still be in the purview of *Aesthetic Theory*; but Beech and Roberts wish to claim that the question of pleasure *in general* has 'undergone a radical revaluation', that it is no longer regarded as bad faith to pursue pleasures 'not in your best interest', and that therefore philistine modes like 'the love of distraction, dissipation, relaxation and idle thrills', now subject to 'choice, modification, customisation just as much as ironization' [*sic*], can no longer be dismissed as 'politically worthless'. This effects a radical shift: 'the "inalert" and leisurely forms of attention associated with TV viewing, radio listening, movie-going, watching football and sex-shop browsing,

are freed from their received subordination to the authority of great art and the cognitive discipline of cultural critique'.

Delivered briskly, after pages of densely argued and allusive 'genealogy', this conclusion seems a shocking non sequitur. Above all it seems opaque that, having insisted that the philistine be a 'relational' concept, the speculative 'suspension' of the derogatory connotations of the concept should so easily allow the 'freeing' of 'philistine modes of attention' from subordination to autonomous art and its attendant modes. The important omission, only really addressed in a footnote in the final essay, is that some form of irony or 'reflexivity' is required to distinguish 'counter-intuitive' philistinism from its 'conventional' counterpart. Only this can turn the injunction to 'love your alienation' like the philistine into more than merely 'carry on consuming'. But how much more? According to this last essay, reflexivity opens philistinism to the 'risk' of being the target of disgusted authority, in an effort to register dissent at the false universals of high culture. It is easier, however, to see this at work in art practice in the historical examples they give (Dada, conceptual art) than in radicalized radio listening.

If Beech and Roberts' programmatic ambitions prove fragile, their critique of 'new aestheticism' proves more fruitful, if only in the bluntness of response it generates. Andrew Bowie's two essays are a reminder that Adorno posited the philistine against those 'naïvely at home in art'. Bristling at the treatment of his work on subjectivity in Beech and Roberts' account, Bowie mounts an all-out defence of 'great art' in an A.C. Grayling vein. Exhorting us to try 'to imagine what our culture would be like without its major works of art', he deals brusquely with Beech and Roberts' thesis, trashing post-structuralist accounts of subjectivity along the way. As Gail Day points out in her essay, however, breezy apodictic claims – such as that Rachel Whiteread's *House* is self-evidently a 'masterpiece' – are self-defeating. In Bowie, the threat to art's existence migrates entirely to the outside, it seems, in the form of the forces of dumbing-down he regards Beech and Roberts as championing, while 'art' seems to lose its aporetic character and to turn into a trophy cabinet. While his account of autonomy pays lip service to Adorno, he sounds closest to the latter at his worst when advocating education into the classics – some of the ridiculousness of Adorno's assertion that he could imagine 'a music teacher who does not happen to come from the youth music scene

analysing hit songs and showing why these hits are incomparably worse than a movement of a Mozart or a Beethoven quartet, or a really genuine piece of modern music' resonates in Bowie's desire to 'persuade students who reject it or ignore it of the value of great music or other art'.

Bowie's inability or unwillingness to engage fully with Beech and Roberts' notion of the philistine, however, does testify to an intuition which is ineliminable: that 'philistine' is a name for a counter-concept of philosophy as much as art. In Adorno, the use of the term 'philistine' is at least mitigated by constellatory form (which amounts to more than a 'relational' framework) and a tacit acceptance of the concept's tainted history. Beech and Roberts' thesis by contrast looks too tactical and too selective. Programmatic philistinism perhaps calls for a performativity, a more dissipated and ironic register than these, after all, relatively polite scholars are prepared to risk.

Michael Sperlinger

Virtually Deleuze

Henri Bergson: Key Writings, edited and introduced by Keith Ansell Pearson and John Mullarkey, Continuum Press, London, 2002. xi + 402 pp., £60.00 hb., £19.99 pb., 0 8264 5728 2 hb., 0 8264 5729 0 pb.

Keith Ansell Pearson, *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual: Bergson and the Time of Life*, Routledge, London and New York, 2001. 246 pp., £50.00 hb., £15.99 pb., 0 415 23727 0 hb., 0 415 23728 9 pb.

These two books make an important contribution to the development of contemporary Bergsonism. Perhaps because of his previous popularity, Bergson's reputation suffered an eclipse during the 1930s, a neglect that Levinas described in terms of a 'scandalous sojourn in purgatory'. Each book contributes to the posthumous rebirth of Bergson as well as aiding an appreciation of certain of the more radical and innovative facets of his thought which deserve to be placed at the heart of contemporary debates.

Henri Bergson: Key Writings is a collection of material presenting the evolution of Bergson's thought from his first work (*Time and Free Will*, 1889) to his last (*The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 1932), along with selections from his essays and two letters addressed to Hoffding and Dellatre, which appear for the first time in English. The thematic and chrono-

logical selection of material allows the editors to display both the central aspects of Bergson's philosophy and those dimensions of his thought that continue to live today in the form of fertile problems. The latter include thinking an irreversible and non-spatialized time (duration), the relationship between perception, memory and representation, thinking the relationship between the psychic and the physical realms beyond the parallogisms of both idealism and realism, the immanence of the theory of knowledge in the philosophy of life, the relationship between metaphysics and science, the renovation of the idea of intuition and its use as a method for the philosophy of life.

The introduction to the *Key Writings* makes a persuasive case for Bergson's reputation as a rigorous thinker, rescuing him from accusations of intellectual dilettantism and incoherence. The editors place Bergson in the post-Kantian tradition by showing how he pursues 'a route intimated but blocked off by Kant' through a transformation of the latter's idea of intuition. They show the ways in which Bergson's idea of time and continuity engages with both physics and epistemology and emphasize Bergson's challenge to classic ontology through his radical thinking of duration as a non-numerical and virtual multiplicity. It is such concerns that make Bergson our contemporary and distance him from the hasty simplifications and easy victories of a popular Bergsonism.

Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual takes as its task 'to contribute to the correction of Bergson's erasure from our image of post-Kantian philosophy and to contribute to our comprehension of Deleuze's unique conception and vision of philosophy.' However, beyond this seemingly modest task, there is a serious and dense study of the major works of Bergson and of the relationship between Bergson and Deleuze. Ansell Pearson does not adopt Deleuze's Bergsonism uncritically, but rather immerses himself in thinking the questions of time and life through the elaboration of the notion of the virtual; a virtual that is never given, but always open and undefined. From the outset, Ansell Pearson insists that it is necessary to create a concept of the virtual that is flexible and harbours difference at its core. For this reason, he refrains from giving a determination or a clear definition of the virtual until the end of the book. Ansell Pearson shows that a clear-cut definition would contradict Bergson's own thought of the virtual and its creative appropriation by Deleuze. For a 'flexible concept' in Bergson's terms is a concept that does not subsume the particular but

expresses it; it is a concept which is carved according to the 'natural articulations of the real'.

The book comprises a collection of essays that deliberately refrains from a chronological approach to the works of Bergson. The author develops in each chapter certain aspects of his ideas of time, life and the virtual and their encounters with Bergson's predecessors, his contemporaries and future thinkers either inspired by Bergson or adopting a critical attitude towards him, like Popper and Russell. An example of this approach is Bergson's and Deleuze's differentiation of the notion of one, simple and immanent virtual being from the Parmenidean ontology of the One and Plotinus' negative thinking of the virtual (which issues in a negative theology of eminence and emanation) as well as from Badiou's version of the Deleuzian virtual as an actual unity that precludes any potential for multiplicity.

Another theme that recurs throughout the book is that of the relationship between science and metaphysics. Ansell Pearson does not offer any facile solutions to this problem, but rather exposes different formulations of it through Bergson's encounter with Einstein in *Duration and Simultaneity* (1922), the double critique of mechanism and finalism in *Creative Evolution* (1907) and the creation of a theory of perception which claims to be beyond idealism and realism (empiricism) in *Matter and Memory* (1896).

Implied in this elaborate treatment of the relationship between science and metaphysics is the claim that it can only be elucidated through the idea of 'superior empiricism' or 'transcendental empiricism': an idea which, for Ansell Pearson (following Deleuze), best captures the character of Bergson's philosophy. The task of establishing philosophy as virtual ontology is inseparable from this idea of 'transcendental empiricism'. This becomes clear through repeated reflection upon the relationship between Bergson and Kant.

Ansell Pearson frames an innovative encounter between Bergson's and Kant's ideas of time. For Ansell Pearson, the move from what he reads as a psychological account of duration (virtual multiplicity) as it appears in *Time and Free Will*, towards an ontology of the virtual – which can be found in Bergson's study of pure memory in *Matter and Memory* and in his conception of life as a simple but virtually multiple vital impetus in *Creative Evolution* – requires the prior critique of classic ontology and an elaboration of Bergson's idea of intuition as the appropriate method for philosophy. The breach between Bergson's initial

conception of duration and Kant's homogeneous time seems to be bridged gradually through the transformation of Bergson's duration from a psychological reality to a new ontology.

Ansell Pearson discovers a number of unsuspected 'bridges' between the philosophies of Kant and Bergson, while at the same time maintaining their differences. We could say that the author uses the Bergsonian idea of divergent but complementary tendencies in order to elucidate Bergson's relation to the Kantian heritage. The first and perhaps most significant of these links is the idea of intuition. Unlike Kant, Bergson does not believe that as human beings we are restricted to sensuous intuition, but that we can – indeed, this is the essential task of philosophy – 'think beyond the human condition'. This means we can think beyond the inveterate habits of our intellect and therefore beyond the subjective conditions which confine our knowledge to the conditions of all possible experience. Through Bergson's idea of intuition, Kant's concept of experience is enlarged and transcended, while at the same time our knowledge discovers the conditions of actual experience.

This enlargement of experience is interpreted by Ansell Pearson as an exit from the psychology of subjective duration (a duration which only resides in human consciousness) towards a duration which is immanent in the universe and which, in Deleuze's work, will become a complete theory of virtual ontology.

The second major encounter between Kant and Bergson involves the question of finality and the role of teleology in the study of nature. Ansell Pearson distinguishes between the internal finality of Kant's notion of the organism, a self-propagating but closed system, and Bergson's external finalism of the undivided impetus, which results in quasi-open organisms, something like provisional breaks in the continuous stream of life.

Beyond the critical confrontation between Bergson and Kant, the author concludes with the possibility of an alliance between the two philosophers, on the basis of Deleuze's work. Ansell Pearson establishes this alliance through his interpretation of Deleuze's three syntheses of time as they appear in *Difference and Repetition* and in the thinking of time as a crystal-image which is developed in Deleuze's texts on cinema. According to Ansell Pearson, Deleuze's virtual ontology and the primacy of the virtual as pure past is an effort of 'saving' or redeeming time, through a combined reading of Bergson, Kant, Nietzsche and

Proust. It is a novel time of depths that escapes the opposition between interiority and exteriority, the problem of one or many durations and the normative psychology of the self. Ansell Pearson shows how already in *Matter and Memory* the pure past is dissociated from consciousness and how Bergson's analysis opens up the way for a study of a pathological duration in dreams and delirium. Time regained or redeemed is exactly the being of time: the core of the virtual ontology. Ansell Pearson shows that this involves a return to Kant's form of time, or time as a straight line – a time dissociated and not subordinated to movement; a time which is not any more opposed to the exteriority of space but has become itself an interiority that encompasses us. This develops into a thought of a being of time as the being of the pure past which coexists and grounds the present. However, this return to Kant becomes incomprehensible, for Ansell Pearson, if it is not related to Nietzsche's idea of eternal recurrence via Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche. According to this reading, the 'greatest weight' of Nietzsche's theory of eternal recurrence is exactly the image of time as the great devourer towards which the will turns its revenge. It is only by establishing a virtual ontology of time, in which the 'peaks of de-actualized present' coexist with the virtual being of the past, that this can be avoided.

However, *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual* is not content to repeat Deleuze's conclusions. Rather, it tries also to show that there is a Bergson beyond Deleuze. The question is, then, whether this Bergson would be happy with the marriage to Kant's 'form of time'. Perhaps Bergson was not that interested in 'saving', 'regaining' or 'redeeming' time: not because he was a philosopher and not an artist, but because for him time, with its devouring qualities, is a creative time, creating through its incessant flow. Maybe Bergson's great critique of classic ontology also entails the idea that time as duration is no longer a haemorrhage of being but a joyful affirmation of becoming that needs neither redemption nor saving.

Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual is a vital step towards discovering the Bergson of the future. It is a rigorous work that reintroduces Bergson to the centre of contemporary thought and prepares the ground for discussion of the relationship between philosophy, art and science.

Margarita Karkayanni

Creative evolution

Gilles Deleuze, *L'île déserte et autres textes*, edited by David Lapoujade, Minuit, Paris, 2002. 416 pp., £21.50 pb., 2 707 31761 6.

The novelty of published letters and correspondence is that there is a youthful, unbound, non-negotiable nature to expression. With Deleuze, we have no correspondence, but the present collection of articles, reviews and seminars from 1950 to 1974 is not without its incandescent moments, its impassioned spells and apprehensive instances in grappling with the mechanics of an ontology of pure difference, an ethic in its nascent state spanning the intermittent eruptions of a developing project marked by anatomizing studies of Hume (1953), Nietzsche (1962), Kant (1963), Bergson (1966), and Spinoza (1968). Such anthologies can function as a denouement to entanglements left in the wake of weightier works, not so much in what they say, but by virtue of to whom and what they refer.

With such an anthology Deleuze studies is given a site-map of his engagement with the figures fashioning his philosophical environment. The best parts of the text bear on *Difference and Repetition* (1968). We are witness to a Deleuze caught within the allure

of the process of rationalization, at times a zealot of the Hegelian erudition of Hyppolite ('Jean Hyppolite, logique et existence', 1954); on occasion a professor of the Sorbonne ('Jean-Jacques Rousseau précurseur de Kafka, de Céline et de Ponge', 1962); a professor at the college of Orléans ('Instincts et institutions', 1955); a reader and brief acquaintance of Kostas Axelos ('Faille et feux locaux', 1970), and a follower of Gilbert Simondon's inquiry into disparate schemes of individuation and heterogeneity ('Gilbert Simondon, L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique', 1966). These are all important historical and conceptual pointers for situating Deleuze.

The texts spanning 1950 to 1970 show Deleuze surveying the ground upon which he would erect his armature of thought's variegations beyond reason, his way of measuring the catastrophic seizures within a world articulated by a double movement, and always by a double movement. The candid and exotic 'Causes et raisons des îles désertes' (*circa* 1950) is the fledgling expression of such a scheme in unearthing the affiliations between geography and the precariousness of existence consequent upon thought's movement to both separate and recreate – 'the movement that brings man to the island'. The pleasure of the text is in its vivacious tone, decorating an inquiry into geneses and recreation in which we find many of the themes of Deleuze's later projects.

All this supposes that the formation of the world is of two times, of two levels, birth and rebirth, that the second be just as necessary and essential as the first is necessarily compromised, born for a reprise and already reborn within a catastrophe.

The unearthing of the apocalyptic need through a double movement gives us a Deleuze who would eventually write of thought's cataclysmic yet refining consequences within the grand scheme of *Difference and Repetition*, a scheme of thought's aesthetic misadventures, aptly outlined in the interview 'Sur Nietzsche et l'image de la pensée' (1968). There, the enterprise of the image of thought, a new image of the act of thinking (a central theme to *Difference and Repetition*), with its empirical creation of concepts, is announced through a retrospective glance at Deleuze's work on Nietzsche, before the conclusive announcement



of the double value of a new thinking called for by a double world of deviation and dissimilarity:

Repetition is difference, it's the same thing, the actual categories of our thought. It's a problem of repetitions and invariants, but also masks, disguises, displacements, variants within repetition.

'La méthode de dramatisation' (1967) is a seminar at which Deleuze communicated the central themes of *Difference and Repetition* to the Société Française de Philosophie (Alquié, Beaufret, Bouligand, Breton, de Gandillac, Merleau-Ponty, Mouloud, Philonenko, Prenant, Schuhl, Souriau, Ullmo, Wahl), whose inspired questioning picks at the cortege of Deleuze's reasoning. The structuralist Mouloud highlights the amalgamation of mathematical and biological functions of difference within Deleuze's project as the workings of rationalization rather than the imagination. Merleau-Ponty urges Deleuze to explicate the working relationship between dynamisms, space and time – a relationship that the cosmological scholar doesn't see as being truly Bergsonian; while the priest and theologian Breton (whose interjection is a Hegelian exposition in itself) enquires as to what exactly, in light of the temporal operations of Deleuze's mode of questioning, the method of dramatization applies to. To the world of man? Or to the world of common scientific experience? What exactly, in terms of traditional ontology, does it serve as an approximation of?

Of equal weight and value is the review of Jean Hyppolite's *Logique et existence* (1954) where Deleuze writes of an ontology of sense qualifying the very logic of existence to be found within an ontology of pure difference, an ontology which, according to Deleuze, Hyppolite's study heralds. He asks, 'can we not construct an ontology of difference that would not have to go as far as contradiction, because contradiction would be less than difference and nothing more?' This is a question that positions Hegel as an admired protagonist within Deleuze's theatre of philosophy, a theatre constructed under the direction of Hyppolite and Canguilhem with the problem of immanence as its recurring theme.

The year 1970 sees Deleuze review Kostas Axelos's cosmo-anthropological project in 'Faille et feux locaux'. Deleuze enthusiastically recognizes within Axelos the estranging qualities of a planetary thought, a pathos very much echoing the younger Deleuze of 'Causes et raisons des îles désertes'. What he perceives within Axelos is a project that goes beyond metaphysics into a pataphysical realm of a One–All (*L'un–Tout*), a fragmentary totality, a game of difference and repetition, an affirmation of difference and the absence of origin,

a celebratory pathos, 'the pathos of this thought, bitter thought, but joyous with its estranging force'. Deleuze had spotted the pataphysical markings of Axelos six years earlier in a review entitled 'En créant la pataphysique Jarry a ouvert la voie à la phénoménologie' (1964). That review explicates a pluralistic rationalism, a totality of a dismembered Dionysus through a game of perpetual affirmation, a game that Deleuze sees Axelos approximate with a new ontology, a planetary act of thinking, enumerating a *thinking the difference* fuelling a journey into the surfaces and depths of an erratic and variable world. Deleuze's enthusiasm for Axelos's project of a planetary mode of thinking, a pataphysical undertaking, is carried through to his short homage to Sartre – 'Il a été mon maître', 1964). There, writing with remorseful tone of a scattered modern people navigating the conditions of Sartrean totalization, 'Today we live as scattered members.' It is a salutary gesture to a philosophical and political luminary, but all too brief in its mentioning of Teilhard de Chardin, whose cosmological project no doubt helped shape, along with Axelos, the bolder moments of *Difference and Repetition* and the foundations for *Logic of Sense*.

The texts of 1972 lack the seminal excitement of the formative years. They deliver a Deleuze with whom we are very much familiar, giving an unwelcome tedium to the anthology, for these texts have neither the novelty nor the raw, inspired energy of those of 1950–70. The politically inspired 'Trois problèmes de groupe' of 1972 is the preface to Guattari's *Psychanalyse et transversalité*. It shows us a Deleuze stepping out of his circle to address psychoanalytic concerns of group dynamics in much the same vain as *Anti-Oedipus* (also 1972). It's a vein we know all too well. 'Deleuze et Guattari s'expliquent' (1972), 'Capitalisme et schizophrénie' (1972), 'Sur le capitalisme et le désir' (1973) are complementary interviews which deliver the expected rhetoric.

The momentary tedium of the collaborative burst of 1972 is cut short by 'Hume' (1972), which serves very much as an extended parallel to 'Instincts et institutions' (1955): the latter a short, sharp four-page initiation into Hume's world of habit, intuition and institutionalism moulded by the Deleuze of Orléans; the former a biographical note on superior empiricism, which is clearer, confident and more finely struck than the first. Here, with 'Hume', we are introduced to *his* strange world, an irreversible world of relations, a superior empiricism of extra-relations, prefiguring a thought of the future. The twelve-page homage to Hume is an inquiry bearing all of Deleuze's hallmarks.

On the one hand, we have Deleuze as the corrosive sublimate of the French circle, reinstating thought's duties through an ontology of pure difference (1950–70); on the other, we have Deleuze as adept, having found his voice and gained his sureties within a new planetary scheme of thought (1972–74). It is a beautiful evolution, whose shaping stages prove the most arresting.

The biographical footnotes by David Lapoujade attend to both the historical and the conceptual development of Deleuze's project. A second volume is in preparation covering the years 1975–95, entitled *Deux régimes de fous et autres textes*.

David Reggio

Hot and cold

Carl Cohen and Tom Regan, *The Animal Rights Debate*, Rowman & Littlefield, Oxford and New York, 2001. xiii + 323 pp., £50.00 hb., £14.95 pb., 0 8476 9662 6 hb., 0 8476 9663 4 pb.

I once witnessed a philosophical exchange between Roger Scruton and Steven Rose at a conference on human nature. I was both enthralled and appalled at its brutality – I hadn't realized that philosophy could be that entertaining, but then I wasn't sure that what I'd seen was philosophy at all. (Scruton seemed convinced he had delivered a decisive blow in the debate when he pointed out that Rose didn't seem to know the plural of 'exegete'.)

I get the same feeling of unease when reading this book, a debate on animal rights between Tom Regan (for) and Carl Cohen (against). In their joint preface they declare their intent of creating 'an environment of mutual respect' in which the arguments are pursued 'in good spirit'. What we get is an ill-tempered exchange in which both writers make it clear that, however much they insist that they respect each other, they haven't an ounce of respect for each other's arguments – everything is disputed, right down to basic facts and figures.

The book begins with Cohen's case against animal rights, followed by Regan's case for them. The second half is taken up with their replies to those cases, and this is when the debate takes a turn towards the dark side. Regan's irritation is understandable, because Cohen focuses exclusively on medical experimentation, with no discussion at all of the many other practices in which the moral standing of non-human animals is questioned. Regan makes it clear that he is baffled

and disappointed by this, since the book was intended to be about animal rights in general. The reader may well share this frustration (as may the publishers), but Cohen insists that 'It is the use of animals in medical research, above all other uses, that compels us to think carefully about the moral status of animals.' He does not tell us why this should be so, and he does not tell us how we could apply the lessons he draws from the discussion of medical experimentation to other practices.

Cohen's central claim is that animals do not have rights, and it may be argued that this *does* have implications for food production, and so on, in that if something has no rights we can do what we like to it. But that is not Cohen's position. He believes that we have moral obligations towards animals – we owe them the obligation to act humanely towards them. Far from justifying the current practices to which animals are subjected, Cohen's case has sweeping implications for their reform, if not the outright abolition of those which can never be humane. He, however, does not consider any of these implications. He is concerned with medical experimentation, and he writes in a universe in which that practice is already morally 'clean'.

An added frustration with Cohen's contribution is that the vast majority of it is spent listing the benefits of animal experimentation. His case that animals do not have rights is brief: they are not moral agents and so do not belong to the moral community and therefore cannot be the bearers of moral rights – an argument based on a Kantian conception of persons as moral ends in themselves. A major part of his case rests on pointing out what we have to give up if we respect animal rights – a utilitarian argument which seems beside the point. Acting morally towards others



normally involves some kind of sacrifice on our part, and although Cohen is at pains to point out that we do have moral duties towards animals – again based on utilitarian grounds – the only thing we seem to have to give up is being sadistic towards them; we can do whatever we want to them as long they do not suffer any *needless* distress. (Interestingly, Cohen exempts his dog from this basic moral condition, because, he claims, he has voluntarily accepted the obligation to care for and be kind to his dog, and therefore has to recognize that there are moral principles that govern his conduct here.)

While there is not enough philosophical discussion in Cohen's contribution, one might feel there is too much in Regan's. He stresses that his argument for animal rights is cumulative. He first works through a series of alternative moral positions and shows how they cannot give us the basis for the moral status of human beings. Only once he has done this does he develop his own moral position, which he claims can act as that basis. He then asserts that there is no good reason to exclude non-human animals from this status as they share an essential moral property with humans. Animals only enter the argument, therefore, at its conclusion.

For Regan, that essential property is being the subject-of-a-life, which is to have 'an experiential welfare'. Humans and other animals 'share both a family of mental capacities and a common status as beings who have an experiential welfare'. Subjects-of-a-life have the right to continue to have the experiences that constitute their welfare. They at least have the negative right of non-interference with that experience, and may have a positive right to support to enable them to achieve it (many of us certainly believe that humans have such a positive right to welfare).

My concern with Regan's account is with its search for the essential property that carries moral significance. It may be that the property we arrive at – the having of experiences that constitute welfare – is not what we thought we were looking for. Regan's point is that we morally value other humans because of this property, and therefore we must be consistent and offer the same respect to other animals who share it. But we can always ask, is this *really* why we morally value other humans? If we are searching for the essential core of our moral concern for others, this seems disappointingly thin. On the other hand, the idea of welfare is going to have to be filled out in some detail, with the recognition that welfare is going to be

significantly different across different types of being. And so while Regan's approach has as its centre the search for a common essential property, it also opens up space for a pluralist approach to how that property is achieved in different cases.

For me Regan's most significant contribution, which is very underplayed in this discussion, is the distinction between moral agents and moral patients, where the latter are beings which lack the capacity for moral agency but have a welfare that can be supported or damaged. His point is that there are good reasons to suppose that we do have moral duties towards moral patients with regard to their welfare (again, we certainly believe that to be the case for those human beings who are moral patients), and therefore there are good reasons to suppose that they have membership of the moral community and can be bearers of moral rights.

Once we allow this, then we realize that a moral theory that holds only between moral agents will not do – we also need to work out our relationship to moral patients. This Cohen recognizes with his two-theory position, but his assertion that Kantian theory applies to all humans while utilitarianism will do for all non-human animals (except his dog) is just too quick and easy, as Regan points out. It simply sets aside too many awkward differences between humans and too many awkward similarities between humans and other animals, whether they be chimpanzees or – Cohen's favourite example – plague-bearing rats.

The book is two things: an introduction to the problem of the moral treatment of non-human animals, and an example of philosophical debate. On the first count it is too narrow. From Cohen, we get only one issue within the debate about animal rights, and in Regan we have just one possible approach to the moral status of animals. On the second count, it depends how you like your philosophical debate. Aimed at a general readership, the book is enormously entertaining, and both writers succeed in making it clear and simple. But I can't help feeling that much of the entertainment comes from seeing just how rude two philosophers can be about each other's arguments. In their joint preface, they observe that much of the debate over the moral status of animals is 'characterized by more heat than light'. In the end, this book is on the hot side. Perhaps we just have to accept that, given the importance of what is at stake in this particular debate, philosophical 'cool' is not an option.

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