

Heaven knows I'm miserable now

Pier Paolo Pasolini, *St Paul: A Screenplay*, translated and introduced by Elizabeth A. Castelli, with a Foreword by Alain Badiou and an Afterword by Ward Blanton, Verso, London and New York, 2014. 240 pp., £16.99 hb., 978 1 78168 288 3.

There are many reasons to welcome this translation of Pasolini's *St Paul: A Screenplay* and to be grateful to everyone involved in translating and introducing it. Although anticipating the current revival of philosophical interest in Paul inspired by the work of Agamben, Badiou and Taubes, the screenplay nevertheless holds its place in their company. Its publication allows the philosophical and political-theological aspects of Pasolini's work to become visible again, after a long period of eclipse following his assassination in 1975. It also invites a reappraisal of his contribution to late-twentieth-century Italian philosophy and to current debates on the philosophical significance of Paul. And finally it forces us to look again at Pasolini's radical opposition to the organized communist movement, along with his theses concerning the mutation of historic fascism into a contemporary fascism of consumerism and conformity.

The screenplay was written in Rome in late May 1968 following the critical success of the resistant Christ in *The Gospel of Saint Matthew* (1964) and revised in 1974 at the same time as Pasolini was renouncing his affirmative 'Trilogy of Life' (the films *The Decameron*, 1971; *The Canterbury Tales*, 1972; and *A Thousand and One Nights*, 1974) and filming the negative theology of *Salò: A Hundred and Twenty Days of Sodom* (1975). While it is tempting to add an apostle to the duke, bishop, magistrate and president who preside over the torments of the conformists, Pasolini's *St Paul* seems a far more complex and ambivalent project than *Salò*. Its spatio-temporal framing is more intricate than the Villa and World War II décor that in *Salò* evoke the continuity between the fascist social republic of 1943–45 and the neo-fascism, social conformity and consumerism of Christian Democratic Italy. In place of the claustrophobic narrative continuity that contributes the oppressive atmosphere of *Salò*, Pasolini adopts the episodic technique pioneered by Roberto Rossellini in his controversial *Francesco giullare di Dio* (1950), which was greatly admired by Pasolini and in many ways the thematic and technical exemplar of his screenplay.

Pasolini follows the dateline of Paul's life, but transposes the well-known episodes of persecution and the martyrdom of St Steven, the conversion on the road to Damascus, the preaching to the Athenians, struggle, prison and death into a time and space extending from Paris during the German occupation to New York in 1968: 'The theatre of Saint Paul's travels is, therefore, no longer the Mediterranean basin but the Atlantic.' His Paul has a fascist past in Paris (Jerusalem) but becomes, after his blinding and fall on the road to Barcelona (Damascus), a resolute opponent of the imperial domination of the United States, taking his struggle to its capital New York (Rome), where in one version he is assassinated in a setting evoking the Memphis motel where Martin Luther King had been murdered earlier in 1968.

Pasolini emphasizes the place of Paul as both within and opposed to imperial power and oppression, but his understanding of this place is very different from that of Jacob Taubes, who in *The Political Theology of Paul* (1993) saw early Christianity and especially Paul's crucial part in its formation as an essentially anti-imperial movement mobilizing opposition to law in general as a means of resisting the specific laws of the Roman Empire. For Taubes, the Pauline origins of Christianity are as much opposed to imperial as they are to Jewish religious law and he regards Paul's emphasis on the aporias of law as central to his political and religious opposition. Pasolini, however, is not so much interested in the law as in bare conformity – here as in *Salò* it is acquiescence to domination that is his main concern and that drives his narrative and image of Paul. Thus in his introduction to his screenplay he transposes what he calls the 'two conformisms' (Jewish and Gentile) of Paul's times into 'the conformism of present day bourgeois civility' in its hypocritical 'religious aspect' and its 'secular, Liberal and materialist aspect'. Yet this Paul will also mobilize domination and conformity in the service of his attack on bourgeois conformity, as much as the sadistic self-professed anarchist legislators of *Salò*, who are in their own way both opponents and upholders of the law. Pasolini's Paul

defies conformity to familial, political and religious structures at the same time as constructing in the Church his own implacable machine for ensuring conformity; but in all this, the question of law as such is peripheral.

So the Paul who moves through the contemporary landscape of Pasolini's screenplay is not just the apostle of liberation from imperial and religious law but also the founder of an institutional order demanding obedience and conformity. The tension between the holy and the priestly emphasized by Pasolini is played out in his view of Paul as being at once the transgressive holy fool (Paul as avatar of St Francis) and the priest or founder of a new perhaps even worse conformity. For Pasolini this is the tension within any revolutionary project whose promise of emancipation brings with it subjection to new conformities and demands for obedience. In the screenplay the instabilities traversing any militant stance are worked through within the discrete but linked registers of the psychoanalytic, the ideological and the political. He agrees with Nietzsche that Paul is sick, but returns repeatedly to the ecstatic moods and visions that drove Paul's mission.

Another intriguing tension in the screenplay involves the treatment of the historical and literary sources for the life of Paul, a critical approach that became the signature of a Pasolini film. In this case he approached the sources of information concerning the life and mission of St Paul – the Acts of Apostles attributed to Luke and the Pauline Letters – in a distinctly critical spirit. The peculiar character of the Acts of the Apostles was recognized long before Pasolini, especially its subtle affirming *and* undermining of Paul's apostolic vocation and its unremitting effort to accommodate Pauline Christianity with the structure and elite culture of the Roman Empire. Luke's account of Paul's mission emphasizes Paul's Roman citizenship, his respect for Roman institutions, support from Roman officials and members of the colonial elite and ends happily with Paul peacefully pursuing missionary work in Rome, leaving unmentioned his violent execution by the Roman authorities. Pasolini takes the radical step of casting Luke as the instrument of a demonic betrayal; he reads back from the narrative of the Acts the presence of a figure in Paul's entourage who was deliberately subverting his mission by his own actions and testimony. For Pasolini, Luke and his Acts satanically undermine Paul's defiance of imperial power, delivering his ministry over to conformity with Rome and preparing the Constantinian ratification of Pauline

Christianity as the religion of Empire. Part of the drama of Pasolini's St Paul emerges from the tension between those scenarios described by the apparently supportive but covertly undermining narrative of Luke and the citations from the Pauline Letters.

The Paul torn between defiance of Empire and the foundation of a new ecclesiastical order that would mirror, absorb and eventually survive the Roman Empire is also played out by the internal references in Pasolini's screenplay to his other 'religious' films. The tension between the 'holy' and the 'priestly' that rends the figure of Pasolini's Paul stands in contrast to the defiance of Christ in the *Gospel According to St Matthew* and the Franciscan comedy of *Hawks and Sparrows* (1966) featuring Toto and Ninetto. The figure of Francis as an alternative to Paul, as a different way of managing the legacy of Christ's ministry, was crucial to Pasolini's wider political theology and especially to this screenplay. Rossellini's film of St Francis is present in *St Paul* not only as a technical precedent but also in pointing beyond the torments of a Paul torn between defiance and domination. It corrects the tendency in the screenplay to present the vulnerability of the Christian revolutionary gesture to containment by the structures and forces of Empire as a tragic dialectic, and helps push the film towards the precedent of *Hawks and Sparrows* – where the 'Franciscans' perform the same contradiction, but as comedy.

Perhaps the tendency towards the tragic points to a weakness in the late work of Pasolini, a surrender to the spirit of gravity most evident in the case of *Salò*. Instead of assigning St Luke and the Acts of the Apostles to the realm of the demonic, Pasolini might have exploited more the unwitting comedy of some of its testimony. He does so in some scenes, but not consistently. The spectacle of Paul holding forth in Athens – wickedly set by Pasolini among an audience of subtle and appalled contemporary Roman intellectuals – is as rare and effective a moment of comedy in the screenplay as it is unwittingly in the Acts. The *spemalogos* or loud-mouth wandering balefully through the shrines and temples of Athens and holding forth in the agora and then even on the Areopagus about the scandalous absurdity of the resurrection *to the Athenians* is hilariously replayed in contemporary Rome, but the same could have been done with other incidents from the Acts such as the horse accident, the shipwreck, cases of mistaken identity, sexual complexity in Corinth and the problems with locals and local law enforcement to which Luke subjects the apostle in the course of

his picaresque travels through the occupied Eastern Mediterranean. In the end Pasolini weighs his screenplay towards the tragedy of the transgressive priest rather than the comedy of Paul as a scandalous holy fool, but there remain effective moments of comedy. Perhaps these could have been enhanced by casting Toto in the role of St Paul, but on the whole the same debilitating gravity that crushes *Salò* increasingly afflicts Pasolini's view of the life and mission of Paul and the claustrophobic torments of the Christianity he contributed to inventing.

The translation of Pasolini's screenplay is framed by three introductory texts that provide it with a philosophical and historical context. But even with this critical support Pasolini's *St Paul* manages to elude capture and remain enigmatic. Badiou's foreword largely replays his own reading of Paul by emphasizing the devastating encounter 'between political truth (communist emancipation being the contemporary form of salvation), and the meaning this could assume in the weight of the world.' This view of the 'dialectic' between institutional discipline and the 'purity of the True' that for Badiou afflicts the ministries of both Lenin and Paul orients Pasolini's screenplay towards tragedy in a way that underestimates those moments of comedy that nevertheless remain at work in the screenplay. Badiou also underestimates Pasolini's sustained effort to undermine the authority of the testimony of the Acts and to free Paul's Epistles from the imperial conformity urged by Luke; he regards both the Acts and the Epistles as equally unproblematic sources for the 'intelligible'. There is something too melancholy about Badiou's tormented militant that distances it from Pasolini; his is a Paul afflicted by the sad passions of being an opponent of the law who, instead of finding the joys of a non-conformist transgressive saintly life, discovers the sadness of the priest who must institute and ensure the obedience of himself and others to ecclesiastical discipline.

The acceptance of the conservative understanding of Pasolini's death as the result of a sexual misadventure is one of the surprising false notes struck in Badiou's foreword. Badiou invites us to share his 'temptation' 'to see Pasolini's own death, which remains obscure, as the Passion of true desire fulfilled in sacrifice under the insensate knife of the person this desire encounters.' The reference to an 'insensate knife' casts a false light on the obscurity by personalizing the murder of Pasolini, confusing his life with his fiction and making his death seem the climax of an erotic quest pursued by the poet among

the violent and dangerous rent boys of the Tiburtina. But this only adds to the *political* obscurity. There was of course no knife involved in Pasolini's murder – he was ambushed and beaten almost certainly by more than one person and then run over by his own car on the beach at Ostia. He may have been trying to reclaim some stolen reels of *Salò* and assassinated by the criminal milieu of the Roman extreme right, or was perhaps silenced after his increasingly courageous and outspoken denunciations of political and institutional corruption. Or, and this seems the most likely, by a combination of the two. Yet whatever the precise motivation for the assassination, Badiou's simplified and mythic description of a 'true' but thanatic desire finding its sacrificial fulfilment echoes the defamation of Pasolini and the complexity of his desires that was used by reactionaries in Italy to obscure the circumstances of his murder and to help ensure his posthumous silencing.

Elizabeth Castelli's introduction ably sets the Paul screenplay within the broader context of Pasolini's work. It situates it historically in the context of Pasolini's critique of the Catholic Church, perhaps underestimating the inspiration of the reforming Pope Giovanni XXIII, to whom he dedicated *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (featuring Agamben's screen debut in the role of St Philip). Her locating of the screenplay with respect to Pasolini's poetry is very sensitively accomplished, but more may have been said about its place within his broader cinematic practice and especially the relationship between Pasolini's revisions of the screenplay and his increasingly self-critical view of his own cinema. While the pragmatic reasons for the film's non-completion are carefully described, some further reflection on the significance of the unfinished in Pasolini's work – as attempted recently by Agamben in a reading of the incomplete 'novel' *Petrolio in il fuoco e il racconto* (2014) – would have added to the case for the urgency of *St Paul*.

Ward Blanton's *Afterword: Appropriation's Excess, Paul of Tarsus for an Age of the Capitalization of Mastery* is an addition to his growing and already indispensable body of work reflecting on and contributing to the recent emergence of a philosophical Saint Paul. The view of Pasolini's Paul as a partisan is productive, although its force is diverted by a focus on the problem of law entirely proper in a reflection on Paul, but distant from Pasolini's Paul. The use of Lacan to illuminate the link between transgression and the authority of the law misses the idiosyncrasy of Pasolini's understanding of the splendours

and miseries of Paul and Pauline Christianity. For, perhaps surprisingly in a screenplay dedicated to Paul, Pasolini shows hardly any interest in the problem of law, focusing instead on naked power, domination and the temptations of conformity. Reflecting on these issues through the medium of law would seem to Pasolini an alleviation or even a diversion. The screenplay then rarely cites from the Letter to Romans, and then only in the final scenes set in New York/Rome and even then with little attention to the disquisitions on the law. The subdued citation from the famed discourse on the aporias of the law, Romans 7:7–12, is immediately followed by a scene of celebration between Satan and Luke. They see in Paul's mumbled deduction of the holiness of the law the definitive step towards the liquidation of Christ's legacy and a welcome diminution of its potential to resist power. They drink a toast to the Church and get drunk on champagne, 'evoking all the crimes of the Church: a huge and long list of criminal popes, of compromises of the Church with power, of bullying, violence, repressions, ignorance, dogmas. At the end the two are completely drunk and they laugh thinking of Paul who is still there, travelling round the world preaching and organizing'. Towards the end of

the screenplay, then, Paul returns as a holy fool, but this time working unknowingly for the devil.

The 1968 *Plan for a Film about Saint Paul* ends in New York as the Rome of the contemporary Empire, where 'the state of injustice that dominates in a slave society like that of Imperial Rome can be symbolized by racism and the condition of blacks'. Paul intervenes in this struggle and is imprisoned and finally judicially murdered: 'Saint Paul will suffer martyrdom in the middle of the bustle of a large city.' In the revised 1974 *Outline of a Screenplay* Rome is still New York and Paul is still in prison, but the execution is now extra-judicial and far more attention paid to the 'desperate and slimy faces of the servants of Power' and the deserted city of 'skyscrapers in the dust' where Power reigns. The distinction between the endings is critical – the former is classically Pauline with its reference to the injustice of the law executed in the midst of the crowded metropolis but where even so the 'word God resounds (or starts to resound)', while the latter at the hands of naked and sweaty Power is closer to Pasolini with its final aesthetic redemption not in the name of God but in the 'small rosy puddle, in which the drops of Paul's blood continue to fall'.

Howard Caygill

War and commas

Hanns Eisler in Conversation with Hans Bunge, *Brecht, Music and Culture*, ed. and trans. Sabine Berendse and Paul Clements, Bloomsbury Methuen, London, 2014. 312 pp., £50.00 hb., £16.99 pb., 978 1 47252 435 5 hb., 978 1 47253 159 9 pb.

On 8 May 1932, Sergei Eisenstein and Bertolt Brecht travelled together by train from Berlin to Moscow. Brecht was attending the premiere of his film *Kuhle Wampe* while Eisenstein was returning from his (mostly disastrous) trip to Mexico and the United States. Apparently, they did not get along. Eisenstein thought Brecht's work too didactic, too moralizing, too much an illustration of Marxist ideology. It is of course the standard complaint levelled against Brecht. Eisenstein's solution to the problem of Marxist didacticism was far from standard. His basic aim, one he shared with Hollywood film-makers, was to produce a kind of art that 'contains a *maximum of emotion and affective power*.' And if the aim of art was the maximum production of affect, then film was the greatest machine or weapon.

Like Brecht and his musical collaborator Hanns Eisler, Eisenstein learned a great deal from their

first-hand encounters with the Hollywood affect industry. Eisenstein, working temporarily with Paramount in 1930, and Brecht and Eisler, from around 1941 to 1948 working in and (mostly) out of the Hollywood system, were fundamentally shaped by the experience. Hollywood signalled for them a singular instance of ambivalence: horror mixed with fascination at what Hollywood could make its audience do – lull them into utter stupor or stimulate them to relieve boredom. There is a constant refrain about Hollywood in Eisenstein's, Brecht's and Eisler's writings that its basic powers were intoxicating, yielding a drug-like stupefaction balanced with meaningless excitement. They were equally fascinated by the sheer *effectiveness* of Hollywood's hold over its audiences. 'We used to go to the cinema, especially to gangster movies', Eisler recalled, 'in order ... to undertake social studies.'

Brecht and Eisler had more to learn from the persuasive powers of Hollywood than Eisenstein. For the film-maker, Hollywood showed him how to perfect his already streamlined techniques of audience control; he put Hollywood to use in his later films, even if the state did not want his help. (Hollywood returned the debt through innumerable homages to Eisenstein's techniques, minus the meaning, of course, and when he was well gone.) When Brecht and Eisler returned to Germany in 1948 they had to contend with a different kind of audience. For the first time, Brecht and Eisler were working with (roughly) the same audience Eisenstein had all along: socialists. No longer pitched directly to bourgeois viewers, Brecht shifted his art away from didactic commitments to reason and understanding – *Verfremdungseffekt* as an aesthetic instrument directed towards better understanding of the structure of capitalism, a structure which required a disidentification with the individuated plights of workers – and instead towards what we might call aesthetic propaganda. Eisler's conversations with Hans Bunge about Brecht focus on their time together in Hollywood as well as on the building of a 'magnificent' new socialist republic. For Eisler, the 'be-all and end-all' of their work was to 'educate the teacher!' The question of course was *how*, and it was here they learned their lessons from Hollywood.

Writing in his journal for June 1950 Brecht lamented the way his work was interpreted by a well-known working-class writer. His verdict was crushing – 'ideology, ideology, ideology' – and the reason was surprising: 'nowhere an aesthetic concept'. Brecht insisted that 'the first thing we have to do [in the GDR] is institute exhibitions and courses to develop taste, i.e. for the enjoyment of life.' These are the basic themes – aesthetics, pleasure, education for taste – addressed by Eisler in these conversations held over fourteen sessions between 1958 and 1961, the last conversation taking place within days of Eisler's death (the original 1975 publication was called *Ask me more about Brecht*).

For Eisler, as for Brecht, one of the standing threats to the new state was 'aesthetic barbarism', Eisler's 'new catchphrase' against 'over-politicizing in the arts'. 'Brecht was always complaining about the decline of aesthetic categories', Eisler says. Throughout the conversations Eisler is at pains to displace the effort to 'turn Brecht into the theoretical showpiece of Marxism' at the expense of his 'poetic brilliance'. 'I read Brecht because he's beautiful', Eisler declares, not because he's a Marxist. When Brecht returned to

Europe in 1947 he made a calculated shift from political lessons to aesthetic theory. We read that Brecht 'especially valued most' his aesthetics and that they were in danger of being 'forgotten' at the moment when they were most necessary as a bulwark against ideology. None of which is to say that Brecht practised a 'special or personal Marxism'. More like the opposite. No distinction could be made between the 'poet Brecht and the Marxist Brecht'. Speaking of *Galileo* Eisler reflected upon how Brecht's 'relentless political position becomes aesthetically attractive' and how this itself 'turns into politics'. Brecht's turn to aesthetics was tactical, situation-specific. 'We Marxists often behave like barbarians when it comes to aesthetics', Eisler warns. And if Brecht could ever be accused of aesthetic barbarism – consider *Der Jasager* – it was intended as a tactical response to Weimar products like *Die Welt ist Schön*. When Brecht arrived in the GDR, it called for an equally appropriate response: aesthetic pleasure.

Just prior to his return to Germany Brecht completed his major theoretical statement, the *Short Organum for the Theatre*. In that text he defined theatre as an 'aesthetic enterprise', one where a 'critical attitude to the social world' would be dissociated from the 'unsensual, negative, inartistic'. Most famously Brecht claims that the 'proper business of theatre' is pleasure. What kind of pleasure? The pleasure of theatre comes from education, knowledge, instruction. Theatrical pleasure had to compete with, and learn from, Hollywood's brand of immediate gratification. For Brecht and Eisler there was little difference between film and music in their shared capacity to generate strong affective responses. (Eisler and Adorno considered this problem in their Los Angeles collaboration *Composing for the Films*.) In fact, Brecht and Eisler were notoriously sceptical of the affective power of music. 'Music is all about feelings', Eisler writes, 'and unfortunately they become polluted through music'. By its very nature music tends to 'manipulate us into abstract and decadent behaviour'. The 'Protean character of music' invites the worst forms of aesthetic 'idiocy'. ('Stupidity in Music' – a peculiar late essay sequence by Eisler – is the subject of several conversations here.) Eisler affirms the famous declaration by Thomas Mann's Lodovico Settembrini in *The Magic Mountain* that music is 'Politically Suspect'. Brecht was shocked to find something he agreed with in Mann's writings, even if Mann didn't agree with his character.

Hollywood was masterful at exploiting music's capacity to manipulate audience response. As Eisler

observed in a lecture delivered during his first trip to Los Angeles in 1935, the 'apparent aimlessness of bourgeois music has in reality the very important function of supporting capitalism. People are diverted from their troubles.' The owners of capital used music as 'a psychological substitute for activities and experiences' that were deprived the masses in reality. Alternately, the socialists' task was to 'influence the practical actions of the audience' towards progressive ends. Eisler was caught up with GDR authorities around this question. He passionately argued against the reigning vision of the state that 'American influence has to be fought *politically*, and not aesthetically.' Political education – teaching the dangers of capitalism and the values of socialism – should be the state's aim, not policing artworks. 'Let's educate our young people politically so that they can (a) dance to boogie-woogie and (b) resist the political influence of America.' Or, more forcefully still: 'Let's emphasize politics and not aesthetics.'

Brecht and Eisler were of course products of the bourgeois tradition that was under scrutiny. In the conversations Goethe comes up as much as Marx, and Hegel comes up more than any other author. Hegel is 'peerless' when it comes to 'pure facts, to real descriptions of art'. Eisler has to 'call upon [his] beloved master Hegel' when he enters into the 'field of pure aesthetics'. Eisler would prefer to protect even the most decadent forms of bourgeois art than succumb to a state-enforced 'politicization of aesthetics.' 'A Leninist', he says, 'is not unworldly after all. If we turned the entire world's stupidity into a political question, we wouldn't be able to see the wood for the trees.' In other words, policing stupidity would become a full-time job, and the job of policing might just filter into the making of art.

And this is exactly the path Eisler ends up following. Hints of the danger of politicization emerge with his weirdly fine-tuned distinction between boogie-woogie and jazz. Warning that 'you can't politicize every aesthetic phenomenon', he goes on to say that the 'mass hysteria ... generated by American jazz'

should be 'forbidden'. And he means it: 'I'm all for police intervention in such case.... I'd turn myself into a hard-nosed sergeant-major.' Eisler was not averse to calling in the police to enforce the *good* kind of music either. If education was at stake with the new state, then 'We Marxists have to take care that our people get some culture, whether they want it or not. We Marxists have to stuff culture down the people's throats, you know what I mean?'



The most fascinating and perplexing aspect of the conversations turns on the effort to 'study the effect of art on human beings'. Eisler suggests that the state should 'conduct trials in the effect of music on people', something enacted in humanities departments across the globe today under the banner of affect theory or neuroaesthetics – without state threat, but often with state funding. Eisler awaits the day when the 'medical profession' will conduct 'research into the physiological effects of music'. Wait no longer, that day has arrived. Eisler draws all the right conclusions of the study of affect. If you believe that works of art generate negative affective states in the listener, then it would logically follow that they should be closely monitored. Here is Eisler:

effects have to be confirmed psychologically and physiologically. And suppose we discover that certain music is harmful. What do we do then? Certain music raises the blood pressure. When you reach fifty you shouldn't listen to this music anymore because arteriosclerosis will have set in and certain pieces should no longer be played because they lower the blood pressure in people

who already have low blood pressure. That sounds barbaric but I think it's only reasonable.

Bunge cites a journal entry by Brecht where he notes that 'a clinical thermometer is one of the most important instruments for judging music.' After listening to music one should immediately take one's temperature to see whether the 'temperature rises when the music is stormy, fervent or simply powerful'. Brecht admired Bach above all because the indicator did *not* rise or fall. The latter point is important, and it is crucially missed by Eisler. Brecht valued the *static* effects of music on him, or simply the lack of physiological effect. Eisler fought to say that if you studied Brecht's biology closely enough it would show that Bach's *St John Passion* actually made his temperature rise. Eisler's vision of aesthetic judgement appears to cast off the historical, rational and cognitive bases of Brecht's project. Brecht's basic affirmation of the 'social rather than biological' is at stake. Nonetheless, Eisler pursues the logic of affect to its conclusion:

Not once has anyone, not even a scientist, really investigated the effect of a piece of music on people. Not even the most primitive trials have been undertaken: whether the blood pressure falls if one hears music of a certain style; whether Brecht's blood pressure falls or rises; what physical and psychological changes occur in a person.

Eisenstein would have revelled in the same set of data. How to build an aesthetic device capable of generating solid communist viewers? How to engineer a counter-Hollywood selling communist anti-products? The danger is that the crucial link between the physical and psychological on one side and the social and historical on the other is missing. It is the danger Eisler spells out, but also misses, in the difference between aesthetics and politics. If the composer is checking his (or anyone's) blood pressure and thermometer while writing or performing his piece, then the aesthetic really has become politicized. Eisler sees the trap he laid for himself and seems to withdraw his assertions; he is only 'joking' after all. More soberly, he sees that 'a better mood is not a matter of art but one of personal well-being.'

Alongside Eisler's quasi-scientific stress on the effects of art on audiences, he reflects on the determined *lack* of audience for his and Brecht's works. He quotes his teacher Arnold Schoenberg to the effect that 'I can tolerate audiences as space fillers, but I could do perfectly well without them.' This was in fact the setting for Brecht and Eisler's greatest

work. Eisler describes their time in Los Angeles as unrelenting production of 'unperformable things' (something which would be better said of Brecht's Scandinavian period). The lack of audience was not just a fact but a principle. As Eisler observes, Brecht sharply distinguished between the artwork and its reception. Brecht 'was interested only in the construction of a play', while 'the production ... he saw as by-product, as an extra'. In its most terse formulation, Brecht identified the work itself with its construction: 'You know, once we've got the framework, the rest is nothing.' The framework, how people and things interacted in a world, was at the heart of the artwork and was also the *idea expressed* by the work. Understanding the framework of capitalism was the meaning of the work of art. The 'rest' of the work – that which 'dazzles people so much' – were the character details, the aspects of the work that might potentially solicit *empathetic response*. Being committed to the framework meant that Brecht was *not* committed to making works productive of theatrical effects. Eisler describes the 'outstanding importance' of Brecht's 'distinctive aesthetic judgment concerning pompous, false and artificial gestures, pathos and sentimentality', noting that Denis Diderot's 'achievements of genius ... influenced Brecht enormously'; Diderot's work about the theatre 'exactly expresses Brecht's theories'. Here, Brecht and Eisler found support for their anti-theatrical position in the historical avant-garde. It was the work of the great French modernists – Flaubert, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Apollinaire – that give expression to 'great dialectics'.

The lesson of the great modernists was the lesson of socialism. In other words, ending capitalism was the precondition for making and understanding great art. One of the more poignant moments in the conversations is where Eisler recalls 'discussing for hours on end the punctuation of Shakespeare's quarto editions'. He calls this a 'tribute to Brecht', one that the 'younger generation may learn something from'. At the most tense moment of World War II, while exiled in Hollywood in what seemed hopeless conditions, questions about punctuation were at the centre of their concerns. 'When the Russians were beating the fascists at Stalingrad', Eisler reflects, 'we were preoccupied with commas in Shakespeare's quarto. Those are correlations, not contradictions. The battles were fought so that we could diagnose the commas.'

Todd Cronan

Voice land

Walter Benjamin, *Radio Benjamin*, ed. Lecia Rosenthal, trans. Jonathan Lutes, Lisa Harries and Diana Reese, Verso, London and New York, 2014. 424 pp., £20.00 hb., 978 1 78168 575 4.

In December 1926 Walter Benjamin noted down a number of sentences constructed by an 11-year-old girl. He provided five words – ‘Pretzel – Feather – Break – Sorrow – Frippery’ – with which the child formulated: ‘Time swings through nature like a pretzel. The feather paints the landscape, and if there is a break, it is filled with rain. One hears of no sorrow, for there is no frippery.’ These ‘fantasy-sentences’ (*Phantasiesätze*) – likely to be the work of Daga, daughter of Asja Lacis, recorded during Benjamin’s visit to Moscow between December 1926 and February 1927 – represent a developing theme in Benjamin’s work: the granting of a poetic voice to the figure of the child, and the granting of that voice with political, philosophical and theological weight. Though the child sits passively listening, Benjamin no doubt writes to activate a response akin to Daga’s *Phantasiesätze*. The work collected together here in *Radio Benjamin* offers new material for the exploration of this aspect of Benjamin’s thought.

The volume collects together for the first time all of Benjamin’s surviving *Youth Hour* radio programmes for children transmitted between 1927 and 1933 on Berlin and Frankfurt State Radio, alongside plays, dialogues, listening models, and his theoretical reflections on the medium. It is the most comprehensive volume to date, for, until now, and until the release of the ninth volume of the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* in late 2015 (edited by Thomas Küpper and Anja Nowak), the radio material has been scattered throughout the *Gesammelte Schriften*, tucked away across a number of volumes. These programmes have thus been lost to the literature as Benjamin’s voice was lost to live broadcast. Although Rolf Tiedemann published *Aufklärung für Kinder* in 1985, the collection excludes everything but the *Youth Hour* scripts, which make up section one of *Radio Benjamin*. And although Suhrkamp published *Drei Hörmodelle* in 1971, this collection excluded the *Youth Hour*, the radio plays, and the theoretical works, all of which are now consolidated in *Radio Benjamin*. As such, it is only now that the form of this work can properly be assessed for the first time as a whole.

The first section of the volume, comprising the *Youth Hour* programmes, is ordered chronologically and into thematic clusters according to Benjamin’s

original schema. The first batch of programmes are largely sketches of Berlin, on the ‘big-snout’ or ‘gob’ of the Berlin dialect, the markets and their characters, the puppet shows and the toys, the rental barracks of the Prussian army and the factories of Borsig, and the province’s artistic traditions through Theodor Hosemann and Theodor Fontane.

The second batch clusters around a number of types or characters: peddlers, witches, gypsies, swindlers, bootleggers, magicians, prisoners, rascals and crooks. The script on the witch trials documents the history of the persecution of witches and its fight as ‘one of the greatest liberation struggles in the history of man [sic].’ In an episode on postage-stamp swindling, Benjamin unravels the history of the mechanical reproduction of counterfeit stamps: how stamps stand in for currency, how they are more easily forged than banknotes, how forged stamps were labelled as forgeries to avoid liability only for them then to be unpackaged and sold on as loose (non-forged) stamps. One cannot help but think that Benjamin is here encouraging the listening child to undercut the law and, like his son Stefan in 1929, produce homemade stamps that might enter circulation rather than their parents’ notebook. (As recorded in *Walter Benjamin’s Archive*, Stefan’s homemade stamps were, for example, fixed into a notebook in 1929.) In the spirit of Cagliostro, an ‘anti-Enlightenment’ hero who equipped himself with the skills of ‘grave digging, counterfeit handwriting, panhandling and the like’, this instructs the child in the subversion of the law. The child is addressed here in starkly political terms.

The third batch of the *Youth Hour* programmes cluster around the themes of catastrophe and disaster. Although this group was the one most extensively translated in the *Selected Writings*, such as the lectures on the Lisbon earthquake, and the railway disaster at the Firth of Tay, there are a number of previously untranslated works that appear here for the first time: on the fall of Herculaneum and Pompeii in 79 AD, on a Cantonese theatre fire in the early nineteenth century, and on the Mississippi flood of 1927. This group is easily located within already existing streams of secondary literature on the historical development of catastrophic history,

on technology prone to ruination and barbarism, of lives fated by natural-historical destruction. As the analogy goes in 'Central Park' (1939), just as the child turns the kaleidoscope, and with every turn dissolves the established order into a new order, so too these tales tell of catastrophe in a state of permanence. Susan Buck-Morss in *Dialectics of Seeing* has previously outlined Benjamin's radio programme on the Mississippi flood, a disaster long thought to be natural that was in fact caused by the state. The programme, as Buck-Morss glosses, tells

the story of two brothers, farmers in Natchez, whose entire means of production were destroyed [by the flood], and who, stranded, climbed to their rooftop to escape the flood waters. As the river rose, one brother did not wait for death, but jumped into the water: 'Farewell, Louis! You see, it has taken too long... I've had enough.' But the other, holding on until seen and rescued by a passing boat, lived to tell the story.

Buck-Morss reads this in relation both to the permanence of catastrophe and to Benjamin's own life in the face of 'economic annihilation'. 'In April 1931 he had described himself as "a shipwrecked person adrift on the wreck, having climbed to the top of the mast which is already torn apart. But he has the chance from there to give a signal for his rescue." For seven years, until the next flood, it was the survivor in Benjamin's character who won out.' The interweaving of historical strands of catastrophe with biographical details on Benjamin's life is a common response to this theme.

In his rendition of the eruption of Vesuvius, a programme from 1931, Benjamin tells of a city 'devoured by a glowing cloud' that laid new geologies atop an obliterated urban landscape. As Benjamin recounts, ash killed a large part of the population instantly, and settled as pumice to harden and seal the bodies. Over time, the organic material decomposed and drained through the porous layers on which they lay. All that remained were voids of the shapes of organic material as it appeared at the time of their destruction. Bodies were eventually excavated when the archaeologist Giuseppe Fiorelli in 1863 developed a technique whereby liquid plaster was used to fill cavities in the ash where organic material had decomposed over time. When it dried, the surrounding ash was chipped away to leave a cast of the void: excavated were statues of the dead at the moment of their death. Ever since Benjamin's visit to Pompeii in 1924, an image of these bodies no doubt lingered in his memory: negative voids recovered to preserve an

absence, records of trauma and destruction poised between nature and artifice.

Tagged on to the end of this first section of programmes are two outliers. The first, on dogs, opens with Carl Linnaeus's taxonomy of this heterogeneous species which nevertheless all 'digest bones, vomit up grass [and] defecate on stone'. A short history of domestication is followed by a number of anecdotes: stories of dogs collectively avoiding mutilation by crocodiles, dogs hailing carriages for the Parisian bourgeoisie, dogs leading funeral processions only to sit through elegies at the graveside. The second programme in this subsection features thirty *Knacknüsse*, or brain-teasers, which fit in with Benjamin's little-known obsession with rhyme, puzzle and word-play. Scattered throughout the *Gesammelte Schriften* are similar documents: the 'Knackmandeln' (strangely absent from this volume, given that they were written for a *Youth Hour* in July 1932), 'Öffentliches Geheimnis', and 'Kurz und Bündig', all of which remain untranslated. Here he asks those listening to mark with a dash the fifteen logical mistakes that occur in the story he recounts. If the barber is a young man and the pharmacist's twin brother, Benjamin explains, then the pharmacist cannot be an old man, as the story at first told us. Alongside these are fifteen questions, each announced in the script with a *Gong!*

Following the *Youth Hour* programmes is an eclectic mix of dialogues, plays and sketches ordered chronologically, and written more for adults than for children. The *Hörmodelle*, or listening models, a form developed with the artist director of Southwest German Radio, Ernst Schoen, are intended to be didactic and dialectical: to juxtapose example with counter-example as a critical dialogue between two figures. These include a dialogue (co-written with Wolf Zucker) on how to instrumentally approach a boss for a pay rise as well as an imagined conversation in which the Voice of Romanticism and the Voice of the Nineteenth Century converse about the German literary canon. The radio plays sit alongside these as a new pedagogical form that brings the didacticism of epic theatre to a large number of people simultaneously. The possibility that radio might announce, as Schoen puts it, a 'gigantic educational enterprise' is central here. Radio is placed next to the old theatre as the more 'exposed' piece of Technik with towering political potential.

Although the radio programmes contain, in Scholem's words, the sediments of Benjamin's 'way of seeing' and novel detours into the sentiments of his thought, this cannot be a reason to pass over them

without criticism. Unlike the ethereal complexity of Benjamin's other work, his sustained mobilization of anecdotes veers between a politics that shatters the historical continuum and one that appeals to its 'healthy common sense'. As the programmes address the imagined children of the bourgeois parlours of Berlin and Frankfurt, they are littered with all the outmoded expressions and colloquialisms familiar to those rooms. Benjamin at times falls into stereotype with talk of 'dirty tricks' among gypsies and 'cater-wauling' (*Katzenmusik*) in the Chinese opera house. As texts transposed from the spoken word, their liveliness and intensity have been lost with the voice that first presented them. The mode of their translation (perhaps the very fact of their transposition) means that a wedge has been lodged between performer and audience, adult and child, a 'separation' Benjamin originally intended to dissolve that has widened with the passage of time. As in the *Arcades Project*, the dominant method is one of literary montage, but, unlike the fragments of the *Arcades*, the rags and refuse of the past form new constellations of knowledge less easily here. At times, the lightning flash of the new is dulled under the strain of a mode of expression that is at times outmoded, at times kitsch.

The possibility that radio might not just mobilize 'knowledge in the direction of the public, but mobilize the public in the direction of knowledge' has become a hope rendered void by subsequent history. Not only did events quash this formulation directly after it was made – Benjamin records, for example, that radio was nationalized in the summer of 1932 to 'propagandize war' – but the voices of the National Theatre that dominate the radio-play today, at least in the UK, render these scripts at times bearable only after they have passed into the display case of Benjaminian curiosities as historical documents. Once transported from the live immediacy of the spoken word, they offer the mild entertainment that accompanies the failure to escape the eternal return of that which the medium attempted to blast open – which is no entertainment at all. Benjamin's style was no doubt radical, borrowing from Brecht and Lăcis so as to resist the early-developed conventions of radio (and of pedagogy and theatre more generally) that spoke of nothing but the naturalistic 'presentation' of information. It is for this reason that the granting of the child with a poetic and political voice should be heard here, not as a historical record of absolute success, but rather as a continued attempt that fights wearily on.

Sam Dolbear

Disturbing

Barbara Cassin, *Sophistical Practice: Toward a Consistent Relativism*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2014. viii + 370 pp., £64.00 hb., £18.47 pb., 978 0 82325 638 9 hb., 978 0 82325 639 6 pb.

One of the more unexpected details to emerge about Barbara Cassin in this first English-language anthology of her writings is that her early years as a researcher were supported by a series of eclectic odd jobs: painting portraits, contributing to the *Encyclopædia Universalis*, teaching Plato to troubled adolescents, and even occasional hand modelling. As she tells Penelope Deutscher in the panoramic interview which opens this collection, as a young specialist in Presocratic philosophy she felt largely out of step with the French academic system. This was even more so following her encounter with Heidegger in Thor in 1969, after which she felt 'incapable' of competing for the *agrégation*, France's severe qualifying exam for secondary-school teachers. Occupying an already marginal position as an untenured, non-*agrégée*, female philosopher, Cassin was a specialist on the philosophy of the Greek sophists, the dazzling rhetoricians of Athens denounced by Plato

as money-grabbing frauds and likened by Aristotle to mindless vegetables. Convincing a conservative academic community of the fundamental import (or even interest) of their thought was always going to be a battle of attrition.

Despite these wilderness years, Cassin today occupies a research chair at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), a post she has held since 1986. With the relative freedom such positions entail, she has pursued what might seem a somewhat erratic programme of research. She has written dense philological readings of the sophistic fragments as well as passionate polemics against France's 'performance'-led university culture; she has edited a 1,400-page *Dictionary of Untranslatables* (reviewed by Howard Caygill in *RP* 138, July/August 2006), while also penning a vigorous critique of Google's information empire. The attraction of an anthology such as this is that it immediately dispels any suggestion of

dilettantism in such a wide array of interests. One sees very quickly that Cassin's varied philosophical concerns are all underpinned by an ongoing interest in the complex relationship between language and the world.

The anthology is divided into five broad themes, with most pieces falling into one of the following categories: articles on ancient philosophy; articles on rhetoric and language; articles on political philosophy and theory; articles on contemporary politics; and articles on translation and 'untranslatables'. All feed into Cassin's more general project of sophistic. The latter emerges from what she calls a 'sophistic history of philosophy'. Ever since Plato's vilification of the sophists for monetarizing thought, they have been cast as philosophy's 'bad other'. Where the philosopher is governed by careful dialectic, the sophist manipulates with the smoke and mirrors of language. He uses his mastery of rhetoric to argue any case (the sophist Gorgias famously stunned crowds with speeches both condemning and praising Helen of Troy); and, worse still, he sells this technique to the highest bidder. Yet in Aristophanes' *The Clouds* it is Socrates who is portrayed as the archetypal sophist, corrupting the youth of Athens with his nonsensical and purposeless teaching. Such critical ambiguity reminds us that the borders between philosophical dialectic and sophistic rhetoric are not as clear-cut as they may first appear.

The virtue of Cassin's work is that it confronts such complexity head-on by showing how sophistry, rather than being a historical phenomenon with a determined content, is an 'effect' (*l'effet sophistique*), a structural by-product of philosophy rather than its exemplary other. Sophistry never really goes away. (If *The Clouds* were written today, it would most likely take place in a packed Parisian seminar room circa 1968.) Cassin's point is, in this sense, a rather simple one: every manifest invocation of sophistry involves a latent, structural delimitation between what does and what does not constitute philosophy. A sophistic history of philosophy would thus trace the exclusions that have characterized the history of philosophy since Plato. Occasionally intemperate language can sometimes obscure the precise aim of Cassin's project. She is not attempting a 'rehabilitation' of the sophists. To rehabilitate the sophists would be to follow G.B. Kerferd, for example, and transform the sophists into hyper-rationalists (philosophers after all), thereby keeping the traditional Platonic hierarchy in place. Cassin is interested in the sophists in so far as they were (and remain) disturbing to

philosophy. If sophistry is an 'effect' of philosophy, produced by philosophy's gesture of self-delimitation, then it also exerts its own 'effect' on philosophy, in so far as it disturbs and even displaces the latter's foundational beliefs.

Sophistics is desirable because it opens philosophy to its excluded others, such as rhetoric and literature; it is a reaction against philosophy conceived as a history of Being from Parmenides onwards. Cassin's interpretation of Gorgias' *On What Is Not* provides the clearest example of the challenge sophistic poses to the ontological. Gorgias' text represents an exemplary instance of 'logology'. The latter is opposed to ontology in so far as it maintains that it is the word (or discourse) which produces the world and not vice-versa. In ontology, language is the transparent vehicle of the real; in sophistic and logology, by contrast, there is no real without a language which first performs it: 'it is not a matter of saying what is, but of making what one says be'. This is precisely what Gorgias' treatise allows us to think: the poem does not describe Being; Being is rather as an effect of the poem and of speech more generally.

Sophists such as Gorgias were famous for their signature technique: rhetoric. Cassin advances a simple yet novel thesis on the origins of this technique. Though she acknowledges existing creation myths, her hypothesis is less rose-tinted: rhetoric, she argues, was invented by philosophy to tame the power of language (*logos*) wielded by the sophists. Plato coined the word *rhêtorikê* to restrain the ambivalent power of *logos* within the conventions of a calculated and calculable system of rhetoric. That the *logos* is perceived as dangerous is clear from Gorgias' *Encomium for Helen*, where discourse is 'a great sovereign, who by means of the smallest and least apparent of bodies accomplishes the most divine of acts'. It is precisely this capacity of discourse to act which escapes Plato's notice in the dialogues. For Cassin the *logos* does not simply influence our interior process of reasoning (rhetoric); it also acts in the world and is by its very nature performative (logology/sophistics).

This leads us naturally to the relationship between discourse and politics. For the sophists, politics is a conflict not of power or personalities but of different regimes of *logos*. Cassin's contribution is to draw out the performative essence of sophistic in its inherent relationship to politics. Language's performative dimension is examined in one of the stand-out pieces of the collection: 'How to Really Do Things with Words: Performance before the Performative'. Here Austin's originality consists in having 'counted

to three', in having rejected any simple distinction between constative and performative and pursuing instead a trinity of the locutionary (descriptive: philosophy), the illocutionary (performative: sophistics), and the perlocutionary (effective: rhetoric). Cassin shows how Austin's work can help us think that which in the *logos* cannot be reduced to philosophy or rhetoric, namely the performative, the means by which discourse acts and produces effects in the world. At the same time, Austin remains attached to the ontological tradition since he is curiously unwilling to offer a concrete analysis of the perlocutionary. If he had attempted to do so, Cassin suggests, he would have grasped the impossibility of drawing a firm distinction between these constitutive elements of the *logos*. His famous delight in playing 'Old Harry' with the truth-falsity and fact-value fetishes nonetheless gestures towards the inherent performativity of discourse, its capacity to shape the world by continually constructing it anew.

The political implications of Cassin's project thus become clearer. What was so troubling about the sophists was their influence on Athenian political life. As we are reminded here, the *polis* was itself the first performance, actively shaped and reshaped by discourse and the Athenians' love of debate. The sophist knows that politics is not built on simple truth or falsity but rather on plurality and conflict, on language's ability to move us not from the worst to the best of states, but from a lesser state to a potentially better one. Concrete political implications of this view are explored in an article entitled "'Enough of the Truth For...': On the Truth and Reconciliation Commission'. Here South Africa's TRC represents 'a kind of political sophistry' or 'sophistical politics'. This is because its underlying rationale insists on the performative power of words, their capacity to heal, to enact change, to posit not a monolithic truth but rather more or less truth – in the words of the commission's report: 'enough of the truth ...' for the process of healing to begin to take place.

It is not possible in this short space to do justice to the richness of this collection, which extends far beyond the partial map sketched here, encompassing problems of cultural hegemony, relativism, translation, 'performance' evaluation in higher education, and much more besides. One disappointing omission is a comprehensive bibliography. But, such a quibble aside, the publication of this anthology represents a major event in continental thought: a summa of Cassin's multifaceted philosophical project to date.

Paul Earlie

Capital wins

Mark Neocleous, *War Power, Police Power*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2014. 302 pp., £75.00 hb., £24.99 pb., 978 0 74869 236 1 hb., 978 0 74869 237 8 pb.

The pertinence of Mark Neocleous's new book can be judged by the conditions in which I write this review. Above my house a Metropolitan Police helicopter is circling, its actual purpose unknown – it might be traffic control, it might be surveillance of actual crime or deterrence of possible crime – but its presence indicative of a will to know and to order, a sort of omni-directional interpellation from the skies. In the Middle East, Israeli air power has been hammering Gaza into the peace of desolation (to misquote Tacitus), whilst US air power rearticulates the balance of forces in northern Mesopotamia. Neocleous rightly sees these aspects of power as more than fortuitously synchronous; they are profoundly connected both materially and conceptually. His book is an attempt to clarify these links and to situate them within the unfolding of liberalism as ideology.

Neocleous's endeavour is disciplinarily radical in viewing the phenomena of war and police together, where their standard investigation is as discrete and discretely conceptualized instances. It is also radical in the sense that, rather than accept liberalism's own account of itself as a philosophy of peace, where the market is a function of free association, he uncovers a history of pacification, where, in a generalization of Karl Polanyi's embedding of the market in socially (and primarily state) produced order, the use of armed power is central to the creation of the conditions of social reproduction. His antagonists here are thus the academy, liberalism itself with its attendant cheerleaders, and the theoreticians of the new, who see something essentially different in the use of military power in the current conjuncture. The book displays a copious engagement with historical and contemporary materials and Neocleous shows that 'war' and 'police' are at the origin of capitalist modernity, with violence being the midwife of the order that began to emerge with the colonization of the New World: the colonial dimension is also precisely where the articulation, or rather the Janus-faced nature, of armed power is most manifest.

So, the book begins with a discussion of Francisco Suárez, the early modern Spanish theologian and jurist whose justification of the European right of armed opposition to indigenous resistance

crucially depends on 'natural' rights to trade and to develop. The privileging of such 'rights' means that any other order of nature and society, especially the non-market societies of the Americas, becomes a legitimate target for intervention and transformation, regardless of the wishes and intentions of the native peoples. This doctrine of 'just war' is thus both creative and dynamic, in that it posits not merely the exercise of violence to impose peace, but to transform the target society in quite radical ways, and to continue to do so, in an expansive way. Arguably, previous forms of empire were content to leave conquered societies as they were, whilst simply extracting tribute, either human or material, from a natural economy. In Suárez's vision of the New World, at least according to Neocleous, the centrality of trade and the extension of money as its medium leads to the creation of a new order. The justification of war is in the service of the production of a regime where trade is possible and expandable. The two moments of violence that are traditionally theorized separately – military power and violence between states; police power and the use of violence to produce internal order – find a common *point d'appui* in the moment of colonialism.



This tends to oversimplify the account of Spanish imperialism in ignoring both the complex disputations around the questions of mercantile power, the exploitation of labour, and the place of trade in an absolutist empire, as well as the reach and influence of Suárez as against other peninsular thinkers of Empire like José de Acosta, Ginés de Sepúlveda or Bartolomé de las Casas. However, it does provide a potential genealogical forebear to Locke, who

Neocleous unpicks to discern the violence that haunts the idea of 'improvement' and that drives its colonial animus. Rightly, the notion of waste becomes the prism through which 'permanent development' can be seen as the telos of an expanded form of market society. To refuse to develop, to leave unimproved, is to violate a central tenet of the evolving order, granting others the right to appropriate and to transform. Again, the colonial moment is crucial: the Indian wars of North America were about the production of what the Spanish were already calling *policía*, albeit for them this was about urban order in the extraordinarily multicultural cities of the Empire, whilst for the English the new order was that of agricultural property. The notion that unbounded land is a waste and that the only title is an individual (as opposed to collective) one underpins settler expansion in North America and the later enclosure movement in Britain (and the planter transformation of Ireland throughout the period): military power – deployed either by professional armies or militia – is crucial to the production of internal order.

In this sense, then, as Neocleous points out, armed power is the mechanism by which Marx's 'primitive accumulation' is carried out, that process by which the separation of the producers from the means of production is achieved. As various writers have noted, the suggestion that this process is a time-bound one, occurring only at the dawn of capitalism, is erroneous. Rather, 'primitive accumulation' is a continuous process, a permanent 'accumulation by dispossession' in David Harvey's terms, and one constantly accompanied by violence. The tracing of one facet of this in the use of air power to subjugate the peoples of the new empire that Britain

acquired after the First World War in the former Ottoman provinces of Iraq and Syria is illuminating: bombing is a means by which pastoral nomads are coerced into becoming sedentary labourers and taxpayers, a twentieth-century echo of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish reductions to concentrate and make docile the Indian labour force of Paraguayan plantations and Peruvian mines. The forcible transition to neoliberal regimes in South America

(especially Chile and Argentina) in the 1970s might also serve as an example of the use of armed power – here the military *as* police – to bring about the ‘freeing’ of labour and the freedom to accumulate, by the violent destruction of political opposition, trade unions and intellectual dissidence. The Chilean military’s notion of ‘security’ here anticipates the central concept of the present global regime, which thus appears as one more avatar of the idea of peace as pacification: the docility implied in the current ideal of safety indicates the essentially political nature of the configuration of violence and its absence, where demobilization (or elimination) of counter-systemic forces is as much an aim as the secure reproduction of the regime of accumulation.

Neocleous develops this account well and expands his previous work on the ‘fabrication of social order’ where his Foucauldian perspective on police power revealed its productive rather than simply prohibitive aspect. Now the optic on the deployment of inter- and intra-state armed power reveals military power as also productive, remedying Foucault’s failure to integrate war into his view of positive power. En route, Neocleous also criticizes the ego ideal that underpins liberalism’s self-account as peaceful, free exchange. In his discussion of the martial ethic and psychology of the Scottish Enlightenment thinker Adam Ferguson, he points out that the warrior virtues associated with hard masculinity were limned as basic desiderata for proper, that is economically and politically cultivated, subjects, and that threats to this became a police matter – that is, a matter of constructive intervention (and here we might recall the ways in which dissident masculinities were policed in Britain until recently, and continue to be so across large swathes of the planet).

The investigation of the psychological dimension of security provides the book’s sombre coda. Taking a critical stance towards the notion of ‘trauma’ and its hegemonic use to temporalize conflict and its consequences, Neocleous shows how the political dimensions of damage and loss are reduced to individual psychic injury and its management. The insecurities induced by permanent accumulation and permanent warfare are ordered and disavowed by the pursuit of an impossible future safety, in which, after Derrida, past trauma is precisely a preparation for trauma to come, and the measures for its avoidance are the elimination of any possibility of a different order than the repetition of the present. Insecurity is countered by resilience, a mode of preparedness and endurance that brings together ‘the fabrication of liberal

subjectivity and its martial defence’. The temporal displacement of trauma becomes a preparation for war, and war a means to generalize police power in the pursuit of capital accumulation, in which ‘capital changes, capital grows, capital wins’, as the stark last line of the book intones.

There is much here that is impressive, not least the extraordinary volume of texts that are used to support the book’s arguments, though one might have wished for a bibliography to help map the copious notes. There is also the novel discussion of air power and the history of its various understandings and justifications. The inclusion of Spain and its empire in the history of capitalism is also praiseworthy, reflecting a general shift to provincialize the Anglo-Saxon ‘take-off’, which can be seen in the work of young historians like Orlando Bentrancor and Elvira Vilches that build on Marx’s own work.

If there is a problem with the grand narrative that sweeps from Suárez to Obama it is the incipient (and teleological) functionalism that threatens to occlude the contradictions and disjunctures of political, military and economic power. The subtension of armed force to the (re)production of a single economic form needs much more explanation than is given here, not least to show how the competition between capitals and their host states is managed, without destructive war (or is there a crypto-Schumpeterian moment to the analysis?). The deployment of police and military power in other contexts – one thinks of the making of the post-revolutionary order in the Soviet Union, the plunder state of Nazi Germany or the postwar transformation of Eastern Europe – receives no attention, and the possibility of armed power taking on its own logic and ends, which was part of the Cold War conjuncture, is not considered. Neocleous might also have addressed the rise of the new ‘war machines’ emerging under the Islamist banner, whose potential to wreck ordered accumulation as well as to offer an alternative (however grotesque) to capitalist modernity becomes increasingly obvious: in their very ‘madness’ they perhaps instance another principle of collective organization. Without endorsing Michael Mann’s Weberian and almost ontological separation of social powers, Neocleous could usefully have examined their more differential and complex relative autonomy and articulation. That said, *War Power, Police Power* is a salutary intervention into thinking the nature of armed power and violence and their ubiquity in our brave new world.

Philip Derbyshire

Refuseniks

Leela Gandhi, *The Common Cause: Postcolonial Ethics and the Practice of Democracy, 1900–1955*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2014. xi + 240 pp., £52.50 hb., £17.50 pb., 978 0 22601 987 1 hb., 978 0 22601 990 1 pb.

The female versions of the Pakistani *shalwar kameez* and Indian *salwar kameez* are basically the same, but they can easily be distinguished from each other by their cut. One tends to wear the garment that fits one's 'identity', but why should a woman be limited in the sensuous choice of what she wears next to her skin when tailoring on both sides of the border is so superb? Can her desire not cross that very closed border in search of sumptuous colours, delicate fabrics and beautiful decorative details, stitched with such painstaking care?

This example is not actually taken from Leela Gandhi's *The Common Cause*, but it evokes the sort of area she wants to explore: a certain poetry in the ordinary and solidarity with the humble, opposed here to an elitist striving for a transcendental ideal, which could be the basis for a more genuine democracy than what is currently on offer. Broadly sticking to the period from the British Khaki election of 1900 to the Bandung Conference of 1955, and moving back and forth between the West, mainly Britain and France, and India, Gandhi brings together an enormous variety of refusenik discourses, including collective social protests or bonding across divisions, types of spiritual *sadhana* or *askesis*, anti-capitalist, anti-colonial and post-colonial thought and the work of a number of well-known philosophers, sometimes approached in uncanonical ways. Her individual chapters are collages of an extremely diverse range of intellectual, cultural, theoretical and social historical material but are always shaped in a compelling and imaginatively argued way. She discusses many figures who are known but either half-forgotten or not read enough, giving exhaustive references for them in her footnotes: her book is very thoroughly researched indeed.

Gandhi starts with an analysis of those elitist, transcendental attitudes, for which the rest of *The Common Cause* attempts to provide an antidote. She sees these attitudes as informing both the more brutal, exploitative and racist New Imperialism that emerged in the late nineteenth century, which had obvious affinities with fascism, and the kind of New Liberalism that led to welfarism, where reformers were not necessarily anti-imperialist, often only

favouring the 'deserving poor', and seeing the rest as feckless or benighted. There is a shared objective of idealist moral perfectionism in both movements, even if New Imperialism was more overtly and aggressively individualistic, and New Liberalism, in appearance at least, more about collective social advancement (although, as Gandhi points out, the latter still required suitably aspirational 'bourgeois' values on the part of the lower classes). This affinity between mainstream right and left is still alive today and is clearly one of the root causes of current voter disaffection in democracies, and Gandhi is perfectly aware of these modern parallels.

The Common Cause tracks two radical left responses to the charge of fecklessness levelled at the poor: either a wholesale puritanical rejection of possession, associated with the revolutionary violence epitomized by Sorel, which she calls *phusikaphobia*, or a subtle revalorization of it, bound up with self-surrender and relationality, best articulated by R.H. Tawney, to which she gives the name *philophusikia*. This contrast is, again, still very much alive today, and its complexities could be explored in much more detail, but Gandhi chooses to focus on the *phusika-philic* approach throughout the rest of her book.

Two of the most beautiful moments in the book describe sweetly subversive episodes of collective disorder: the sudden joyous emergence of striking female factory workers dressed in their best Sunday finery in the streets of Bermondsey in the summer of 1911 (chapter 1), and earnest discussions between members of the court and defendants about the decline in the quality of *ghee* during the Royal Indian Naval Mutiny trial (chapter 4). In chapter 3, Gandhi examines a different transformation in social hierarchy in the letters of north and west Indian soldiers fighting on the Western Front in the First World War: they saw their sacrifice and the generosity of the French civilians and British nurses as being reciprocal virtues suited to the capabilities of each side. Relationships between intellectual figures, such as Rolland and Freud or Western disciples and their Indian gurus, are explored, and the private lives of philosophers, including Husserl and Kant, are used to reorientate how one should think about their work. This means

the intellectual in Gandhi is always grounded in actual social movements and Derridean philosophical friendships. Complex chapters on anti- and post-colonial thought and on ethical/political inconsequentialism and counterpublics develop out of the First World War and Royal Indian Naval Mutiny material.

The Common Cause offers extended discussions of specific philosophers, including Sri Aurobindo (chapter 2), Husserl (chapter 3) and Kant (chapter 4), as well as considerations of three modern Indian gurus, including Mahatma Gandhi. Sri Aurobindo is presented as a democratizing opponent of elitist Aryan racial theories, while the tensions between postwar Oxford philosophy and the subtle fascism of Leavisite Cambridge English are explored – although Gandhi does not notice that both the ‘Aryans’ and Leavisites often saw themselves as ‘little people’ reacting against a privileged cosmopolitan elite. There is little question that Sri Aurobindo is a considerable thinker, whose work could be much better known as pure philosophy in the West, but his deconstruction of the simplistic transcendental idealist interpretation of the Vedas also has precise parallels in the more intuitive or politically engaged *sadhana* (spiritual practice) of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Ramana and M.K. Gandhi, where the ascent to the divine is always connected with a redescend to the humble. There is a distinctly subversive quality to these four figures, which is why Leela Gandhi is able to link them with a whole series of pacifist, gay or civil rights movements in the West. She might, however, have made more of the anti-transcendental Vaisnava tradition in Indian devotion and thought, which gave rise to Sikhism, for example, where one gains connection with God by the practice of *naamsimran* (remembrance of the Name) but continues to be fully engaged in an altruistic secular life, only achieving *moksa* (liberation) at one’s death. It is important to mention that there is a great deal of technical complexity in Vaisnava philosophical and devotional material. In a different vein, *The Common Cause*’s account of ordinary-language philosophy as democratic, because of the way it seeks the meaningful in the everyday and is open to excess of verification and possibility, is well-argued and convincing, but Gandhi does not deal with Derrida’s critique of Austin: that there are unresolved metaphysical assumptions in ordinary-language philosophy which it tends to fudge rather than tackle head-on.

Husserlian intersubjectivity, constituted by the twin but asymmetric poles of reduction or *epoché* and intention or *Einfühlung*, is used by Gandhi to

bridge the gap between colonizer and colonized in the anti- and post-colonial literature. This comes at the end of a chapter that starts with the slightly Gunga Din moment of reciprocal virtues on the Western Front. The use of Husserl is perceptive, in so far as he is indeed the ultimate source of one major strand in post-colonial theory, but the framework he provides needs to be filled out with much more technical detail regarding the relationship of self to itself and to the other, drawn from the very thinkers Gandhi cites in an *en passant* way in the course of her chapter, such as Césaire, Memmi, Sartre, Levinas and Derrida. One can indeed combine Edmund Wilson and Edward Said in the rehabilitation of Kipling, but the mix really needs to be much more gritty and employ something like Deleuzian disjunctive synthesis to work. In what could be the richest chapter in *The Common Cause*, Kantian ethics are seen via the perspective of his celibate, possibly gay and dandyish lifestyle, and related to an excellent account of the history of the recruitment and mutinies of the Indian *sipahi*, aspects of queer theory and work on counterpublics and a concept of ethical/political inconsequentialism that opposes symbolic celibacy and non-generative lack of productivity to a reductive insistence on temporality, causality and procreation. Here the problem is that Gandhi tends to emphasize the lifestyle argument over the philosophic one: this means that one loses the distinction between an individual lifestyle per se and the fact that it may have something in it that enriches anyone’s ethics or political action, whatever their lifestyle may be. This also means that there is a sense of a subculture resisting the mainstream rather than bringing an added dimension to it. The complex frivolity of the rococo might be a more fruitful way of looking at Kant and the ethics/politics of inconsequentialism: Derrida’s *The Archaeology of the Frivolous* would be of obvious importance here.

As intellectual history with real contemporary resonance, Leela Gandhi’s *The Common Cause* is the product of thorough research. It makes impressively wide-ranging connections in time and space. It makes excellent use of theory and a number of well-known philosophers. It is elegantly written and well constructed, and it communicates a generous vision which is sincere and passionate. Its main fault is that it tends to summarize thought very skilfully without actually pushing it on in a denser, tougher, more intensive way, but that is perhaps something one should ask of a different kind of book.

Nardina Kaur

Planning for the feast

Peter Hudis, *Marx's Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism*, Haymarket Books, Chicago, 2013. 272 pp., \$28.00 pb, 978 1 60846 275 9.

Given the often whimsical schemes of utopians like Fourier, whose 'foretaste' of socialism includes detailed menus and eating arrangements, it is understandable why Marx refuses to 'write recipes for the cook-shops of the future'. Nevertheless, while the ebb of liberal triumphalism revitalizes Marx's extensive critique of capitalism, it would appear that the comparatively little he says about socialism cannot satisfy the renewed hunger for societal alternatives. Peter Hudis disagrees. In an exegesis of the entire corpus, Hudis shows that Marx has a robust and remarkably consistent concept of socialist society. Furthermore, by applying Marx's critiques of utopian socialism to the socialist experiments of the twentieth century, Hudis also offers insights for an alternative to those regimes that failed to differentiate themselves sufficiently from capitalism.

Hudis emphasizes the distinction between capital and the variety of its personifications, who, like everyone else, remain under its control. It is not from the barbarity of the boss, the bourgeois or the bureaucrat that we expect to lose our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves not to their inhumanity but to their self-preservation. For Hudis, the key aspects of capital are that to which it is necessarily related, abstract labour, and that to which they both give rise, value-production. As was the case with 'actually existing socialism', any future attempt to forge an alternative society by abolishing money, the commodity market and private property, but not abstract labour and value, can only reconstitute capital in a different guise.

In every form of society, labour produces material wealth, but abstract labour and value are unique to capitalism. Under value-production, neither the variety of social needs nor the requirements of production are decided upon and coordinated *pre-festum* or 'before the fact', prior to production. Independent acts of labour only gain a social character indirectly, through exchange. As a result, the variety of qualitatively distinct concrete labours and use-values are translated into quantitatively comparable units of abstract labour and exchange-value. Nevertheless, this formal equality abstracts from their real inequality. The measure of value is not the actual

labour-time of each concrete act of labour, but the socially necessary labour-time required to produce different commodities at any given moment. The comparative exchange-value of a commodity, and therefore the relative productivity of the labour that produced it, are determined after the production process. To the extent that an act of concrete labour takes longer than this social average, it produces no value and cannot recoup the costs of production. This causes the imperative to produce at or below the social average, and thus the constant increase of productivity. Labour is not remunerated according to its specific duration and intensity, much less its broader societal importance, but according to an uncontrollable pricing mechanism.

We might ask, why does this matter? Even when a worker is paid the full value for labour that corresponds to average productivity, a portion of this labour is still appropriated without compensation by capitalists. In an account of Marx's critique of workers' co-operatives, Hudis shows the priority of value-production over the specific relation of exploitation. Even if co-operatives remove their internal antagonism with capitalists, they are still mediated by commodity exchange. What is produced, how much, and how fast is still dictated by the constantly increasing average productivity. In Marx's words, workers must 'valorize their own labour', 'become their own capitalist', and in effect exploit themselves. Far from posing a genuine alternative, production conditions remain a form of the capital-relation that escapes their control. The demand for and distribution of products are still determined after the production process, *post-festum* in the feast where few are fed.

Syndicalist control over the workplace is not sufficient for effective control over the conditions of production, but neither is the centralized political control of production according to an economic plan. Here, too, Marx's critiques of the utopian socialists are illustrative. For Proudhon and Darimon, social inequality arises because the abstract and indirect character of money allows capitalists to pay workers below their value, for less than their actual labour-time. They propose a national bank to replace money with labour-vouchers that represent the full value of actual labour-time. In his account of Marx's response to these proposals, Hudis offers a lucid explanation of value theory. Each commodity has a value, but this only becomes apparent in its quantitative relation to other commodities. Since value must first appear as exchange-value, they are frequently and mistakenly

conflated. To be quantitatively comparable, however, commodities must be qualitatively identical. This, the substance of value, is abstract labour. Marx surpasses both classical political economy and utopian socialism by discovering that the commodities are commensurable because the *kind* of labour that produces them is also reified and quantifiable. Due to the deceptive character of value, what we often take to be a transformation of production relations is only an alteration of exchange relations. This changes the quantitative determination of values, but not its qualitative determination, abstract labour. Marx contends that value must diverge from price, not because value is real and money is abstract, but because value is itself an abstraction that can only be determined by the constantly shifting social average. Even if the labour-voucher attempts to represent actual labour-time, it will always be discordant with the values of products. Hudis asserts:

Ironically, what Marx here subjects to critique is a striking anticipation of what passed for ‘Marxism’ in many ‘socialist’ and ‘communist’ regimes of the twentieth century. Such regimes eliminated private property and the ‘free market’ by bringing the process of distribution and circulation under the control of the state. But they did little or nothing to transform *production*-relations. Concrete labour was still reduced to a monotonous, routinized activity through the dominance of abstract labour. Abstract labour continued to serve as the substance of value.

The Soviet and Maoist economic plans failed to overcome the necessary discrepancy between the *nominal* and *real* value of commodities because the abolition of money, the commodity market and private property cannot put an end to the way in which the law of value mediates between production and consumption. Whereas market capitalism is often beset by ‘a surplus of products that cannot be consumed’, in market socialism ‘there is a shortage of products that cannot be produced’, hence the widespread emergence of black markets. This is the continuing relevance of Marx’s critiques of socialists who advocate for ‘capital without the capitalists’. Capital need not be embodied by independent capitalists and private corporations in an open market. It can also take the form of isolated co-operatives forced to exploit themselves, or of bureaucratic functionaries in state-controlled production. Compared to value production, it is of secondary importance whether surplus value is appropriated by corporations or co-operatives, in the market or by the state. This

is why the *substantive* transformation of production relations must put an end to abstract labour, value production and the separation between production and consumption, whether it is the *pre-festum* breadlines of actually existing socialism or the *post-festum* soup kitchens of actually existing capitalism.



Producers only have *effective* control over production when it is directly social from the outset, when the variety of social needs and the appropriate distribution of labour-time over the various branches of production are determined through democratic deliberation *before* production begins. In the lower phase of socialism, the measure of our share in the collective labour, and thus the extent of our compensation, is not socially necessary labour-time, but actual labour-time. This includes socially useful kinds of labour that, under capitalism, are devalued and uncompensated, such as women’s domestic labour. When producers receive the equivalent of their contribution, there is no longer an imperative to produce according to an abstract social average. Consequently, production is reconciled with consumption, concrete labour is no longer subordinate to abstract labour, and value production comes to an end. Why, then, does Marx say, ‘Labour, to serve as measure, must be defined by its duration or intensity?’ If workers are compensated according to the quantity of product per unit of time, is this much different from socially necessary labour-time? It depends on

what Marx means by ‘intensity’. Hudis contends that compensation will not be determined by the quantitative output of products, but the qualitative output of *energy*. For example, the preparation of a meal will not be as well compensated as the additional effort required to prepare the same amount of food for people with strict and varying dietary restrictions. Labour-time becomes a variable standard corresponding to the particular needs of unique people within specific situations. Nevertheless, the first phase of socialism is still somewhat abstract because producers are remunerated according to ability, irrespective of their different needs: ‘It is not as if one’s needs are met only to the extent that they correspond to the expression of a given set of abilities. If such a principle prevailed, human relations would still be governed by natural necessity and external expediency.’ The higher phase of socialism no longer demands the exchange of equivalents according to some measure of labour-time. Compensation is based on need, irrespective of ability. Only then does there emerge the true realm of freedom.

Marx’s Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism is significant because of what he helps to put back on the menu. This is not our last meal at the end of history. We need not wash down the bitter pill of neoliberal austerity with a rancid glass of capitalist realism. There is an alternative.

Paul Christopher Gray

More than one

Michael Halewood, *A.N. Whitehead and Social Theory: Tracing a Culture of Thought*, Anthem Press, London, New York and Delhi, 2013. 188 pp., £20.00 pb., 987 1 78308 069 4.

Gilles Deleuze describes Whitehead’s *Process and Reality* as ‘one of the greatest books of modern philosophy’, because it opposes categories with notions that are ‘really open ... empirical and pluralist’ – “‘existential” as against essential, percepts as against concepts’. Central to Whitehead’s importance is his critique of abstraction as a dominant culture of thought in modernity. This is not an attack on abstraction per se, but rather on a particular way of doing abstraction in our times. He notes, for example, that the formal, detached structures often associated with writing have tended to close down thinking as they suggest that topics are given rather than

evolving and relational to context. Whitehead’s take on abstraction, by contrast, is that our discursive practices should not attempt to *capture* the essence of an entity but rather have the character of the gestural, metaphorical or suggestive, so as to act as a lure or adumbration for a topic, rather than being the last word. There is an overlap between the symbolic and the physical in that language is shaped by its topic as much as the topic is shaped by language.

In his new book, Michael Halewood takes up Whitehead’s argument in relation to Butler’s well-known account of the body as produced by naming practices. However, Butler neglects the fact that to point to or describe something is already to have one’s pointing, and so on, shaped by the thing in the process of description. This leads us to the major implication of Whitehead’s critique of abstraction: that modern cultures of thought have separated out the intellect from the natural. Nature (the world) is perceived as separate and something to be captured by science or industry. Such ‘bifurcation of nature’ instigates all kinds of difficulties, both intellectual and real, and eventuates in a ‘false concreteness’ in interrelations between human beings and between human beings and the natural world. Through this reification, as Halewood argues, the mediations or processes of interrelation are suppressed. One particularly prominent case of this, which the book discusses in detail, is the suppression of the mediation of sexuality. First, via modern abstractions, individuals are sutured onto the social as autonomous agents (as per the influential agency–structure dualism in sociological thinking). Second, sexual categories are identified with individuals such that the categories are seen as a natural part of the individual. In this way individuals come to be seen as types rather than intersections of different vectors or influences, which is how Whitehead pictures subjectivity. Consequently, deviation against type becomes deviation against nature.

Halewood notes that Whitehead’s methodology presents a radical challenge to this sort of thinking, to the extent that there is no separation (autonomy) between the individual and the social or natural. Instead, they are intertwined categories whose elements are mutually constitutive of all entities. This finds an echo in, for example, Derridean deconstruction, which has similarly pointed to the way the cultural and the natural, once posited as opposites, actually leak into each other. In a different vein, both Beauvoir and Irigaray have shown the ambiguities of ‘sex’ in this regard. Beauvoir famously noted that one is not born a woman but becomes one, while

Irigaray's *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* makes the point that sex is in reality a hybrid construct, a multiplicity or 'sexuate' being, a subjectivity distributed across individuals rather than confined within them.

More generally, Halewood argues that the distributed nature of subjectivity is configured through the individual-social-material complex. Whitehead's approach here was to argue that such complexes only exist *as apprehended* – that is, as experiences, feelings or 'prehensions'. However, an entity's prehension modifies whatever complex of vectors or subjectivity previously existed there, so it only makes sense to talk of entities as part of experience – that is, as subjectivities rather than noumenal 'in-themselves'. Further, because experience is distributed across the material and social, for Whitehead we cannot see it as purely subjective or interior to the individual. It only has pure interiority for the individual in its moment of formation, but this moment is also that of (public) interrelationship, given that entities are only produced by a confluence of different prehensions to form stable unities. It follows from this that not only is there no pure detached objectivity, but also, as noted, that experience takes on an objective dimension. Feelings, reactions, and so on, can be attributed to what we take to be material objects because they are always elements of wider social/individual complexes. We can speak of a fabric as having a certain feeling, so highlighting the intertwined subjective and objective components of feelings. This makes sense in terms of the way experience is mediated by the body (as self-experience) and also in other material forms including 'the media'.

The failure of hybrid entities such as is found in the break-up of complex social worlds can then be seen as the failure of experience to be articulated. This is a general point about the way the world works according to Whitehead's metaphysics, and we can see here the influence of Bergson's creative evolutionism with its emphasis on attraction/repulsion between entities as providing the dynamic behind development. (Bourdieu's notion of hysteresis – the point at which a project reaches a dead end, meaning is transgressed – and Merleau-Ponty's cognate idea of reaching the point of non-sense could both be seen as ways of translating Whitehead's metaphysics into social theory here.) Within modern capitalism, however, there is an ongoing crisis of subjectivity, as abstractions bifurcate us, creating self-identical subjects through a series of dualities which lead to hybridity being experienced in the form of self-alienation. As Halewood suggests, our social worlds

are dogged by abstraction in the form of reification/fragmentation. As such, we are always battling against its threatened displacement of the concrete, lived world and the failure of meaning.

Halewood's discussion uses the work of Irigaray to illustrate this condition. Irigaray emphasizes that the 'time of life' has become a 'socio-logical temporality' and that this is founded on the doubleness of 'man', which has caused him 'to lose his relation to the living world'. The subjectivities thus produced oscillate between the true and the false as life is experienced via both abstraction and concrete existence. Whitehead's response to this bifurcation is a notion of duality as a contrast between unity and multiplicity – things seen both as a synthesis and as the diversity that this comprises. Importantly here, unlike the modern world of abstraction, there is no subsumption but rather a dynamic tension between these two moments of the processual. So, as indicated above, for Whitehead abstraction is performative, linked to context of action, and indicating a direction of travel rather than a timeless essence of 'man', 'woman', 'labour', and so on.

Halewood concludes with a discussion of 'real abstraction', where it is argued that Whitehead's alternative model might serve a critical function in the context of modern capitalism. As with Whitehead, Marx's account of abstraction is both as an intellectual and as a material process; that is, the interiority of the individual and the externality of modernity are linked. Both identify a false concreteness that gives an oversubstantial tenor to the structures of the modern world. The subject-predicate relationship, for example, suggests that there is first an underlying substance which is then predicated, thus creating a 'bifurcation of nature'. By contrast, Whitehead's own view is that it is the confluence of predicating functions, actualizing tendencies, which gives permanence or 'substance' to an entity. This parallels Marx's notion of the fetishistic displacement of relationships in the valorization process. Both, as Halewood argues, are examples of 'false concreteness' produced by processes of abstraction.

Here things become more problematic, if also maybe more productive, as Halewood argues for an understanding of the relationship between the modern state and capital as, in effect, mutually constitutive, as opposed to the traditional Marxist view that the economy is the 'real foundation'. The legal-rational bureaucracy co-produces capitalism; just as money capital acts via abstraction to give equivalence to disparate concrete resources as commodities, we

can perhaps argue that the state acts to render equivalent concrete individuals as citizens, or, again, that formal institutions render human bodies equivalent as 'women' and 'men', via, say, disciplinary practices.

Halewood sees Marx's treatment of abstraction in the *Grundrisse* as homologous to Whitehead's multiplicity-unity relation. In Marx's methodology, abstractions are taken as aspects of a concrete totality: they are always situated by a context of concrete determinations and hence the abstraction is viewed from a particular point of view, that of the concrete determinations which situate it. 'Population' makes sense in relation to class, labour power, and so on. The multiplicity of population therefore exceeds any attempt at exhaustive definition. It exists in relation to a unity rather than being subsumed within it. This understanding of Marx's approach to abstraction subverts the substantialist view of capitalism as a pre-constituted reality: capital only exists as a process of self-actualization rather than as a freewheeling subject which then itself acts on external others. We should see ourselves inter alia as actors or part subjects in its ongoing constitution.

However, Halewood's view of constitution as 'mutual constitution' or interrelation of elements generates a tension with Whitehead's grasp of abstraction because mutual constitution tends to suggest a lack of centres or foci of determination which stymies any attempt at causal prioritization, whereas Marx's or Whitehead's conception of a subject as containing a concentration of determinations veers towards a sense of structural causality where one element or subject is provisionally overdetermined by the rest as a kind of 'structure in dominance'. Significantly, there is such an implication of structural or 'final' causality in, for example, Whitehead's treatment of evolution where entities form as 'concrecences' of subjectival vectors which have their own logic of development and completion/dissolution into other concrecences. Bergson, whose creative evolutionism, as Isabelle Stengers has noted, is clearly an influence, does not, however, appear in Halewood's text. Nonetheless, *A.N. Whitehead and Social Theory* remains a highly suggestive resource for social theorizing. As with Whitehead's own abstraction, its multiplicity is certainly a unity which is 'more than one'.

Howard Feather

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