

opposition to all the other terms', Saussure, p88), there is 'an incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier' (Lacan, p154). However, Saussure distinguishes the syntagmatic axis of language from the paradigmatic or associative. Syntagmatic is the linear dimension of language most apparent in the sentence, the 'horizontal' chain in which meaning is sequentially differentiated so that 'I like Ike' means something different from 'I like honey' or 'I like Benn'; paradigmatic is the 'vertical' dimension of possible substitutions and associations dependent on a term in the syntagmatic chain (instead of 'like' there are 'hate'/'smite'/'fight' and 'dislike'/'will like'/'liked'/'have liked' and 'strike'/'bike'/'tike' etc etc). Meaning inheres in the syntagmatic chain ('it is in the chain of the signifier that meaning "insists"', Lacan, p153) but only becomes intended there as meaning through exclusion of the paradigmatic associations. The coherence of the subject, its ability to intend meaning, is constituted along the syntagmatic chain as a 'single voice' sustaining meaning and so itself sustained in this 'linearity' (p154 again). The Freudian ego is developed as a split in the subject, Cs/Uos: the Lacanian ego is developed as this split between meaning intended in the syntagmatic chain and the whole resonating mass of associated and associating signifiers which are excluded for meaning to take place in and for the subject. The whole difficulty of trying to say this is that our language and culture would commit us to description either of an objective and subjectless process (it happens this way - abstract nouns and passive verbs) or how people originate meanings (we do this - personal pronouns and active verbs). For Lacan as for Caudwell 'object and subject ... come into being simultaneous' and the attempt to force this on our language accounts for some seemingly baroque circumlocutions.

Language Entry. In Beyond the Pleasure Principle Freud describes a child (his grandson) who at 18 months repeats the game of lost and found with a cotton reel, each time saying 'fort' ('gone') and 'da' ('there'). Freud interprets the repetition as the child mastering the absence of his mother by speak-

ing of it. Lacan persistently comes back to this, the Fort/Da game, as exemplum of language entry. It is not that the absence, the meaning 'mummy gone', was always there for the child who suddenly recognises it (and who was there to recognise it); it is rather that entering language the infant enters a presence/absence system in which the lack of the mother is brought into being as such - 'the child's whole universe is divided whereas previously it was wholly and without mediation, satiety or void' (see Coward and Ellis, p96). On the one hand absence because signifiers relate only to each other in a system of differences with no 'positive' content (the 'O' of fort and the 'A' of da define each other as opposing phonemes); on the other hand presence since meaning 'insists' in the syntagmatic chain, is the coherent progression from 'fort' ('gone!') to 'da' ('there!'). Language brings into being for the subject a gap, a ditch on the frontier of its domain, which it tries to fill with the kind of meaning language also makes possible.

None of this is so far away from our common or garden experience of how babies grow. For example Spock (Baby and Child Care, para 348) describes how a 3 month old who smiles at everyone becomes a 5 month old who cries when a stranger approaches. He adds, not surprisingly, 'Probably the main cause of this behavior is that he is now smart enough to distinguish between friend and stranger'. As the distinction between friend and stranger, mummy and not mummy, opens up for the infant, so it enters language; and vice versa.

For Lacan the consciousness of the subject depends upon its being (in language) and cannot exist apart from this. This is, at the least, not incompatible with historical materialism and contrary to Reé gives Lacan an interest and importance well beyond the clinical.



REVIEWS

BAHRO'S ALTERNATIVE

Rudolph Bahro, The Alternative in Eastern Europe, New Left Books, 1978, £9.50 hc

Bahro's book is the most significant normative work yet to emerge from the experience of post-1945 Eastern Europe. It is, in addition, probably the most important Marxist discussion in decades of the relation of the ultimate goals of socialism to the interlocking hierarchies of scientific knowledge, political power, and economic advantage which dominate what Bahro calls 'actually existing socialism'. The Alternative is also a book which, by the very breadth of its enquiry, necessarily contains a number of contradictions and inadequacies. As it has been fairly widely reviewed, I will

try to concentrate on those areas which have not been the subject of much attention elsewhere.

What does merit reiteration, however, is that Bahro's critique of Soviet-style socialism is written from the inside of the system, with a view to rendering it more Marxist rather than simply less authoritarian. Bahro's education in philosophy, and experience as a party member, economist, journalist, and trade-union functionary in East Germany have given him a much richer perspective than that often found in dissenting criticism. Though he now resides in exile in West Germany, following his recent release from prison, Bahro's writing was done over a period of four years while he was still an employee of the state, and he is

proud to emphasise that he never lost an hour of work while leading this double life.

Such difficulties help to explain some of the unevenness of his analysis. A third of the book dwells upon the evolution of Soviet society, with Bahro rather deterministically applying the oft-abused 'Asiatic Mode of Production' to account for the history of Stalinism. Much of this analysis has already been seen many years of active service, often in the hands of more capable historical scholars. Bahro's use of it does, however, indicate the revival of a more open and specifically socialist debate in this area, since references to such examples as Lenin's 1907 warning of a possible 'Asiatic restoration' in post-revolutionary Russia have mainly provided fuel for anti-Marxists like Karl Wittfogel, especially after the 'Asiatic Mode' was officially banned in 1931.

Historical interpretation is thus not the most original and suggestive aspect of The Alternative. Its principal concern is to conjecture upon the forms of socialist organisation most likely to realise Marx's ideal, 'the total emancipation of man', where the decline of the state as a repressive institution and the abolition of the traditional division of labour remain for Bahro prerequisites for the 'all-rounded development' of individuals. These phrases have often remained ideological platitudes among socialists, when indeed they have been mentioned at all. Their definitions are obscure and undeveloped, largely as a result of the orthodox view that they are essentially the product of an immature utopian preconception, later superseded by 'scientific socialism'.

Given the prominence of this interpretation, Bahro's extensive development of Marx's visionary side is, I think, potentially of great importance to modern socialism. If Marx and Engels are often believed to have (in Lenin's words) 'substituted science for dreams', Bahro construes this as being in many ways a dichotomy which is both false and dishonest. He thus goes a long way towards restoring a vital intellectual component to an ideology whose image of the future - however vague - has always been a profound aspect of its appeal, and ought to be a test of its authenticity.

The first stage of this process is a criticism of Marx's early emphasis upon property relations as the central characteristic distinguishing capitalism from socialism. For a number of reasons, Marx assumed that the relation of capital to labour constituted the most extreme form of alienation, and hence that the abolition of private property would lead to the 'complete restoration of man to himself as a social, i.e. human, being' (EPMS). Starting from the general account given in The German Ideology, Bahro suggests that the concept of alienation has only a fairly limited practical utility when seen as the result of commodity fetishism, and that the division of labour engenders a far greater proportion of human domination than does private property per se, i.e. in the oppression of women, the subordination of country to town, and most importantly, the exploitation of manual by mental labour.

Here the real importance of the 'Asiatic Mode' debate to contemporary analysis becomes evident: where property is nominally owned in common, social power results from an ability to command labour-power and the disposition of its products. In such a system the degree to which wealth is private is of only secondary importance when com-

pared to the deprivation or advantages which accrue to anyone simply by virtue of their position in the labour process.

For Bahro this has important consequences, and is not a shift in textual emphasis, but an attempt to restructure the central categories of the socialist critique of exploitation. Social inequality is 'anchored in the division of labour, in the structures of technology and cooperation themselves' (Bahro's emphasis), and is predominantly a political rather than an economic relation. This view makes any simplistic reduction of human problems to the inadequate level of technological development inconceivable. The real achievement of The Alternative lies in its elaboration of this political problem in terms of certain psychological and epistemological aspects of the division of labour, the discussion of which goes far beyond, for instance, the work of Sohn-Rethel on the subject.

Paternalism and specialisation, Bahro argues, have underdeveloped the motivation to learn among the less privileged, while ensuring the monopolisation of the most creative tasks by certain groups. Consciousness of self, a sense of personal independence and competence for intellectual judgment, and the extension of these in 'universal individuality' can only be a function for each of 'active access to the totality of the community' (146). This is in the first instance contingent upon the free flow of comprehensible information, but in a bureaucratic regime secrecy and the general treatment of knowledge as a restricted commodity help ensure that popular credulity continues, and hence that authority remains unchallenged. Thus political domination is masked by the apparent personal superiority of 'the bosses', but access to the resources of knowledge constitutes the true inner foundation of the maintenance of power.

In this hierarchy, intellectual exclusivity perpetually reproduces an anxious sense of inferiority among manual workers, and the bureaucracy always creates in its members 'a specific human type of conservative mediocrity' (224). To describe this process Bahro introduces his central concept, subalternity (Subalternität), the 'form of existence and mode of thought of "little people"' (271). Social decisions are taken by 'sages' and merely carried out by 'subalterns', and the status of the latter as subordinate objects directed by others results in the creation of a mass subaltern complex. Individuality meets its greatest enemy in this denial of a right to partake in self-direction. Here Bahro most clearly spells out the political origins of much psychic disorder. Not only is subalternity the most vital form of alienation. Any serious sociology of knowledge becomes thereby a pathology of collective neurosis.

Nor is this all. Bahro also suggests that all those who feel permanently and systematically powerless (including many office workers and skilled specialists) displace their personal feeling of insufficiency through an enhanced desire for material goods ('compensatory consumption'). Since dwindling resources indicate that this growth-and-accumulation complex cannot last, 'the overcoming of subalternity on a mass scale is the only possible alternative to the limitless expansion of material needs' (271, Bahro's emphasis).

Bahro's alternative is thus based upon an unusually strong argument for the necessity of a

complete social revolution directed in particular at the traditional division of labour, and grounded in a perspective which is derived from neither a resurgent Enlightenment view of human nature (as simply desirable) nor an estimation of the collapse of capitalism, but from the manifest possibility of environmental catastrophe. As a primary means of combatting this Bahro argues for a reinterpretation of the idea of progress, with an emphasis upon the socio-economic destructiveness of the hierarchy of knowledge and power. Universal intellectual training must become both the goal and precondition of a new theory of needs, in order to allow cultural experience to preponderate over lower forms of self-expression. To communicate as equals - a crucial aspect of the general political problem - everyone must be raised to the highest level possible of scientific, technical, and artistic expertise. From this emerges 'the real possibility of access to all essential realms of activity' (273).

Most socialists would agree that these arrangements would probably offer the greatest amount of human fulfilment to the largest number of people. Precedents for Bahro's vision of a society of worker-philosopher-engineers have nonetheless often been caricatured as a 'levelution' or universalisation of ignorance, the reduction of all to the lowest common intellectual denominator. The virtual inevitability of some form of despotism is another charge often made against these ideas. To refute these criticisms is for Bahro one of the key tasks of modern socialism. There are however many difficulties in his own approach to these questions, some of which seem to me quite serious.

He seems to argue, firstly, for an uncomfortably close connection between the mental activities involved in natural science and engineering, and those required by 'universal labour', the evaluation of human needs and corresponding paths of social development. The shared element in both cases is the high degree of abstraction required, which allows Bahro to conclude that 'the engineer potentially stands far closer to "philosophy" than does the cook' (175). This is either tautological (since we must presume the engineer to be better educated than the cook), or is a surreptitious plea for the guiding hand of the technical intelligentsia, at least during the transition to a system of shared labour and equal education.

There is evidence elsewhere in The Alternative that Bahro's proposed agency of transformation is the 'new middle class', that the trade unions 'do not anticipate any new civilisation' (148-49). The question here is whether Bahro is simply smuggling in an epistemology to support this view, or whether much more is intended than this. I think that both are actually the case. Decisions are taken at the top of the intellectual hierarchy because those who concentrate their energy eight hours a day on activities that demand a relatively low level of mental coordination cannot see the whole or understand its complexity (176). In his analysis of the current formulation of these decisions, Bahro is entirely on the side of the engineers against the managers, who seem usually to be self-serving party members.

This situation seems to lead Bahro to conflate a necessary distinction between social and natural knowledge. Empirically there is a certain similarity in the calculations required, for instance, in the assembly of a computer, and those used in dividing the population into, say, income groups. This

technical element always exists in decisions which are basically concerned with values and social ends, but only on their administrative side, and not as part of the choice of values themselves. Most scientists and engineers are no more (and often less) qualified to decide upon the social desirability of their products than other groups in society. A revolution in concepts of need only becomes a purely technical problem when there no longer exist the means for fulfilling certain desires at all. As long as choices remain an education appropriate to making them is also required, and there is no plausible reason why a technical education in itself offers any ability to perceive the common good.

Hence 'universal labour' seems to include within it not only an idea of universal knowledge, but also one of general interest. In Bahro's view a capacity for philosophy seems to allow us to know the Good for all men, and this language is not inappropriate in that there seems to be something verging on Platonism in Bahro's formulations. Nor have the problems inherent in this view changed much since Plato, except that we are occasionally a little more cynical about the necessary association of virtue with knowledge.

What these comments point to, secondly, is that Bahro's problem is more political than epistemological. His political philosophy is the weakest part of The Alternative, and though this is equally true for almost the entire Marxist tradition, that is no reason for perpetuating it. Despite the frequent references to 'democracy', it is unclear as to how the 'general will' is formed, and how general and particular interests are to be reconciled. While Bahro's overall concern seems to be the gradual unification of political and civil society through the diffusion of responsibility, one of his specific proposals is the separation of the 'League of Communists' from the administrative bureaucracy, hence widening the distinction between politicians and technicians without elaborating upon the relations between the two groups.

This segregation is designed to help ensure the subjugation of the state apparatus to society, and to purify both the party and the government accordingly. Bahro bases this on his view that many present party members are torn between the inclinations of 'communist' and those of 'apparatchik'. This subjective dilemma would disappear if party membership meant only public service and not administrative advancement. A morally superior League would result, though not 'Leagues', since despite Bahro's emphasis upon decentralised responsibility he rejects the idea of a multiple party system as anachronistic. In simplistically equating party pluralism with the presence of 'antagonistic' social contradictions he just passes over a whole range of crucial problems which require much further discussion.

The gist of my criticisms here is that Bahro, like Marx and Engels, fails to confront the idea of a relatively autonomous socialist politics. This seems somewhat ironic given his separation of political from administrative functions, and his categorical politicisation of whole areas of activity (i. e. the division of labour) which are generally defined in a more narrowly economic sense. The existence and even desirability of factionalism in a socialist society is not given the attention by Bahro that it merits, with the result that the pursuit and exercise of power, the forms of representation or

delegation, and the relation of centralised authority to local bodies, are issues which The Alternative tends to ignore. And foremost among these is the nature, function, and controls upon the repressive arm of the state. Bahro ultimately remains stuck, I think, in the view in which politics disappears into the 'administration of things'. This is one of the least useful items in the 'old utopian' baggage which Marx and Engels took on board, and it contributes no more to Bahro's argument than it did to theirs.

Finally, I would like to comment briefly on Bahro's psychology, and his comments on the need for profound changes in the structure of production and consumption. It is difficult to be persuaded that, even if 'little people' would gain much self-esteem through the sharing of manual labour, the localisation of political power, and the gradual education of the entire population (for it certainly seems that they would), this would necessarily lead to a decline in demand for consumer goods of various kinds. Creative activity may provide its own rewards, but in practice these often complement, rather than preclude, specifically material consumption. Bahro's view here is the cornerstone of his normative argument. If it is fallacious much of the rest of his edifice will weaken accordingly.

The problem as I see it here is that Bahro is trying to operate with two definitions of progress simultaneously, one of which is virtually defunct, the other not yet invented. He writes that 'progress never consists principally in negating favourable conditions of development simply because these are privileges, but rather in generalizing them' (148). In another section he describes general emancipation as 'the appropriation of the totality of socially

produced productive forces by individuals' (254). He speaks of 'a genuine equalization in the distribution of those consumer goods that determine the standard of living' (401), but also of the absolute necessity for 'a system of quantitatively simple reproduction, or at most very slow and well thought out expanded reproduction, of men, tools and material goods' (265, Bahro's emphasis).

It seems fairly obvious that Bahro rejects as untenable the traditional anti-consumerist recourse to an ideology of ascetic self-renunciation. The real question, as he puts it, is 'to create the objective conditions so that everyone can prefer 'to know and to be, instead of to possess'' (281). It is of course desirable that this subjective choice be made freely and democratically, if this is possible. But it is precisely in terms of a revolution in values of this magnitude that Bahro seems to rely most upon his own chosen vanguard, as is perhaps almost inevitable. It is probably upon the resolution of this problem, however, that the success or failure of the human race will be decided, and Bahro's work is very definitely an essential step in the right direction.

None of these criticisms, in fact, detract from the enormous achievement of The Alternative. Bahro's psychology and theory of knowledge are very subtle, and there are many rich areas of his enquiry which I have not even touched on here. Bahro has come closer than anyone else alive to playing Luther to an increasingly ossified orthodoxy, and has written a book which will be read for a very long time to come.

Greg Claeys

DERRIDA'S DIFFERANCE

Jacques Derrida, Writing and Difference, translated, with introduction and notes, by Alan Bass, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979, £12.50 hc

I Jacques Derrida is a philosopher who produces extreme reactions. Not only in the English speaking world where the view of 'continental philosophy' is often refracted through the murky depths of ignorance, but also at the apparent centre of philosophical mystification, in Paris itself. Thus, on the one hand, we find Michel Foucault dismissing his work as 'an historically sufficiently determined little pedagogy'(1), while on the other the grand old man of French phenomenology, Emmanuel Levinas, gives serious consideration to the question, 'Does the work of Derrida divide the development of Western thought by a line of demarcation similar to the Kantianism which separates dogmatic from critical philosophy?'(2). My suspicion is that the published reviews of this new translation will reflect the extremity of these reactions; Derrida the boring pompous pedant or Derrida the most radical possible thinker. My aim in this review, in line with the spirit of the times, is to steer a middle course. To show the validity of both these reactions beyond the contingencies of English overreaction to 'Parisian fashions'. To coin a phrase, my conten-

tion will be that Derrida represents the highest point of a certain tradition in philosophy, but his work shows how little is achieved in reaching this summit. The review will be in two parts; the first will say something about the book and the best way of reading it, the second will be a sort of general introduction to Derrida as philosopher. While the latter has been tried a number of times before (see, for example, D.C. Wood's 'Introduction to Derrida' in RP21), it seems to me still the most necessary task at present. Without some idea of 'what Derrida is getting at' his work becomes extremely opaque and specific discussions of the individual figures who form the ostensible subject-matter of Writing and Difference would be of little help.

This book is the third major work by Derrida to appear in English. These three, Writing and Difference, Speech and Phenomena (Northwestern UP, 1973), and Of Grammatology (Johns Hopkins UP, 1976) together made up the initial moves in Derrida's campaign of philosophical action. All three were originally published in 1967 and can now be seen as marking the beginning of the end of 'structuralism'. Cross-channel delays are such that the beginnings of 'post-structuralism' are only now having any impact on English intellectuals (for example the work of Hindess and Hirst) so the appearance of this translation is fortuitously well-

timed. The translation itself is, on the whole, very accurate, although Alan Bass is afflicted by the (perhaps unavoidable) preciousness of Derrida's translators; lecturing us endlessly on the difficulties of capturing the full range of Derrida's use of words in another language, on etymology, on the wide range of 'hidden' references, and so on.

The book itself comprises eleven essays, written over a period of seven years and showing something of the development of Derrida's thought. He places the last five essays on a different level from the first six (in a later interview - Positions, Paris, Minuit, 1972, hereafter P, p12 -) within what he calls 'the grammatical opening'. For those who intend to tackle the book without further ado - and I certainly think that reading at least some of it is worthwhile - I would recommend starting with the tenth essay 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences'. This is one of the best available general introductions to what Derrida is trying to do. After this it's probably best to read essays 1, 2, 5, 7 and 9 (any order). Essay 4 stands somewhat on its own - a brilliant exposition plus criticism of Levinas's work, taking up nearly a quarter of the book. Essays 3, 6, 8 and 11 are more 'literary' and more obscure. The biggest apparent obstacle to English readers is the range of intellectual reference of the book. The apparent subjects of the essays are as follows: Rousset, Foucault, Jabes, Levinas, Husserl, Artaud, Freud, Bataille and Lévi-Strauss - few of whom are widely studied in English philosophy departments! We may be tempted to consign Derrida to the 'comparative literature' departments, the philosopher disappearing beneath the literary critic and cultural super-star. (Indeed most of the Anglo-Saxon interest in Derrida to date, including that which led to the translation of this book, has come from the 'literary' side.) But the real difficulty in reading Derrida is that of understanding what he is aiming for, what the 'general philosophical position' behind his treatment of particular authors consists in. I will now try and give some indications as to the philosophical approach to his work.

II There are two broad ways of looking at the work of a particular philosopher. It can either be 'placed within a tradition' or we can consider it 'ahistorically' as an attempt to solve certain 'universal problems of philosophy'. It is possible to approach Derrida in both these ways. His most immediate predecessor, from whom he draws many of his themes, is Heidegger. Derrida's 'radicalisation' of Husserlian phenomenology is even more explicit than Heidegger's - it is the subject of Speech and Phenomena; of his recently translated first book, an Introduction to Husserl's Origin of Geometry; and of an early piece, "'Genesis and Structure" and phenomenology', essay number five in this book (3). An even more important influence - sometimes evoked by Derrida in criticisms of Heidegger - is Nietzsche. To these we must add the influences of Freud, of Blanchot, of Bataille and a host of philosophical and literary figures.

Alternatively we could place his work in relation to certain philosophical problems - in general those of the philosophy of language; of the nature of the sign, the relationship between speech and writing, the nature of a text and its interpretation, the relationship between literary and philosophical discourse. Such problems have apparently only a

tangential relation to the problems of the philosophy of language as conceived of by contemporary analytical philosophy. As the latter regards only the 'problem-oriented' approach to philosophical works as being of philosophical (as opposed to, say, cultural) interest, the work of philosophers such as Derrida is dismissed as belonging to some other subject.

It might be thought that the obvious move for someone wishing to recommend Derrida's work to analytical philosophers is to propose a 'translation' of it into the idiom of analytical philosophy; showing what sort of answers he is giving to standard philosophical problems. This is being tried increasingly with Husserl's work, why not with Derrida's radicalisation of it?(4) This question brings us to the heart of Derrida's philosophising: his rejection of any such division between problems and tradition. It's not just that problems only have meaning within the philosophical tradition but, more importantly, for Derrida, the problem is the tradition. He takes 'tradition' in a very strong and wide sense, it is the 'fundamental permanence of the logico-philosophical heritage' (Writing and Difference, hereafter WD, p39) and encompasses the whole of 'Western thought' (this idea comes from Heidegger and Nietzsche), from Plato to Hegel, or perhaps, from Thales to Merleau-Ponty. ('Metaphysics' is often used as the name for the tradition in this sense.)

It is this attempt to question the entire philosophical tradition which makes Derrida appear the most radical possible thinker. For he takes the basic philosophical imperative 'examine your presuppositions' and implements it as fully as possible, refusing to accept anything given 'on authority'. His famous method of 'deconstruction', on one level, is part of this generalised suspicion, 'it is simply a question of (and this is a necessity of criticism in the classical sense of the word) being alert to the implications, to the historical sedimentation of the language that we use'(5). He discovers that the tradition has privileged certain questions and repressed others and therefore, on the ground of the basic philosophical imperative, it must be 'gone beyond'. This is thus a kind of 'internal critique' of the tradition. And yet, and this is the crucial move in Derrida's philosophy, he realises that such a transgression of the tradition cannot be simple;

There is no transgression, if one understands by this pure and simple installation in a beyond of metaphysics ... even in transgressions we carry on with a code to which metaphysics is irreducibly linked. (P, p21)

This is because of the recuperative structure of metaphysics which leads Derrida to speak in the present work of,

The unsurpassable, unique and imperial grandeur of the order of reason, that which makes it not just another actual order or structure ... is that one cannot speak out against it except by being for it, that one cannot protest against it only from within it; and within its domain it only leaves us recourse to stratagems and strategies. (p36)

The tradition only gives us two possibilities: speaking for or against reason, and both moves already have places in its conceptual space. Derrida tries to open up a third possibility - using the notion of strategy or ruse; he aims to move in such a way as to escape capture by the 'oppositions of metaphysics'(6).

Derrida names the system which gives unity to

the tradition of Western philosophy the 'metaphysics of presence'. This idea derives from Heidegger. The point is that metaphysics has always determined Being as presence (WD, p279). It has always valued and sought after the immediate purity of the here and now. Its aim has always been to 'make present' what is hidden, what is absent, so that all can be grasped in an instantaneous vision. 'A particularly revelatory symptom' (P, p15) of this is the treatment of the relationship between speech and writing in the tradition. Speech has been seen as the purest form of language because the 'ideas' behind it are 'present' in the mind of the speaker as he speaks. This privilege of speech, of the voice, leads Derrida to dub metaphysics 'phono-logo-centrism'. Writing has been seen as subordinate to speech, it has been violently condemned as 'parasitic' on speech. This condemnation, according to Derrida, is due to the fact that writing can function in the absence of its author, it is clearly in no need of 'ideas' in the author's mind to guarantee it. It is dangerous because there seems to be nothing 'present' to control it. Derrida argues that the written and the spoken sign have, in fact, the same structure: one of 'difference'. A sign is constituted by its position in the system of language, its identity depends on its difference from other similar signs within the system. The sign is not an 'immediate, present, identity' which receives its meaning from the idea behind it, rather it gets its meaning from the system of language, it is always marked by absence. Of course metaphysics tries to 'make present' the essence of the sign - by trying to display the whole of the system of language which constitutes it. But, Derrida argues, this attempt will always fail, 'not because the infiniteness of a field cannot be covered by a finite glance or a finite discourse, but because the nature of the field - that is, language and a finite language - excludes totalisation' (WD, p289). This is because language has no centre to 'arrest and ground' the 'infinite play of substitutions' which can take place within it. Contrary to the metaphysics of presence there is no 'presence' (idea, intention, meaning) which limits the 'freeplay' of language.

Derrida's operation on the speech/writing opposition is a central instance of what he calls 'deconstruction' - which is not only the operation of uncovering the presuppositions of metaphysics but also that referred to above of, as it were, 'jamming' them. The opposition is not simply 'neutralised' or rejected (which would be the traditional move) but is first of all 'reversed' (because in all classical oppositions one term is subordinate to the other). We operate here 'from the inside' accepting the classical terms 'speech and writing' but arguing that they've been put the wrong way round. This phase is interminable because, 'the hierarchy of the dual opposition always reconstitutes itself' (P, p57). The second phase is that of the emergence of a new 'concept' which cannot be grasped in the old opposition; thus Derrida says that the best way to think of speech and writing is in terms of the 'trace' - which is not a trace of anything which was present, it is like a copy of a non-existent original. Derrida has a whole range of such 'non-concepts' (non-concepts because they cannot be grasped in the oppositions of metaphysics and so cannot be called 'concepts' in the traditional sense): gramme, supplement, spacing (both active and passive) hymen, pharmakon, dissemination and

perhaps most well-known, *différance*. The last plays on the sense of the French verb 'differer' and is taken to mean both 'differing' and 'deferring' - again both active and passive. The important point to grasp here is that these words have, for Derrida, a purely strategic significance - they are meant to confuse, tangle up, jam, the categories of metaphysics, and thus, as it were, 'show' their limitations (these limitations cannot be 'said' because all saying involves the concepts tainted by metaphysics). At one point Derrida lists some of these 'non-concept' words, adding 'there will be more of them' (P, p24) - there have to be more because as the old ones are 'fixed' by commentators the strategy of disruption which employs them becomes useless and new ones have to be tried.

So far I've characterised Derrida's work as a kind of radical 'internal critique' of traditional philosophy. Another way of putting Derrida's general views is to say that, for him, philosophy is a kind of writing. On the traditional view philosophical language is transparent, governed only by the laws of reason. But Derrida continually points out and illustrates the extent to which philosophical statements are constituted by constraints internal to philosophical discourse. The constraints of metaphysics can be seen as those of a particular genre of writing. A genre defined as Rorty says 'by neither subject matter nor method nor institutional affiliation, but only by an enumeration of the mighty dead'(7). But, just like all writing, it can never be pinned down to one univocal meaning - something which is implicitly recognized in the traditional condemnations of writing and metaphysics' denial of its own status as 'written' (in this 'literary sense'). The claim that philosophy is a form of writing should not be taken as another philosophical thesis but more as an 'affirmation'

the joyous affirmation of the free play of the world and of the innocence of becoming, the affirmation of a world of signs without fault, without truth and without origin, which is offered to an active interpretation.

(WD, p292)

There are no answers to philosophical problems, only a series of endlessly displaced questions, open to endless interpretation and reinterpretation. And even to say this is to say too much - our own statements are also endlessly displaceable. And so on...

Where does all this get us? When quizzed on the wider implications of his work Derrida is extremely cautious but says 'what seemed to me necessary in the historical situation which is our own, is a general determination of the conditions of emergence of the limits of philosophy, of metaphysics' (P, p69). He has always thought that as part of a radical politics it is necessary to have a radical philosophy, to go beyond philosophy, but also that 'the passage beyond philosophy does not consist in turning the page of philosophy (which usually amounts to philosophising badly), but in continuing to read philosophers in a certain way' (WD, p288).

Derrida is at his best when reading other philosophers - showing up what is presupposed in their texts, exposing the equivocity of the terms that they take to be univocal. He says that although nobody can escape the necessity of the tradition of metaphysics and 'if no one is therefore responsible for giving in to it, however little, this does not mean that all ways of giving in to it are of an equal pertinence' (WD, p282). But, in his own terms, it is not clear how 'unequal degrees of participation

in the tradition' are to be judged. For there is no position from which we can judge, or rather there are an infinity of such positions, depending on the strategy we adopt. Thus although David Wood is right to point out that the philosopher aiming to 'go beyond metaphysics' is in an analogous position to the revolutionary trying to 'go beyond' capitalist society, Derrida's direct contribution to revolutionary politics is somewhat questionable because there are no standards to judge degrees of recuperation.

One way of putting Derrida's dilemma is to say that he considers writing in the form of 'pure language'. This is analogous to the 'pure thought' of Hegel's *Science of Logic* and is the 'medium' in which all metaphysical oppositions are made. 'Reality' is not something simple which we can say that language is 'about', it too is a metaphysical concept constituted in pure language (pure text). When Derrida makes his famous remark that 'there is no outside of the text' he is not stating some kind of linguistic idealism but rather saying that any apparent 'outside' of the text is something which can be read and interpreted and which is therefore just another text and which, like all texts, has no simple 'obvious' reading. But whereas for Hegel 'pure thought' has a necessary structure (which is unfolded in the *Logic*), Derrida's 'pure language' has no fixed structure at all. It has no 'dialectic of development', it can never be finally totalised or ordered. Thus Derrida can say nothing definite at all, everything given with one hand must be taken away with the other. Everything can be said thus nothing can be said.

This is not meant to be a 'refutation' of Derrida. Rather, I am trying to show what lies behind the second extreme reaction to his work which I men-

tioned at the beginning. Precisely because he carries the 'self-examination' of philosophy to its highest point Derrida is left with nothing but a game of endless evasion. The ceaseless refusal to accept anything as given propels him ever faster up a kind of transcendental spiral which gives no resting place. This spiral is what seems to his critics to be a mere academic game because of its complete lack of determinacy.

In reaction to Derrida's Hegel his successors in Paris have followed the historical precedents and played Marx; from transcendental heaven down to the pluralistic richness of things on earth. This latter form of French thought - what might be called post-post-structuralism - is now dominant in Paris; Foucault, Deleuze and Lyotard being its leading exponents. It is already finding its English adherents, being much closer to the English spirit than structuralist rationalism or its Derridean radicalisation. But it is not possible to understand the philosophical interest of these 'new pluralists' without an understanding of Derrida.

- 1 *Histoire de la folie*, Paris, Gallimard, 2nd edn., 1972, p602. This appendix to the book is due to appear in English in the next *Oxford Literary Review*.
- 2 *L'Arc*, 54, p33.
- 3 On the central place of this essay see Alan Bass's introduction, pp. ix. For a preliminary account of Derrida and Husserl see D.C. Wood, 'Introduction to Derrida', RP21, pp19-20.
- 4 Newton Garver's 'Preface' to the English translation of *Speech and Phenomena* is an interesting attempt to do this. This is discussed by R. Forty, 'Derrida on Language, Being and Abnormal Philosophy', *Journal of Philosophy*, LXXIV, no. 11, Nov 1977.
- 5 R. Macksey and E. Donato, eds. *The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, Johns Hopkins Press, 1970, p271. Derrida is speaking in a discussion of the tenth essay of WD.
- 6 Well discussed in Vincent Descombes, *The Same and the Other: Forty Five Years of French Philosophy (1933-1978)*, Cambridge UP, forthcoming, chapter 5, section I. This book is at present available in French, *Le mème et l'autre*, Minuit, 1979. The sections on Derrida are very useful.
- 7 R. Forty, op. cit., p680.

MARX'S METHOD

Derek Sayer, *Marx's Method: Ideology, Science and Critique in 'Capital'*, Harvester Press, 1979, £10.95 hc

Derek Sayer's book is aptly titled. It is an account of Marx's method, particularly in his mature economic writings. I am in considerable agreement with much of this account; what I propose to do in this review is to summarise what I take to be its essence, and to indicate some possible limitations of it. It should, however, be said straight away that this is a book which everyone, interested in Marx - whether their interest is political or academic - should read. Lucid, well-organised and laboriously researched, it develops its theme - that Marx was a realist - consistently and clearly. In addition it contains one of the most comprehensive listings of English sources of Marx's and Engels' works currently available.

According to Sayer, Marx's materialism commits him to a series of correspondences between categories of thought, forms of experience and their objects (things etc)(174 n10). Because of these correspondences, Marx cannot explain ideology (false consciousness) as an error within the phenomenal realm (or the subject), but must

explain it in terms of an objective mechanism of mystification, analogous to the production of a mirage, dependent upon the existence of an 'object' which is not in correspondence, i. e. upon an internal dislocation (so to speak) within the stratification of things. Thus an (objective) essence/appearance distinction at once grounds Marx's concept of ideology and defines the project of his science.

In Marx's well-known 1857 General Introduction he distinguishes two moments of analysis: the movement from the concrete to the abstract, and the reverse movement from the abstract to the concrete. The former consists in the a posteriori derivation of theory and corresponds to what Marx called (in his 1873 afterword to *Capital*) the 'method of inquiry'; the latter consists in the reconstruction (in thought) of the concrete, the phenomena explained by theory, and corresponds, according to Sayer, to Marx's 'method of presentation'. Most Marxist philosophers, Sayer argues, have pre-occupied themselves with Marx's method of presentation. In this way they have not only aped bourgeois philosophy's obsession with the 'context of justification' at the expense of the 'context of discovery', but incidentally contravened the

principles of materialist explanation. In contrast, Sayer's intention is to display the mode of production of the knowledge presented in Capital itself.

But before addressing this question directly, Sayer sets himself a puzzle. Why did Marx change his analytical point of departure between 1857 and the publication of Capital in 1867 from the 'general abstract determinants which obtain in all forms of society' to the concrete entity, the commodity, 'the simplest form in which the labour product is represented in contemporary society'? Sayer attributes this change to the discovery of a non-Ricardian theory of surplus-value, the realisation of how little could (or should) be said a priori about those determinants and the working through of the implications of a rigorous distinction between trans-historical and historical categories. Transhistorical categories designate features common to all material production, whereas historical categories designate features specific to particular (transient) modes of production. Now patently the concept of what distinguishes the members of a class cannot be deduced from the concept of what they have in common (87), so the historical categories must be derived in some other way. And it is only after such a derivation, that the peculiar status of the commodity in the architectonic of Marx's completed work can be explained.

What, then, is Marx's method of inquiry? According to Sayer, it takes the form of a 'critique', which is essentially Kantian in form, but transcendental realist, not idealist, in content. Given that the object of Marx's science is the production and reproduction of man's material life, the role of the transhistorical categories is to identify Marx's explananda-productive phenomena, as conceptualised in the experience of the productive agents concerned. The next step is the empirically-controlled retroduction of an adequate explanation as to why the productive phenomena take the experiential forms they do. It should be noted that theory-construction cannot proceed either by induction - because of the potential deceptiveness - or by deduction - because of the historicity - of these forms; and that it is subject to the constraints of exhaustiveness, independence and consistency, so that (ideally) the explanation will be complete, non-circular and consistent. The explanation itself will consist, according to Sayer, in statements about (a) the mechanisms accounting for these forms and (b) the conditions necessary for the functioning of the mechanisms. These conditions are then taken as the 'material groundwork' of the forms themselves; so that the forms (productive phenomena as experienced) can now be reconceptualised in terms of their precise historical conditions of existence. But to specify the historical conditions of existence of the phenomenal forms is ipso facto to specify the historical limits of the categories with which these forms are in correspondence. And so we have a 'critique' of those categories and their associated 'schemata' and 'principles' (explanations), in which an 'analytic' of categories underpins a 'dialectic' of their illegitimate employment (in fetishised discourse etc).

The totality of the relations and conditions necessary for the phenomenal forms having been established a posteriori, Marx is now in a position to consider the manner of their presentation. And here the hidden exegetical structure of Capital reveals itself as that of a hierarchy of conditions of possibility, in which Marx begins from the most

fundamental of all the necessary conditions of commodity production, the commodity itself, to, at least ideally, the eventual recovery of all the forms of specifically capitalist production, and social life (102).

Some problems: Sayer seems uncertain whether the relation between essence and form is internal and a-causal (4, 81) or causal (137, 140), but of course it must be causal and internal. Sayer's criterion of exhaustiveness, and his invocation of postdictability as an independent test of theory (139-41), are both suspect: they presuppose what I have characterised as 'closed systems'. There are no grounds for assuming the possibility, let alone desirability, of a theory which mimics the world. Hence there are no grounds for supposing that 'the empirical residuum' (or contingency) will ever disappear. Nor are there grounds for supposing that it will be possible to establish, even for the historical domain, (in a world characterised by 'combined and uneven development'), a deductively-unified explanatory structure. Sayer is exclusively concerned here with theoretical, not historical or practical explanations (though he tells me he is currently planning a sequel on the 'historical sociology' of Marx). There is no notion, in this book, of the conjuncture, or the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. The concepts of events, episodes, processes disappear entirely in favour of the category of phenomenal forms. Now I think this misleads Sayer into overlooking the possibility that the second moment of the 1857 Introduction may correspond not to Marx's presentation in Capital, but to the kind of reconstruction undertaken in the 18th Brumaire or The Civil War in France. Moreover, both capitalism and Marxism must be conceptualised in principle as developing (and in relation to each other). One does not get this from Derek's book. Perhaps this is connected with the absence of any non-Kantian concept of dialectic. Marx's method was certainly realist; definitely materialist; but does it not contain a realist-materialist-dialectic (however precisely this is to be explicated) as well? Sayer does not think that history is already implicit in the commodity. But if this is indeed so, the work of empirically-controlled retroductive theory-construction cannot be completed before any exposition can commence (143). Rather both theory and its forms of presentation (and practical elaboration in class struggle, and forms of action more generally) must be continually developed, modified, refined and occasionally revolutionised, transformed. Derek intends his book to provoke a return to Marx (xi). I would be more pleased if I thought Marx's Method might contribute to the development of Marx's unfinished work. And it is because I am sure that it will do so that I welcome it.

Roy Bhaskar



CHOMSKY'S POLITICS

Geoffrey Sampson, Liberty and Language, Oxford University Press, 1979, £5.75

Shortly after last year's General Election, Keith Joseph issued his senior civil servants with a reading list, including such golden oldies as Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations, and Joseph Schumpeter's Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy. He would do well to add this recent book by Geoffrey Sampson. For in it he will find an ingenious and lucidly argued rationale for his laissez-faire politics - explicitly endorsed by Sampson as a 'principled liberalism' (p39). According to this doctrine (which, for the rest of the review, will be what's meant by 'liberalism'),

... the production and distribution of goods should as far as possible be controlled exclusively by the impersonal mechanism of free competition between individuals in an open market. It should be open to any individual to produce goods by any method he wishes using whatever resources he owns or can buy or hire, and to sell the goods he produces, or his labour, for whatever price he can get. The proper task of government is to maintain the free market in being and to protect individuals in their enjoyment of the rewards they derive from participation in the market, and it should take on as few other tasks as possible. (p40)

And in this kind of free market, minimal state society, there is no room for any ideals of justice, especially socialist ones, to interfere in the resulting distribution of goods:

Nor should government use taxation to redistribute wealth or interfere with patterns of industry. For the liberal it is desirable that those individuals whose enterprise or labour commands relatively high prices should be rewarded proportionately (irrespective of the individual's moral worth, or the like); human beliefs as to what is just or appropriate should play no part in determining the distribution of goods.

(p41)

What is new in Sampson's book is not, of course, this political position, but the theoretical arguments he uses to support it. The central concept here is creativity. According to Sampson, the nature of human creativity (which all members of the species possess, and which is exemplified most clearly in language) is such that only liberalism can generate and sustain the kind of progress and development that humans are both capable of and desire. Any other political system, in which decisions about production and distribution are taken for individuals by some kind of central agency (Sampson calls such systems 'authoritarian') is bound in the long run to fail. Authoritarian systems stifle the only source of genuine innovation, namely individual creativity. They attempt to make predictions about developments which are inherently unpredictable, just because of this creativity; and they have no effective way of evaluating the benefits and costs of those innovations that do (unpredictably) occur.

For Sampson - recognizing that in practice there is a spectrum between liberal and authoritarian

extremes - the USA is the most liberal of present-day societies, and it's this which explains its economic success:

The reason why America is so much richer than most other nations is that she enjoys a near-monopoly of liberal government and, consequently a near-monopoly of economic innovation. (p97)

Further, America has 'rather consistently' attempted to end this near-monopoly by 'encouraging the growth of liberalism abroad' (p97), a policy which, though sometimes involving imperialism, Sampson tends to endorse. Indeed, he argues that, subject to certain qualifications,

... the liberal has no objection to imperialism, which may indeed in certain circumstances be a highly desirable world order. It would certainly be an excellent thing for the Vietnamese and for everyone else concerned if the USA were administering North and South Vietnam in place of the authoritarian government now in control there. (p165)

To talk both about linguistic creativity and about the USA's role in Vietnam is implicitly to talk about Noam Chomsky. And it's no accident that the former two items are linked in Liberty and Language, for Sampson's book is explicitly constructed as a critique of Chomsky's politics - or, more accurately, of what he takes to be Chomsky's attempts (in works such as American Power and the New Mandarins, Problems of Freedom and Knowledge, and For Reasons of State) to support his leftist politics by arguments based on the conception of human nature suggested by his theoretical position in linguistics. Now the concept of creativity is a central element in that position; but Sampson argues that Chomsky misunderstands the true character of linguistic/human creativity, and correspondingly adopts an erroneous political standpoint. Thus:

A consideration of the semantic side of language, in particular - of the ways in which utterances convey meaning - leads to a view of human nature which is sharply at variance with Chomsky's, and which suggests that political ideals very different from Chomsky's are the appropriate ones. Chomsky claims that syntax refutes liberalism, but the claim fails; Chomsky ignores semantics, and semantics strongly supports liberalism. (p8, my italics)

This last sentence neatly encapsulates the central theoretical argument in Liberty and Language, which I will now outline.

II

According to Chomsky, the most striking feature of human linguistic competence is its creativity, the ability of the native speaker to produce and understand sentences that he or she has never heard or uttered before. He regards this fact, among others, as strong evidence against any empiricist account of language and its acquisition, and in favour of there being innate (though highly abstract) rules of syntax, shared by all members of the species, and

underlying the more 'superficial' grammatical rules which vary between different languages. (To a non-linguist, e.g. me, Sampson's accounts of these and related issues are extremely clear and informative.) A purely empiricist account would seem to require that present competence be explained in terms of past experience; but

The new utterances that are produced and interpreted in the daily use of language are 'similar' to those that constitute the past experience of speaker and hearer only in that they are determined, in their form and interpretation, by the same system of abstract underlying rules.

(J. Allen and P. van Buren (eds.), Chomsky: Selected Readings, OUP, 1971, p154; quoted by Sampson, p102)

Now Sampson accepts Chomsky's view of syntactic creativity, but argues that it provides by itself a grossly impoverished understanding of human creativity. He regards as central examples of this, phenomena such as the development of new scientific theories (containing concepts that had not previously 'existed'), the creation of new kinds of social institution, the invention of qualitatively different economic products, and the emergence of new schools or styles of artistic activity. All these go quite beyond Chomsky's conception of creativity, which involves 'only' the production of new instances within an already specifiable set of rules.

Sampson says:

To be creative is to produce something which falls outside the class implied by any set of principles that might have been proposed to account for previous examples.

(p105, my italics)

The form of creativity that Sampson concentrates upon is semantic innovation, i. e. (roughly) changes in the meanings of terms, or the introduction of new terms expressing previously non-existent concepts. Thus:

Locomotive, insurance, playgroup, Oedipus complex, gravity - these are not convenient short expressions for concepts which Chaucerian English could express only by cumbersome paraphrases, they are expressions for concepts which in Chaucer's day did not yet exist; and, according to the liberal, the potential existence of these particular concepts was in no sense implied by the stock of concepts which did exist in the fourteenth century.

(p120)

Sampson claims not merely that such innovations constantly occur (and he rightly emphasizes the importance of metaphor in these changes) but also that it is impossible to think of them as in any way predictable. This unpredictability is not due to the practical difficulties of gathering adequate information - as might be the case, say, in weather forecasting (my example, not his) - but is a matter of principle. For to predict the occurrence of a new concept would be to possess it already; and this is self-contradictory (pp45-46: here Sampson endorses Karl Popper's argument against the predictability of the growth of scientific knowledge, in the Preface to The Poverty of Historicism). Further this unpredictability means there are highly significant areas of human activity that are radically inaccessible to scientific study. Thus 'scientism' - 'the prejudice which holds that the scientific method applies to all possible subjects of human thought'

(p1) - is refuted, and with it, any possibility of success for a planned, authoritarian society in which the crucial decisions are taken 'scientifically'.

An important part of Sampson's argument about semantic creativity is his claim that it is impossible to specify a set of rules determining the 'sensicality' of possible sentences: viz. (roughly) whether the sentence is not only grammatical but meaningful. A sentence may shift from non-sensicality to sensicality due to semantic innovations: for instance, he says that 'Horseless carriages travel rapidly was nonsensical in 1700 but is a mere truism today', since at that time 'the idea of self-propelling machines had not yet occurred to anyone'(p119). And he suggests that:

To invent a novel scientific theory, mechanical device, social institution, or the like, is inter alia to render sensical some word-sequences which were previously grammatical but nonsensical'(p119).

In this way, Sampson links his theoretical argument for semantic innovation with his general claim about human creativity: each creative human achievement will be reflected in a semantic change that will also shift the application of the sensical-nonsensical division.

III

There are other pieces of theoretical equipment in Sampson's defence of liberalism, and some of them will be introduced in what follows, where I will pursue three lines of criticism. First, directly addressing the political position he defends, I will argue there are major gaps in his grounds for opposing principles of justice 'interfering' in the distribution of social goods. Second, I will suggest that some of the things Sampson says about creativity - and which I am inclined to accept - actually give grounds for doubting the virtues of liberalism, and are at least consistent with some forms of socialism. Third, I will claim that, in a sense of 'scientism' quite closely related to that employed by Sampson, his own standpoint involves a form of scientism - more specifically, a mistaken version of evolutionism that he shares with Popper.

IV

One might expect that someone relying on the fact of human creativity to support liberalism would argue along the following lines: for humans to be able to realize this capacity to the greatest extent, it's necessary that they should be as free as possible from potential sources of interference and control over what they want to do; and since governmental coercion in the control of the economy is a major potential area of such interference, it should be restricted to the minimum necessary.

But, although there are occasional hints of an argument like this (e.g. on p60, where he says that '(f)reedom from coercion is desirable in its own right...'), Sampson's main emphasis is very different. It is expressed in the following passage, where he replies to the possible charge of advocating a harshly inhumane and selfish doctrine which arbitrarily refuses to use governmental power to abolish the evils that afflict the poor. On the contrary, I am a liberal precisely because I wish to see poverty abolished... I advocate liberalism and oppose authoritarianism, because liberalism leads to progress and author-

itarianism obstructs progress, and it is progress that abolishes poverty, in the sense of raising the standard of life of the poorer members of a society. The abolition of poverty in this absolute sense entails the retention of relative poverty - there must always be richer and poorer, if the poorer of tomorrow are to live like the richer of yesterday.

(p71, my italics)

The claim here is that liberalism maximizes economic progress, and, in doing so, improves the absolute position of the worst-off; and that this is why it should be chosen as the best political system. Indeed, Sampson later emphasizes how important this argument is, for him, by saying that if it could in fact be shown that an egalitarian distribution leads to a faster growth of total production, this 'might well be accepted by a liberal as a refutation of his political ideal'(p196).

But even if it were true that liberalism both maximizes total output and raises the standard of living of the worst-off, why should this count so strongly in its favour? At least two considerations go against this. First, if Sampson is primarily concerned about improving the position of the worst-off, he must show not merely that liberalism improves their position, but that it does so to a greater extent than any other system. Now such alternative systems need not be 'strict egalitarian' ones. Instead, they might involve attempts to 'balance' the ideals of equality and of maximizing growth of total output: that is, neither ideal is exclusively followed, but each is given some weight, in a 'trade-off' relation with the other. (See, for instance, Arthur Okun's Efficiency and Equality: The Big Trade-off.) In such systems, it is quite conceivable that, whilst total output would be somewhat lower than in liberalism, the position of the worst-off would be better.

Second, Sampson's argument depends upon paying attention only to the absolute, and not the relative position of the worst-off, as if the sources of human dissatisfaction did not legitimately include a sense of the inferiority of one's position in relation to others. Although he offers a number of arguments against strict egalitarianism, none of these go any way to provide a justification for this general assumption, which is clearly in need of one. After all, most proponents of (various forms of) social justice have regarded relative positions as intrinsically significant; and to defend liberalism as 'in the best interests of the poor', without looking beyond their absolute standard of living, seems quite inadequate.

Sampson, as I've said, does present arguments directly against egalitarianism. There is room here to comment on only one of these: that egalitarianism is an impossible ideal to realize, since it is only the existence of a free market (with its consequent inequalities) that provides an objective basis for determining the extent to which people are equal or unequal: that is, the price-system. This is ingenious, but unconvincing. Intuitively, it seems that in a society with a fairly homogeneous set of values about preferred forms of activity, one could get a rough but adequate sense of the extent of inequalities without a market-determined price-system. For instance, the differences between housing conditions experienced in the UK at present by typical members of the two groups, unskilled workers and professional/managerial staff, is detectable without knowledge of house prices.

Further - and this issue he ignores throughout - Sampson does not examine the viability of various forms of market socialism, in which there is no private ownership of the means of production, but a (modified) market system determines prices. (See, for instance, David Miller's 'Socialism and the Market', Political Theory, 1977).

V

By now considering why it is that Sampson believes that liberalism is in fact the system best able to 'deliver the goods' of economic progress I can move on to my second criticism - that creativity, far from supporting liberalism, may count against it.

Creativity makes progress possible, according to Sampson. And since the new ideas generated by this capacity cannot be predicted, no 'scientifically planned' society will be able to make use of it. But this potential can only be effectively realized if certain conditions are met. One of these is that

People - the person who actually thinks up the new idea, and others who are in a position to try it out - must stand to gain if the idea is successful; which means that they must stand to lose, if it is not. In the economic sphere, progress can come about only from risk-taking free enterprise.

(p47)

So there must be incentives, which consist in receiving a large share of goods. Sampson notes that within the Marxist tradition, there has been considerable resistance to the claim that such a need for rewards reflects some 'law of human nature'; instead, it is often argued, this kind of psychological attitude is itself determined by the mode of economic production, and will thus change with changes in that mode. Sampson says that, on this alternative view

... when full socialism is attained, it may be that labour will not need to be motivated by incentives, and men will work selflessly on behalf of society in general...

(p86)

Unfortunately, his reply to this is too closely tied with an ad hominem argument against Chomsky for it to be entirely clear how he would deal directly with the traditional Marxist objection itself. But it seems that Sampson regards this particular psychological attitude as pretty much a given feature of human nature, commenting that 'We have no empirical evidence to suggest that degree of altruism is one of the more malleable of human characteristics...' (p87). Now I'm not at all sure I agree with this. But in any case, I think it's a mistake to see the issue as primarily concerned with degrees of altruism, and to characterise the socialist as necessarily believing in the possibility of working 'selflessly on behalf of society in general'.

For a start, it may be that only certain kinds of work require special incentives for people to be willing to perform them. Part of the socialist ideal has always been to change the character of the forms of labour dominant in capitalism, to make them more directly and intrinsically enjoyable. This clearly does not involve workers becoming more altruistic; rather, their legitimate self-concern can now be (partly) met in work. Further, it seems reasonable to suggest that the activities of creating new ideas and trying them out are central examples of the kind of work which does not necessarily require external incentives. Yet

this is just the area of activity which, according to Sampson, does require such incentives - at least in a market society. He makes it sound as if someone who denied this must believe that humans can be more altruistic than they are; but this would only be so if we thought of these activities as, in themselves, 'unrewarding' to those who engaged in them. This seems implausible.

I want now to pursue this question of the relations between liberalism, creativity and human nature a bit further. Sampson rightly insists that we should understand creativity in a broad sense, to include innovations in all areas of human activity - art, science, economic production, social institutions, and so on. He is well aware that the particular set of institutions he is concerned to advocate - those of liberalism - are the outcome of a specific period of historical development; indeed, he wants to celebrate these as, in a way, the species' greatest act of creativity. And along with these historically specific institutions come specific patterns of social behaviour: thus, for instance, Sampson endorses Adam Smith's view 'that the propensity of humans to "truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another" is probably not innate' (p94).

It seems to me that this whole emphasis upon the historically changing character of human activities militates strongly against believing that there is some single, historically specific set of institutions - those of liberalism - that are uniquely 'in tune' with a set of unchangeable and innate psychological attitudes, patterns of motivation, etc. That is, I think that if we accept Sampson's account of human creativity, we should be highly sceptical of the claims of liberalism to represent a uniquely successful attempt by humans to find a form of society that maximally realizes 'human nature'. And if there is such a 'thing' as human nature, its characteristics must surely be far more general than the highly specific and distinctive attitudes and motivations involved in a liberal market economy.

Further, I would argue against Sampson that liberalism tends to hinder and prevent the exercise of many possible products of human creativity. For instance, the discovery and practice of new forms of social relationships involving co-operative, collective work (whilst maintaining the values of individuality and self-concern) are pretty difficult to achieve in such a society. So too are certain forms of community - related to, but not identical with, those typical of many pre-capitalist societies. Sampson, indeed, replies explicitly to the charge that liberalism historically destroyed '... the bonds of affection, respect, compassion, and the like which link individuals occupying neighbouring positions in a social structure...' by saying that 'The operation of a free market does not destroy the bonds of affection between related individuals - nothing could, they are surely amongst the fixed elements of human nature...' (p94). But this seems unsatisfactory. For even if it is true that the development of some 'bonds of affection' is part of human nature, what specific form these may take is not; and what form is taken is influenced by various institutional structures. For instance, the character of family relationships is clearly influenced by that of economic institutions; so that, at any given time, it is likely that possible developments of a creative kind in the former will be limited and hindered by the nature of the latter. And I can see no reason why the institutions of liberalism should be exceptions to this.

VI

In his attempt to show why liberalism is the best system for achieving growth and progress, Sampson argues that a society needs not only to encourage innovation, but also to devise a mechanism by which beneficial innovations may be selected from non-beneficial ones. In his view, the competitive market is the ideal such mechanism. And at one point, he says this:

Only a liberal society, as I have defined it, is not authoritarian, in that economic conflicts in such a society are ultimately decided not by any human authority but by the neutral arbitration of Nature.

(p83, my *italics*)

Elsewhere, Sampson supports a strongly Popperian account of the growth of scientific knowledge, according to which this consists in a process of 'trial and error'. Hypotheses are put forward, tested, and rejected if found wanting; then new hypotheses are proposed. This account is used by Sampson to characterize all forms of innovatory progress.

Now, as Sampson notes, Popper himself has stressed the analogies between his account of scientific growth, and the Darwinian theory of evolution. It is presumably this evolutionary analogy that lies behind the italicized phrase in the passage just quoted, which, *prima facie*, makes a highly implausible claim: for surely what it is that determines which economic products 'survive' and which 'fail' is not Nature, but human decisions taken within the context of historically varying forms of social structures, embodying specific motivations, preferences, and values - one could scarcely conceive anything less 'natural' than these. My suggestion is that this curious passage indicates a pervasive evolutionism in Sampson's position, an evolutionism which is mistakenly 'scientific'.

Amongst the several errors in Popper's own evolutionary analogy for the growth of knowledge, the most important for my purposes is this. In Darwinian evolution, 'selection' is purely a matter of differential rates of reproduction resulting from the differing degrees of adaptedness of organisms to their environment. By contrast, the 'selection' of scientific theories involves the conscious application to them of particular standards of acceptability adopted by the members of a scientific community. The appropriateness of these standards is itself partly determined by the acceptance of a particular aim, or aims, for scientific enquiry: in Popper's case, this aim is 'the truth', understood in a realist fashion, whereas other aims have been proposed and pursued, such as practical utility, or aesthetic beauty.

For Sampson to talk of economic conflicts being settled 'by the neutral arbitration of Nature' is to ignore the fact that in selecting innovations in human societies, there is a major question to be decided: what standards, in relation to which aims, should be adopted? This question seems not to get answered, but to be frequently avoided, as in the following passage:

'Progress' means not simply innovation but beneficial innovation; in a liberal society, however, it is not necessary to stress this distinction, since the only innovations that survive will be beneficial ones.

(p99, my *italics*)

The question is: 'beneficial' in terms of which human aims and values? And here we return to

some of the issues raised earlier, in section IV, concerning Sampson's discussion of egalitarianism and the growth of total output. Why should we decide to value exclusively the latter, and give no weight to the former? Why should 'freedom' (itself understood in a particular fashion) matter more than equality? And so on.

These, of course, are traditional questions of political philosophy. Although theories of a scientific character are relevant and important in answering them, I believe they cannot be answered solely by scientifically establishable claims. To think otherwise is to accept a form of scientism - 'the prejudice which holds that the scientific method applies to all possible subjects of human thought' (p1); and there seem to me strong elements of this in Sampson's defence of liberalism. For instance, in discussing why it is that, despite its demonstrable virtues, liberalism is at present often rejected in favour of socialism, he says this:

The liberal holds that anybody's beliefs may be mistaken, that nobody is infallible. It is perfectly possible for everyone to be mistaken on some particular issue, and in fact such situations are quite normal. There was a time, I believe, when everyone thought the earth stood still and the sun moved round it; no doubt there are many beliefs held by everyone today which are false and which, with luck, we shall eventually discover to be false. Political theory is not a specially privileged domain of enquiry in which the truth is somehow more obvious than in other areas.

(p199)

Here - as elsewhere - Sampson appears to assimilate the epistemological status of science and politics, with an undifferentiated conception of 'truth' and 'error' which, in practice, tends to transform political questions into scientifically decidable ones.

Historically, there have been many different versions of this attempted transformation. One of them, loosely describable as 'social Darwinism', involves the view that we could discover what are the best and most progressive types of social arrangement by seeing which actually survive in competition with others. The evolutionary slogan of 'the survival of the fittest' is thus used as a way of determining what is the 'fittest': since it has survived, it must be the most fit (cf. the passage from p99, quoted above). This view seems quite wrong. For (amongst other reasons), whereas in the biological theory of evolution, the concept of 'fitness' is a matter of adaptedness to a given environment, in political theory we are concerned with deciding what kind of 'environment' to construct, and thus with what kinds of social institutions, relationships, etc, will be 'fit' and hence 'survive'. We cannot talk of a struggle for survival between competing social entities, arbitrated by some ideologically neutral 'Nature', since what actually replaces 'Nature', in the sphere of human historical development, is itself open to deliberate intervention and control guided by particular political values.

That Sampson practises this evolutionist version of scientism is also indicated by his concern, towards the end of Liberty and Language, to answer the following objection to his arguments for liberalism:

... surely liberalism can itself be regarded as a novel social and economic arrangement in competition with various versions of authoritarianism and I have admitted that it is losing ground at present to its rivals: is it not convicted

by its own standards?

(p202)

In other words: if liberalism is so good, and 'good' means surviving in competition with others, why isn't it surviving? Sampson describes this as 'a very subtle objection', and tries to deal with it. I cannot go into his answer; but what matters is that, as far as I can see, he doesn't reject the basic assumption behind the objection, that, at least in the long run, what is 'good' will tend to survive - since survival is the criterion of goodness.

VII

Despite the length of this review, there are many major elements in this book that I have not even mentioned. The most important of these - and for many readers, perhaps, the most interesting part of the book - is Sampson's attempt to ground his defence of liberalism in the acceptance of an empiricist (or at least, Popperianly empiricist) theory of knowledge, and to oppose what he claims to be the rationalist basis of non-liberal political systems, especially the form of socialism defended by Chomsky. Other elements include: an attack (to me, quite convincing) on Chomsky's claim that empiricism is naturally associated with racism, together with a counter-claim that racism is more plausibly associated with Chomsky's nativist rationalism; a critical discussion of Chomsky's position on Vietnam, and a defence of Britain's 'Second' Empire of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In all these areas, Sampson believes both that there are political implications stemming from apparently very abstract and 'non-political' issues in linguistics and philosophy, and that it's important for academic specialists in the latter disciplines to think and write about these 'wider human implications' of their work. In these respects, he is in complete agreement with Chomsky, and for me, this is one of the book's several virtues. It is also written with clarity and vigour; its accounts of various theoretical issues in linguistics are lucid and informative; and it forces one to think hard about the complex relationships between political positions and the character of human knowledge.

Russell Keat

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RADICAL DIALOGUES

Howard P. Kainz, The Unbinding of Prometheus: Towards a Philosophy of Revolution, New York, Libra, 1976, \$6.95 hc
Ethica Dialectica: A Study of Ethical Oppositions, Martinus Nijhoff, 1979, no price

Despite their difference in subject matter both these books reflect Kainz's dissatisfaction with the prevalent literary method of presenting philosophical and political arguments. Building on Marshall McLuhan's claim that the 'medium is the message', Kainz advocates the use of the dialogue as an introduction and an antidote to the emphasis of philosophical differences. He regards conventional literary form as confirming the existence of these differences while, given the desire for firm conclusions associated with it, it fails to do justice to them. Unfortunately, Kainz only briefly refers to the conventional method; presumably because he considers it sufficiently well-known and unified.

The Unbinding of Prometheus contains in addition to several dialogues a 'textual exegesis' of two plays by Aeschylus and a phenomenological analysis supposedly based on Hegel's method. The latter is the only non-dialogic piece, and is also the least clear. This lack of clarity might explain the exclusive reliance on the dialogue form in the later of the two books.

The purpose of The Unbinding of Prometheus, aside from its advocacy of a specific literary form, is said to be to lay the basis for a viable theory of revolution or the basis for 'developing a congruent perspective recognizing the viability of theories of revolution which are already extant'. It is not clear whether Kainz intends to do both or regards them as alternatives. Whichever it is, Kainz develops his project with reference to various positions, whose nature is evident in the chapter headings, 'Socrates Cross-Examines Homo-Radicalis' and 'The Individual and the Establishment - A Phenomenological Analysis', and with reference to certain major figures, namely, Jefferson, Marx, Freud, Nietzsche and Hegel. This wide-ranging scope, in connexion with Kainz's methodology, seems however to frustrate his aim of providing a theory about revolutions. This is implicitly confessed in Chapter 4 where it appears that the aim is to emphasize certain themes in philosophies dealing with revolution - which are in fact presented as dilemmas - and to allow the reader to form his own view on the basis of these dilemmas.

This failure to fulfil his avowed purpose is a consequence of Kainz's suspicion of 'ordinary prose' which, he claims, tends to supply supposedly definitive statements rather than offering various developments from an initial clash of opinions. This methodological preference could however aid clarification. Two things militate against the clarification of theories of revolution in this book. Firstly, there are some dubious interpretations of specific theories. In the dialogue with Marx, for instance, Kainz's Marx refers to 'laws of matter',

which is a notion Marx did not subscribe to. Secondly, there is a lack of articulation and development of concepts adequate to the subject matter.

The deficiency of conceptual clarity is also evident in Ethica Dialectica, though this book is a considerable improvement on the earlier one, both in the quality of the dialogue and in the content of the argument. The reliance on one dialogue seems to aid the presentation. The protagonists are Cranston, who is portrayed as an idealistic ethicist with strong sympathies for Kant, and Turner, who is portrayed as a utilitarian and an advocate of an empirico-analytic approach. The positions of these two change as each tries to meet the objections of the other and tries to find some common ground with the other when their differences threaten to bring them to an impasse.

Again, the area covered is extensive. Starting with a preliminary, and not very enlightening, discussion of the meaning of good and evil, the book moves on to consider such issues as 'is' and 'ought', ethics and politics, atheism and ethics, and, ethics and aesthetics. There is of course nothing inherently objectionable in this wide coverage, but Kainz fails to establish any conceptual coherence in the order of the presentation of the various stages. The desire to continue the dialogue helps to conceal, but does not compensate for, this inadequacy. This problem is compounded by the frequent reference to a multitude of past and present theories. As with the earlier book this leads to some dubious and misleading summaries. Thus, in the notes, which, along with a seven-page glossary, are supposed to supply background material for beginners, Kainz describes the term 'ideal self' as 'a blanket term that might be loosely applied to such wide-ranging notions as Kant's "transcendental ego", Kirkegaard's "ideal self", Freud's "super-ego" and the behavioural psychologists' "level of aspiration"'.

The book eschews adopting any definitive conclusion and leaves the reader with a series of contradictory viewpoints, and what seems like a general injunction to tolerate divergent attitudes to the formation of ethical attitudes, provided that they are clearly argued. Nevertheless, while The Unbinding of Prometheus contains more confusion than clarification the reverse is true of Ethica Dialectica. Kainz seems more well-versed in questions of ethics than of revolutions, and some of the chapters in Ethica Dialectica contain information and arguments which those involved in teaching about ethics might find useful. These chapters are: Ch. 4, 'Subjective and Objective Morality'; Ch. 6, 'Legality and Morality'; Ch. 8, 'Ethics and Aesthetics'.

Kainz is to be praised for attempting to revive a little-used method of presentation, and his work may be of interest to those with similar concerns.

Pete Stirk

HABERMAS' CRITICAL COMMUNICATIONS

Thomas McCarthy, The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas, Hutchinson, 1978, £12.50 hc
Jürgen Habermas, Communication and the Evolution of Society, translated T. McCarthy, Heinemann, 1979, £4.95 pb

These two books make a very useful contribution to the English reader's understanding of Habermas' work. Communication and the Evolution of Society (CES) contains translations of various papers by Habermas that were published in German in 1976, and which represent important recent developments in his position. The translator - who also provides an introduction that summarizes clearly Habermas' earlier views on the nature of a critical social theory, and shows how the newly translated essays both build upon, and depart from, these - is Thomas McCarthy, author of The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas (CTJH), which is in almost every respect precisely the book that needed to be written about Habermas. It consists mainly in a detailed, lucid, and sympathetic exposition of Habermas's writings: from the early papers of the late 1950s and early 1960s (such as 'Between Philosophy and Science: Marxism as Critique', in Theory and Practice), through the 'middle period' of the mid-1960s (especially Knowledge and Human Interests, which led on to his first formulations of a theory of communication, e.g. 'Towards a Theory of Communicative Competence', Inquiry, 1970), and on to his recent work on the crisis-potentials of late capitalism (e.g. Legitimation Crisis, and the last essay in CES) and an attempted 'reconstruction of historical materialism' (e.g. most of the essays in CES). In addition, McCarthy provides a number of thoughtful and incisive critical discussions of some of the key difficulties in Habermas's views, such as the distinction between labour and communicative interaction (pp23-30), the claim that 'nature' is in some sense 'constituted' by the human species' technical interest in control (pp110-25), and his consensus theory of truth (pp303-10: I discuss McCarthy's treatment of this in a fuller review of CTJH to be published in Philosophical Books, October 1980).

A great merit of CTJH is the way it enables us to see the development of Habermas's views, and the reasons for some of his changes of position. An important example of such a change is the apparent departure from the doctrine of knowledge-constitutive interests that is involved in his recently developed concept of the 'rational reconstructive sciences', which include, for instance, logic, Chomskyan linguistics, and Piagetian developmental theories. The last of these play an important part in his 'reconstruction of historical materialism' (see CTJH, Ch. 3, section 6). Habermas argues that just as changes in the forces of production express changes in a species-universal technical learning process with its own logic of development, so also do changes in the relations of production express the development of a practical learning process, involving a logical progression of forms of normative structures and thought; and Habermas 'borrows' here from L. Kohlberg's Piagetian studies in onto-

genetic moral development. He claims that 'the development of these normative structures is the pacemaker [Schrittmacher] of social evolution', though he also maintains that 'this change of normative structures remains dependent on the evolutionary challenges of unsolved, economically conditioned systems problems...' (quoted in CTJH, pp248 and 253). I am not sure that these two claims are consistent; but a comparison with Weber's attitude towards historical materialism, and especially to the rise of capitalism, might well be fruitful.

A further merit of CTJH is that it presents many of Habermas's writings that have not been translated. The most important of these is his 1967 Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften. Particularly interesting here is the account of Habermas's criticisms of the leading contemporary exponent of hermeneutic theory, H.G. Gadamer, especially his Truth and Method, and of the exchanges between them following Habermas's initial attack. In this, he argued that Gadamer's insistence that all understanding is necessarily rooted in the 'prejudices' of the interpreter's own language, rules out the possibility of a certain kind of rational ideology-critique. Gadamer replies that his views do not rule out a critical relationship to traditions, but that he does deny the possibility of what he takes Habermas to be advocating, namely a critique from a uniquely privileged 'rational' standpoint. (This exchange is illuminating for the more general issue of the Frankfurt School's claim to provide a critique that is both rational yet historical.)

So: anyone who wants to be (fairly) up to date with Habermas's writings, read CES; and if you want the whole works, excellently presented, read McCarthy's 'big book', CTJH (warning: it's over 150,000 words - though individual sections can often be read separately).

Russell Keat

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MARX'S METHOD

David Papineau, For Science in the Social Sciences, Macmillan, 1978, £10 hc

Despite the editor's claim that this book draws upon recent work in the 'philosophy of science' and notwithstanding a handful of perfunctory references to such work, Papineau's For Science in the Social Sciences is severely dated in its aim, approach and design. Had it appeared some ten years ago and had the author seen fit to include an introduction or conclusion drawing together its disconnected chapters along with some substantial bibliographical notes patching up the more obvious omissions, some justification might reasonably have been offered for its publication. As it stands, however, this work is profoundly unsatisfactory and can in no way be recommended.

Intending as it does to introduce a new perspective on 'traditional problems' within the social sciences, the book is explicit in assuming no 'specialised training' in philosophy or the social sciences on the part of the reader; the style adopted throughout is, we are told, to be 'clear' and 'simple'. As is all too often the case in didactic commentaries, a simple exposition quickly turns into an affected simplicity which serves to justify frequent broad and unsubstantiated generalisations and which, paradoxically, demand a wealth of 'specialised training' if they are to be grasped and their relation to the main argument assessed. In the work under review this simplicity is on the order of distortion rather than detraction of the main argument. To cite only a few illustrations of this point; we find 'marxism' equated with economism (p120), modern physics seemingly denying universal determinism (p124) and 'Classical empiricism' encompassing the work of Hume, Berkeley and Locke (p19).

Partly because the arguments are often cut off before they are concluded and the topics discussed are seen as largely self-sufficient, and partly because of the contortionist literary style sometimes adopted, a certain dexterity (not to say perseverance) is required to discover this thesis. Certainly the aim of the work is clear: to assess the relationship that could and ought to hold between the social and natural sciences. This task is necessary because of the 'misunderstandings' surrounding both these terms and the stranglehold 'positivism' and the 'behaviourist principle' continue to exercise over the ways in which that relationship is conceived. It thus comes as something of a shock to learn that the author has no intention of defining the term 'social sciences' or even of using the category 'positivism'. We are therefore directed to pay particular attention to the early chapters since they set out a 'cogent vision of scientific practice' as well as laying the basis for a broader, simply 'scientific' (as opposed to 'social scientific') perspective on 'traditional social scientific problems', i. e. 'facts and values', 'actions, rules and meanings', 'free will and determinism' etc, which are discussed in the later chapters.

Science, we are informed, is concerned with 'universal generalisations', that is, with statements specifying that all things of some kind have some property' (p20). However, because of the

'problem of induction', such statements are unprovable. This said Papineau might have invoked the theories of Popper, Hume, Schlick or indeed followed any particular branch of the 'philosophy of science'. Instead we find him trying to follow them all and ending up somewhat perplexed. He holds the following positions: that the 'problem of induction' is unsolvable, that substituting testability for provability allows scientific generalisation, that 'falsifiability' distinguishes non-science from science - none of which, however, solves the 'problem of explaining why such proper science is such a good thing' (p21). The section on empiricism ends with a doubt that 'there is any good alternative to simply accepting as a first principle that the past is somehow an informative (if fallible) guide to the future' (p21, my emphasis). In a similar way Papineau only brings confusion to his discussion of the status of observations and theories. The 'double-language model' of science developed by Nagel and Carnap which posits a separate realm of observational and theoretical terms is rejected (p34) yet the author aligns himself with instrumentalism (p27), which presupposes just such a model (p28). Having accepted the strong arguments for instrumentalism against realism (pp26-27), we then discover that Papineau has switched to supporting a realist view of science (p46). We are presumably intended to fluctuate somewhere in between these 'opposing' positions. For convenience's sake, we are told, 'we can talk loosely of a term being more or less observation in general, according as it is more or less often used observationally (sic)' (p31, my emphasis). By this stage the notion of 'universal generalisation' has been dropped in favour of 'theory'. Drawing freely from Kuhn's notion of 'paradigm' and Lakatos' 'research programme' (which are 'not dissimilar' (p36)) and basing himself on his 'realism' (or is it 'instrumentalism'?), it is perhaps not surprising to find 'theory' referring to at least two separate notions. On page 33 we read that 'from now on "theory" will refer to any set of interconnected generalisations', and ten pages later that 'theory' refers to 'something like a continuing programme of research. This is ... the most natural sense of "theory" and one that I shall be using henceforth' (pp42-43). Apart from these confusing, contradictory and, frankly, incomprehensible positions, the book is littered with blunt misinterpretations. In Chapter 2, for instance, Feyerabend is falsely attributed with the belief in a context of justification distinct from a context of discovery (p43) (a view explicitly denied in Against Method Chapter 14) and in the belief in a notion of 'total incommensurability' (p38) (again denied in his 'Consolations for the specialist', Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge)

The 'Philosophy of the Social Sciences' currently finds itself in an unenviable predicament: it still fights for academic respectability, it remains unsure of its objectives and the theoretical apparatus it should develop to attain them, and borrows unashamedly from the disciplines that surround it. Papineau's intention was presumably to help solve some of these problems. However, in the light of the assessment above, For Science in the Social Sciences is very much part of this predicament rather than a step towards its solution.

Christine Loveland