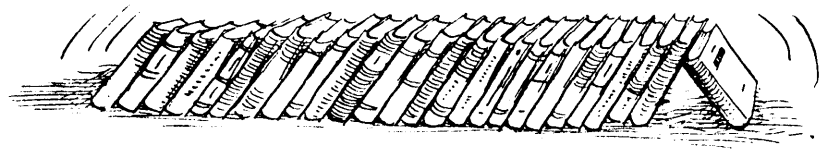
REVIEWS



Young Hegels

H.S. Harris, Hegel's Development, Volume II: Night Thoughts (Jena 1801-6), Oxford University Press, 1983, £35 hb, lxx + 627pp

Robert C. Solomon, In the Spirit of Hegel, Oxford University Press, New York, 1983, £25 hb, xxiv + 646pp

M.J. Inwood, Hegel, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983, £24 hb, xv + 582pp

I

In the first days of the nineteenth century, an obscure thirty-year-old provincial intellectual moved to the city of Jena, hoping to worm his way into a private lectureship in the Philosophy Faculty of what was then the most vigorous and prestigious university in Germany. His chances did not look good. It is true that Kant's presumptive heir, Fichte, had departed in 1799, after being accused of atheism. But, as one of the newcomer's antagonists pointed out, there were already nearly as many teachers as students in the Philosophy Faculty (between twenty and thirty). And the wonderboy Friedrich Schelling, not yet twenty-six, had already been a full professor there for three years, publishing five books and establishing an enviable reputation for himself; so there was hardly an intellectual vacuum.

The hopeful newcomer was G.W.F. Hegel. Some years later, he would be able to jeer at Schelling for 'conducting his education in public'. But for the time being, he was in no position to criticise, and Schelling was admirably generous to him, lobbying on his behalf with the Faculty, and cajoling him into writing his first book. This was The Difference between the Fichtean and Schellingian Systems (1801), in which, predictably perhaps, but unaffectedly, Hegel came down on Schelling's side. Hegel obtained permission to lecture, and the following year he and Schelling started the Critical Journal of Philosophy. The problem for Hegel was that he needed to shelter under Schelling's patronage, without being overshadowed. Providentially, Schelling himself had to leave Jena in 1803, because of a scandal with the wonderful, but not unmarried, Caroline Schlegel.

Schelling's departure led to the collapse of the Critical Journal after its sixth issue, but it also cleared some of the congestion threatening Hegel's future. He revived an old idea of writing a textbook for his lectures. But - what with a chaotic personal life, disputation-classes and lecture-courses on logic and metaphysics, mathematics, natural science, and ethics, not to mention his constantly changing ideas about philosophy - Hegel kept letting his publishers down. At last, in the summer of 1806, he was able to give his students a printed text for their lectures: the proof-sheets of the first half of the Phenomenology of Spirit; but he was still working on the second half, and trying to meet an October deadline. He accomplished this with a few days to spare; but immediately afterwards Napoleon captured the city, causing havoc in the University and leaving Hegel's carefully nurtured plans in ruins.

He spent the next eighteen months working as a journalist, and did not return to University teaching until he got a professorship at Heidelberg ten years later, at the age of forty-six. Still, he had at least published an impressive book - a work which could not be ignored. Some people consider the Phenomenology to be a carbuncle on the face of philosophy; others (including me) think that it is one of the most beautiful and enjoyable books in the world. Nineteenth-century Hegelians (including Hegel himself, some say) mostly regarded it as a rather unsuccessful trial run for his more systematic later works, which were frequently seen - by their advocates as well as their enemies - as a monumental remake of Plato, and the theoretical arm of conservatism and authoritarianism in religion and politics.

Those who, more recently, have tried to enlist Hegel into the tradition of progressive or revolutionary thought - notably Kojève in 1933, Marcuse in 1941, Hyppolite in 1946, and Lukacs in 1948 - have naturally attempted to promote the Phenomenology to at least equal rank with the later works. The benefits of this revaluation for leftist readings of Hegel are mixed, however. Marx himself definitely preferred Hegel's Science of Logic; and anyway the Phenomenology is open to Platonising and reactionary interpretations as well as to Marxist ones. Indeed there used to be a weight of scholarly opinion in favour of the view that the work is split down the middle because Hegel changed his mind about the key issues when the first half was already printed and the second not yet written. Inevitably, with so much depending on the status of the Phenomenology, a massive search began for a person called 'the young Hegel'.

The process had started with Wilhelm Dilthey's Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels in 1905. Drawing on a mass of Hegel's manuscripts preserved in Berlin, Dilthey enthusiastically evoked the idea of 'folk-religion' which had preoccupied Hegel between 1793 and 1800, and which Dilthey regarded as an anticipation of his own philosophy of history. Two years later, a portion of these manuscripts was published under the title of Hegel's Early Theological Writings <1>. The term 'theological' was to prove controversial, however: though Hegel was clearly calling for a revival of religion, he did not see himself as a friend to theology. In his book, The Young Hegel (1948), Lukacs went so far as to denounce the 'theological' label as 'a reactionary legend'.

But Lukacs' young Hegel - who bears an uncanny resemblance both to 'the young Marx' and to the recently hailed 'young Lukacs' - was to be overtaken by events. A thoroughly retooled Hegel-industry went into production in Germany in the 1960s, producing new dates, new attributions, and even new manuscripts. Since that time, the best of Hegelian scholarship seems to have been devoted to such matters as the evolution of his handwriting, making those who are more interested in the power of his dialectic feel rather left out: awestruck, nervous, and perhaps a bit annoyed.

II

Thanks mainly to H.S. Harris, English readers have convenient access to the esoteric world of young-Hegel studies. Some years ago, he brought out Hegel's Development, Volume I: Towards the Sunlight, 1770-1801 (Oxford University Press, 1972). After dealing quickly with Hegel's childhood and youth, this volume gave a painstaking account of Hegel's intellectual life as a seminary student at Tübingen and as a private tutor in Berne and then Frankfurt. Harris's meticulousness is prodigious, and his enthusiasm for his subject has charm, even if it is not unerringly infectious. His main achievement is to demonstrate Hegel's abiding passion for the idea of a 'folk-religion' - a popular culture which should satisfy the emotional needs of the masses, as well as the intellectual requirements of the philosophers. In the 'Tübingen Fragment' of 1793 (of which Harris provides a complete translation) Hegel wrote of the need for a religion which would be 'grounded on universal reason' but which would also ensure that 'fancy, heart and sensibility' would 'not be sent empty away'. Three years later, he was lamenting that 'we are without any religious imagery which is homegrown or linked with our history, and we are without any political imagery whatever; all we have is the remains of an imagery of our own, lurking amid the common people under the name of superstition' (Knox and Kroner, 216). Philosophy, as Hegel put it in the 'Earliest System Programme' (1796 - also translated in Harris), must link itself to mythology: 'mythology must become philosophical in order to make the people rational, and philosophy must become mythological in order to make the philosophers sensible.' It was with this exciting mixture of ideas about myth, religion, philosophy, and the people, topped off with references in letters from Schelling to 'the revolution that will be made by philosophy', that, on Harris's persuasive interpretation, Hegel moved to Jena in January 1801.

The second volume of Harris's biography is now available - eleven years after the first, and at seven times the price. It deals with Hegel's years at Jena, and especially with his frequently renewed attempts to get his own 'system', as he called it, into publishable shape. Harris traces these uncertain developments with the same scrupulousness which distinguished his first volume. He shows how the urgent activism of Hegel's earlier thought was at first pacified under Schelling's influence, but then slowly revived as Hegel planned, partially composed, and then abandoned two successive textbooks, before completing what was intended as an introduction to the 'system' - the Phenomenology of Spirit.

The overall direction of the story is provided by Hegel's growing conviction that Christianity is an advance on ancient Greek religion, and that the individual, rather than the community, must be the starting point for a renewal of philosophical culture. The details of the development, however, are appallingly complicated, especially given continued uncertainties about the dating of certain manuscripts. And whilst our Hegelian Maigret is always pleasant company, he does spend a lot of time speculating about the content of manuscripts (like the 'triangle manuscript') whose loss can hardly be considered a serious deprivation for philosophy. He perhaps also devotes longer than he need to summarising material which - thanks largely to his own efforts - is now available in very satisfactory English translation, though, thanks to the vagaries of academic publishing, it is almost unobtainable in British shops and libraries <2>.

But the real problem with Harris's new volume is that it confines itself to the foothills. 'My real aim,' Harris says in a mildly self-mocking conclusion, 'is to elucidate the Phenomenology of Spirit'; but though it completely dominates the landscape of his book, he stops short before he gets there. Extrapolating from past experience, we can expect a superb volume on the Phenomenology in 1994, at a cost of £245.

III

Harris's closing words - 'there is never any need to be impatient' - will not satisfy all his readers, so it is natural to look for a modern guidebook to the Phenomenology itself. And readers who fear suffocation in the archive-dust of Harris's investigations will be invigorated by the prairie breezes of Robert Solomon's In the Spirit of Hegel. The Preface sets the evangelising tone by telling us that, although 'Hegel was a horrible writer', nevertheless 'we can save him from his own language.' A very good introduction maps out the debates by which Solomon will orient his project, which, he says, is 'quite literally to re-do Hegel'. The idea of Hegel as a reactionary, Platonistic ontologist (which he attributes to Stace, Findlay, Taylor and Stanley Rosen) will be avoided. Solomon's Hegel will be 'a strict humanist', whose opposition to metaphysics is so vehement that he is 'in tune with the spirit of the logical positivists.' We will be disappointed, says Solomon, if we hope to find 'the Absolute' in Hegel: 'Hegel began looking for the Absolute, but what he discovered was the richness of conceptual history.... (He was) a conceptual anthropologist rather than an ontologist.'

The next 300 pages are a readable guide to 'the younger Hegel' and his relations to German romanticism. According to Solomon, Hegel's move to Jena in 1801 was a fall: his free spirit was henceforth trammelled by academic careerism. ('Unfortunately, to be a philosopher with professional ambitions, then as now, meant that one had to be profound, i.e. obscure and serious, i.e. humorless and extremely tedious.') Solomon's mission is to show that - even if Hegel would have denied it - a free and youthful Hegel survived behind the increasingly forbidding and respectable public facade; and that in the Phenomenology Hegel 'almost discovered that philosophy, and human nature too, were nothing but their history, without a terminus, without a Truth, without an essence.'

For Solomon, the main issue in Hegel-criticism is the question of method, and specifically of how Hegel conceived the progress of philosophical thought from one stage to the next. According to Solomon, 'five generations of British commentators' have assumed that the relation is one of logical deduction; and they have all been mistaken. The Hegelian transitions, he argues, are not 'logical', nor yet 'loose': they are accomplished not by pursuing an abstract 'method', but by following 'the path we expect to be taken to a particular result'; they are a matter of growth, not of logic, and as Solomon points out, 'growth is not the acorn's method of finding an oak tree.'

The second half of Solomon's book is more specific. Under the title of 'Hitching the Highway of Despair', he leads us, more or less sequentially, through almost every paragraph of the Phenomenology. Even when he is persistently unconvincing (as in his often repeated but always elusive repudiation of the idea that the contradictions Hegel writes about are logical contradictions), what he provides is never less than enjoyable, and often more, as when he pursues some disagreements with Heidegger, Charles Taylor, and Alasdair MacIntyre.

One of the freshest portions of the commentary is the discussion of the master-slave dialectic. Like many other recent critics, Solomon finds that the significance of this 'parable' within Hegel's plot has been vastly exaggerated, ever since Kojève's interpretation of it fifty years ago. He drives the point home by firmly refuting the supposition that

the slave eventually triumphs over the master. (The truth is that the master-slave relationship survives as a whole, to become the origin of subsequent developments.) Solomon's revision does not go far enough, though, for he still refers to master and slave as 'two principal persons', despite the fact that Hegel does not introduce the category of 'person' till a much later stage of his argument. Solomon also perpetuates the legend that Marx was decisively influenced by the master-slave discussion in Hegel <3>.

After 100 pages discussing Hegel's ethics Solomon comes round to a culminating chapter called 'The Secret of Hegel'. Here he argues, with some excitement, that since religion is 'superseded' by philosophy in the argument of the Phenomenology, the book contains a coded but unmistakable atheistic message, or at least an anti-Christian one. This squib is a little damp, though: all that we can prove from the text of the Phenomenology is that, having contemplated the variegated history of Christianity, and the achievements of ancient Paganism, the certainties of unconsidered Christian faith were no longer available to Hegel - and no Christian Hegelian would ever have supposed otherwise.

The difficulty is that Solomon can pin his cheerfully humanistic and relativistic and 'young Hegelian' conclusions onto Hegel only by resorting to the idea that Hegel, at least in his maturity, did not know what he really meant. It can hardly be denied that the Phenomenology culminates in a description of 'Absolute Knowledge' as the comprehensive last word on everything. Solomon asserts, however, that Hegel's philosophy is 'an absolute relativism', which implies, he claims, 'the utter impossibility of denying an irreducible plurality of possible human experiences and, consequently, possible human worlds. But' - he goes on - 'Hegel himself couldn't even consider this conclusion, and though he established it more brilliantly than anyone ever has in his Phenomenology, he felt compelled to deny it with his unproven appeal to the Absolute.... After Dorothy's discovery, the Wizard still had a career to carry on.'

Solomon's lightness of touch will certainly endear him to the worried novices for whom his book is intended; even if they find his 600 large pages too much, they will welcome the 15-page glossary of Hegel's main terms at the middle of the book - a section which seems likely to lead to an active independent life in the form of illegal photocopies. For apart from this, those seeking a cheap and easy guide to Hegel in general, may well be satisfied with Peter Singer's Hegel (Oxford University Press, 1983); while those who want a philosophical introduction to the Phenomenology may confidently stay with Richard Norman's short but excellent Hegel's Phenomenology (Sussex University Press/Harvester, 1976).

IV

After Harris's leisurely scholarship, and Solomon's breeziness, M.J. Inwood's Hegel may come as rather a jolt. It belongs to a series whose aim is to provide brief 'analytical' commentaries on 'the arguments of the philosophers'; and it is dedicated to the idea of philosophy as uncompromising hard work. The only point he shares with Harris, Solomon, and most other Hegel-scholars, is that he seems to have got infected with Hegelian gigantism - as if, with utter disregard for trees, budgets, or eyes, the purpose of writing on Hegel were not so much to present a few new ideas about him, as to write it all out again, like some obsessive character in a story by Borges.

Inwood's book is fastidiously thoughtful, and, in its scrupulous deafness to the contingencies of fashion and the marketplace, quite brilliant. Implicitly, it is a rebuff to all partisans of 'the young Hegel'. Inwood does Hegel the honour of taking him at his word - as the creator of a 'philosophical system', with three parts, dealing respectively with logic, nature and mind, the greatest of these being logic. For Inwood, as for Hegel, the Phenomenology is a kind of portico leading in to the great edifice of 'the system' itself.

In his first half, Inwood gives a sympathetic description of the 'problems' which Hegel's system was designed to solve - how to overcome the fragmentation of experience; how to avoid making assumptions; how to construct a system which could represent not only the world but also its own emergence in it; how to prove the existence and qualities of God; and how to explain that proofs produce new concepts, rather than merely (as in standard logic) recycling existing ones.

In the second half of his book, Inwood patiently weighs up Hegel's performance with each of the problems he tackles: even the notoriously unattractive doctrines that natural reality contains logical contradictions, and that it has the structure of syllogisms, are portrayed with great care and effectiveness. In the end, by Inwood's tests, almost none of Hegel's doctrines deserve to be believed; but, by his example, Inwood demonstrates that they are well worth debating.

Inwood leaves us, therefore, with the paradoxical idea of a philosophy which is false but indispensable. His book is a reminder that, if we take Hegel literally, he is indeed an absolutist and a theist. The possibility remains, though, that it might be better not to take Hegel literally - to read his books as if they were some kind of fiction, perhaps. For then the project of progressive 'young Hegelianism' comes back to life. Kant, after all, had argued that there were fictions - about the unity of nature, or the kingdom of ends, or historical progress - which we must trust in not because they are objectively true, but because otherwise they would be impossible, and because their possibility is a condition of wisdom and virtue. In the same way, Hegel's system can be read as a philosophical Utopia - an absolute fiction about what things would look like if it were possible to grasp them as a perspectiveless whole, once and for all. But Hegel himself, it would have to be conceded, was not exactly a playful Utopian novelist. As Inwood says, 'it is not modest to claim to be a mere mouthpiece for one's subject-matter, particularly if one's subject-matter is God'; and multitudes of postulated 'young Hegels' cannot alter that fact.

Jonathan Rée

1 Herman Nohl, Hegels Theologische Jugendschriften, Tübingen, 1907; translated as Early Theological Writings, by T.M. Knox, with an introduction by Richard Kroner, Chicago, 1948. Some political writings of the same period are available in Hegel's Political Writings, trans. T.M. Knox, with an introduction by Z.A. Pelczynski, Oxford University Press, 1984. Another main source for the study of the young Hegel is J.K.F. Rosenkranz, G.W.F. Hegels Leben, 1844, and 'Hegels ursprüngliche System 1798-1806' (1844), which made use of manuscripts since lost.

2 The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy (1801), trans. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf, Albany, SUNY Press, 1977; Faith and Knowledge (1802), trans. Walter Cerf and H.S. Harris, Albany, SUNY Press, 1977; Natural Law (1802-3), trans. T.M. Knox, ed. H.B. Acton, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975; System of Ethical Life (1802-3) & First Philosophy of Spirit (1803-4), trans. H.S. Harris and T.M. Knox, Albany, SUNY Press, 1979.

3 See Chris Arthur, 'Objectification and Alienation in Marx and Hegel', Radical Philosophy 30, Spring 1982, pp. 14-24; and 'Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic and a Myth of Marxology', New Left Review 142, November-December 1983, pp. 67-75.

Radicalism and reaction in the work of Max Weber

Susan J. Hekman, Max Weber and Contemporary Social Theory, Martin Robertson, 1983, £16.50 hb, 213pp

Gianfranco Poggi, Calvinism and the Capitalist Spirit: Max Weber's 'Protestant Ethic', Macmillan, 1983, £12 hb, £5.95 pb, 121pp

Stephen P. Turner and Regis A. Factor, Max Weber and the Dispute Over Reason and Value, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984, £14.96 hb, 274pp

The work of Max Weber occupies an ambiguous position in relation to the diverse projects of avowedly 'radical' social theory. Viewed in a certain light, Weber is one of the enemy. At the level of general methodology he is responsible for forging neo-Kantianism into 'the principal alternative to the post-Hegelianism of Marx's dialectical materialism' (Turner, 1981, p.3). His substantive theory of capitalism is the most influential of bourgeois rearguard actions against Marxism, reverting to an idealist conception of history and a political-economic theory of class. Weber's political theory is even more suspect. A commitment to German imperialism underpins a celebration of power-politics, and opens direct lines into fascism.

Were this an adequate placing of Weber's corpus, radical theory could shudder and quickly pass on. In fact, Weberian themes enter into radical social theory at each of the 'levels' noted above. Methodological debates within sociology during the '60s and '70s led to an equation of radicalism with opposition to the hydra of 'positivism'. Within such a radicalism, Weber's development of an 'action' methodology can occupy an honourable place.

The 'rationalisation' theme in Weber's theory of capitalism became a major focus for Frankfurt School theorists, who took it up '... in ways connected to the dialectic of living and dead labour, of ethical and systemic relations' (Habermas, 1984, p. 343). For Habermas, the theme must remain at the core of a radical social theory (ibid., p. 399). Attempts to reformulate Marxist class-theory have also drawn on Weber, if less overtly, so that, as Parkin remarks, 'Inside every neo-Marxist there seems to be a Weberian struggling to get out' (Parkin, 1979, p. 25). Commentators on Weber's political theory have come to stress his Nietzschean pedigree. This has led, in turn, to the recognition of thematic continuities between Weber and Foucault's recently fashionable explorations of 'power/knowledge' <1>.

The three volumes under review can each be related to at least one of these 'levels' on which the radical potential of Weber's work can be problematised. They thus provide a useful occasion for a brief assessment of that potential. Hekman's concern is with Weber's methodology and its relevance to contemporary foundational debates. Poggi elucidates the argument-form of the 'Protestant ethic thesis' and its place in his account of Occidental rationalisation. Turner and Factor examine Weber's value-theory, which informs both the rationalisation theme and his conception of politics, and review the debates to which it has given rise.

Hekman seeks to defend and deploy Weber's methodological concepts (Most notably that of the 'ideal type') in order to solve the potentially fatal foundational problems of social science. 'In a philosophical sense, the social sciences are floundering. They have discarded the positivist foundations of their discipline; nevertheless, they fail to agree a viable replacement' (Hekman, p. 193). Drawing on Giddens for support, Hekman urges that any 'viable replacement' must consist in a foundational synthesis of post-positivist schools of general methodology, a synthesis of 'subject and structure'. She goes on to advance the thesis that '... in his theory of the ideal type, Weber effected a synthesis between the analysis of subjective meaning and the assessment of structural forms' (Hekman, p. 14). Thus, after some fine-tuning, Weber's general methodology can serve as a new foundation for the social sciences.

It will be clear from the above that Hekman accepts without question a version of the 'foundationalist' thesis, according to which only the formulae of philosophy, or general methodology, can validate, ground, legitimate or justify the practices of social science inquiry. But to read Weber through such a foundationalist grid is to obscure the possibility that he is of interest to radical theory precisely as a critic of philosophical foundationalism. Two examples will illustrate the manner in which Hekman begs this question.

First, she advances the common view that Weber's general methodology derives from Rickert's version of neo-Kantianism: despite his denial that generalisation is peculiar to the 'sciences of nature', 'Weber was in general agreement with most of Rickert's theory' (Hekman, p. 22). This alignment supports the image of Weber as the author of a verstehende sociology, founded on a methodological appropriation of neo-Kantian value-theory. But it is just this image which is contested by those who see Weber's concern with values as primarily political and Nietzschean.

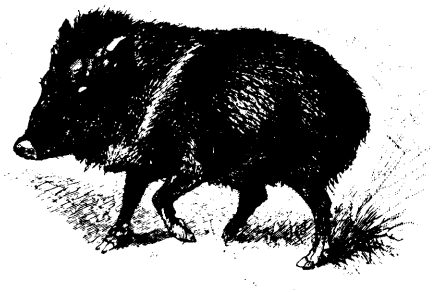
Mommsen (who allows that Weber 'borrows' from Rickert) insists that 'Weber did not share the belief of the neo-Kantians in the existence of any "objective" cultural values' (Mommsen, 1974, p. 7). Turner and Factor argue that Weber's entire sociology is '... motivated by a specific (Nietzschean, SC) philosophy of values and is unintelligible apart from it' (Turner and Factor, p. 39). On the same basis, Fleischmann scorns the '... futility of Rickert's efforts to place Weber (after his death) in the Pantheon of neo-Kantianism' (Fleischmann, 1964, p. 197). It may well be that a 'Nietzschean' denial of the rationality of values can co-exist with elements of a 'neo-Kantian' methodology <2>. But Hekman simply does not allow this crucial question to be posed.

Second, Hekman devotes an entire chapter to Weber's conception of 'objectivity' and its pertinence to post-Winchean debates about 'rationality'. Yet at no point does she refer to what many would see as Weber's most significant contribution to this area; the substantive conception of 'rationalisation' as a socio-historical process. The possibility which Hekman excludes by default is nicely caught by Bauman. 'Max Weber saw the chance of an objective understanding in the very changes already brought about by the advent of Capitalism: in the central role capitalism assigns, to an ever growing degree, to rational-instrumental action' (Bauman, 1978, p. 69).

Considered in its own terms, Hekman's general argument flows well enough. The 'ideal-type' concept is elucidated, and defended against both subjectivist and structuralist critiques. She has useful points to make about Weber's relation to themes in recent general methodology (on the whole she prefers the Wittgenstein-Winch tradition). But the entire text has the flavour of a somewhat formal exercise. It is never quite clear what the purpose of a refounded social science is to be, or how 'refoundation' will alter research practices. It may well be that Weber's importance fo these questions lies precisely in the anti-foundationalist strain which Hekman effaces from his work.

The 'Protestant ethic thesis' forms a useful case-study in the limits of a foundationalist reading of Weber. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism is often treated as a battlefield in the foundational war between 'idealism' and 'materialism'. As Mann notes in his 'foreword' to Poggi, generations of sociology students have been required to contrast '... Weber's stress on the content of religious beliefs with Marx's stress on material factors as explanations of the rise of capitalism' (Poggi, p. vii). The outcome of such comparisons will normally be taken to be an endorsement of the foundational power of either verstehende sociology or historical materialism. Alternatively, some mighty synthesis between the two general methodologies might be proposed.

The thrust (if not all the detail) of Poggi's persuasive re-reading of the argument is resolutely anti-foundationalist. Poggi insists that Weber did intend The Protestant Ethic as a refutation of what (unfairly, no doubt) he took to be the claims of 'Historical Materialism' about the relation of 'base' to 'superstructure'. But this refutation proceeds through '... the sustained examination of a significant contrary instance' (Poggi, p. 84), rather than through general foundational argument <3>.



The value of Poggi's interpretation lies first in his careful reconstruction of the phases of Weber's argument and second, in his striking account of the pertinence of the argument to the history of capitalist development. It is a common vulgarisation of Weber to portray Calvinist doctrine as an immediate motive for engagement in, and the 'rational' conduct of, business. Against this view, Poggi makes clear that Calvinist doctrine, the ethic of 'inner-worldly asceticism', and the occupational ethic which Weber terms 'the spirit of capitalism' are conceptually distinct and (in historical terms) only contingently related elements. '... The whole story shows how a certain body of religious ideas (Calvinist doctrine in particular) typically leads the believer to adopt a certain ethical posture (inner-worldly asceticism). This posture in turn - within certain groups already involved in the practice of business - engenders a certain occupational ethic (the spirit of capitalism)' (Poggi, p. 56).

Poggi's account of the historical signficance of The Protestant Ethic begins with the claim, in evidence above, that the 'protestant ethic' develops among groups of Calvinists who have been involved in business for some generations. The 'ethic' is neither the immediate motive for business activity, nor the original catalyst for the formation of a group identity. The significance of Weber's thesis relates to what Poggi construes as the third stage in the development of 'the western Bürgertum'. In the first two phases the Bürgertum has constituted itself as a powerful 'estate', established in the economic, legal and political structures of the late-medieval city. The historical role of the 'protestant ethic' is to have promoted, within elements of that estate, the emergence of the rationalising 'spirit of capitalism'. This led to the transformation of the social relations involved in the conduct of business, and set in motion the processes which transformed the Bürgertum from an estate into a class. In the formula which Poggi elucidates at some length, Weber's argument is 'partial, complex and momentous' (Poggi, p. 79).

Poggi's argument does not evade foundational entanglements entirely. It is open to doubt whether he reconciles his insistence on the contingent, historical character of Weber's thesis with allusions to 'elective affinities' or 'meaningful congruences' between the relevant formations <4>. But what emerges clearly from Poggi is a view of the place of 'ideas' in history in which '... the bearing of the original intentions upon the later outcomes often becomes positively bizarre and perverse' (Poggi, p. 87). It may be possible to assimilate certain of Marx's remarks to this view, and the ironic 'dialectic of enlightenment' is familiar from Adorno's work. By and large, however, radical theory has been reluctant to reflect on the implications of Weber's sense of the 'evil ambience' of routinisation and the 'underlying malevolence' of social reality (Turner, 1981, p. 10). It is more comfortable to repeat vade mecum critiques of 'idealism', 'teleology' and 'pessimism'.

These issues lead back to the question of the appropriate general interpretation of Weber. It is possible to identify three major frameworks in which unity might be sought for Weber's apparently diverse concerns. The first seeks to remake Weber in the image of American sociology. In this vein Parsons portrays the conception of a 'value-free' but 'value-relevant' social science as one which transcended its origins and '... heralded the "end of ideology"' (Parsons, 1971, p. 48). More recently, Alexander has acknowledged the existence of contradictory tendencies in Weber's work, while maintaining that the 'liberal' elements celebrated by Parsons and Bendix '... are the most valuable kernels of Weber's analysis of contemporary society' (Alexander, 1983, p. 100).

The second general framework is that advanced by Hekman, among others: Weber the founder of a neo-Kantian verstehende sociology. Turner and Factor set themselves the task of shattering both of these images, particularly the former. The story about Weber the '... heroic defenderof reason and science against ideological attack' is, they allege, 'a fairy tale' (Turner and Factor, p. 1). In its place Turner and Factor seek to install a third, less prepossessing, image of Weber as a reactionary Nietzschean nihilist.

The claim that Weber is an irrationalist is not new, of course. Lukacs, for example, argues that the doctrine of 'value-neuturality' '... banished irrationalism from (Weber's) methodology ... only in order to introduce it as the philosophical basis of his world-picture...' (Lukacs, 1980, p. 619). From a very different perspective, Strauss's celebrated paper claims that Weber's doctrine of the subjective, non-rational, character of value-choice '... necessarily leads to nihilism, or to the view that every preference, however evil, base or insane, has to be judged before the tribunal of reason to be as legitimate as any other preference' (Strauss, 1953, p. 42). In a more strictly 'sociological' mould, Fleischmann (1964), Aron (1971) and Mommsen (1974) have all stressed the Nietzschean turn in Weber's theories of value and politics.

One of the main achievements of Turner and Factor is to have charted the manner in which these, and other, interpretations of Weber's value doctrine emerged, and to map the complex debates within whch they are placed. Their book is essential reading for anyone interested in the influence of debates in pre-war Germany on the development of post-war social science. Turner and Factor have more than documentary ambitions, however. They also develop their own analysis and evaluation of Weber's position.

Weber's value-doctrine (and defences of it from contemporary Weberians such as Roth and Schluchter) turns on a series of illegitimate reductions and elisions. First, Weber treats ethical judgements as 'values', and concludes that all values involve choice. Second, he elides the 'choice' between alternative courses of action with the 'choice' between ethical theories. Third, he reduces 'rationality' to a deductivist conception '... that identifies reasoning with

deductive reasoning from principles' (Turner and Factor, p. 36). On this basis Weber can 'prove' that values are non-rational, and that (subjective) value-choice is inescapable. He can then argue that only one of a range of possible choices is 'realistic'.

The most general form of this argument is found in Weber's 'Politics as a Vocation', where he distinguishes the 'ethics of ultimate ends' (concerned only with intentions) from the 'ethics of responsibility' (concerned with consequences). Only the latter is a 'realistic' response to the challenge of the times. More specific versions of the same argument dispose of alternatives to extreme nationalism in politics, and 'value-neutrality' in social science. Weber contrives to pass off highly specific (and generally reactionary) value-judgements as the necessary consequence of a 'realistic' sociology of values. Turner and Factor follow the vicissitudes of these doctrines over the course of half a century, to conclude that 'Weber believed that he had discovered the limits of reason: perhaps it would be better to say that he had discovered the limits of a particular philosophical tradition' (Turner and Factor, p. 233).

The distaste which Turner and Factor display for the reactionary content and hectoring tone of Weber's value-doctrine is no doubt to their credit. But the suspicion remains that the doctrine embodies insights which a radical social theory would ignore at its peril. First among these must be the claims that the question of 'values' is central to social and political theory, and that the question must be placed in an historical context. The argument that values have been 'subjectivised' by the process of rationalisation cannot simply be ignored.

Attempts in radical social theory to think away this problem have their own fates. Thus, Lukacs's early attempts to evade subjectivism and relativism pitch him into an historicism which replaces Weber with Hegel. On the other hand, the 'discourse-theoretic' neo-Marxism advanced by Hindess, Hirst and others in the late '70s seems to fall prey to precisely that 'irrationalism' which Lukacs condemned in Weber: 'values' are rigorously excluded from theoretical discourse, which becomes a matter of 'calculation', but the choice of one discourse as against another cannot be rendered rationally accountable. If radical social theory tries to evade the Weberian problem of the 'fate' of values, it must fall victim to that fate.

The fate of values is one aspect of the 'ironic' conception of history exemplified by the 'Protestant ethic thesis' and discussed above, and it is perhaps appropriate to end with a paradox. The apparently 'progressive' elements in Weber's work, as interpreted by Hekman, seek to embroil radical social theory in a foundationalist metaphysics. The more overtly 'reactionary' themes in Weber seek to relate the collapse of traditional foundationalism to the 'fate' of modernity, and are therefore of more interest and importance to radical theory. As Fleischmann notes, for Weber 'The task of the true scholar is to give value to the values themselves ...' (Fleischmann, 1964, p. 238). The would-be radical scholar cannot evade this task.

Steve Crooks

NOTES

1 On these relations see, for example, Turneer 1982 and Dews 1983.
2 The example of Simmel, whose own influence on Weber was considerable, suggests that this is so. Rickert's recognition of the existence of different 'spheres' of culture clearly feeds into Weber's Nietzschean differentiation between conflicting 'spheres of value'.
3 Weber's text 'Stammler's "refutation" of the Materialist Conception of History' (Critique of Stammler) indicates his scepticism about the value of such argument.
4 See, for example, Poggi's discussion of the 'disaffinities' between Catholicism and the capitalist spirit on pp. 56-60.

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Dangers of Deterrence

Nigel Blake and Kay Pole, eds., Dangers of Deterrence: philosophers on nuclear strategy, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983, £5.95 pb, 184pp

Nigel Blake and Kay Pole, eds., Objections to Nuclear Defence: philosophers on deterrence, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984, £5.95 pb, 186pp

Karl Jaspers, The Atom Bomb and the Future of Man, Chicago University Press, 1984, £8.45 pb, 342pp

Philosophers have written some of the most dreadful prose known to mankind, so it is a relief to find that many of the contributors to the two volumes edited by Blake and Pole are not philosophers at all, and that some of those who are have managed to turn out some engaging and readable essays. In fact, there is not much philosophy in the two volumes. Objections is mostly moral argument (on which philosophers, of course, have no monopoly) and Dangers operates primarily in the areas of strategic and political debate. There is not too much here to put off the non-specialist reader.

In terms of style and tone the contributions vary greatly. Michael Dummett's magnificent essay 'Nuclear Warfare' in Objections is a passionate, crusading denunciation of the monstrous wickedness and insanity of nuclear deterrence. In Dangers Mary Midgley and W.B. Gallie adopt a more detached and cautious style in picking their way carefully through the arguments for and against deterrence and disarmament. The question of style is at the heart of the essay which I found the most original and exciting in the two books (and one of the few which really is philosophical), 'Morality and Survival in the Nuclear Age' by Susan Whin Zaw. She tries to understand what reason and imagination can each contribute to the process of developing fundamentally new moral perspectives appropriate to the drastically new situation. The conditions of life are so changed, she argues, that 'the values with which one is already equipped are simply inadequate for dealing with the world'.

Objections explores some of the moral arguments which have been at the centre of the debate about nuclear weapons within the Christian Churches. If engaging in nuclear warfare is immoral, does it follow that threatening to engage in it (which is what deterrence is based on) is also immoral? Does threatening nuclear warfare necessarily involve intending to engage in it under certain conditions? Is this intention immoral absolutely, under all conditions, or only conditionally, depending on the circumstances? Do the

moral distinctions written into international laws, treaties and conventions of warfare have any possible application in nuclear war? The essays on these topics by Antony Kenny, Michael Dummett, Roger Ruston and Bernard Williams are very useful.

Michael Dummett takes the view that nuclear deterrence is unconditionally wicked. Bernard Williams disagrees. He argues that moral judgement must take into account the circumstances and likely consequences of action and policy. The case for nuclear disarmament, then, must be based not on moral absolutes but on the kinds of reasoning that are at the heart of policy formation, international relations and strategic thinking, that is practical and prudential reasoning. When critics claim that CND lacks realism, their charge usually amounts to just this, that unilateralism is based on moral absolutes and ignores practical considerations.

It is not necessarily as a consequence of cynicism or wickedness (though these are certainly not in short supply in ruling circles in both blocs) that decisions on defence policy and international relations always subordinate moral values to prudential calculation. For example, political leaders may be convinced by Roger Ruston's conclusion that 'the use of nuclear weapons and the threat to use them flagrantly violate (international laws and conventions) and the moral framework within which they stand'. But, they will answer, with the sad shrug of the worldly-wise, there are overriding considerations. The peace movement has no hope of success unless it can convince people that nuclear disarmament is not only morally proper but also that it makes practical sense as a 'realistic' defence policy.

There has been an enormous wealth of argument supporting such a case produced in the last year or two, and Dangers of Deterrence makes a modest contribution to this effort. The most substantial essay in the book is 'Unilateralism: A Clausewitzian Reform?' by Ken Booth, a strategic studies and foreign policy expert, who argues that non-nuclear defence makes optimum strategic sense for Britain. But Booth's argument also shows clearly the limitations of this kind of strategic studies analysis. His argument is based on the idea that global 'stability' must continue to be based on the world-order of the post-war settlement - the division of Europe into spheres of influence, the military occupation of Europe by foreign powers, the confrontation of the two superpowers. But it is just this international order which has produced the arms race, which continues to escalate the arms race to unimaginable proportions and which creates the risk that the whole system will tip into the terminal instability of nuclear conflict.
In other words, it is not a stable system at all. When it does produce local islands of 'stability' this takes the form, as in Poland and Turkey, of the military boot stamping on the face of all aspirations to democracy and freedom. Booth argues that 'Europe has to continue to live with the implications of the Cold War and the shadows of two determined superpowers'. But this is to ignore all those grave and ever-multipying risks of war which Booth has himself documented at length at the beginning of his essay. British nuclear disarmament would not by itself diminish by any significant degree the risks of nuclear war except within the context of some broader European politics of disengagement, some international political dynamic that would help to shift international relations away from the confrontation of nuclear-armed blocs. We can only avoid the frozen wastes of the nuclear winter if British nuclear disarmament helps to thaw the icy stasis of the Cold War.

Karl Jaspers's book was originally published in German in 1958. The English translation is now republished as a paperback. It contains a mixture which I find impossible to stomach - Cold War politics, German existentialism and religious faith. His style of philosophical argument is not now as fashionable as it once was. In this tradition of thinking, philosophy has a world-historic mission. The philosopher stands above and surveys all departments of human thought and activity. The whole panorama of human history lies beneath him. From this height he can diagnose the human condition and point the way forward.

What Jaspers can see from his eminence is that the world faces two possible forms of utter disaster: either destruction by the bomb or world conquest by totalitarianism. In either event, history would come to an end. In the latter case it would end because history is freedom, whereas totalitarianism is absolute unfreedom. This kind of philosophical argument is based on the notion that you can sum up the essential truth of complex societies or historical epochs in one simple concept. That one thing is the essence. It tells us everything there is to know about the future possibilities for society. It is a style of thinking that wants to reduce all the multiple complexities, contradictions and potentialities of the present to just one essential concept ('freedom'/'unfreedom'). For all its apparent sophistication, this kind of philosophy is in the end very simple-minded.

What happens if a choice has to be made between these two ways of bringing history to an end? Does the philosopher recommend pushing the nuclear button in the event of a threatened Soviet offensive? Yes, he does. Rather everyone dead than everyone totally unfree. By failing to face up to this greatest risk 'man would be failing in his task'. But what is this talk of 'man's task'? Is human history the working through of some preconceived assignment? It emerges in the final chapter of the book that Jaspers does rest his case on a religious faith in the ultimate meaningfulness of human history in the light of some transcendent purpose. When history ends, as some religiously motivated great statesman unleashes the final war, we can be confident, Jaspers argues, that it will not have been in vain. 'It could be necessary only as a sacrifice made for the sake of eternity.' We should contemplate nuclear war with Job's words in mind: 'The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.' Personally, I do not find this view of history reassuring. I hope Christian friends in CND can forgive me saying that, in this nuclear age, when I hear talk of eternity or the trials of Job I would, if I had one, run for my bunker. Since I do not have one I will book my place on the coach to Barrow and put my faith, inasmuch as I have any, in politics.

John Mepham
(This review originally appeared in Sanity)

Tallyman

Adolf Grünbaum, The Foundations of Psychoanalysis: a philosophical critique, University of California Press, 1984. £15.60 hb, 310pp

When it is asked, 'Is psychoanalysis a science?', two distinct questions can be intended. One concerns the possible satisfaction by Freud's theory of those criteria which distinguish a scientific from a non-scientific doctrine; another asks about the relationship between psychoanalysis and the 'natural' sciences. Thus, with respect to the first, most are familiar with Popper's characterisation of Freud's theory as a pseudo-science unfalsifiable by any conceivable experience: as for the second, there is the claim that psychoanalysis is a human science whose theoretical domain is not reducible to that of such natural sciences as biology for instance. Adolf Grünbaum's is, on the whole, a welcome addition to this debate on the purported scientificity of psychoanalysis. The author is generally sympathetic to Freud, and his concern accurately and fairly to represent Freud's views is shown by his painstaking textual cit tion. His arguments are carefully

and precisely outlined, meticulously defended and their import extensively detailed. Indeed, if anything, the style is over ponderous and the language unnecessarily prolix: there is much that could be, and deserves to be, stated with more concision and bite. There is rather too much wielding of argumentative sledge hammers to crack minor nuts, and the telling quotation is redeployed once too often.

This is a pity. In essence, Grünbaum's case is a simple one: psychoanalysis is not unfalsifiable, but it is not confirmed by experience since clinical data ('from the couch') can only validate the key Freudian claims - for example, concerning repression - on condition that a certain argument succeeds. This, which Grünbaum gives the sobriquet 'The Tally Argument', maintains that, crudely, in psychoanalysis if it works it's right; that is that a hypothesis's correctness is ultimately guaranteed by its therapeutic efficacy. Grünbaum seeks to show how Freud was himself aware of the problems surrounding the confirmability of his major claims, how he outlined and defended the 'Tally Argument', only later to abandon it without realising the full implications. For his part, Grünbaum finds the argument wanting and concludes that psychoanalysis, whilst it might yet receive confirmation from extra-clinical sources, is, on its own ground, unproven. Psychoanalysis is, Grünbaum believes, alive (just) but certainly not well.

Grünbaum's critique is an interesting and challenging one, and he is right to berate Freud's defenders with having failed to appreciate just how vulnerable psychoanalytic theory is to certain elementary charges. The problem is that insofar as Grünbaum's book essentially turns on his appreciation of this single argument, it lacks the comprehensiveness of a general philosophical critique of Freud. Moreover, his approach is curiously lopsided. He opts for a lengthy 'introductory' critique of the hermeneutic misconception of Freudianism. Now he may well be right to attack Ricoeur and Habermas for 'saving' Freud from 'scientism' only at the expense of rendering him incomprehensible, but what justifies devoting a third of the book to these particular commentators? Grünbaum's claim that the hermeneutic rendition of Freud is 'widely accepted' if not de rigeur seems overblown, if not patently false. Moreover concentrating on these writers means that Grünbaum misses the opportunity to broaden the discussion and tackle a crucial and interesting debate - namely understanding Freud in terms of meanings, symbols and language as possibly opposed to understanding him in terms of causes and mechanisms. Thus, Lacan, who could be treated in this context and who is surely far more 'de rigeur' in many circles, is mentioned only once and then at second hand. Again, when looking at the debate about 'motives as reasons or causes' which has been very influential in Anglo-American readings of Freud, Grünbaum quotes at some length from a Toulmin article which is now almost forty years old, and ignores the more recent, relevant writings of Donald Davidson.

The introductory critique is unsatisfactory for a further, and perhaps more crucial, reason. In defending the scientificity of Freud's work against the hermeneuticists, Grünbaum makes the claim that 'Freud forsook his initial ontologically reductive notion of scientific status in favour of a methodological, epistemic one' (p. 3). This claim is repeated but nowhere defended in detail or at length. The only 'evidence' cited for the claim is Freud's laying aside of his 1895 'Project for a Scientific Psychology'. But clearly the failure to achieve an actual reduction need not entail the abandonment of reductionism; nor does the latter represent a simple alternative to 'epistemic' models of scientificity. Moreover, the influence and importance of the 'Project' in Freud's conception of psychoanalysis is too contentious to deserve Grünbaum's single paragraph treatment, just as his mere two references to Sulloway's influential study of Freud in terms of biological theory is grossly inadequate.

Of course, the move Grünbaum makes in those early pages is crucial since, if the scientificity of Freud's theory is methodological, then perhaps the crucial argument is the one attacked (and further consideration of the relationship between psychoanalysis and the natural sciences is necessary). But then again Grünbaum shows himself surprisingly unaware (on the page at least) of debates in the philosophy and history of science. He spends a great deal of tima criticising Popper for culpable misuse of the supposed 'case of psychoanalysis' to exemplify the merits of falsification. Yet he himself seems simply to assume that there are standard methodological protocols whereby any theory's scientificity is appraised. Were this to be a genuinely comprehensive philosophical appraisal of Freud's 'science' much more would have to be said about various accounts of scientificity.

One senses that Grünbaum's book emerges from articles which first isolated and examined the 'Tally Argument', with the 'Introduction' appended as a polemical flourish. This is not to gainsay the value of Grünbaum's critique. Not least this is because, as Grünbaum shows, Freud's own appreciation of the need and the way to defend his theory as science is sadly absent from most of his defenders. There are however severe limitations to Grünbaum's approach and these only serve to signal the kind of 'philosophical critique' of Freudianism which might have been produced.

David Archard

David Archard, Consciousness and the Unconscious, Hutchinson, 1984. £4.95 pb, 136pp

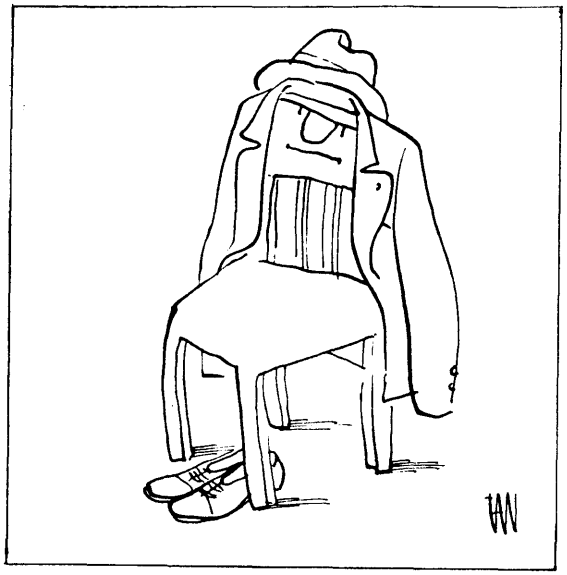
Hutchinson's new 'Problems of Modern European Thought' series is intended to bridge the divide between continental and English-speaking philosophers by providing a range of studies of continental themes by authors familiar with 'the procedures of analytic philosophy'. In the first volume of the series to be published, Archard concentrates upon the concept of the unconscious, as presented in recent European thought. After a general exposition of Freud, he turns to a lucid discussion of Sartre's objections to psychoanalysis and then to Lacan. Finally, discussion is extended to take in Timpanaro's The Freudian Slip, a text which the author rightly regards as having been shamefully neglected in contemporary British accounts of psychoanalysis.

The discussion and critique of Sartre's criticisms of Freud are particularly welcome in that they do much to bring to light the influence of Politzer, whose work has been ignored or forgotten for far too long. There is, however, a certain irony at work here. Whilst it is certainly true that Sartre owes a great deal to Politzer, Politzer was also a major influence on Lacan's early work, but that issue is never raised here. The relationship between Lacan, Sartre's existential psychoanalysis and Politzer's 'concrete psychology' is much more complex and tortuous than Archard would have us believe.

When it comes to Freud and Lacan, matters are rather less satisfactory. Whilst it is definitely refreshing to read an account of Lacan that rejects the usual pieties about his supposed reliance on linguistics and brings out certain of his misappropriations and distortions of the work of Saussure and others, the comment that Lacan's very style of writing precludes any objective critical appraisal is uncomfortably close to the strictures of Anglo-Saxon 'common sense'. Although some of the ambiguities of Lacan's relations with philosophy are touched upon, it is disconcerting to find no reference to his debts to Heidegger who, in terms of theory of language, may well be more relevant to Lacan than Saussure himself. As in many philosophical accounts of psychoanalysis, the unconscious itself is viewed with a certain suspicion. Archard presents the unconscious as a philosophical proposition rather than a clinical reality and tends to asepticise it by paying relatively little attention to its sexual components and connotations. If anything, he lends

credence to the psychoanalytic (and eminently Lacanian) claim that philosophy cannot tolerate the foregrounding of sexuality and therefore insists upon subsuming the unconscious within debates about philosophy of mind.

David Macey



Barry Richards (ed.), Capitalism and Infancy: Essays on Psychoanalysis and Politics, Free Association Books, 1984, £14.95 hb, £5.95 pb, 232pp

This is a collection of papers devoted to the theme that psychoanalysis can illuminate social processes where Marxism fails. Many of the authors share a background in the 'British school' of analysis which has developed out of the work of Melanie Klein and object-relations theory. They demonstrate a detailed knowledge of psychoanalytic theory. The articles are clearly written, without any of the flamboyant posturing of post-structuralism. Partly for this reason, however, one is continually aware of how difficult it is to integrate psychoanalysis and social thought.

Psychoanalysis is primarily a form of individual psychology. Its theory is based upon a method of observation and investigation which focuses on the minutiae of individual feelings and personal relationships. It is like a microscope for the mind.

Thus equipped, the analyst is uniquely able to observe the effects upon individuals of current social conditions and to reveal the psychological damage that results. There is an excellent piece here by Sue and Ray Holland which uses case studies in this way, to give a powerful and moving account of the effects of racial barriers in mixed marriages. One is reminded of Fanon. The Rustins also use some case material to good effect in their contribution.

However, many of the other articles use psychoanalysis merely as an idiom for social and cultural criticism. Such psychoanalytically-based social theory has been enjoying a vogue recently, but it is not new. On the contrary, there is a long tradition of it, going back to Freud himself, and including Reich, Marcuse, Fromm and Lasch (who contributes some stray fragments to this collection).

Suggestive and fertile as this tradition has sometimes been, it also has its pitfalls. Freud's efforts in this area (e.g. Totem and Taboo, Moses and Monotheism, etc.) should be a sufficient warning. As Marx says, the ideological conceptions of scientists become evident once they 'venture beyond the bounds of their own speciality' (Capital, I, p. 373n).

The authors here are all too prone to 'psychoanalyse' social phenomena in sweeping and speculative terms which are neither illuminating as social theory nor helpful politically. In fact, these articles are most interesting when they focus on purely technical issues of psychoanalysis. A good piece by Stephen Robinson, for example, covers some of the main philosophical problems in Kleinian theory.

All in all, this is an interesting and useful collection of papers which well indicates both the range of the psychoanalytic contribution to social thought, and its weaknesses and strengths. It is also the first product of a new press which is an offshoot of Radical Science Journal and a welcome addition to left-wing publishing in this country.

Sean Sayers

Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel, Creativity and Perversion (foreword by Otto Kernberg), Free Association Books, 1985, £11.95 hb, £5.95 pb, 172pp

Our perception of French psychoanalysis is so dominated by the monstrous figure of Lacan that it is all too easy to forget that his name is not in fact synonymous with France's share of the Freudian heritage. Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel, for instance, speaks from another scene within the analytic community. She is a training analyst with the Société Psychanalytique de Paris, the oldest of the French associations from which Lacan made such a memorable exit in 1953. The essays collected here are based upon lectures and seminars given while she held the Freud Chair of Psychoanalysis at University College London in 1982-83.

Using a wealth of clinical material and literary references ranging from Sade to Wilde and Wells's Island of Doctor Moreau, Chasseguet-Smirgel undertakes a thorough exploration of Freud's theories of perversion, arguing that perversion is rooted in an attempt to deny differences of gender and generation and in a desire to create an alternative world of hubris which goes against all universal laws. At the same time, derivatives of the perverse anal instincts are held to be at the origin of the matrix that gives rise to creative idealisation and aestheticism.

Two theoretical issues stand out in these studies. Firstly, the ego is accorded a positive value that would be anathema to any Lacanian. More significantly, Chasseguet-Smirgel begins to challenge the infantile theory of phallic monism (which is of course endorsed by Freud) by suggesting that there may be a pre-phallic stage at which the girl-child has an intuitive knowledge of her own sexual organs as opposed to a belief that she, too, should or will have a penis. Unfortunately, the implications of this claim for feminism are not thought through. While it has the advantage of questioning certain of the assumptions surrounding the notorious question of penis envy, it could also lead to the assertion that there is an innate, eternal and inescapable essence of femininity. In short, it could lead back to the naturalist theories of femininity against which Freud was arguing in the thirties.

Chasseguet-Smirgel's essays are marred by a certain amount of repetition and by a disturbing tendency to equate radical political action with forms of perversion. As so often, psychoanalysis reduces the political to the pathological. They are, however, also characterised by a theoretical openness which makes a welcome change from the Lacanian dogmatism that sometimes appears to typify all analytic work undertaken on the far side of the Channel.

David Macey

A. Sayer, Method in Social Science: a realist approach, Hutchinson, 1984. £12 hc, £6.95 pb, 271pp

In this book, Sayer aims to present the methodological implications for social research which follow from a realist philosophy of science. He acknowledges that several chapters owe much to the work of Roy Bhaskar and Rom Harré.

The first two chapters deal with the context in which knowledge develops and how it relates to practice and its objects. Sayer rejects the possibility of absolute truth and argues that knowledge is assessable by reference to its 'practical adequacy'. He also adopts the view that observation is 'theory laden', but I am not convinced that he adequately demonstrates how this fits with practical adequacy. My reading leads me to the opinion that his exposition results in an epistemological tension between idealism and pragmatism, a position which is not resolved due to the theoretical isolation of these chapters from the remainder of the book. The isolation arises because in developing the implications for the method of social science from the ontology of the realist view, Sayer neglects the relationship of this method to his aforementioned theory of knowledge. Due to this, the ontology, and therefore the implications for research, are only given support in loose terms, even though the ontology is argued to be necessary for the possibility of knowledge and society. This ontological position entails the idea that social reality is stratified and embodies emergent properties involving necessary and contingent social relations; necessity and contingency being regarded as essential for the possibility of knowledge for the researcher and society's members.

Taking account of these problems, it must still be said that in using this ontology the text does give a concise and clear presentation of the broader parameters for research into the social world. This involves the idea that in the realist approach events are causally explained by reintroducing and confirming the existence of mechanisms, and in turn the existence of mechanisms is explained by reference to the structure and constitution of the 'objects' which possess them. From this position Sayer presents a penetrating critique of various research methods.

Because of this, although the work could have been framed by tighter argument (particularly in the realm of epistemology), I think that the book is well worth reading for an appreciation of social research informed by a realist perspective. Sayer's major consideration in writing the book was to make it accessible to students and researchers with little or no previous experience of the philosophy of social science, as well as to make it interesting for those who are already familiar with this field. He has essentially succeeded in this objective.

Paul A. Fox-Strangways

A. Cottrell, Social Classes in Marxist Theory, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984. £25 hb, 373 pp

The author begins by discussing Marx's theory of class as it is found in the Manifesto and the Eighteenth Brumaire, and the neo-Marxist approaches of Poulantzas, Carchedi and Wright. He goes on to present his own analysis of economic class relations in contemporary Britain. Finally there is an investigation of political forces in post-war Britain. The arguments are solidly grounded in the post-Althusserian Marxism of Hindess, Hirst et al., and so absurdities and contradictions abound throughout the text.

For example, on page 1 we are told '... I wish to "test" the conclusions derived from this theoretical reflection against the task of analysing some aspects of the development of class relations in ... Britain over the post-war years...', but when we get to page 18 we find '... one can reject all social-historical theories which appeal to an essential explanatory principle ... "the facts" ... or whatever." Cottrell goes on to interpret all the 'facts' of Britain's post-war experience as supporting his theories.

His class theory is deceptively simple. Capitalist Britain has a dichotomous class structure based on possession of/-separation from the means of production. Cottrell argues that as the joint-stock company is the major form of capital in Britain so that no one individual person owns the means of production in these companies, then capitalists as individuals have ceased to exist and all of the company's employees are working class. There is a yawning theoretical gap between these economic class relations and Cottrell's analysis of what he calls 'social collectivities' (basically any arbitrarily defined group of people) and political forces. He tells us that there can be no determinate relationship between economic classes and politics, except that Marxist theory identifies class relations merely to point to what needs changing by a socialist revolution. Any attempt at a social scientific analysis goes out of the window, all that remains of Marxism is an unsubstantiated moral commitment.

Theoretically and philosophically naive in the extreme, Cottrell's concrete analyses are no better. Even the supposed advantages of post-Althusserean Marxism (i.e. to provide analyses of race and gender for example) are lost in his concrete analyses. These focus almost entirely on trade union struggle and electoral politics as described in the dry statistical studies of political 'scientists'.

It's difficult to find anything good to say about this book other than it presents with startling clarity the absurdities of post-Althusserianism.

Paul Bagguley

Albert Weale, Political Theory and Social Policy, Macmillan, 1984. £15 hb, £5.95 pb, 227pp

Weale proceeds from the assumption that a central problem in the theory of social policy is the degree to which the state should assume responsibility for the welfare of its citizens, and sets out to assess the principles from which to consider this question. Both liberalism and socialism are assumed to seek the development of human autonomy, and Weale analyses those arguments in which the welfare state is seen as contributing to or detracting from the goals of autonomy, though without considering any practical examples. After defending this goal as a form of the good, he claims that the welfare state does provide a minimum adequate level of autonomy, but that separate principles are required to discuss those welfare measures which seek to go beyond this minimum. A conception of rights is presented to support such principles, and a more detailed discussion then follows of the mechanisms by which resources are divided in the welfare state. A conclusion considers how the process of welfare decision-making can become more democratic.

Insofar as welfare systems are too little confronted by political theorists (who often do not go beyond abstract discussions of the redistributive problem) this is a very welcome book. Intellectual defenses of the welfare state have been very battered of late and remain weak, and this book is a very useful basic introduction to the whole topic which, without confronting particular theorists or politicians, serves to clarify the theories and principles at issue. To the degree that a preference is made, the author relies largely on a utilitarian and contractarian conception of social choice (though other principles are considered as complementary arguments) in which the principle of autonomy is given central emphasis, and in which many forms of government intervention are seen as a means of increasing liberty and autonomy rather than, as in neo-liberalism, threatening it.

Gregory Claeys

T. Ball and J. Farr (eds.), After Marx, Cambridge University Press, 1974. £22.50 hb, £6.95 pb, 287pp

This collection of papers on aspects of Marx's work is essentially a sometimes competent exercise in academic Marxism and as such perhaps could most judiciously be placed in the context of the on-going 'Marx industry'.

The themes discussed include the possibility of 'rescuing' a humanistic Marx from the total Marx-Engels oeuvre; whether, methodologically speaking, Marx was eclectic or monothetic (the different levels of methodology remain undistinguished here); Marx's use of notions of causality; and the influence of Engels on the way we read Marx's method(s).

Engels seems to play the role of demon king in this collection, firstly, and perhaps rightly, because of the impact The Dialectics of Nature had on the way 'dialectics' has commonly been appropriated by friends and foes. Secondly, and more questionably, he appears as arch-positivist (a term which undergoes a good deal of slipping and sliding and is never distinguished from realism). Lastly, Engels also gets the blame for the Soviet brand of 'socialism'. The influence of Engels' 'positivistic'/'instrumentalist'/'manipulative' conception of Historical Materialism paved the way for Leninism's degeneration into Stalinism, it seems.

Another theme is the issue of whether it is rational for workers to struggle for socialism. Unfortunately, this is posed as an unmediated means-ends dualism, disregarding whether benefits might accrue along the way which validate such a struggle. Rather we have a kind of abstract cost-benefit approach with workers trying to calculate whether they gain or lose by making an input into 'the revolution'. G.A. Cohen's views on base-superstructure relations and the possibility of technological determinism surface in a couple of the papers. Finally, there is an interesting discussion of Marx's views on how individual subjects are inserted (as citizens) into the social relations of the capitalist state. This suggests how, for example, the Falklands War was capable of rescusitating the state as an internal relation of the subject, via national chauvinism.

These papers have, on the whole, the air of the seminar room; an academic recuperation of Marx as a platonic figure above the political hurly-burly and collaboration with Engels; a figure from whom endless debates can be spun which do not engage with the social reality about which Marx wrote. The publisher's blurb suggests that one sense in which the contributors are 'after Marx' is that they write in the 'critical spirit of Marx', but as one turns the pages of After Marx, it is 'after' in the sense of Minervian critical dusk that encroaches.

H. Feather

Margaret Jacob and James Jacob (eds.), The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism, George Allen & Unwin, 1984. £16 hc, x + 333pp

Potential readers might be puzzled by the title of this book. 'Anglo-American radicalism' is not a common phrase, even among those with an interest in the history of the radical tradition; but it could well come to be heard more frequently if this book is given the attention it deserves. The twenty-one authors whose work is represented here are concerned with the parallels between English radicalism, as it developed after the English Revolution of the mid-seventeenth century, and the transatlantic movement which culminated in the American Revolution more than a century later. The contributions, from a distinguished group of British and American historians, are of a high standard and provocatively diverse in their approaches and conclusions. The reader is helped to perceive the issues at stake by an extensive introduction, and by the provision of commentaries on some (though not all) of the papers.

One of the exciting features of the work, from the point of view of the historian, is the diversity of methodological approaches which it exemplifies. On the one hand, we have the analyses of ideological formations, undertaken for example in Lois G. Schwoerer's discussion of the influence of the 1689 Declaration of Rights, or on a rather larger scale in J.G.A. Pocock's masterful survey of radical opposition to the Whig hegemony. On the other hand, precisely-focused social history is exemplified by the work of Gary B. Nash and Steven Rosswurm on radical movements in eighteenth-century Philadelphia. Somewhere between the analyses of ideology and of social structure, and perhaps offering the prospect of reconciling the two, lies the study of radicalism as a cultural phenomenon, using the tools of the anthropologist. This approach is emphasised in a number of ways: Nicholas Rogers and Alfred F. Young explicate the rituals of popular protest in (respectively) England and America, while the cultural aspects of what would later be called 'industrial' disputes are highlighted by Robert W. Malcolmson. The work of E.P. Thompson and John Brewer (neither of whom is represented in this volume) has clearly been an important stimulus in the development of the cultural approach, which although fertile and suggestive remains unrationalised methodologically. The one attempt which is made here to grapple with the methodological problems of the reconciliation of cultural, social and ideological approaches, by Rhys Isaac, is rather quickly and high-handedly squashed by a commentator, who remarks that it 'collapses in the face of social complexity'.

The publisher's blurb for this volume claims that 'many of these radical ideas will sound familiar; they are also timely'. I doubt that this is true to the authors' intentions. They are without exception scrupulously concerned to avoid anachronism in ascribing views to the radicals they portray, even when the radicals then appear far from 'progressive' to twentieth-century eyes. For example, Pocock and Rogers point out how radical opposition politics in early eighteenth-century England, reacting to developments in commercial capitalism at the time, could find expression in popular Toryism. Those who seek a teleological or hagiographical history of radicalism will find little to comfort them here. But those who are genuinely interested in developing the historiography of radicalism in Anglo-American culture will find this book indispensable.

Jan Golinski

Richard Kearney, Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers, Manchester University Press, 1984. £17.50 hb, 133pp

Richard Kearney has collected together in one volume a series of interviews he has conducted with five leading thinkers of recent times: Paul Ricoeur, Emmanuel Levinas, Herbert Marcuse, Stanislas Breton, and Jacques Derrida. I suspect that maybe Levinas and certainly Breton will be largely unknown to an English-speaking readership. All the interviews are conducted by Kearney in an accessible and lucid manner, and he has the ability to consistently pose the 'right' questions and elicit generous answers. Of course a book like this is no substitute for the task of reading the real thing, but it does serve the highly useful purpose of allowing these notable theorists to clarify their ideas in response to criticisms and misunderstandings that have arisen over their work; a practice that will prove to be, I believe, of utmost benefit to readers of recent continental philosophy.

The interview with Derrida illustrates the usefulness of the task. Derrida is responsive to the charges that Kearney raises concerning the deconstructive project - that it is nihilistic and apolitical, and he adamantly proclaims: 'I totally refuse the label of nihilism which has been ascribed to me. Deconstruction is not an enclosure in nothingness, but an openness towards the Other.' Derrida is also given the opportunity to clarify the notion of the 'end of philosophy' which he has developed from Heidegger into the idea of the 'closure of metaphysics'. A great deal of confusion has been generated over Derrida's meaning, mainly by hasty commentators and critics, and he responds accordingly and without conceding anything in the way of forsaking the essential ambiguous nature of the term, recognising that his thought has been seriously misinterpreted and misunderstood. The book should also serve to introduce to a wider readership Levinas, a fascinating thinker who is concerned with 'the primacy of the ethical' (in heteronomous not autonomous terms) and who represents an interesting development in contemporary continental thinking. The 1976 interview with Marcuse catches him, I think, at his most uninspired. The interview is conducted around the issue of the relation between art and politics, and it is evident that at the end of a long and brilliant intellectual career, Marcuse has finally colluded with the German tradition of aestheticism (Kant, Schiller) that he had so brilliantly criticised some four decades earlier. All five thinkers share a common background and heritage in phenomenology, and beyond that, one might suppose, there is little that unites them. However, they are all practitioners in the art of philosophy, and therein perhaps lies unity in diversity.

Keith Pearson

Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics (trans. and edited by Caryl Emerson, with an introduction by Wayne C. Booth), Manchester University Press, 1984. £11.50 pb, xliii + 333pp

Co-founder of the 'Bakhtin Circle' alongside P.N. Medvedev and V.N. Voloshinov in the USSR in the late 1920s, Bakhtin originally published this work with the title Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Practice in 1929. Not long afterwards he was arrested and sent into internal exile. Rehabilitated in the 1950s, Bakhtin revised the text and saw it republished in 1963, to be followed in 1965 by the publication of what is perhaps his most famous work, Rabelais and his World. This is a new translation of the revised and retitled second edition.

The central problem tacked in this book is that of the unique contribution made by Dostoevsky to the history of the 'menippea' as a literary genre. 'Menippea' may be briefly characterised as the 'underside' of the traditional rhetorical genres. Its origins are to be found in the Menippean Satire, the Socratic dialogue and the diatribe of Greek antiquity, and it stretches through the Renaissance (Rabelais and Cervantes) to culminate in Dostoevsky's modernist version. What gives these different modes their unity, according to Bakhtin, is their 'carnavaleque' nature - the discourse of the public square, of the threshold or frontier between self and other, of 'crowning and decrowning', of parody and utopia - the turning of the world 'inside out'. As such, they are dialogical and open, contrary to the predominantly monological and closed discourses of most literary modes - although all are vulnerable to it. They are addressed to others and contain others within their utterances. Not only is dialogical discourse referential, but more importantly, it is related to other discourses (literary, philosophical, etc.). It is double-voiced, and its words are 'cringing' words, or words with a 'side-ways glance'.

Dostoevsky is seen by Bakhtin to have developed this tradition to the point of having created a new literary genre: the polyphonic, as opposed to the homeophonic, novel. In Dostoevsky's later novels dialogue is extended so as to include a plurality of 'consciousness centres', the voices of many personalities - each of equal validity and subordinated to that of neither author nor narrator. There is no dominant voice or idea. This being so, far from being a decadent romantic (Lukacs), Dostoevsky, for Bakhtin, both artistically reflects reality in its dialogic truthfulness, and projects a carnavalistic utopia of equality.

Despite what could be seen as merely gestural appeals to the power of the word in class societies, and a certain lack of awareness of instances of incommunication, these historical and socialised conceptions of polyphony, dialogical discourse and carnavalisation - especially in their utopian inflections - have recently, quite rightly, been taken up by some Marxist literary theory and criticism, displacing the influence of structuralism's monologic 'parole'. Bakhtin's work is recognised as part of a buried but recoverable popular tradition, and it is gratifying that it is at last accessible to the English reader.

John Kraniauskas

Vladimir Propp, Theory and History of Folklore (trans. A. and R. Martin, ed. Anatoly Liberman), Manchester University Press, 1984. £11.50 pb, 251pp

> 'The study of Russian folklore shows that it is indeed saturated with historical self-awareness. This is evident in heroic poetry and in historical songs, later in the songs of the Civil and Great Patriotic Wars. A people with such intensity of historical consciousness and with such an understanding of its historical tasks can never be defeated.'
> (p. 15)

So wrote Vladimir Propp in a 1946 essay on folklore, confirming - horribile dictu - the claim of the editorial introduction that Propp found no difficulty in adapting his famous work on folklore to the ideological demands of Stalinism. Until this volume, Propp was by and large known to non-specialists only as the author of the classic Morphology of the Folktale, originally published in 1928.

That was, and is, a book I love and use. Its development of simple, reproducible techniques for revealing the formulaic bases of a range of 'wondertales' (Propp's own title for

his book, in fact) laid the basis for a great deal of subsequent, but markedly inferior, structural analysis of narrative. Here was a revolutionary method for the empirical analysis of narrative ideologies. Then to find Propp so happily tainting his work with 'patriotic historical tasks' was a real deflator.

After the very long introduction, which partly addresses specialist folklorists but which also makes their discipline available to non-specialists, perhaps the most interesting part of the book is the clash it reproduces between Propp and Lévi-Strauss. Lévi-Strauss 'discovered' Propp's 1928 work when it was finally translated in the West in the 1950s. He wrote a glowing review of it, but within that he criticised it from his 'mythological' standpoint as 'formalist'. Propp reacted furiously, counterposing his own empirically-based study to Lévi-Strauss's 'a priori' method. This he did a trifle abusively. Lévi-Strauss responded with a curt but sad regret at Propp's tone - and there the discussion ended. Propp, who died in 1970, is now generally seen as just the formalist that Lévi-Strauss depicted him.

If nothing else, this volume ought to restart that discussion. For always glowing like hot embers under the Stalinist schemata and the self-imposed caution, is a different Propp: one who loves wondertales, humour, ancient ballads, and loves them for their empirical richness. One who finds traces of history in all the complexity of the tales he treats. The spirit of the Morphology and its methods is one that would live with that richness and seek within it clues to the social sources from which it grew. Who are the formalists now? When so many of our soi-disant structuralists produce historyless histories, myths that think themselves through us, and ideologies that structure our subjectivities, I'll stick with Propp. And if I ever get tempted to feel harsh about the Stalinist bleaknesses, I'll reread Victor Serge's The Case of Comrade Tulayev, and wonder how brave I would have been.

Martin Barker

Marcelin Pleynet, Painting and System (trans. Sima N. Godfrey), Chicago University Press, 1985. £15.95 hb, 167pp

Pleynet was for many years the managing editor of Tel Quel and is now on the editorial board of its successor, L'Infini. The four essays collected here deal with Matisse, The Bauhaus, Mondrian and the Russian constructivists. In other words, they typify Tel Quel's long-standing concern with the modernism produced by moments of rupture (a term designed to signal a parallel with Bachelard's epistemological break) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Mercifully, we are, however, spared the political terrorism that infected so much of Tel Quel's writing, especially during its Cultural Revolution phase.

Pleynet's criticism is remarkable for the way in which he attempts to reconstruct the ideological ground against which the rupture takes place and for the sophistication of his interdisciplinarity. This is most pronounced in the essay on Matisse (by far the longest in the collection), which combines biography, the artist's own statements, theory of colour and a general survey of the ideologies of the period to impressive effect. The application of psychoanalysis is less happy. By relating the late paper cut-outs to castration reactions Pleynet comes disastrously close to vulgar Freudianism. It would have been more fruitful to extend the brief comments on the old line-colour debate in French painting.

The avant garde whose history Pleynet traces here is, predictably, somewhat restricted, as was the literary avant garde which Tel Quel celebrated. In many ways Cézanne is the central figure, though no one essay is devoted to him. The line of descent from Cézanne is through post-impressionism to cubism and constructivism; Dada and surrealism are conspicuous only by their absence from the pantheon.

The sophistication of these essays is undeniable, but there is an anachronistic feel to them in 1985, when the galleries of both London and Paris are dominated by figure painting and varieties of realism, when the logical heir to Matisse appears to be Hockney rather than anyone else (the debt is especially obvious in some of Hockney's portraits of Celia). Three of the essays were written in 1969 and the fourth (on Matisse) in 1970-71: in many ways they say more about the concerns of the Parisian intelligentsia of that period than about the subjects under discussion.

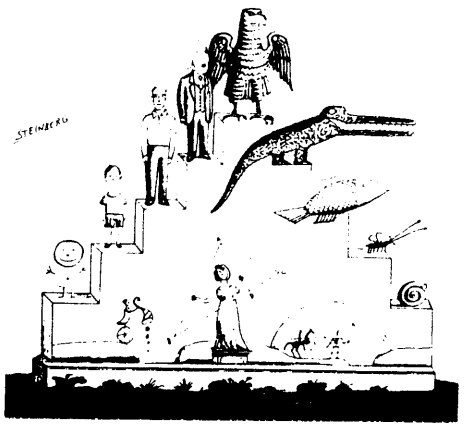
The translation is on the whole accurate, if at times over-literal, but Godfrey is woefully at sea with the initials of Russian revolutionary organisations and with the title of a pamphlet by Lenin. Sadly, the illustrations are, as in the French original, limited to three Matisse drawings.

David Macey

Bertrand Russell, The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell Volume 7: Theory of Knowledge: The 1913 Manuscript, (ed. Elizabeth Ramsden Eames in collaboration with Kenneth Blackwell, George Allen & Unwin, 1984, £35 hb. 314pp

When all 28 volumes of The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell are published (in the year 2000) they will look very pretty arrayed on a library shelf, bound in navy-blue cloth with gold lettering. They may not be consulted every day, but that is hardly the point of an enterprise such as this. It will save much scurrying over the Atlantic to the Bertrand Russell Archives at McMaster University, Ontario. The world of pure scholarship is lastingly enriched. And perhaps eventually - early in the next century? - a 'Shorter Collected Papers' might come out in paperback so that Russell's more important occasional pieces will at last be brought back to a wider public at a price it can afford.

Meanwhile, however, we have this volume. It is not an occasional piece, but a nearly completed book intended as Russell's major contribution to what he then saw as the most important problem: 'Can human beings know anything, and if so what and how?' Its composition was an extraordinary feat of intense application, writing ten pages a day in his pellucid prose. But, alas, his young student - 'my German engineer' - Ludwig Wittgenstein told Russell it was 'all wrong'; the 350-page manuscript was set aside and seemingly blotted from Russell's memory until disinterred from amongst his papers by the eager beavers of the Bertrand Russell Archive.



ONTOGENY AND PHYLOGENY. Stephen Jay Gould's study of the relationship between individual development and species evolution is now available in paperback (Harvard University Press, 1985, £7.95, 501pp).

This is an important transitional text for those interested in the development of Russell's thought from the dualism of the still popular Problems of Philosophy (1912) to the logical atomism Russell publicly espoused from 1918 onwards. But readers who are not historians of philosophy might do better by hanging on and saving up for later and more intriguing volumes: the title essay of volume 19 is 'The Man who stuck Pins in his Wife' (logical pointillism, perhaps).

John Fauvel

David Selbourne, Against Socialist Illusion: a radical argument, Macmillan, 1985. £25 hb, £8.95 pb, 327pp

David Selbourne attacks the 'socialist illusion' that either communism or social democracy is possible or desirable. Instead 'the left', whose definition in the context is obscure, should struggle with the erosion of individual liberty in the modern state-corporatist world. Selbourne's argument centres on the proposition, repeated on every page, that the working class not only acquiesces in the private capitalist market but takes its very identity and values from it. Hence 'the welfare state' can never be the basis for advance to socialism but remains a vulnerable and clumsy way of coping with a resented residuum of the poor and the disabled, while offering all sorts of perks to middle-class users. Contemporary 'middle class socialist' notions of 'participatory democracy', directed against capitalism and state socialism, fail to recognise the essentially private aspirations of a labour force content to allow others to run the show.

Selbourne's book is long-winded and repetitive, the brilliance of its sentences palling through a lack of development in the argument. It is thoroughly referenced, but must have been written before the important works of Nove and Hodgson.

Focusing almost entirely on Britain, it is locked as a consequence within an insular, static and backward-looking perspective, making few efforts to assess relevant developments in world capitalism, especially as regards the future of work and of economic nationalism. For all that, and for all the failure to provide a 'materialist base' to his appeals for a libertarian market 'leftism', Selbourne's book adds to the growing list of awkward bed-time reading for socialists. But if, lying there, you think you're reading the same thing over and over again, it's not so much an effect as a possible cause of drowsiness.

Tony Skillen

C.A. Wringem Children's Rights: A philosophical study, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, £12.50

Although this book opens with a well-researched list of demands and movements for children's rights, its main argument involves a fairly uncritical application of a general inquiry into the nature of rights to 'the case' of children. This conservative-liberal formalism, a regrettable feature of the Peters-Hirst school of educational thought, makes for a dull, though bibliographically useful, book. Any serious discussion of children's rights would surely need centrally to examine what childhood is, psycho-biologically, and socio-culturally. This would of course entail an historical perspective and one sensitive to the 'value' dimension of the 'category' 'child'.

An illustration of Wringe's way of thinking: liberally, he questions school uniform regulations; yet he writes:

> The child has a welfare right (of guidance and protection) vis-à-vis his elders to be prevented from flouting conventions which he may not fully understand, to the extent of attracting ridicule or hostility, particularly on the part of those in a position substantially to affect his material interests.... If it is thought ... that the outlandish appearance of children reflects badly on their parents and damages the latter's interests, it would seem to follow that children do not normally have the right to dress outlandishly...
> (p. 153)

Do not allow your children near large parts of this book but there are good grounds for reading small parts to them, these grounds being classifiable as (a) educational and (b) soporific.

Tony Skillen

Karl R. Popper and John C. Eccles, The Self and its Brain, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984. £7.95 pb, xvi + 597pp

John C. Eccles, The Human Mystery: The Gifford Lectures University of Edinburgh 1977-1978, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984. £5.95 pb, xvi + 255pp

These related books, first appearing in 1977 and 1979 respectively, are now published in paperback. Popper and Eccles's central concern is 'the argument for interactionism': that brain and mind constitute distinct states of being and that logic and science require us to accept their causal interaction. Eccles's starting point, in the last four of ten Gifford Lectures and in a substantial middle section of the book with Popper, is the current state of neurophysiology: observed 'selectional and integrational functions' require explanation by the causal intervention of mind. Behind this is the tradition of natural theology (which in the nineteenth century learnt the danger of making arguments for spiritual purpose in the world depend on contingent states of knowledge), expressed here in a recounting of evolution from cosmos to altruism. Popper's starting point is a critical review of mind-body theories, leading to his well-known argument for Worlds 1, 2 and 3 (which Eccles deploys in his lectures). In the third section of their joint book, Popper and Eccles stroll in the grounds of the Villa Serbelloni above Lago di Como, recording a patrician dialogue for the rest of us.

Roger Smith

W.F. Whitehouse, A Realistic Conception of History, Aquila Publications (64 Lissimore House, Maria Street, West Bromwich, B70 6DR), 70p pb including p&p, 12pp

Readers of Radical Philosophy will find the title of this pamphlet misleading. Realistic is used as a term of approbation for an idealistic speculative philosophy of history which, curiously enough, combines Hegelian with Popperian ideas. What 'makes history go' is something that Whitehouse calls 'general mentality' which is an 'aggregate of unique individual ... minds', which contribute to a complex of intended events and unintended consequences. I wasn't impressed, either, by his claim to have 'knock-down' arguments against Marxism to counter its nefarious influence.

Cynthia Hay

M. Adereth, The French Communist Party: A Critical History (1920-1984). From Comintern to 'The Colours of France', Manchester University Press, 1984. £27.50 hb, 326pp

Wisely, Adereth does not claim to have written a fully scientific study of the French Communist Party (PCF), but he does provide a clear narrative account of the major phases in its history and of its policies. It is based primarily upon source material that will be familiar to any student of the Party. Adereth's history will not, and is presumably not intended to, replace any of the standard works, but should serve as a concise and readable introduction to one of the West's more interesting Communist Parties. Perhaps inevitably in a work of this length, there are some omissions and some oversimplifications. The PCF's stance on the colonial question, and particularly on Algerian independence, was, for instance, rather more ambivalent and less honourable than is suggested here. Discussion of the Party's cultural politics is brief to the point of inadequacy; it would surely have been preferable either to have devoted a chapter to the subject or simply to have omitted it. More surprisingly, there is no discussion of the PCF's views on feminism other than a quotation from a woman Politburo member who tells us that she feels 'quite at home' in the Party. No doubt she does, but her remark is hardly illuminating. Such reservations aside, this is a useful introductory survey. Regrettably, the inflated cover price means that those most likely to need an introduction will probably be unable to buy it. Someone once described the PCF as a proletarian restaurant serving cuisine bourgeois. Manchester University Press obviously believes that its history is a cordon bleu delicacy and prices it as such.

David Macey

Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone (ed.), Communism in Eastern Europe, Manchester University Press, 1984 (first edition 1979), £25 hb, £8.50 pb, 391pp

This is not a book for those wanting a Marxist analysis of Eastern Europe. Its purpose, methodology and values are very different. It is basically a textbook guide to the political, social and economic systems of the region, which also includes a number of general chapters on Eastern Europe as a whole and its relationships with the outside world. The predominant explicit theoretical debt is to the American Political Science tradition of Huntington, Almond, etc., offset to an extent by fairly sound historical writing. Most of the contributors appear to be non- or anti-socialist and work with an idealised model of liberal democracy with which to judge the errant socialist republics and peoples' democracies.

Vincent Geoghegan

John Gray, Hayek on Liberty, Basil Blackwell, 1984. £19.50 hb, 230pp

Partly through the successes of his British and American disciples during the last decade, Hayek has become perhaps the most important post-war neo-classical liberal devotee of laissez-faire and opponent of 'the road to serfdom' - the emergence of economic planning in Western countries. Gray, the author of a recent defence of Mill's On Liberty, here continues the trend of interest revealed by more general works like Norman Barry's Hayek's Social and Economic Philosophy, and also alerts us to at least two other forthcoming studies and biographies of his subject. Part of the strength of his own work for those who seek with short lines to plumb the minds of modern conservatives is the 70-page bibliography, half as long as the text itself.

In his analysis, Gray's sense of the grandeur of Hayek seems to have been fortified by his Mill studies, since Hayek is essentially portrayed as the saviour of liberalism from the errors of 'abstract individualism' and 'uncritical rationalism' (p. viii), as well as the initiator of a new paradigm shift in liberalism, whereby social systems are held to be more fruitfully judged by the degree to which they make impossible demands upon our capacity for knowledge (with reference to needs: this is the planning issue) rather than their essential moral tendency.

Unhappily much of this book is a blythly unhistorical paean which seems to ignore the great failures of two centuries of economic liberalism, omitting in particular any examination of the relations between moral, political and economic liberalism, and the problem of the inability of the latter to uphold the goals of the former in many cases. This is at least scholarly revivalism, but it is too Manichean and uncritical to furnish the unconvinced with materials for a much-needed, and hitherto almost non-existent, debate between economic liberals and advocates of planning. In these circumstances Gray's success in making Hayek appear a more coherent thinker is only another stage in the canonisation process.

Gregory Claeys