



REVIEWS

On the Jackson Trail

Jonathan Ree, *Proletarian Philosophers: Problems in Socialist Culture in Britain, 1900-1940*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984, 176pp, £15 hb

If the fundamental experience of twentieth-century European philosophy has been that of a continuing self-reflection upon its own status and identity, a persistent and profound identity-crisis in the face of the growing specialisation and "scientization" of knowledge, there is perhaps nowhere that this crisis has been more acutely felt, yet at the same time more compulsively denied, than within orthodox Marxism. From Plekhanov to Althusser, the indisputable superiority of Marxism in the realm of philosophy as at once a completion and an overcoming of the classical tradition has been continually trumpeted; yet, equally consistently, the substance of the claim has failed to be either satisfactorily explicated or redeemed. Indeed, it remains unclear what might count as an adequate theoretical validation of such a claim. The problem, moreover, is more than a merely academic one. For what rests upon it is not just the possibility of an adequate account of the relationship of Marxism to the philosophical tradition, but its relationship to bourgeois culture in general, and consequently, both its general-theoretical and its historical status. Classically, philosophy has been the point at which the various strands of a culture have been systematically related to one another, and reflected upon in their interconnection. The identity-crisis of bourgeois philosophy reflects, in this respect, a general crisis of bourgeois culture. But what of the possibilities of a socialist culture? How are we to understand them? And in what relation do they stand to the dilemmas of the idea of Marxist philosophy?

Proletarian Philosophers addresses this complex set of issues from an historical rather than a strictly theoretical standpoint, in the form of a history of the place of philosophy in socialist culture in Britain in the early years of the century. For, it is suggested, none of the positions adopted in the more narrowly theoretical debate about the character and status of Marxist philosophy can be appraised "apart from the ambivalences about education and culture in the midst of which they have been adopted". The book is thus "simultaneously a history of education, a history of philosophy, and a history of politics". It is from the interweaving of these three themes that much of the book's fascination, as well as some of its unresolved tensions, derive.

The central issue of socialist cultural politics during the period in question was the organisation of independent educational institutions for the working class.

And it is around the development of such initiatives, from the foundation of the University Extension Movement in the latter part of the nineteenth century to the demise of the National Council of Labour Colleges in the early 1930s, that the book is chronologically structured; focusing in particular upon the effect of developments within the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). The importation of dialectical materialism into British Communism from Russia, and its influence within the party, the scientific community, and upon the philosophical establishment, respectively, are discussed in successive chapters. Throughout, a brief history of the institution in question is combined with a commentary on its predominant ideological formation and social composition: from the objective idealist state philosophy of the T.H. Green-inspired and predominantly petty-bourgeois Extension Movement, through the defiant proletarian Dietzgenism of the Labour Colleges, to the pseudo-rigorous universalism of the Marxist-Leninism of the CPGB official educational programme.

Alongside, or rather within and beneath, this institutional narrative, however, runs another: that of the fate of the aspirations of working class autodidacts to the "cultural treasure-house" of philosophy: a kind of *Bildungsroman* of the proletarian philosopher. For, Ree argues, it was primarily in the form of "a special longing for philosophical education" that the cultural aspirations of late nineteenth and early twentieth century autodidacts were shaped; aspirations that were closely connected to the idea of socialism. The autodidacts' "athletic enthusiasm for self-improvement through intellectual exercise," it is argued, "provided them with a model of social progress.... Surely, this individual betterment could be repeated on a social scale, and then the divisions between classes, nations, or groups would be accorded their true (that is to say, their vanishingly small) significance." The hero of this narrative is Tommy Jackson, son of an East End compositor, apprentice printer, bibliophile, wayward radical (foundation member of the CPGB), and one time Labour College organiser for the North East: "a militant proletarian educator of unequalled philosophical culture" and author of the baroque *Dialectics: The Logic of Marxism and its Critics - An Essay in Exploration* (1936), the "robust and substantial content" of which Ree contrasts with the confused evasions of the proponents of the "official" dialectical materialism.

Jackson's presence haunts *Proletarian Philosophers* with the melancholy of a great opportunity irretrievably lost. His ideas and personality structure the presentation of debates in which he played no direct role. And his

philosophical work is used as a benchmark against which to judge the inverse deficiencies of academic philosophy and the "official" dialectical materialism, respectively: social irrelevance and lack of conceptual rigour. He is very much the conscience of the book. The debates about philosophy in the Plebs League are marked by the absence of his "informed, humorous, humble and exciting style". While the contrast between the narrowness of Workers' Weekly and the cultural range and inventiveness of its predecessor The Communist (for which Jackson wrote extensively) parallels that between Jackson's "traditional English radical prose style" and the "tabloid philosophy" of the "new turn" dialectical materialists.

It is in large part the energy imparted to the book by the portrayal of Jackson that gives it the essayistic character that makes it such a pleasure to read. But what of the "annihilated" aspirations of the proletarian philosophers of whom Jackson is so memorable a representative, to "seek opportunities to think connectedly" about their lives; the autodidacts for whom "politics became part of world history, and world history a chapter of cosmology"? What, in other words, is the moral (if there is one) of this tale? It is in turning to this question that certain tensions and difficulties within Proletarian Philosophers begin to emerge. At the same time, however, it is in the manifestation of these tensions and difficulties, in my view, that the theoretical value of the book lies.

Ree presents the defeat of the hopes of the proletarian philosophers as the effect of a dual movement: the toppling of philosophy from its position as "the sovereign discipline of University culture", and the development of a controversy about the status and value of philosophy within the communist movement that was so politically overdetermined by the relationship of the CPGB to the Russian party that genuine theoretical debate was stifled from the outset and cut off from its roots in the educational politics of the Labour Colleges. Within its own terms, this is a convincing picture. But these are rather narrow terms, historically, within which to confine the more general question of the role of philosophy within a socialist educational politics.

The problem is that within the book these two questions (the fate of the aspirations of working class autodidacts, and philosophy's possible contribution to a socialist education) become identified. The result is a tendency towards a false absolutisation of a particular historical defeat, that closes, instead of opening up, the general issues that it raises. The problem here is perhaps best expressed in terms of Nietzsche's three varieties of historical writing: the monumental, the antiquarian, and the critical. For there is a strong sense in which the theoretical tensions within Proletarian Philosophers are the result of its adoption of a particular aesthetic form; or rather, of its compounding of three distinct styles - part classical realist narrative, part academic monograph, part essay - that may be associated with these three kinds of history.

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For Nietzsche, monumental history reconstructs the past in the service of the present as an example of the possibilities of human achievement. It is essentially inspiratory, and as such of necessity lives by false analogy. Antiquarian history, on the other hand, adopts an essentially "reverent" attitude towards the past with respect to its survival within the present. It celebrates the identity-constitutive role of the historical continuity of cultural artefacts and traditions. Its problem is that "it only understands how to preserve life, not to create it; and thus always undervalues the present growth, having, unlike monumental history, no certain instinct for it". Critical history distances us from the past by passing judgement upon it. It is essentially destructive. The problem with it is that since "it is difficult to find a limit to the denial of the past ... we stop too often at knowing the good without doing it because we also know the better but cannot do it".

Proletarian Philosophers shifts uneasily between these three modes. More specifically, it seems to move through them: from the monumental to the antiquarian to the critical. Although stylistically, the compounding of forms is obviously more complex. The effect of this movement is the production of a kind of critically self-conscious romanticism, a Benjaminesque "hope that is given only to those without hope", in which the distinct practical functions of the different kinds of historical writing tend to cancel one another out, rather than to complement each other. In this respect, the book displays a curious combination of commitment and theoretical agnosticism in its treatment of the question of the role of philosophy in a socialist culture. Such a combination, however, is double-edged since its very ambivalence points beyond itself to the necessity for a more integrated treatment of the issue; while at the same time highlighting the ever-present danger of a precipitate resolution of theoretical issues that are actually dependent upon practical developments for their resolution. Such developments, though, are obviously themselves dependent upon the current state of theoretical work.

From this standpoint, Ree's agnosticism begins to look more problematic. For there is an unreconciled tension in the book between two quite different attitudes to philosophy that, for practical purposes, require some sort of mediation. On the one hand, there is the critical viewpoint from which the "undisciplined pulpity" of the proletarian philosophers is ultimately to be judged as harshly as Stalin's "feeble pages" on dialectical materialism. On the other, there is the point of view from which it is not the specific content of the work, but the opportunity for its production, that is the main thing: "the cultivation of unconfined and unrelenting reflection". It



is the passing of this opportunity as in some way irrevocably lost that is mourned by Ree. But firstly, is the value of such opportunities really so independent of the content of the ideas produced. And secondly, why need the creation of such opportunities be tied to the archaic individualism of autodidacticism in the way in which it is within Ree's lament? After all, was it not the precise

virtue of Stalin's "feeble pages", despite the relative inadequacies of both their theoretical content and the educational practices within which they circulated, that they provided a framework for thousands of militants "to think connectedly about what they were exhausting themselves for, so as to be fortified against violence, neglect, or scorn"? With regard to these issues, Jackson's central position within Proletarian Philosophers is such as to conceal the character of the problems at stake by the projection of an ideal but unrepeatable resolution to

them: the false closure of a classical realist narrative? But how "representative" a figure is Jackson? And how useful is it to view the problem of the role of philosophy in a socialist culture through the prism of his life? It is the great value of Proletarian Philosophers that it raises these questions in a form by which it is impossible not to be engaged.

Peter Osborne

Images of Truth

Sean Sayers, *Reality and Reason: Dialectic and the Theory of Knowledge*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985, 224pp, £19.50 hb, £7.50 pb

The "main aim" of Sean Sayers's book is "to develop and defend a realist theory of knowledge". By "realism" he means "the theory that there is an objective material world, which exists independently of consciousness and which is knowable by consciousness" (p. 3). What he offers is a "dialectical and materialist" version of this familiar doctrine. According to it, subject and object, appearance and reality are opposites existing in unity, a unity in which knowledge and consciousness are to be understood not simply as "static states" but rather as "active processes" (p. 15). Knowledge is "the process of the transformation of reality into thought", the "dynamic and dialectical unity of these opposites" (p. 16). This conception provides, in Sayers's view, the basis of a "research programme" for tackling all the traditional questions of epistemology. In particular, it can, he believes, vindicate "the social and historical character of consciousness and knowledge". Social forms, "as embodied in concepts, categories, discourses, world-views, etc.", are "the essential means through which our knowledge develops beyond its lowest, merely instinctive and animal level" (p. 132). Hence, our theories may be viewed as approximations to the truth about a reality which is independent of them, and to which we have access only through conceptual forms made available by society and history. On this view, the justification of our knowledge is, Sayers holds, "relative but real" (pp. 165, 174). The test of success in approximating to reality is supplied by practice. Thus, knowledge may be characterised as a continual process of interaction between theory and practice. It is their "dialectical" and "concrete" unity, a unity in which practice is, however, "the most basic and fundamental, the primary aspect" (pp. 141, 144). In the light of these ideas, Sayers is inclined to an optimistic view of the historical development of knowledge: the story is, he believes, only to be comprehended as a record of progress (pp. 164-66).

Sayers's book lies at the intersection of a complex set of intellectual currents. Its success in integrating them accounts for much of its interest and achievement. Most obviously, perhaps, it draws on Marxist sources, in particular on the work of Engels and of the Lenin of Materialism and Empirio-Criticism. "Despite the abuse that has been heaped on them," Sayers writes, "I do not hesitate to avow myself their pupil in philosophy" (X).

Thus, his book may be seen as reaching out across the historical divide to the classical roots of Marxist tradition. The gesture is timely in view of the fact that the successor movement, "Western Marxism", now shows on all sides signs of having run its course. In this situation the best hope for revitalising the tradition as a whole may well lie in a return to origins. The significance of Sayers's book from this standpoint lies in its demonstration of the varied forms of inspiration and guidance still to be found there, even in an area, the central issues of epistemology, where that possibility has been most scornfully derided and dismissed. The book is timely in another way, in its relationship to the substantial body of recent work in "realist" philosophy. Much of this work has been done by people sympathetic to Marx and even regarding themselves as Marxists. Yet it has tended to hold oddly aloof from what is surely the most important philosophical strand in Marxist thought, that for which the Hegelian background and the project of a materialist dialectic have been prime concerns. In seeking to articulate a dialectical version of realism, Sayers's book is, one may reasonably hope, a straw in a gathering wind.

Another current feeding the book derives from the analytical movement in philosophy. Sayers's use of it, however, departs considerably, as he notes, from that of many recent writers who have tried to "clarify" or "criticise" Marxism with the tools of analysis. In his case the boot in on the other foot: dialectical method provides the standard in terms of which analytical methods are criticised and rejected (XII). This is an instance of his general refusal to accept the hegemony of the orthodox ways of the academy, an obstinacy not likely to endear his work to the conventionally minded. His book differs also from recent "Marxist" writings on analytical philosophy and Marxism whose analytical philosophy is, unfortunately, that of the day before yesterday. Sayers has by contrast not merely caught up with Quine, but gone on to assimilate the major later developments and, in particular, those associated with the names of Kripke, Putnam and Davidson. The tendency represented by the work of Quine himself, Kuhn and Rorty is especially noteworthy here. For it may be that the most important achievement of Sayers's book is to show how the insights of this tendency into the epistemic significance of the social may be preserved without falling into a sterile and self-defeating relativism. This alone serves to put the book at the centre of contemporary debates in epistemology, and makes it essential reading for anyone interested in them.

The chief themes of Sayers's discussion are so tightly integrated that one might be tempted to suppose the results must be taken or left as a whole. There is, however, one point of tension that may be worth pressing a little. Sayers insists that false ideas, as well as true, reflect reality, and he takes this to mean that all, "even the most apparently senseless and arbitrary ones", have some truth in them (p. 66, also pp. 61, 67, 69, 80, 109, 121, 129). This leads naturally to the idea of "degrees of truth": "There is no absolute truth, there is no absolute error. Truth and falsehood are matters of degree" (p. 177). This is a perfectly tenable view with a respectable ancestry, and Sayers has no difficulty in disposing of the usual vulgar objections to it. Yet, whatever its merits, it may be a source of some difficulty within his own overall position. To put the issue crudely, it looks suspiciously like an undigested Hegelian residue within an otherwise materialist and Marxist theory. The Hegelian provenance of the idea is undoubted, as Sayers shows (pp. 175-77). The problem is to reconcile it with what he, in orthodox Marxist fashion, takes to be the "central notion of dialectical thought" that "opposites are contradictory and exist in unity" (p. 15). Given the assumption that truth and falsity are matters of degree, it becomes difficult to see how these crucial categories can be sufficiently antithetical for items embodying them to form contradictions. It was the recognition of similar tendencies in Hegel that led commentators such as McTaggart to propose that it is not opposition, but rather the instability of finite and imperfect categories striving for completion in the infinite, that is the ultimate driving force of his dialectic. The essential pattern, on this interpretation, is linear development, not the reconciliation of contradiction. It is, one might suggest, the natural consequence of the wish to see truth everywhere. Moreover, it yields a striking reading of Hegel's dialectic, and one influential in English idealism as a whole. But it seems quite at odds with the spirit of Sayers's, or anyone else's, Marxism.

Some deeper questions arise for Sayers at this point. They arise if one asks what underlies and justifies Hegel's

belief in the universality of truth. The answer must lie in his ontology as characterised by Sayers: "Reason, he believes, is 'in the world' and 'actual' ... in the sense that material and objective reality is the product, the expression, the 'self-alienation' of the 'Idea', of reason" (p. 197). Forms of consciousness are even more obviously and directly expressions of reason and vehicles of the Idea than is material reality, and as such can never be entirely null and unredeemable. Sayers offers what is surely a correct gloss on this situation: "Hegel's philosophy is best seen as a sort of pantheism, in which the world is a creation and a realisation of the divine rational will" (p. 198). Here one can hardly forbear mentioning the formation of the "degrees of truth" idea which Sayers uses as the epigraph for his book: "Everything possible to be believed is an image of truth." If the same question is asked of Blake as of Hegel, the answer does not seem far to seek. It is readily suggested by the other "Proverbs of Hell", and, in particular, by the litany that begins, "The pride of the peacock is the glory of God". What these proverbs express can once again only be described as a pantheistic vision for which everything is the creation and realisation of the divine. With Blake, as with Hegel, it is ultimately a religious view of the world that underpins the tenderness towards the forms of human consciousness. It seems reasonable to ask what underpins it in Sayers's case, and to wonder how it is accomplished within a secular and materialist framework. This is to ask that he spell out more fully the ontological foundations of his epistemology. Of course, to do so would, to put it mildly, be a sufficient task for another book.

A review of the present one should not conclude without mentioning what a pleasure it is to read. It is written in a way that, without any literary frills or strivings, achieves remarkable force and pungency, and even at times a kind of austere eloquence. It is a style that, to use one of Sayers's favourite expressions, fully reflects the strength and solidity of the ideas.

Joseph McCarney

Global Utterances

Marshall Blonsky (ed.), *On Signs: A Semiotics Reader*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985, £27.50 hb, £8.95 pb

On Signs is a five-hundred page anthology of writings from "within the broad field of post-structuralist semiotics". Most of the pieces are from the 1970s and most of their authors are the expected names: Barthes, Derrida, Eco, Foucault, Greimas, Kristeva (who provides one of the only three contributions by women), Lacan ... Hartman, Jameson, Scholes.... Largely made up of translations of material appearing for the first time in English, the book offers the interest of the new rather than an arrangement of the centrally representative: Barthes figures, for example, with his review of his own *Barthes par lui-même*, his column for *Le Nouvel Observateur* and so on. As "a semiotics reader", *On Signs* is thus more a wide-ranging sampler than a systematic introduction, providing in fact a

kind of euphoric excitement to semiotics as we are moved from *Casablanca* to Cuba, from "the unremarkable Wordsworth" to "consumer-focus-group research" and the marketing of "intimate apparel".

Marshall Blonsky, the editor, has a vision of semiotics to give us in all this movement and organizes the book in sections to guide the reader to it: first "Seeing Signs", then "Understanding the Meaning of Signs", finally reaching "Signs for Life" - look at all those signs around you, think how they mean, now see just how hooked into our world semiotics can be. The overall sense is given by Blonsky's framing "Introduction" and "Endword", from "The Agony of Semiotics" to "Americans on the Move", the former the key text and itself full of story-line sub-headings such as "In the beginning", "Out of the tower...", "Uninvited into the world".

In part this is the familiar account of the shift from an

initial structuralist semiotics to a post-structuralist awareness of play, signifier, writing, the world as text. The mode, however, is hortatory (the urging of the vision) and the argument is for a social importance of semiotics, apparently for its recasting as social intervention. Semiotics is "domesticated and tranquil", needs to be brought up against reality: "The articles assembled for this book are probes, early attempts to push semiotics off its repetitive path" (p. xix). Fine, but then the terms of this are much less clear. The world is "replete" with signs, signs tell lies, semiotics can take us beyond these sign-lies: "Having read their surfaces, we can know the secret in lying signs ... jump from the lie to its concealed distant masters" (p. viii). Semiotics also insists, though, that "the sign-receiving, sign-using self ... cannot know the world or itself; it cannot enunciate any kind of truth about the world" (p. xxi). The memories of Barthes's project in *Mythologies*, a Saussurian semiology as tool for



the analysis of the ideological construction of "Reality", are overwhelmed by the spectacular autonomous reality of signs: the post-structuralist tail now wags the structuralist dog. Blonsky wants to break semiotics away from this and give the dog some teeth, "reassessing the discipline" (p. xiii), but is blank when it comes to saying how: the reassessment is simply exhortation and rhetoric, with no theorized account of the social determinations and relations of meaning and subjectivity and ideology. The conception throughout is just that of getting behind or beyond the signs to those hidden masters, "great men (and women) or lesser ones ... office holders who impress their intent on us" (p. xxxvi).

The status of semiotics itself is then accordingly dubious. Semiotics is "operable, analytically and creatively" (p. L) but has been no more than "a futile gaze at the world's seeming pleasures" (p. xxxv). "No one has tried to turn semiotics 180 degrees around to deal with the living present and the possible future" (p. L), yet we are nevertheless given this semiotics reader, but at the same

time we are also told that the "clientele" of its authors "comprise an elite" who are not "hooked up to" the key sign-producers ("the commentators, actors, models, the media figures", p. xxxvi). Cut off from these latter and from the "great men (and women) or lesser ones", faced too with a "population at large" which is alienated beyond recall, "structurally incapable of wanting, of being able to tolerate" semiotics (p. xxxvi), semioticians are in a limbo. Which is what Blonsky wants to change: semiotics should be "tuned in" (p. L) But tuned in to what? The repletion of signs, the signs of life. At which point Blonsky's vision describes a swirl of critical stasis. Semiotics shows us the world of signs but then stays in an ivory tower (kept there by "silent social agents", p. xxiii), concerned with "literature, philosophy or film studies" (p. xxxvi), from which it can be brought back into the world, turned around 180 degrees; all this with no question of semiotics, which is simply given - what does turning semiotics around 180 degrees actually mean? Are we then dealing with semiotics as before (the one that, according to Blonsky, teaches the impossibility of enunciating any kind of truth about the world) or elaborating a new one (but then what are its terms?)?

Early on, Blonsky states that his aim in the book is to create a "global utterer": "The articles have been arranged ... to create a 'global utterer': a thinker of good will who in his/her search for method doesn't make a fetish of any end as a privileged place to arrive at, to the detriment of any other end" (p. viii). In other words, anything goes, anything on signs - semiotics as spectacle response. The global utterer is, precisely, global, totally attuned; good will is political indifference: Meiselas photos of El Salvador sit nicely next to a comic strip version of *The Story of O* - it's all signs and semiotics. And Blonsky constructs himself as semiotician for us in these very terms, always where the signs of life are, no matter where, listening to "a European friend, significant in the field of semiotics" (p. xxxv) or sitting in "the New York boardroom of a \$1 billion dollar plus international agency" (p. 505). And he gives us the anthology in this image too: its writers are "radicals, technocrats, aspirers to the ruling circle" (p. ix), while its audience is to be "student ... scholar ... businessman or woman ... people in politics..." (p. vii). The critical edge of semiotics ends up as one component, possibly, of a general celebration, anything in or on signs, and the task seems as much to impress as to oppose the masters, at last to share in their world, to give semiotics that kind of social importance, to get it into the marketplace: "It is not a corruption of the semiotic enterprise to use it politically, or commercially" (p. L). Hence the style of the book's assemblages of pieces and their presentation: "Franco is thinking her way into Latin American ruling circles as they 'recode' women. Weintraub is using semiotics to facilitate entry into the marketplace" (p. xi); both are equal in the general display. Instead of developing and demonstrating the terms and problems of a political, interventionary semiotics, Blonsky stays with a showing off of semiotics, at times half-critical, at times half-complicit (or more than half), always sign-struck, fascinated with the "Americanized, gaudy" social sign, all its excitement.

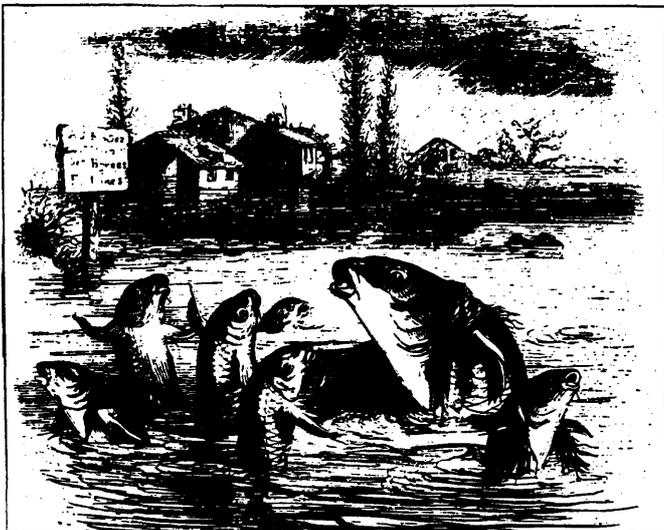
So the selection itself is a mish-mash, some good and useful pieces but no good and useful context for their reading in relation to a new project of semiotics. The translations vary in quality and are occasionally incomplete (thus the translation of "Day by Day with Roland Barthes" gives no indication of the number of sections that are missing). There are some oversights (the television photos of Nixon on page 10 appear not to be referred to or referenced in the article they accompany) and omissions (not all the articles are recorded with bibliographical details in the "Acknowledgements").

Stephen Heath

Starting Out

Anthony O'Hear, *What Philosophy Is: An Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985, 316pp, £4.95 pb

Producing an introduction to philosophy must be an unenviable task and perhaps the acid test of a professional philosopher. Can he or she after so much effort succeed in finding the wood amongst the trees? Can the central questions be identified, simplified and sorted into a hierarchy of significance? Can the interesting and significant answers be selected and can they be merged and presented in a clear, precise and accessible form for the beginner? Anthony O'Hear's book is certainly easily accessible in terms of price, form and content. The readers will find here a clear and precise elaboration of questions and answers, an interesting style and where technical terms are introduced they will find them helpfully defined and explained.



Next, the book fulfills its promise by being genuinely about contemporary philosophy. It concentrates on philosophy and philosophers after Wittgenstein, the most frequently referred to thinkers being Quine, Putman, Davidson, Goodman, Kripke and Ayer. Not only contemporary philosophers but contemporary issues are taken up and debated for the reader. Hence in the excellent third chapter on "Logic and Language" the reader is quickly and efficiently ushered into Frege, Davidson, Kripke, Putman and Quine and the contemporary issues over "Naming and Referring", and the last chapter on "Ethics and Politics" introduces students to the

"rational choice" theory of Nozick and Rawls and the "realist" theory of law of Dworkin. This contemporary relevance is also reflected in the helpful section on additional reading, and in the first chapter on "Metaphysics" which distances the book from the idea of the engagement of philosophy which associated it primarily with science, mathematics and logic.

However, despite a predisposition to recommend this book that arises from a long search for a good utility introductory text in philosophy, I have ended up with some reservations. These revolve around the point that the book does not really succeed in its aims to reach "those with little or no background in the subject, and also those already embarked on some course of philosophy study" (p. 9). The book will, I believe, help those in the second category who are taking single honours philosophy but it will not be so helpful to those studying joint honours or amateurs wishing to explore totally new terrain, for it fails to relate philosophy to history, sociology, psychology and other social sciences (except politics) and it fails to relate philosophical problems and debates to everyday experiences of the world.

My first worry relates to the structure of the book. It starts by exploring the key methods or approaches to philosophy, "Metaphysics", "Epistemology" and "Logic and Language" but then alters course, taking up two substantive problem areas for discussion, "Human Beings" and "Ethics and Politics". Not only is there a kind of identity shift here, but the book does not really grapple with the key question in the title. While it may be agreed that the best way to show people "What Philosophy Is" is to make them do some, it is still odd in a book of this title that there is no effort to spell out the peculiar nature of philosophy, its unique purposes, its rules and postulates.

Despite covering much contemporary ground, this book continues the British practice of ignoring or lightly passing over the contributions of contemporary Continental philosophy. From Heidegger to Habermas and the Frankfurt School, German philosophy with its own problematic and debates is ignored and so are the contributions of the French existentialists, semiologists, and phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty and the recent post-structuralists such as Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze and Lyotard. Concentration in this book on contemporary philosophy can be applauded but the omission of contemporary Continental philosophy narrows its appeal. Tied to this is a very thin conception of philosophy and philosophical concerns that seems to underpin the book. The author does not enter into debates over the nature of history, politics, the philosophical problems encountered in anthropology, psychology, economics, art, literary or social criticism. Thus, the book seems less attractive to non-philosophy specialists and, in particular, to students in fields of the other arts and social sciences; since they provide at least half of a potential audience for an introductory text, this is a serious defect.

Equally worrying is that the book misses the opportunity to relate philosophy to the social context of

the everyday world. My teaching experience suggests that beginners need to be able to relate philosophy to their own life experience as well as to the rest of their academic studies. In addition it is at least an interesting contention that philosophy arises out of wider intellectual, social and political contexts. Hence students may be better able to understand the question of scepticism by locating it in terms of the experience and practices of advertising, political broadcasts, confidence tricksters or selling techniques rather than discussion of tables and chairs on the technical formulations of Hume's epistemology. Grappling with philosophical problems in this phenomenological fashion can also help us to see how scepticism can be disarmed. We do, for instance, question the methods, motives and language of advertisers, we can check on their claims, the gap between statements and conclusions and produce more rather than less certain judgements as a result.

Secondly on this issue there is the rather surprising suppression of the sort of arguments that Wittgenstein, Winch, Habermas, and others have raised about the social construction of knowledge and hence of philosophy itself. In the final paragraph O'Hear concludes that "moral and political argument has both a logical and an empirical aspect" (p. 299) but he ignores the counter claim that philosophy, logic, science, epistemology, moral and political theory also have a social, political and even economic aspect. In two short but suggestive passages, quoting D. Wiggins against D. Parfit on human nature, and some references to Aristotle and Bradley on their social location of ethics (pp. 251-252, 272-273) this style of

argument is noted but contributions from Wittgenstein, Rorty and Oakeshott that argue philosophy is a conversation, that languages and knowledge are social, that forms of thought and theories need to be located in forms of life or practices are played down.

At one place, the opportunity for radical insight emerges clearly but the opportunity is lost. Referring to the re-emergence of rationalist individualism in Nozick and Rawls when compared to Bradley and Aristotle, O'Hear notes "the distance we have travelled from the perspective in which the rootless ego castigated by Bradley is really a fiction" (p. 277). But the route is not just academic but rather it is cultural, social, economic, and political. Hence the full significance to modern philosophy of Alistair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* could have been revealed and tied in with contemporary French post-structuralist and British contributions to the "Fate of Modernity Debate".

In terms of my concerns the last two chapters are by far the most helpful in reducing my worries, though more on the nature of politics and the state would have been useful. The first three chapters will be a great help to specialist philosophers. But I feel that the book lacks general appeal to joint honours students and the interested amateur. Even in philosophy departments it is unlikely to nudge Bertrand Russell's *Problems of Philosophy* from the top spot on many first year philosophy reading lists.

John R. Gibbins

Moral Responses

Steven Lukes, *Marxism and Morality*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985, 163pp, £12.50 hb

This is an uneven and inconsistent book - but it is not without value for all that. It reads as though it has been produced by tacking together disparate bits of writing. Nevertheless it gives a readable and quite helpful introductory survey of some of the major issues raised by the Marxist treatment of morality.

The book starts in a purposeful and confident tone, by describing a familiar paradox in the Marxist approach to morality. On the one hand, Marxists have tended to scorn any appeal to principles of justice or right, claiming that their own critique of capitalism is ahistorical and scientific in character. Morality is rejected as mere ideology: the product of particular historical conditions, the expression of specific class interests. At the same time, however, Marxist writing - and not least that of Marx himself - abounds in moral judgements, and contains a powerful, unmistakably moral, indictment of capitalist society. Many of the central concepts of Marx's theory - alienation, exploitation, oppression, for example - have strong evaluative overtones which are an ineliminable part of their meaning and force. In short, Marxism seems both to repudiate morality and to involve it.

Having spelled out this paradox, Lukes then boldly claims to "resolve" it with the help of a distinction between the "morality of Recht" and the "morality of

emancipation". The morality of Recht is the morality of rights, which has formed an important (and currently flourishing) part of the liberal tradition. However, as Lukes argues, this theory is founded upon assumptions of a universal and unchanging, individualistic human nature, convincingly criticised by Marx. By contrast, Marxism involves a theory of emancipation: "a conception of the agent as a (potentially) self-directing being who achieves self-realisation in mutual identification and community with others" (p. 78). It envisages a classless society in which alienation has been overcome and in which the very conditions that require principles of justice and right have "withered away". That is to say, his own claims to the contrary notwithstanding, Marx does not so much reject morality as develop an alternative morality, based upon a "deeper and richer" concept of liberation than the negative and individualistic account characteristic of liberalism (p. 149).

This is a worthwhile and important line of thought: or at least it can be if it is thought through properly. Here, unfortunately, it is not. The book's account of the concept of emancipation is perhaps its most disappointing part. A sketchy treatment of Marx's theories of freedom, alienation and future communist society rapidly dissolves into a welter of sceptical doubts and questions, which seem more like an agenda for further work than a finished argument.

These doubts, however, become the vehicle for a

criticism of Marxism which constitutes the predominant theme of the latter part of the book. Marx was reluctant to speculate about future society; and this fear of "utopianism", Lukes argues, "has consistently inhibited [Marxism] from spelling out what the morality of emancipation implies for the future constitution and organisation of society" (pp. 45-46). In short, so far from developing an alternative morality of emancipation, Marxism is now criticised precisely for failing to do so.

In this way, the paradox with which the book begins is reinstated, in the form of a "sub-paradox": Marxism is an anti-utopian utopianism. But Lukes's treatment of this new paradox is quite different. He makes no attempt to "resolve" it. Quite the contrary, he uses it as the basis for criticising Marxism. Marx's anti-utopianism, he argues, has stood in the way of creative and imaginative thought about future possibilities - Marx's anti-moralism prevented him from developing an alternative moral vision: the ideal of emancipation is a mirage.

This is a familiar enough line of criticism of Marxism. It is best known, perhaps, in the context of the argument about means and ends. Through copious quotation, Lukes usefully presents the debates on this issue which occurred in the wake of the Russian revolution (between Lenin, Luxemburg, Kautsky, Trotsky) and in response to the Moscow Trials of the 1930s (Serge, Koestler, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty). As Lukes neatly puts it, the question is: "what is not to be done?" What actions, if any, are

morally intolerable even if they are believed necessary to further the socialist cause? Although Lukes at one point notes that "Marxists across the world ... have been in the forefront of struggles against tyranny and oppression ... often in the name of human rights" (pp. 61-62), he tends to endorse the charge that Marxism, because of its distrust of morality, is incapable of an adequate moral response to these issues.

Quite apart from the problem that this cuts across the earlier line of argument, it is not satisfactory. The social scientific and anti-utopian theme in Marxism is, indeed, an insistent one. It is also clear, however, that Marxism has been an extraordinarily powerful moral force and the source of the most potent and influential modern utopian vision: the ideal of a classless society in which all individuals can develop their powers and capacities in an all-round way. In short, the paradox of Marx's anti-utopian utopianism is just as real, and just as much in need of resolution, as his anti-moral moralism.

The whole issue of the Marxist attitude to morality is a complex and important one, which raises some of the fundamental questions of moral philosophy in their most pressing modern form. Though this book gives a helpful and clear introductory account of some of these issues, an altogether deeper and more thorough-going treatment is needed if they are to be resolved.

Sean Sayers

Freudian Turns

Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane (eds.), *In Dora's Case: Freud, Hysteria, Feminism*, London: Virago, 1986, 291pp, £11.95 hb, £5.95 pb

Peregrine Horden (ed.), *Freud and the Humanities*, London: Duckworth, 1985, 186pp, £18 hb

It has long seemed appropriate to read Freud's case histories as if they were short stories. Indeed Freud himself suggested the analogy. The majority of the contributors to *In Dora's Case* are teachers of literature whose literary approach is also informed by a Lacanian emphasis upon linguistics. (A relevant piece by Lacan is included.) It must be said that viewing Freud's "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" as a "narrative" does make a lot of sense. What Freud recounts is, after all, the drama of a young woman hopelessly embroiled in a complicated network of sexual passion, adultery, betrayal and illness. Moreover, ever the psychoanalytic detective, Freud shares with his readers the clues to the mystery of Dora's illness. But, of course, the story is left unfinished and a more fundamental mystery is unsolved. "Dora" abruptly terminated the analysis, and Freud felt obliged to raise, but leave unanswered, the question, "What did she really want from the analysis?" This in turn suggests the further question of what women in general want. The problem of female sexuality is thus at the heart of Dora's case. What is doubtful is whether the literary, and mostly Lacanian, approach really sheds much light on it.

The most explicitly Lacanian pieces are hard going, and anyone unfamiliar with Lacan's work will undoubtedly be mystified. Those unsympathetic to Lacanian theory will also find much to reinforce their hostility in claims such as "The penis ... becomes the epistemological object par excellence for Freud ... his penis must fill the epistemological hole represented by Dora" (pp. 6-7). It is thus unfortunate that the editors do not supply any kind of introduction to Lacan's work. Equally it is regrettable that they do not really attempt to draw out and summarise the major lines of interpretation contained in the book. Perhaps because of the Lacanian bias it is refreshing to read the piece by Maria Ramas (significantly the only historian amongst the book's contributors). She confronts the patriarchal assumptions of Freudian theory in a direct and accessible fashion, and argues Ida (Ramas is the only contributor to give "Dora" her real name) to be a victim not of the desires Freud claimed for her, but of "the unconscious belief that femininity [sic?] bondage and debasement were synonymous" (p. 176). This belief is in turn subjected to a thorough historical and political critique. Yet, for all its originality, Ramas's piece is discussed only once, and then ungraciously, as advancing "little beyond a ... somewhat tedious resume of Freud's text" (p. 183).

Of course the scrupulous nature of a Lacanian attention to the text of Freud's report yields some insights. For instance, several writers rightly ironise the point at which, defending his discussion of sexual matters with a

young woman, Freud stresses the importance of direct and unambiguous language. "J'appelle un chat un chat," says Freud. Jane Gallop comments, "where he (Freud) founds his innocence upon the direct use of technical terms, he takes a French detour and calls a pussy a pussy" (p. 209). Again it is worthwhile dwelling on the respects in which the case report is a "fragment", and of drawing attention to Freud's relegation of many important comments to footnotes.

Yet one's confidence in the utility of such an approach is diminished by realising how many different conclusions it yields. There appear to be as many real "solutions" to Dora's case as authors, and every figure in the drama is given the major role by at least one writer. Behind all of this one suspects that too many of the critics take Freud too seriously. It is "Dora" who is reanalysed and Freud who, some minor cavils apart, is somehow let off the hook. Ramas apart, no one really takes Freud seriously to task for his quite astonishing sexism. His stubborn refusal to accept that "Dora" does not really love Herr K, his outrageous description of her rejection of Herr K's clumsy and unsolicited sexual advances as "hysterical", and his studied dismissal of her mother are inexcusable. It is not nearly sufficient to discount such prejudices as "countertransference", as if Freud's own failings as an analyst can somehow be excused in the name of his own analytic theory. What is really at issue in the case of "Dora" is not whether Freud understood female sexuality, as to whether female sexuality can be understood in Freudian terms. One might have expected the case of "Dora" to stimulate very radical questions about the consonance of Feminism and Freudianism. With very few exceptions, the questions in this book are about what type of Freudianism is appropriate.

Claire Kahane remarks in her Introduction to *In Dora's Case* that "it is by now self-evident that Freud has captured the imagination of those who engage in cultural inquiry" (p. 19). *Freud and the Humanities* is a disappointing reflection of this self-evident fact. The book collects together lectures given at Oxford by various experts on the influence of Freudianism in their respective fields. The whole thing is a rather lame and uneven affair. There are contributions from analysts, Storr and Rycroft, but these are lacklustre resumes of ideas both have rehearsed elsewhere. The editor chooses not so much to introduce the various contributions, as to offer some of his own "thoughts of Freud". These display an interest in Lacan's ideas which is nowhere evident in the very English contributions that follow. Gombrich offers an extended essay on Schiller's poetry whose relevance to Freudian ideas is admitted in an almost apologetic postface to be tenuous. And Lloyd-Jones takes 30 pages to establish that psychoanalysis has little or no relevance to a study of the Ancient World. The one bright spot in the collection is Richard Ellmann's elegant and thoughtful piece on "Freud and Literary Biography". Here at least one gets a real sense of how a popularised Freudianism has been assimilated into, and dramatically changed, an intellectual activity. The benefits and pitfalls of a Freudian approach are intelligently discussed by someone whose sympathies are by no means uncritical. And it is pleasant to see the wilful exaggerations of Sartrean biography gently ironised. But even the inclusion of Ellmann's piece cannot excuse what is a poor commentary on Freud's influence in the Humanities.

Dave Archard

Goodbye to all that

Anthony Arblaster, *The Rise and Decline of Western Liberalism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984, £19.50 hb, £7.95 pb

Anthony Arblaster has not come to praise liberalism: too many others have done that already. If his intention is not to bury it, it is certainly to stress the evil that it's done. But at the end of the first chapter we find that liberalism, whilst in dubious health, is not yet dead; and so we don't get a funeral oration, but a diagnosis of the cause of the decline. This raises the question whether radical philosophers, on finding that the corpse lives, should call for a doctor - or for an assassin who can do the job properly. I shall concentrate on this question, since Arblaster's answer seems to me to be surprisingly ambivalent.

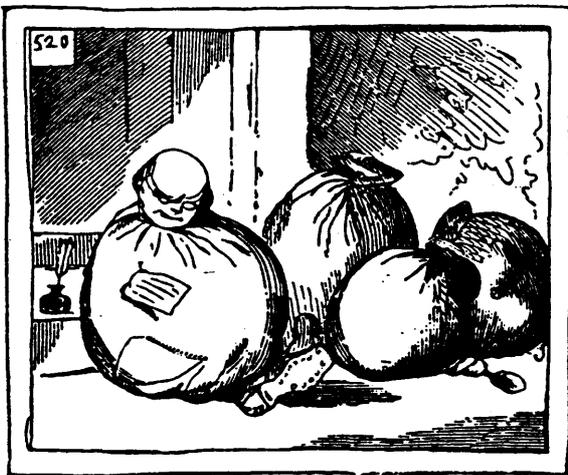
Part of the difficulty lies in the task that Arblaster has set himself: to write simultaneously a history, an analysis, and a criticism of liberalism. This requires at least ten stout volumes (and Arblaster has the erudition to write them); but the state of publishing nowadays is such that we must be grateful that Blackwells allowed him some 175,000 words. So, even whilst this is a long book by current standards, there is a danger of

superficiality; and the book does contain some quick generalisations which will annoy specialists. But more seriously, there must be a grave doubt about Arblaster's characterisation of liberalism; and this, I think, is the cause of his ambivalence.

Arblaster, rightly, does not produce a "snap definition" of liberalism; nor does he pick some typical exemplar (Locke, say, or Mill) and study him in depth. Instead, in the brilliant first Part, he starts with individualism - the "core" of the liberal world-view - and works outwards to produce an account of liberal beliefs. This account is critical: liberal individualism is portrayed as inherently elitist and scared of democracy; possessive and protective of private property; and incapable of constructing a social theory that is not either cruelly inhumane or naively optimistic.

But, as Arblaster admits, this approach "runs the danger of presenting too unified and too fixed a picture of something which has taken different shapes at different times" (p. 91); and to answer this challenge he produces the second part of the book - a history of liberalism. But this history - fascinating and worth reading though it is - fails to answer the objection: for it is a methodological weakness of the book that Arblaster seems unsure where

he himself is drawing the boundaries of liberalism. Thus he equivocates about whether Herzen, Spinoza or T. H. Green should count as liberals (pp. 270, 141, 286); he sometimes considers Hobbes and Bentham as "orthodox liberals" (p. 143) and sometimes as scarcely liberals at all (e.g. p. 351); and he claims in one place that utilitarianism has "predominated within liberalism" (p. 334), and at another that it is not really even a part of liberalism (Appendix). Burke (e.g. pp. 225-27), Yeats (p. 69) and Talmon (pp. 77, 83) all get written into the history of liberalism, although Arblaster freely admits that they were conservative, not liberal, thinkers. Conversely, social democracy is excluded (pp. 291-92), and the contemporary welfare state doesn't even get a mention. There are also some strange inconsistencies. For instance, after being told repeatedly of liberalism's fear of democracy and hostility to it, we suddenly find, in a throw-away remark, the acknowledgement that liberals had been committed to the widening of the franchise (p. 284). More startlingly still, Arblaster manages to claim both that "liberalism is the dominant ideology of the West.... [It] makes up a large part of the intellectual air we breathe" (p. 6) and that "liberalism has lost hope of gaining acceptance for its values in the public sphere" (p. 71).



This inevitably takes some of the force away from Arblaster's story, summed up in the book's title: the story of liberalism's change from a radical, even revolutionary, doctrine, full of hope and confidence, to an ideology characterised by doubt, disgust, and a profound loss of hope - one that is both strongly conservative and expressing a "militant moderation" (p. 299). And Arblaster's thesis is not merely that there was a radical liberalism and there was a reactionary liberalism, and that the former declined as the latter advanced. Rather it is that this decline is an inevitable consequence of liberalism taking power: the seeds of the decline were present from the start.

Now this is a strong and challenging thesis, with which radicals will have a lot of sympathy. But it is very difficult to show that such a change is inevitable and I don't think that Arblaster succeeds. It's also not clear where we are left if we accept it. It is perhaps not surprising that, at the end of the book, when we reach the question with which I started this review, we find, not a conclusion, but the briefest coda - and one that seems to contradict the main theses of the book. Thus, contrary to the story of inevitable decline, Arblaster here encourages radicals and socialists to continue the struggle, since "the best of liberalism is too good to be left to the liberals" (p. 348). Yet one of the recurring motifs was that liberalism must be judged by what liberals have done, rather than what they have claimed they wanted to do. And what liberals have done in the name of liberalism is, on Arblaster's account, often thoroughly nasty.

Throughout Arblaster has used this to attack liberalism, not liberals. If this is fair, and liberalism is at fault, nothing will be gained by taking liberalism away from liberals.

Further, Arblaster exhorts us to "move beyond liberalism, whilst rescuing from the historical and theoretical shipwreck of liberalism itself what [we] can of its most valuable principles and achievements" (p. 349). But he has argued at length - and most convincingly - that we cannot detach values from their philosophical setting; that liberal values are a product of, and rooted in, individualism; and that individualism is "in many ways a defective and inadequate way of conceiving of human beings" (p. 349). He is well aware that we cannot just pick noble principles without any ontology to support them: we need to construct some better world-view. But he doesn't provide any suggestion what this might be. Maybe this is a trailer for his next book (I hope it is), but it is a very unsatisfactory end to this one, since it refuses to meet what is perhaps the strongest argument for liberalism: that, whilst it is far from perfect, nobody has come up with anything else which can guarantee the very real advances that it has made.

So perhaps it would have been better to try to distinguish different strands within liberalism, and not tackle the idea as a whole. Arblaster's inconsistencies and apparent arbitrariness, to which I have pointed, are consequences of writing the story as the rise and decline of some one idea, rather than the continual competition of different forms of liberalism. We have seen that he goes out of his way to emphasise the conservative strand of liberalism; a more constructive reading would have tried to resurrect the radical liberalism that undeniably also still exists. If this slightly more sympathetic and analytic treatment had been adopted, then Arblaster would have been in a much better position to point a way forward.

Yet, if this book has faults, they are the faults that inevitably come with attempting something really worthwhile. This is a very important book, which is essential reading for anybody interested not only in liberalism as a political philosophy, but in our philosophical heritage. It excels in many ways which I have not been able to mention here; it is well-written, wide-ranging and provocative. It is the best book on its subject, and will remain so for many years.

Pete Morriss



Animal Manners

R. G. Frey, *Rights, Killing, and Suffering*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 248pp, £19.50 hb

S. R. L. Clark, *The Moral Status of Animals*, Oxford University Press, 1984, 214pp, £3.95 pb

There is substantial disagreement between these writers. Within a consequentialist framework Frey argues that moral vegetarianism is not established, even by appeal to the strongest argument for animal welfare - that they suffer a painful life and a premature death to gratify human interests and tastes. Rather, Frey's "concerned individual" is morally obliged only to promote piecemeal reform to improve the manner of life and death of food animals, provided no significant disutility results for humans. For Clark such proposals exemplify "devices of the heathen" - the strategies, sophisms, and casuistical reasoning by which humans obscure and avoid their proper responsibilities to other animals and the biosphere. From within an Aristotelian grounded moral absolutism set in a complex, holistic metaphysics, he rails against the human delusions and deceptions which vitiate proper human-animal transactions, to the detriment of all. But, whilst far apart in attitudes, proposals, and philosophical stance, Frey and Clark have in common the aim of reaching the hearts and minds of a non-philosophical audience. Each documents well relevant realities of animals' treatment, and offers detailed scenarios of changed, improved relations between humans and animals. Further both aim to make their philosophising accessible to non-professionals, and to show how and why philosophers should engage in advocacy on moral matters. Regrettably it is in this laudable aim of reaching the educated, concerned reader that both books prove most flawed.

Frey's book suffers from diverse aims and origins, as well as its lack of sufficient explicit and argued theoretical underpinning for its critical response to others' ideas. Parts are accessibly addressed to the educated reader, with five chapters engaged in concerned and lively philosophising about views and issues which surround our treatment of animals. Frey's discussion of diverse moral grounds for vegetarianism, the disutility of abolishing the meat industry, and likely charges of insincerity and hypocrisy that "the concerned individual"

faces, exemplifies the kind of purchase which critical philosophical thought can provide on difficult issues. In these sections Frey is at his most lucid, and offers the kind of telling presentation of ideas and issues that makes for good, instructive reading. However, this fruitful applied philosophy, and Frey's welcome statements of where he personally stands, sit awkwardly with other aims and material. Large parts of the text address matters peripheral to animal welfare and moral vegetarianism and do so, moreover, in a narrow, technical style better suited to professional exchanges in journals. For example, Part II - comprising a quarter of the text - is a critical review of, and contribution to, recent rights and utilitarian theorising which, though it may serve to extend and clarify Frey's own position in relation to his earlier *Interests and Rights*, fails to engage animal issues substantially and is likely to bemuse and lose the educated reader.

It must be concluded that Frey's claim to make "arguments and language completely accessible to non-philosophers" (p. ix), though laudable, is hardly achieved. Further, Frey's own position remains largely unanalysed and undefended. That he is a consequentialist is evident but, rather bafflingly, the reader is told that Frey rejects "the entire utilitarian underpinning of Singer's normative views" (p. 197), and yet has a "predisposition towards utilitarianism" (op. cit.) which unites Singer and himself against rights based philosophical scholarship and haranguing, disdainful dismissal of opponents - the latter from the vantage point of both spleen ("... The third group whom I cordially detest..." (p. 7)) and an unexplored and undefended moral absolutism. Even if this approach does not undermine the point and force of philosophical considerations, it runs the risk of giving comfort to an unreined irrationalism. Whilst there is an important truth in his view that reason and argument have a limited power to change practices, too extensive a reliance on the alternatives of "poetry, humour, and polemic" that Clark employs and advocates may make our deepest convictions a product of, and hostage to, mere powerful persuasion. And that seems too dangerous an outcome for Clark's proposals to be acceptable to anyone who is concerned to provide a defensible case on behalf of animals.

Mike Singleton



Six Ideologies

Gordon Graham, *Politics in its Place*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985, 196pp, £17.50 hb, £7.95 pb

A preliminary word ought to be said about the aims of Gordon Graham's book. Its subtitle, "A study of six ideologies", might lead the unsuspecting to think that they had come across a text book on ideologies: the kind of thing to which undergraduates make reference when an essay on fascism or liberalism is in the offing. Not a bit of it. Graham's intention is to offer a "dispassionate consideration of political ideas" (p. v), and he spends rather more time considering them than saying what they are.

His strategy on this score is to "set out what I take to be one or two of the leading ideas of each ideology in turn" (p. vii), and to the objection that he may have misrepresented ideas or selected for unimportant ones he replies, "I cannot do more than appeal to the reader to acknowledge that what I pinpoint and examine in each case is indeed a belief important to the ideology in question, and one which many people actually hold" (ibid.). I think that this strategy is, on the whole, successful, but it ought to be stressed that this "dispassionate" study is also idiosyncratic and therefore not to be taken as a reference book.

Graham realises that his claim to have written a study of ideologies without taking sides will be contentious, and so he devotes 77 pages of the text to disposing of sociological, Marxist and historical/cultural arguments which suggest that his "dispassionate" study of ideologies is impossible. His position is closely-argued and illuminating, although the success of his critique of Marx's concept of ideology via an attack on historical materialism (all in four pages) does not seem to me to be total.

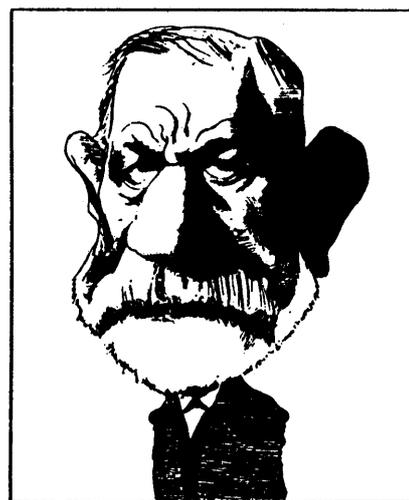
I am not sure, either, that his conclusion to this part - "that some common ground is a necessary part of ideological debate and furthermore that this common ground is just the right resource for critical examination of ideological beliefs" (p. 71) - does all the work he wants it to.

He wishes to show that a "non-ideological enquiry into the truth of ideological beliefs" (p. 64) is possible, but never adequately refutes the position that once the philosopher dirties the results of that enquiry in a concrete political circumstance at a particular place at a particular time, the enquiry takes an ideological form despite itself.

From this perspective, Graham's bluff is called on the book's penultimate page when he says, "My general conclusion is that the visions of the future that have inspired the politics of salvation, and hence promoted the authority and apparatus of the state, are not so inspiring as to give us reason to run the risk that this kind of politics involves" (p. 191). Calm, rational argument about ideologies is possible - Gordon Graham's book is adequate testimony to that - but his work will be read in a world already shot through with ideology and prejudice, not in some philosophical never-never land. To this extent his calm, rational conclusion about the dangers of the state will be ideological as soon as it hits the political market place.

Maybe this is one reason why although we might agree that "reason can effect change in belief" (p. 67), we harbour the suspicion that it cannot do so on its own. An additional factor is that emotion is at least as important to belief as is reason, which is why a "dispassionate" study of ideologies will never tell us more than half the story. Gordon Graham has brought his impressive philosophical armoury to bear on a topic whose significance is far from exhausted by philosophical enquiry. If he has put politics in its place, then he has done the same for philosophy.

Andy Dobson



Screen Memories

Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Freud Scenario* (ed. J.-B. Pontalis, trans. Quintin Hoare), London: Verso, 1986, 549pp, £16.95 hb

Here at last is the translation of the book of the film of the writer of the theory. A favoured legend amongst Sartreans is how John Huston commissioned from Sartre a screenplay for a film biography of Freud; Sartre duly returned a seven-hour script, was told by Huston to cut it, made only minor concessions, had his work pruned by Hollywood hacks, and removed his name from the credits of the eventually produced film, *Freud: the Secret Passion*. Pontalis corrects this legend in one important respect. Sartre's second version was longer than the first! Verso have now published the complete first version, together with extracts from the second, and the originally submitted synopsis. The book is referred to as an important "document", and it is true that we now have more evidence with which to judge Sartre's literary skills, and his ambiguous attitude to Freudianism. However, the work cannot be counted amongst Sartre's greatest achievements. I am reminded of a story told me by a friend of Sartre. On being presented with a photograph of two half-sisters and told the barest biographical details, Sartre proceeded to launch into a lengthy description of their lives and character. "Typically Sartrean: brilliant, imaginative but utterly mistaken and beside the point" was the friend's comment.

Sartre's totalising ambition of capturing another's life in print (as with the monumental work on Flaubert) is not, in the case of Freud, diminished by any concern for the truth about his subject. Even the loyal Pontalis admits that "the question of truth and falsehood is no longer posed" (p. xiv). Sartre's sources seem to have been fairly minimal - mainly the first volume of Jones's biography and the edited correspondence of Freud with Wilhelm Fliess. Even so, his distortions of the known facts and wilful invention of non-existent events are quite astonishing. For instance, we are given an extraordinarily melodramatic death-bed confession by Meynart, Freud's early mentor and teacher, of his "hysteria", and a visit by Freud to the barber on the day of his father's funeral. There is one unfortunate example of such invention. In 1896 Freud gave to the Society for Psychiatry and Neurology his celebrated defence of the "seduction thesis". There are no reports of its reception, save a comment from Freud to Fliess that it was "icy". Nevertheless, Sartre has Freud exit from the meeting through two rows of those present who yell at him "Dirty Jew!", "Filthy yid!". Now Freud

was the victim of anti-Semitism, but it is a wild, and largely unhelpful, distortion of the truth to suggest that his medical colleagues exhibited it in the form of such open abuse.

None of this would really matter if Sartre had conveyed, in an interesting and original manner, the spirit of Freud's personal and intellectual odyssey in those crucial years with which the film concerns itself. However, what we have is a surprisingly hagiographical depiction of a heroic intellectual "adventurer" battling against racial prejudice, and the indifference or open hostility of his colleagues. Sartre's "Freud" is an almost mythical figure, a truth seeker whose own soul or sanity is put in jeopardy by his Faustian quest for personal knowledge. Fliess thus appears as a Mephistopheles ("devilish" is used several times to describe his appearance) provoking Freud's rupture with Breuer; and Meynart warns Freud that to acquire the knowledge he seeks he must make a pact with the Devil. Consequently Freud's character is that of a mythical hero in some modern epic, and his intellectual contemporaries mere stumbling mortals. Martha seems resigned in her marriage to a "God" and content merely to keep food on the table and a roof over their heads.

It is also disappointing that the writing should be so unsubtle and, occasionally, downright clumsy. There are speeches in which Freud stumbles upon the truth (of the "she must have been ... er ... repressing the memory - yes that's it!" sort) for which a dramatic orchestral tutti in the background would be appropriate. There are extremely awkward descriptions of Freud's self-analysis ("Brucke, Meynert, Breuer, you (Fleiss): so many fathers! Not counting Jakob Freud who begot me" (p. 273)); and peculiarly Sartrean metaphors recur in the description of the Freudian unconscious ("slime" and "mud" figure largely).

It is well known that Sartre never came to terms with the specifically Freudian notion of an "unconscious". And we certainly learn nothing new from this script about the relationship between Freud's theory and Sartre's view of consciousness. What did interest Sartre was the project of making sense of one's own, and other human beings' lives. For Sartre, some people are capable of making sense of others in the very act of making sense of themselves. Sartre's "Freud" is such a "singular universal". Of course in dramatising that claim Freudianism is bowdlerised and Freud's life misrepresented. But then Sartre never allowed considerations of fact to interfere with the broad sweep of his own particular theoretical brush.

Dave Archard

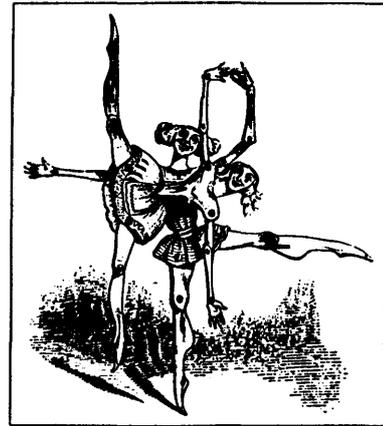
Doing It

Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality 1880-1930*, London: Pandora Press, 1985, 232pp, £5.95 pb

The period Sheila Jeffreys has chosen is a rich one for feminist historians, as the public campaigns of the nineteenth century, over prostitution and child abuse particularly, and the works of the sexologists after the First World War, provide a wealth of material about discourses on and attitudes to homosexual and heterosexual relations. Jeffreys's argument is that the sex reform movement of the 1920s is primarily responsible for the devaluing of the ideas of the older feminists before the war, that is to say their critique of male sexual behaviour and repudiation of heterosexual relations as

necessary for women. Her major concern is to rehabilitate their work, and demonstrate their importance for contemporary feminism.

Jeffreys argues that the sexologists' insistence on heterosexuality has polarised options for women into being pro-sex or anti-sex, removed spinsterhood and lesbianism as positive choices for women (the two are not conflated, though attacks on them, most importantly, are), thus enabling the feminists who challenge compulsory heterosexuality and male violence against women to be presented as "anti-sex, prudish, puritanical, reactionary and as potential allies of the moral majority" (p. 195). Her return to the older feminists has a very definite political purpose. She presents them as sharing the perspective that sexuality is socially constructed, and makes the persuasive claim that it is the sexologists' vision of a progress from Victorian darkness to current enlightenment in matters sexual which relies on the notion of an "essence" of sexuality.



There is much of interest in this study. Its documentation of the campaigns against prostitution, child abuse and the sexual submission of women, where the denunciations of male power extended to the legal system and parliament, and were directed not only against fathers and guardians but also against employers of servants, illuminates neatly the way sexual relations necessarily pose questions of the social relations of power. The sexologists' normative perspective on the heterosexual woman and the vacuousness of their writings on frigidity are equally well demonstrated.

Unfortunately, as a contribution to an analysis of sexuality, the book is far less convincing, primarily because one of the overriding targets of its polemic is "the coital imperative which rules at present" (p. 37). Much of the discussion is underpinned by a sexual politics which equates male sexuality (which is the subject of no analysis) with violence against women. This means that women who refuse to "do sexual intercourse" (a recurring phrase) are positively presented, whatever their reasons and whatever the context, as feminist, and attacks on them are considered anti-feminist. So Stella Browne is described as a "socialist feminist" (p. 51), but her willingness to envisage sexual relations between women (only apparently progressive, according to Jeffreys), is due to her "horror of feminists" (p. 118). There is much similar slippage between description and valid judgement, compounded by the fact feminism is never defined; it slowly becomes clear that full weight must be given to the title, and that only those who say heterosexuality equals male aggression and female oppression really qualify as feminist.

The historical analyses are fitted into this straightjacket. Those who celebrate the joy of sex for the heterosexual woman are doubly discredited by linking this to woman's natural role as wife and mother, to imperial concerns with the race, or the medicalisation of the spinster (by seeing heterosexual activity as vital to

health). That women arguing for social purity, continence or psychic love make similar connections is explained sociologically and does not detract from their status as feminists. If one does not share the author's sexual politics, conflating heterosexuality with anti-lesbianism, or her uncritical attitude towards claims of women's moral superiority over men, all this is very annoying.

Other reservations apply to the arguments concerning the social construction of sexuality. It is asserted that the older feminists who sought to set limits to male sexual urges and drives, see these as socially constructed because controllable, therefore not natural. It would seem to me that, far from questioning it, such views depend on the idea of a male sexual nature. Doubts also arise as to what the author herself means by the phrase "social construction of sexuality", given that it is applied so often to the sex reformers on heterosexuality or anti-lesbianism, but never to lesbianism as such. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that some sexualities are here thought to be less constructed than others. In spite of much interesting documentation, this book fails in the end to escape the essentialism and moralism of which it accuses its opponents.

Margaret Atack

Streetwise

Edward Timms and David Kelley (eds.), *Unreal city: Urban experience in modern European literature and art*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985, 268pp, £26.50 hb (illustrated)

In the eighteenth century, David Hume wrote that the city was "the true scene for a man of letters". The writers and artists of our own century have worked through a relationship with the city no less important than that enjoyed by the men of the Enlightenment, though distinctively different. Modernism's relationship with the city has worked two ways: the turn-of-the-century European city provided many of the historical conditions which made the emergence of Modernism possible. And Modernist writers and artists have repaid the debt, by representing the city with the subjectivity of viewpoint, and all the experimentalism of form, which have characterised their movement. This is the origin of the "unreal city" (the phrase is T. S. Eliot's), whose difform images appear in so many places in Modernist culture.

This collection of studies takes the "unreal city" of Modernist writing and visual arts as its subject, and the period from about 1910 to 1930 as its chronological focus. Poetry is particularly well represented, the work of Eliot, Apollinaire, Rilke, Lorca and the Surrealists, being frequent points of reference. The novels of Musil, Kafka, Doblin, Bely and Joyce are also given sustained discussion. Painting, cinema, and (Futurist) architecture are treated in individual chapters, but other aspects of architecture, along with design, photography and music, are omitted.

In most of the studies, Modernist responses to the city are the centre of attention, while the urban conditions of Modernism's emergence are crowded out of the picture. Raymond Williams's essay, given a keynote position in the book, is stimulating and authoritative, but cannot single-handedly provide the historical context for all the critical studies which follow it. Other essays which make worthy efforts to place their subjects in a cultural and historical context include: Frank Whitford on the city in

painting, Edward Timms on German Expressionists and English Georgians, and again on Musil's Vienna and Kafka's Prague, Michael Long on Eliot, Pound and Joyce, Jana Howlett on Bely, Mayakovsky and Mandelstam, and David Midgley on Brecht. These are the best pieces; lively, well-informed and clearly-argued. Some of the other essays seem to me too narrowly-focused, and unsure of their overall intentions, to offer any new perspectives on the overall subject of the book. There are also some loose-ends: the political issues surrounding Modernist responses to the city really deserve to be more squarely confronted than they are; and no attempt is made to integrate cinema with other media, despite what several of the authors say about the "cinematic" quality of Modernist renderings of the city in media other than film.

Loose-ends are inevitable in collections of this kind. The volume has nevertheless been well edited, with cross-references provided between the papers and a thorough index. The illustrations have been well chosen, though one wished for colour reproductions of the paintings. Passages in foreign languages are provided with scrupulous translations. If it fails to offer a radically new thesis on Modernism and the city, this book can at least serve as an excellent introduction to many ideas of Modernist culture.

Jan Golinski

Merleau-Ponty

James Schmidt, *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Between Phenomenology and Structuralism*, London: Macmillan, 1985, 214pp, £20 hb, £6.95 pb

This new book on the human sciences in the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty is much needed. Many phenomenologists get irate with studies of his social and political thought, but this work takes a different emphasis. Schmidt attempts to correlate the development of Merleau-Ponty's views of meaning, experience and perception with the development of his views on anthropology, psychology and sociology. Quite rightly he has presented his subject not as a social theorist but as a phenomenologist who has addressed in a sophisticated way problems of the human sciences. Thus, as I see it, this book lies within philosophical rather than sociological discourse. This may or may not satisfy expectations but will no doubt please phenomenologists; it remains in any event a useful, concentrated, clearly written study.

Starting from an introduction reviewing Merleau-Ponty's development which in its unfolding promised so much, but was ultimately frustrated by his early death, Schmidt proceeds over the next three chapters to examine the intellectual relationships between Merleau-Ponty and his colleagues and teachers; notably Husserl and Levi-Strauss, Sartre and the psychologists, and Saussure, Weber and Lukacs. The concluding chapter assesses the tentative philosophical progress which led Merleau-Ponty to a precarious stance between phenomenology and structuralism.

Early in the second chapter, Schmidt states what I take to be the central thesis of the book. He writes: "Virtually all of Merleau-Ponty's works can be read as an attempt to reunite parties which, since Descartes, had increasingly come to face one another as antagonists" (p. 14). Most

successful in demonstrating this aim is the fourth chapter which shows how Merleau-Ponty's notorious misreading of Saussurean linguistics is turned into an innovative exploration of the diacritical nature of the sign which grounds one's sense of history.

Chapter 4 on Speech, Expression and the Sense of History is by far the best chapter. It charts the staggered development of his theory of expression from Phenomenology of Perception to the Prose of the World and The Visible and the Invisible in relation to his realisation of the failures of Soviet Marxism. The final chapter plays out the conflict between Merleau-Ponty and Sartre by acknowledging that, while a profoundly phenomenological philosophy of consciousness remained with Sartre, Merleau-Ponty's work paved the way for structuralism and exorcised the remnants of a transcendental phenomenology.

Despite its expository strengths, this book is just too conventional. In lacking political or methodological commitment it has a textbook-ish quality but is rather too advanced to play this role. Few themes are considered outside the immediate intellectual milieu yet Schmidt could quite justifiably have offered some discussion of Merleau-Ponty in relation to Derrida's work on such notions as "trace", "forgetting" and the critique of the sign which are prefigured in the former's linking of Saussurean linguistics to a philosophy of history.

Graham B. McBeath

Personhood

Michael Tooley, *Abortion and Infanticide*, Oxford University Press, 1985, 425pp, £22.50 hb, £12.50 pb

Michael Tooley's book provides a comprehensive analysis of the moral issues surrounding abortion and infanticide. The two aspects of the book are inextricably linked, as the moral status of the fetus/baby is taken to be the central point at issue. Moral status is argued to be confirmed when the fetus/baby can be said to have become a person. It is therefore to an examination of the significance and criteria of personhood that much of the book is given. Tooley provides a thorough elucidation of the contemporary debate of this issue, providing a series of detailed critiques in propounding his own position.

Membership of the species *homo sapiens* is rejected as morally significant, as it is held to be incompatible with basic moral principles. Tooley follows recent trends in arguing that such principles are universal and therefore not specific to one species. The moral significance of personhood is assessed and affirmed, while commonly held criteria, such as rationality and agency, are rejected as inadequate. The anti-abortion argument based on the potential personhood of the fetus is rejected, as it depends on an assumption that it is equally wrong to refrain from procreation; potentiality being equally applicable to contraception as well as abortion. This assumption is argued to be unsubstantiated. Tooley suggests that some criterion of personhood is necessary and the consequences of this have to be accepted however much they may go against intuitive responses.

The criterion of personhood Tooley puts forward is that of being a subject of non-momentary interests. From a detailed assessment of the psychological and neurophysiological evidence which he rightly considers to be essential to the consideration of these issues, he shows that the capacity to be a person on his criterion is not

present until several weeks after birth - a date of three months being increasingly recognised as crucial. Thus the necessity for a joint discussion of the morality of abortion and infanticide; a position on one entailed and entails a position on the other linked through a conception of personhood.

While there is much of value in the detailed discussion and argument of this work, there is also a central weakness. The book follows the dominant strand of contemporary debate in assuming the moral status of the fetus/baby to be the central issue. Abortion and infanticide are therefore decontextualised from the power relations in which their rightness or wrongness are actually assessed. I do not think it is stretching credibility too greatly to argue that there are wider considerations than the status of the fetus/baby which are equally, if not more, important in reaching conclusions to these issues. Particularly relevant is the unequal relationship between men and women. Within this context, the status of the fetus may be secondary in the battle over whether a woman ought to have control over the use of her body.

Such a position would entail a very different conception of ethics and rights than that put forward by Tooley. What is disappointing is that if he does not consider a woman's rights argument significant, he should have provided an argument against it, rather than passing it over in silence.

This aside, Tooley has produced a redoubtable set of arguments to support a liberal position on abortion and infanticide which may go against the inclinations of many. While regretting the confinement of the debate to the conventional terrain, there is much in this work for further study - not least the idea of persons being subjects of non-momentary interests.

Richard Edwards

MODS

Eugene Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism: an historical study of Lukacs, Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno*, London: Verso, 1985, 328pp, £7.95 pb

Modernism as a force in the art and literature of the twentieth century was inevitably at the heart of theoretical debates among the more literary Marxist intellectuals in Germany between the wars. Some of the essential essays by Lukacs, Brecht, Benjamin, Bloch and Adorno were collected and translated in the volume *Aesthetics and Politics* (E. Bloch et al, Verso/NLB, London, 1977) with pertinent if sometimes overbearing commentaries. Eugene Lunn has provided an excellent companion piece: a reliable, well-written survey of the issues and debates among four leading Marxist literary figures.

Expressionism in painting and poetry was the immediate subject of the first exchanges between Bloch, who wished to appropriate for Marxism the apocalyptic energies and resolutely anti-establishment posture of the art of the avant-garde, and Lukacs, who saw Modernism as an expression of alienation and irrationalism without a solidly critical self-awareness and who hoped to pattern Marxist literature after more traditional forms of Realism. The so-called "Expressionism-debates" soon became a more full-blown controversy about the nature of Realism and the Marxist appropriation of artistic techniques, traditional and Modernist. Lukacs the critic

(and his supporters in Moscow) were ranged against the literary practitioner, Brecht, in a conflict that produced no formal debate, no real exchange of views and in which far more was at stake than simply the theoretical ideas.

Brecht's friend and collaborator, the critic Walter Benjamin, drew more extensively than any of the figures treated here on non-Marxist sources and was in his own way much more fully engaged with a whole range of avant-garde art movements and modern technologies (Brecht, Surrealism, photography, film to name only the most obvious). His was the most subtle and far-reaching, but also the most idiosyncratic grasp of Modernism among these writers. His one-time disciple (later a rather heavy-handed editor and then executor to Benjamin) Theodor Adorno pinpointed at the time the difficulties in reconciling Benjamin's insights with more orthodox Marxist critiques and found Benjamin's endorsement of the liberational possibilities of the new techniques and technologies impossible to subscribe to. But he went on in his monumental *Aesthetic Theory* to integrate Marxist critiques of fetishism and alienation, with Benjamin's most original ideas (aura, dialectic of extremes, dialectic at a standstill, and so on), as well as with much in the classical aesthetic theories of Winckelmann, Kant, Goethe and Hegel.

Lunn's strategy is to compare and contrast the ideas and interventions of Lukacs and Brecht in one section of the book and then to do the same for the much more closely related writings of Benjamin and Adorno in the next. Alert to the connections between these two dyads, Lunn succeeds in mapping a complex field of argument and engagement. In a useful opening section he prepares the ground by setting out Marx's own ideas on art and literature and the issues central to the Marxist tradition. In focussing on the development of these issues by these four leading Marxist literary figures, Lunn succeeds in establishing a solid framework for approaching the vexed question of the status of Modernism, and its importance for Marxism.

The result is a readable and reliable survey of complex debates and interrelations. Any newcomer to this area would read the book with great profit; anyone teaching such subjects should have Lunn's book near the top of any list of the secondary materials. Those who are already deeper into the writings he discusses will find that the history-of-ideas approach (even when it is exemplified as expertly as it is here) fails to catch much of the flavour of the original, much of the pace and direction of their particular cogitations and engagements. Lunn's book has already been warmly welcomed by Marxist teachers and intellectuals; it is sure to establish itself as an invaluable teaching and study aid.

Short Reviews

Anne Wiltsher, *Most Dangerous Women: Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War*, London: Pandora Press, 1985, 263pp, £5.95 pb

Anne Wiltsher dedicates her book "To Greenham women everywhere", and there are indeed many echoes of that struggle in this lively account of the numerous women's organisations and the main protagonists involved in the long fight to put an end to the first world war by a negotiated peace. Although rather heavy on biographical details at first, it really gets into its stride as it tells the story of the first Women's International Congress at The Hague in 1915, the subsequent meetings between women and politicians across Europe to set up a negotiating conference, and the efforts made to prevent the United States from entering the war.

Wiltsher focuses on the activities and campaigns of the women themselves, and it is perhaps because of the initial attention to marking out the cast of characters that the

narrative remains remarkably clear, in spite of covering a very wide range of countries, campaigns and issues, and in spite of the profusion of acronyms. As one campaigner writes to another: "I am stomping the country again quite a lot for the UDC ILP WIL WPC (Do you know your alphabet?)" (p. 193). The campaigners wore themselves out, not only fighting the Establishment and the press (the latter's attacks being all too boringly familiar), but also in trying to maintain international sisterhood at a time when not only nationalism, but also the threat the demands for peace posed to the cause of suffragism, led many to reappraise their positions. Wiltsher chronicles the tensions generated by their conflicting priorities, and the triumphs which the international gatherings represented. Together with the amount of detail on the conditions they were working under, and on the situation of women generally in Europe during and after the war, this is a very useful contribution to women's social history.

Margaret Atack

Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985, 546pp, £9.95 pb

In the first quarter of this century, Nietzsche was probably the most widely discussed and passionately promoted philosopher in the English-speaking world. For those early enthusiasts, Nietzsche stood for a positivistic, Darwinian and iconoclastic secularism; and he was made into a patron of sexual radicalism, artistic modernism, socialism and feminism. The past ten years have seen the celebration of a "New Nietzsche" - a precocious Heideggerian and what some like to call a "post-modernist". Richard Schacht's bulky book - first published in 1983 and now available in paperback - belongs to the "Arguments of the Philosophers" series and it therefore presents us with a third Nietzsche: Nietzsche for analytical philosophers.

Each of its eight chapters portrays Nietzsche's opinions on a particular topic - Philosophy, Truth, Metaphysics, The World, Man, Values, Morality and (most interestingly) Art. Schacht ranges over the whole of Nietzsche's philosophical work, of all genres and periods, peeling away the "vehement and extravagant" and "excessively metaphorical" language, and extracting useful estimates of Nietzsche's "positions" on the conventional philosophical map. (Thus for example he demonstrates that "balanced and careful consideration ... shows ... that he is no more a true epiphenomenalist than he is a strict determinist").

Unfortunately, the result of Schacht's labours seems to be that Nietzsche's settled opinions on standard philosophical topics are banal and predictable. If anything is profound in Nietzsche's work, it is perhaps not his philosophical theory but his literary practice: his extravagances and his metaphors, his deliberate paradoxes and his use of many voices; in short his surface or his style. Nietzsche expressed his contempt for utilitarians by mocking their boringness; but he added that "in so far as they are boring one cannot think sufficiently highly of their utility". One of the utilities of Schacht's book, perhaps, is that it shows that if Nietzsche was an analytical philosopher, he was a pretty boring one.

Jonathan Rée

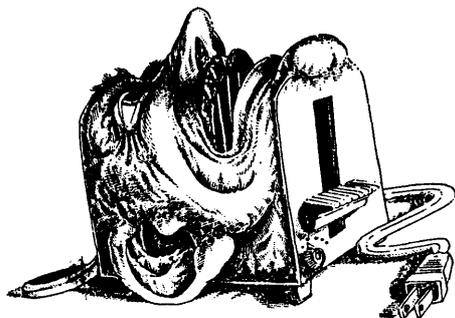
Tony Judt, *Marxism and the French Left: Studies on Labour and Politics in France*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, 338pp, £25.00 hb

Judt's studies deal with the labour movements of the last century, the Socialist Party in the 1920s and 1930s, and the 1981 elections. The empirical detail is fascinating

and valuable, though the collection is marred by a certain lack of cohesion: this is very much a collection of thematically related essays rather than a unitary study. The essay most likely to be of interest to Radical Philosophy readers deals with French Marxism in the period 1945-75, and is sadly disappointing. It is, for instance, punctuated with the usual snide comments about the intellectual abstractions and fashions of the Left Bank and about the theoreticians' lack of contact with the "real needs and concerns of workers". Such criticisms always sound distasteful on the lips of British academics, but the claim that Sartre indulged a vicarious taste for violence "at a comfortable distance" is simply offensive. During the Algerian war the violence was very close to home, and having one's flat bombed is unlikely to be a comfortable experience by any criterion.

Much of Judt's discussion centres upon the influence of Stalinism on developments in French Marxism, but Stalinism remains a curiously abstract notion, an all-purpose category rather than a real phenomenon. The treatment of Althusser is somewhat summary and Judt chooses to ignore the fact that, whatever its shortcomings, Althusserianism did help to produce a wealth of historical writing in both France and Britain. Finally, non-French speakers might have appreciated the inclusion of translations of all the quotations.

David Macey



Henry Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984, 179pp, £28.00 hb

For too long our readings of Wittgenstein and Derrida have been conditioned by the "movements" they have helped engender - "ordinary language" or "analytic" philosophy in the case of the former, and Franco-American-type literary theory in the case of the latter. Henry Staten's approach puts Wittgenstein and Derrida in a different perspective by tracing the emergence of their projects in relation to arguably the central theme of Western metaphysics - namely truth conceived as the coincidence of thought and "that by virtue of which the phenomenon becomes accessible to knowledge" (p. 10), i.e. "form" (in the broadest sense of that term). Staten's exposition of Derrida is especially valuable, not only for its clarity, but in particular for the way it disposes of the easy stereotype of Derrida as a mere advocate of an "anything goes" approach in textual interpretation. In relation to Wittgenstein, Staten's reading (as the author himself admits) is a fairly familiar one, but even so, the links he makes between Wittgenstein and Derrida are of interest both in themselves and in terms of the broader issues they raise. The reason for the latter is that Staten's study succeeds in presenting deconstruction as a rigorous strategy of textual interpretation - rather than the trendy literary conceit which many have taken it for. Indeed if the main body of Staten's text shows its relevance to problems in epistemology and metaphysics, one is led also to wonder what a rigorous deconstruction of concepts in ethics and political theory would be like...

Paul Crowther

Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Philosophy Through the Looking-Glass: Language, Nonsense, Desire*, London: Hutchinson, 1985, 206pp, £5.95 pb

In psychiatric terms, delire is equivalent to the English "delirium", but in recent French writing it has taken on a much wider meaning and has come to refer to what Lecercle terms the discursive locus where philosophy consorts with the March Hare. There is no strict equivalent in English, and the decision to use the French term throughout does appear to be justified. Delire takes us to the other side of language, to a realm where communication breaks down, where the words take over and proliferate. The inhabitants of this linguistic wonderland include the psychotic Dr Schreber, the Saussure of the anagrams, possessed visionaries like Arthaud and a host of literary eccentrics.

This is also the natural habitat of the schizophrenics whose language was studied by Irigaray in her early work, and of the paranoiacs who contributed so much to the development of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Lecercle wanders through this strange landscape, hand in hand with Alice, and provides a thorough and highly entertaining - if not always easy - account of the literature, linguistics, philosophy and psychoanalysis of delire. The journey ends in the company of Deleuze and Guattari, for whom delire is cognate with desire, a direct product of libido and a precondition of all human expression.

Lecercle gives an important account of an area of French thought that has received relatively little attention in Britain, showing that the apparent eccentricity of Deleuze and Guattari's desiring machines in fact belongs within a long tradition affecting disciplines as seemingly diverse as poetry and psychoanalysis. The range of material he covers is breath-taking: from stoic theories of language to Edward Lear, from Lacan to Lewis Carroll. He does not write from outside the tradition he is discussing with the detached objectivity of the historian or the clinician; on the contrary, as he himself admits, his book displays mild symptoms of delire in that it attempts to translate the untranslatable and insists upon crossing and recrossing linguistic and disciplinary frontiers. It should be added that it also generates a great deal of pleasure.

Lecercle teaches English at the University of Nanterre and writes English with a fluency that many "native speakers" would do well to emulate. He also displays a love of the English nonsense tradition that is all too rare in France. One can only envy his students.

David Macey

