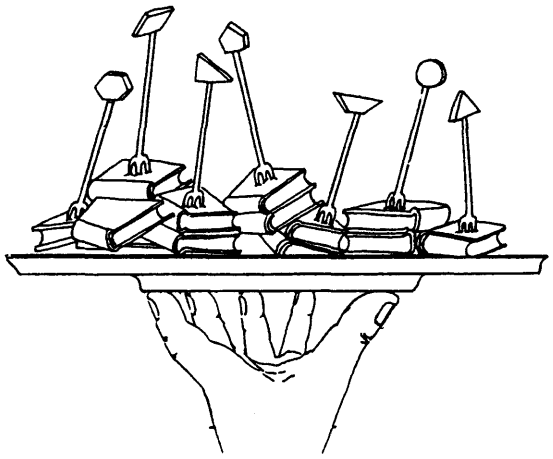
REVIEWS



THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT?

Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, Oxford, Polity Press, 1988, 264pp., £27.50 hb, £8.95 pb.

In the good old days when education was not yet subordinated to the market, and the study of politics was presumed to include acquaintance with classical texts as well as a working knowledge of computers, I used to teach social contract theory to first year politics students. It was always difficult to disentangle history from theory, as students expressed their stunned disbelief that any such contracts could ever have been made. Future students lucky enough to have *The Sexual Contract* on their list of required reading may find themselves even more incredulous. Carole Pateman argues that the original social contract was in reality a sexual-social contract, in which men overthrew the rule of the fathers, but only to institute a fraternal agreement which guaranteed men access to women's bodies. Drawing on Freud's conjectural history of the origins of social life, she argues that the historical defeat of the fathers was necessary, not just to create civil freedom, but to transfer their sex-right to the sons. Patriarchy was transformed; a new fraternal order came into being that re-wrote male sex-right in contractual terms.

Carole Pateman is of course crystal clear that she is dealing with story rather than history, but it is a story that helps illuminate the premises of modern society, and in particular what is implied in viewing society through contractarian eyes. Her book is a sustained critique of contract, which cannot, she argues, provide the theoretical basis for a free social order. Implicit in contract theory is the notion of individuals as owning their own persons and capacities, but owing nothing to anyone else; the whole point of a contract is to make possible an orderly (legitimate) access to someone else's body or services. This is one of the senses in which contract is profoundly patriarchal – that it reflects a male quest for access to women's bodies and control over their reproductive powers, and conceives of all relationships on this pattern. The other sense in which the sexual-social contract is patriarchal is that it is a deal struck between men. In the classical theories of contract, women are parties only to a marriage contract but not to the social contract itself; no mere oversight, argues Carole Pateman, but essential to the nature of the original contract, which simultaneously established the conditions for marriage and the conditions for civil freedom. Women are the objects rather than the subjects of this process.

The Sexual Contract is considerably more than a contribution to the history of political theory. It takes issue with those (including many feminists) who conflate patriarchy with its traditional paternal form, and argues that modern patriarchy is expressed *through* the principles of individualism and civil contract, not in opposition to them. There has been a long tradition of writing on women that views the contemporary world as a profound contradiction – a running battle between the 'gender-free' principles of modern society and the patriarchal remnants that sustain masculine power. This was how John Stuart Mill conceived of the subordination of women; this has the underlying premise of the dual-systems approach that talks of an interaction between a supposedly sex-blind capitalism and patriarchy. Carole Pateman's arguments represent a decisive alternative to this: contract is not in tension with patriarchy but the medium through which patriarchal right is now upheld; nothing can be salvaged from the contractarian position; indeed the very concept of the individual is imbued with patriarchal norms.

Much of the argument hinges around the 'political fiction' that our selves can be separated from our abilities and our services, a fiction that legitimates both employment and marriage contracts. Yet both contracts submit one party to the command of another, both 'create social relations that endure over time – social relations of subordination'. To describe either as an 'exchange' – of services for support, or services for money – suggests that we can deal in bits of ourselves while retaining our selves intact. Pateman regards this as dangerous nonsense; earlier socialists who talked of wage labour as wage slavery were closer to the truth, for they made it clear that subordination was the essence of the deal. Contracts that involve property in persons always involve one party agreeing to obey if the other party agrees to protect; they are of their nature unequal.

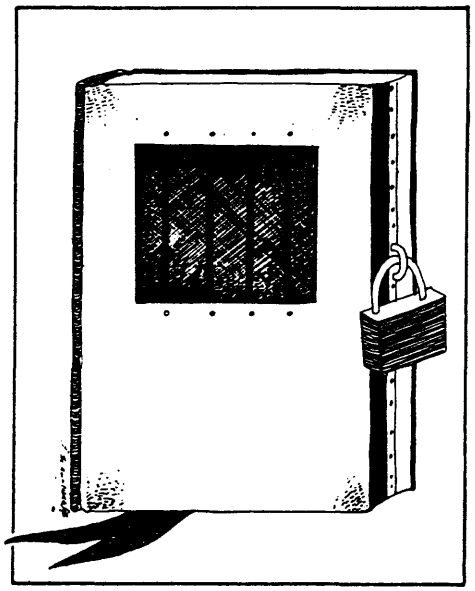
If this is true for employment, where the physical body is a necessary adjunct of the employment contract, but not really what the employer is interested in, then it is *a fortiori* true for marriage, and overwhelmingly so for prostitution. Those

feminists – primarily in the United States – who have pursued visions of a non-sexist marriage contract, are therefore heading off course. Taken to its logical conclusion, this would make marriage a mere contract of sexual use, and this, believes Pateman, 'would mark the political defeat of women *as women*'. The language of contract allows women no alternative but to turn themselves into replicas of men; it cannot provide the basis for sexual equality or freedom.

In similar vein she considers what is wrong with prostitution. One route travelled by feminists is to say that women get forced into prostitution by economic necessity, and/or that once they are in this line of work, they operate at a disadvantage in securing fair conditions of work. By implication, the problem would be solved if first, we had a more equal labour market with a wider range of opportunities for women so that prostitutes were freely choosing this as the kind of work they wished to do; and second, those choosing prostitution had the same rights to trade union and legal protection as other workers. Remove the inequalities of entry and the inequalities in the conditions of employment, and no problem. What gets left out, Pateman rightly argues, is the defining characteristic of prostitution, which is that women enter into a contract which gives men a 'right' of command over their bodies. The effect of the contract is the subordination – if for a limited time – of a woman and her body to a man. Can we seriously say that the requirements for equality are satisfied as long as the woman had equal standing when she makes the contract? Isn't there something wrong with contract itself?

The argument adds theoretical weight to reservations feminists have long expressed over approaches that seek to dissolve the differences between men and women, and illuminates the kind of problems that arise when we try to think of sexual equality in terms of equalising the basis for fair deals. If sexual difference is already inscribed in the apparently gender-neutral language of modern society, then we cannot see the pursuit of equality in terms of making this language consistent. We cannot just strip away our differences till we emerge as the supposedly 'abstract', but in reality male, individuals of liberal thinking; we must abandon 'the masculine, unitary individual to make space for two figures: one masculine, one feminine'. Sexual difference has to be acknowledged not denied if we are to advance towards sexual equality.

Much of this I find extremely powerful and convincing. But some of it I find overstated, and my doubts hark back to the discussions I used to have with my students over the relationship between theory and history. It is not that I seek documentation of the events of the primal scene or the original contract; I fully support the argument set out in the final chapter that the political fictions through which we represent ourselves shape our visions of freedom or equality, and can deny a language to women. But *The Sexual Contract* sometimes reads as if the stories create the reality, and tends to treat patterns of social or economic change as largely irrelevant to the founding assumptions. Thus the marriage contract is defined through the woman's duty to serve her husband and the man's duty to support his wife, and carries with it extensive patriarchal powers. The fact that these powers have been substantially reduced over the last century, or that many husbands would not dream of using the full range of rights that remain, is not, Carole Pateman believes, the point, for it 'is to confuse particular examples of married couples with the *institution* of marriage'. But surely some changes will be to the point? No law court in the country would now try to enforce the return of an unwilling wife to a brutal husband, and it is surely conceivable that legal systems will be reformed to acknowledge the possibility of rape within marriage. What is left then of the notion that marriage creates a 'right' of access to a woman's body? One might say that at this point there *is* no contract of marriage, for a contract that never binds you to do things you would prefer not to do is arguably not a contract. From the perspective of *The Sexual Contract* this would surely be an event of astounding importance, for the argument rests on the centrality of contract in the way patriarchy is sustained. But important as the admission of rape in marriage would be to many wives, it would not transform our world.



I am not in other words sure what to make of the status of the arguments which seem to claim for contract such a central, defining role. The great strength of the book lies in the case it develops against socialist or feminist deployment of contractarian arguments, a case that it makes with superb skill, and to my mind complete success. It is I think less successful in setting out the sexual-social contract as the founding principle of modern society, for in challenging those who have viewed patriarchy as the opposite of contract, it tends to understate the possibility of contradiction, tensions, inconsistencies in the modern world view. This puts a tremendous strain on the argument.

In the history of socialist and feminist critiques of liberalism, two broad patterns have emerged. We can treat liberalism as a tradition that has refused to accept the logic of its own argument, a tradition that has remained inconsistently wedded to class or male power, despite the emancipatory implications of its own notions of equality and the free individual. From this perspective, we can say that liberalism is at war with itself, and can trace the effects of its internal contradictions in subsequent patterns of social change. Or we can say that liberalism is founded on principles of class and patriarchal power, and that what might seem like paradoxes within it (like the paradox that women are 'individual' enough to enter a marriage contract but not 'individual' enough to enter the social one) merely confirm what liberalism is about. From this perspective there will also be changes, but they will be consolidations of the basic principles which remain depressingly enclosed within its terms.

The Sexual Contract is the most impressive example of

this second approach, and like all of Carole Pateman's work, a highly original and thought-provoking contribution to political theory. It almost convinces me – but not quite – that nothing can be salvaged from the liberal tradition. It leaves us with a central question. Is there a version of the 'individual' that we can rescue from this sorry history, a version that serves men and women alike? Or is the individual, as Carole Pateman suggests, a patriarchal category, inseparable from the principles of contract, a subversion of the feminist dream? At a time when many socialists are re-appraising and reclaiming the concept of the individual, *The Sexual Contract* should be required reading for all.

Anne Phillips

JUST ECONOMICS

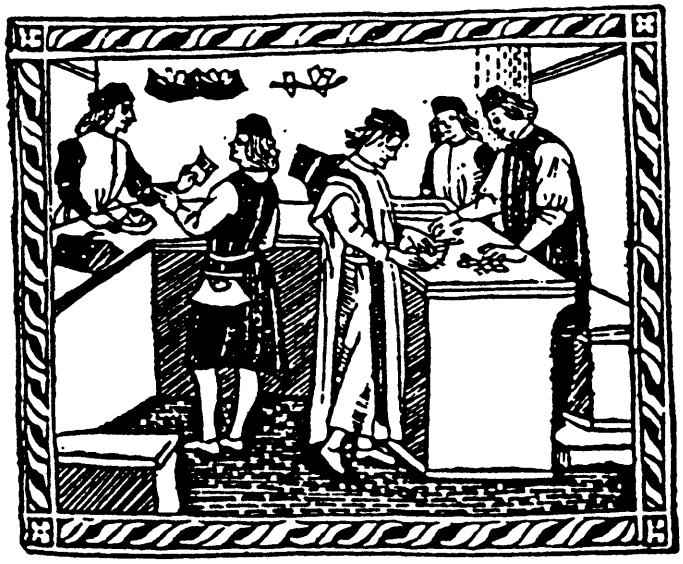
Richard Dien Winfield, *The Just Economy*, New York and London: Routledge, 1988, 252pp., £25 hb

The issue at the heart of this densely written and challenging book may be formulated as follows: Is it appropriate to make normative judgements concerning the economy and economic relations, and if so, what form should the just economy take, and what principles should we use in organizing it? Adopting what he identifies as an Hegelian approach, Winfield answers the first of these questions affirmatively, and uses Hegel's account of freedom to provide the focus for his response to the second. The discussion falls into two parts: in Part I Winfield examines why economic issues have often fallen outside ethical theory, and why the notion of 'the just economy' has proved problematic for many thinkers; in Part II he suggests that an Hegelian approach may help solve many of the difficulties faced by other theories, and uses it to discuss the question of economic justice in a novel way.

In general, Winfield argues, the reason why the organization of the economy has been excluded from ethical consideration is that economic activity has been concevied in either naturalistic or monological terms. Conceived naturalistically, the economy is taken to be determined by our natural needs and inclinations, and is thereby reduced to a sphere of necessity, rendering it normatively neutral; and conceived monologically, economic activity merely concerns a single agent, and does not involve the kind of interaction *between* individuals which brings in the issue of respective economic rights and duties, as a result of which normative issues arise. His aim, in the first part of the book, is to illustrate how such naturalistic and monological conceptions have made it hard to offer a consistent normative approach to the structure of the economy, by showing how a number of thinkers have failed to do just that.

Winfield begins by examining how prescriptive economics has been rejected by the two main types of practical philosophy: what he calls the 'praxis theory' initiated by Plato and Aristotle, and the social contract theory of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Kant. Praxis theory excludes the economy from the domain of justice by attaching no ethical value to economic behaviour: society is good if it enables man to lead the best life, but this life does not include the pursuit of particular wants and needs, so that the normative assessment of a given social organization is confined to the level of the state, and does not extend to the nature of the economy. Social contract theory also 'touches on economic affairs only extrinsically', being basically monological and naturalistic in outlook. Thus, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau treat labour as the act of an individual upon nature, and only the legal question of ownership falls into the domain of justice; this means that all reference to economic need and satisfaction lies outside civil society, and their picture of the just state. Winfield treats Kant as the logical culmination of this tradition of practical philosophy, in that he took economic principles to be hypothetical rather than categorical imperatives, excluding them from the laws of freedom, and thus from his Kingdom of Ends. The upshot (according to Winfield) is that neither praxis theory nor social contract theory offer any normative principles on which to discuss the workings of the economy, or any criteria to which a just economy must conform.

From these theories, in which the notion of economic justice can play no part, Winfield then moves on to an assessment of those political economists – like Fichte, Rawls and Marx – who *prime facie* attempt to treat the economy as a sphere of justice. Winfield claims, however, that the work of these theorists is flawed, in so far as they 'attempt to conceive an intrinsically just economy with principles borrowed from praxis or liberal theory'. Thus Fichte and Rawls are condemned on the grounds that, although they introduce questions of economic practice and distribution into the terms of their contract theory, their principles of justice are *ad hoc* and not defensible against critics (like Nozick) who reject them as inconsistent with the presumptions of the social contract scheme. Likewise, the young Marx is criticised for failing to transcend 'the natural and monological terms of praxis and liberal thought', while his later work is said to be 'marred by



his appeal to natural factors and history, his failure to supply an independent theory of justice, and his inability to systematically establish the universality of economic categories or locate the economy in relation to other institutions'; as a result, Winfield claims, he could not construct a theory of capital that was normatively relevant, and so failed to provide a satisfactory account of economic justice.

After this (admittedly tendentious) analysis of how and why no theorist mentioned so far has succeeded in constructing a prescriptive economics, we now move on to Part II of the book, in which Winfield tries to show how Hegel alone offers the sort of practical philosophy in which an intelligible account of the just economy can have a part. Winfield argues as follows: Beginning his social theory with the claim that 'the system of right is the realm of freedom made actual' (*Philosophy of Right*, section 4), Hegel takes freedom to be endemic in any just social structure; but the will cannot achieve this freedom by acting upon nature or in isolation, but only by interacting with others, in pursuit of freely chosen ends. Now, in treating economic relations as non-natural and intersubjective, Winfield suggests that Hegel took economic exchange as carried on in civil society to be free in exactly this sense, in so far as commodity relations involve 'the respected freedom to satisfy needs of one's own choosing in reciprocity with others'. Thus, Winfield argues, Hegel was able to make economic freedom the central principle in his account of civil society, for only that economy which respects the individual's freedom to acquire personally chosen goods in exchange with others can be called just.

In the remainder of the book, Winfield draws out certain consequences of Hegel's conception of economic freedom, and elaborates it. Using Hegel's account of free economic exchange as a criterion, he offers a defence of the major features of the market economy on normative grounds. First, he argues, the exchange value of commodities should be determined by 'the mutual decision of the traders involved', and not fixed by any natural or intrinsic qualities; and he rejects Marx's labour theory of value as unjust, because it 'automatically violates the economic rights of commodity owners to choose their market needs and trade their property as they see fit'. Secondly, in opposition to Marx's theory of exploitation, he maintains that capital's realization of profit is just, as it 'need [not] involve any curtailment of the legitimate freedom of commodity interaction'. Thirdly, Winfield defends the existence of classes, as 'a classless society cannot be established without depriving everyone of their personal economic freedom to choose their own needs and to decide independently what activity they will engage in to satisfy them in conjunction with others'. Nonetheless, Winfield accepts that, while enshrining freedom in these respects, 'the justice of the market economy has an endemic limit', and must be regulated accordingly. He therefore attempts to show how the right to economic freedom is not infringed by a degree of public intervention, but rather *requires* it, if all individuals are to be able to exercise their right to act freely in the market place. In general, as he admits, the types of intervention Winfield allows are similar to those recommended by Rawls—namely, the curtailing of monopolies and inefficient pricing, the maintenance of reasonably full employment, the establishment of a certain minimum standard of living, and the just distribution of wealth; but, he emphasises, this intervention receives its proper justification from the Hegelian doctrine of interactive economic freedom, rather than the latter's social contract principles. Finally, Winfield argues that, although the market economy cannot eliminate all wrong, injustice should be righted in a way that is consistent with this doctrine of economic freedom.

Winfield's goal is therefore to defend a broadly Rawlsian conception of the nature of the just economy, using a principle of economic freedom he claims to have found in Hegel: namely, the freedom of satisfying personally chosen needs with goods acquired through exchange with others. Despite the ingenuity and originality of Winfield's strategy, two questions arise: on the one hand, how far is he justified in calling his approach Hegelian, and on the other, how satisfactory is this principle of economic freedom as a basis for a theory of the just economy? In response to the first question, I would say that, while Winfield's position might be Hegelian in

inspiration, it is hardly Hegelian in spirit, for Hegel's aim was to *transcend* the purely economic freedom of which Winfield makes so much, and to reach a higher *political* freedom beyond the particular ends of 'the system of needs'; in this respect, of course, Hegel is closer to the tradition begun by Plato and Aristotle than Winfield allows. As far as the second (doubtless more important) question goes, Winfield's position rests on the claim that commodity relations and the exchange of goods have a normative validity, as an exercise of freedom in reciprocity with others, and that it is in virtue of its respect for such activities that the market economy is just. This claim seems to me to be mistaken, however: commodity exchange is not a necessary feature of any just economic system, as commodity exchange does not possess the overriding normative value that Winfield requires of it. Free economic activity is simply a feature of the market economy as such; and I remain unconvinced by the supposedly Hegelian arguments he uses to elevate it into a fundamental principle of prescriptive economics. If this is accepted, then Winfield's whole normative defence of the market economy becomes problematic.

Robert Stern

LATE MODERNITY

William E. Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1988, 196pp., £22.50 hb.

William Connolly claims that this book was written in 'troubled times'. The sense of historical crisis which informs the text has persuaded its author to stand back a long way from current modes of political discourse, and to attempt to call into question their own presuppositions. Something has clearly unsettled Connolly. Quite *what* has unsettled him I wouldn't know, but this is surely a familiar contemporary feeling to those who have, for example, come into contact with any of those writers generally deemed to contribute to the postmodern interrogation of modernity. Connolly does not subscribe to the term 'postmodernity', at least in its guise as a move beyond modernity (and here he is in agreement with Zygmunt Bauman in *Legislators and Interpreters*). Connolly sees 'postmodernism' as 'one of the paradigmatic ways of being modern' in the sense in which he aruges that 'in modernity, modernization is always under way' and postmodernism is just another form of modernisation. Unwilling to claim any substantial originality for postmodernity, then, Connolly prefers to use the less obtrusive term 'late-modern'.

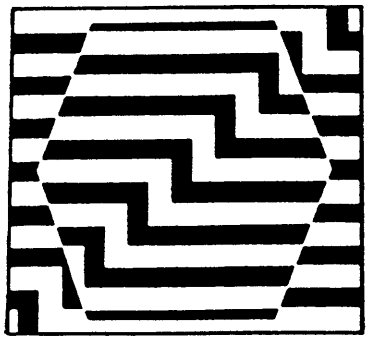
If the sense of destabilisation which has prompted this reading is familiar, then so is the worry at leaving behind (if only temporarily) the frames of reference and consequent prescriptions which typically inform the modern project. 'If one seeks to rethink radically dominant theories of self,' writes Connolly, 'one is called into court for failing to live up to established theories of freedom and responsibility.' Similarly, it becomes hard to find firm ground from which to propound universal standards of equality and justice. Connolly's wish to 'lift thought to the conditions and prospects of late-modernity' finds him hard-pushed to give prescriptive content to these projects, and also forces him to question the unquestioned status of the projects themselves.

In many disciplines postmodernity (or late-modernity) has already made itself felt, but I believe this is the first book about it by a political theorist. One of Connolly's principal contentions is that a late-modern perspective allows similarities to emerge between thinkers who have always seemed disparate. Even more interesting and potentially explosive is Connolly's contention that this may allow us to see how certain 'elements of life are subordinated in modern political discourse'. Connolly argues that modernity, 'in its optimistic moments ... defines itself by contrast to earlier periods which are darker, more superstitious, less free, less rational, less productive, less civilised, less comfortable, less democratic, less respectful of the individual, less scientific and less developed technically than it is at its best'. Modernity thus seeks to liberate, but it seeks to liberate in its own terms. With the help of the patriarchical discourse which nourishes it, it sets up polarities (rational/irrational; male/female; science/myth) which are then cast in hierarchies of value, of good/bad. Hence Connolly's assertion that some elements of life are subordinated in modern political discourse.

Connolly's strategy is to subject Hobbes, Rousseau and Hegel (centrally) and Sade and Marx (less so) to interrogation by Nietzsche. Put briefly, modernity's task has been to respond to the 'death of God', an event which killed the Being that 'could ground an entire way of life in common injunctions and assurances'. Modernity's response has not been to abandon the terrain which God provided, but to reconstruct it. Hobbes, Rousseau, Hegel and Marx all provide different forms of reconstruction – different 'solutions to homesickness'. The common themes of their enterprise, though, are a reliance on the notion of the transparency of self ('the last slumbering outpost of the view that the world is a design'), a will to mastery and universalisation, and a belief in Truth. Moreover, the failure of their programmes results not in the abandonment of the presuppositions which inform them, but in the ever more aggressive exclusion of 'that which does not fit'. Nietzsche makes us aware, for example, that 'in a world without a divine designer knowing is not a correspondence but an imposition of form upon the objects of knowledge'. Again, a certain sort of reason is called into question: 'Human life is paradoxical at its core, while modern reason, penetrating into new corners of life, strives to eliminate every paradox. This is a dangerous combination, with repressive potentialities.' Imposition of standards and the repression of alterity thus become the common themes informing the work of Hobbes, Rousseau, Hegel and Marx – themes which postmodernity seeks to uncover in modernity.

In Nietzsche, Connolly discovers an alternative. This 'counsels us to come to terms with difference and to seek ways to enable difference to be. It is an ethic of letting be. It calls into question the project of perfecting mastery of the world on the grounds that, given resistances built into the order of things, the project would reduce everything to a straitjacket while pursuing an illusory goal.' As I understand it, this is a typically postmodern *cri de coeur* whose genealogy (from Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* through Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* to Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*) is now pretty familiar. The novelty lies not only in William Connolly so clearly placing himself in that line of descent but also in the manner in which he arrives at his conclusions. Connolly prefaces this brave book by suggesting that, 'to modify the terms of interrogation is to move the boundaries of political thought.' He has done just that, and the strategic adoption of this late-modern perspective would do much to enliven any teachers of political theory who think that either they, their students or their courses are in need of agitation. I hope that Connolly's book will be widely read.

Andy Dobson



OTHER COURAGE

Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Volume III*, London: University of Chicago Press, 1988, 355pp., £23.95 hb.

Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* is one of the most imposing works of constructive philosophical theory to appear since the war. Its three volumes came out in French between 1983 and 1985, and all of them are now available in English.

The first volumes began with an interpretation of Augustine's *Confessions*, which led to the conclusion that the experience of time is intrinsically bewildering or 'aporetic'. This was followed by a presentation of Aristotle's *Poetics* which argued that narrative or 'emplotment' is the appropriate response to these 'aporias of the experience of time'. Augustine, in other words, was called as a witness for the 'phenomenological' perspective on time, based on the subjective 'present'; Aristotle, for the 'cosmological' one, based on the objective 'instant'. Ricoeur's next task was to illustrate, through detailed investigations of the 'configuration' of time in historical and fictional narratives, that both of these apparently contradictory approaches are correct. The resulting theme was that 'time becomes human time to the extent that it is organised after the manner of a narrative,' and that 'narrative is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience.'

In this final volume Ricoeur draws these inquiries together in an investigation of the processes of 'refiguration' which constitute 'human time'. With the help of Husserl, Kant, Heidegger and Hegel he adds two further items to his 'aporetics of time'. The first concerns the 'totalisation' in virtue of which it is impossible not to regard the dimensions of past, present and future as stages of a unique all-inclusive time, which is 'always spoken of in the singular', but equally impossible to conceive of time as a completed totality. The second is that ultimately time is 'inscrutable' or 'unrepresentable', so that any hope (such as he himself might have been suspected of harbouring) of 'saturating the aporetics of time with a poetics of narrative' has, eventually, to be abandoned.

The spirit of the book is stoical. Ricoeur believes that the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' has exposed the 'hypocrisy and naivety' of that old philosophical fiction, 'the egotistical and narcissistic ego'. But he salvages a nuanced account of personal identity, as embedded in the social heritage of stories; for, he argues, 'life itself' is just 'a cloth woven of stories told.' So we are left with a 'network of interweaving perspectives of the expectation of the future, the reception of the past, and the experience of the present', but bereft of the restful solace of a Hegelian totality. We must give up Hegel, says Ricoeur; but this itself is the kind of world-historical tragedy which only Hegelians can understand. It is a personal sadness too, since those who 'have been seduced by the power of Hegel's thought,' he says, will experience the end of Hegelianism as 'a wound, a wound that, unlike those that affect the absolute spirit, will not be healed.' In welcome contrast to those who work themselves into a dare-devil ecstasy over the 'end of modernity', Ricoeur believes that the event requires 'the courage of the work of mourning'. The author of *Time and Narrative* has the courage.

Jonathan Rée

SCREEN MEMORIES

Graham McCann, *Marilyn Monroe*, Oxford, Polity Press, 1988, 241pp., £7.95 pb.

Graham McCann's *Marilyn Monroe* draws on a wide range of theoretical resources. Walter Benjamin is used to make the point that in film and photography something of a performance or gesture and its historical context is lost, both to the audience and to the performer. Star performers in film are cut off from their personal biography by the film image, which interposes and dehistorices, and a sense of disenchantment, of the inauthenticity of the filmic representation ensues. McCann's other tack is to pursue Marilyn Monroe's identity through previous biography and other texts about her; the message here is that 'there is no body in the library', only a series of texts. It is suggested, however, (via Benjamin) that the truth of Marilyn Monroe's subjectivity can be glimpsed through the folds or dislocations in the narrative of her career. The text oscillates uncertainly between these two points of theoretical reference.

Although McCann emphasises the distance between Monroe and her stereotypical film roles he senses her immediacy there and tends to read her through them. He nonetheless remains concerned with his subject's ambiguity throughout the book – he is held or 'fascinated' by it.

For McCann ambiguity is loss of the authentic. Indeed, the whole text is pervaded by Benjaminesque disenchantment; popular culture is seen in terms of Bellow's *Moronic Inferno*, modern life is said to suffer 'the disintegration of coherent experience' – which is what makes Monroe's image 'at once so touching and so tacky'. Ironically enough, it is precisely through what the book describes as 'the machine-made mediocrity of commercialised culture' that its subject celebrates her individuality.

McCann prefaces his chapters with photo portraits of Monroe and, through Barthes' work on the photograph, these stills achieve a significance greater than the 30 film performances. The beguiling sense of immediacy which Barthes noted in the photographic image appears crucial to the quest for

Monroe-the-historical-subject. Unfortunately, in the search for the 'real' Monroe, Benjamin's idea of the loss of the authentic in film becomes elided with McCann's own sense of *personal* loss, which is rehearsed in terms of a preoccupation with Monroe's death. Indeed, the narrative is structured by the idea of an *impending* doom. It is as if Monroe's negotiation of the contradictions and hiatuses of gender stereotyping which provide the space where she generates her own image cannot, ultimately, be allowed because it makes her inaccessible to the narcissistic requirements of patriarchy. The 'incommunicability' of desire which the author senses here is in fact often characteristic of male writing about women depicted as strikingly attractive (to men). She is a figure who cannot give, doesn't know how to receive and consequently causes hurt to men. McCann frames Miller's marriage to Monroe in this way. Anthony Powell's vamp figure, Pamela Flitton, is another example. She, like Monroe, is the cause of consternation in her men, who cannot satisfy her. Like Monroe she meets a sticky end.

Some moral tale of this sort would appear to be inscribed in the 'loss/doom' problematic underlying McCann's book. The semblance of Monroe the author produces works against this grain, showing her not as a passive or pathetic victim of the Hollywood star machine but as someone capable of using the system to assert her autonomy within it, and perhaps towards the end, breaking with it.

Howard Feather

NATURAL RIGHTS

Andrew Brennan, *Thinking About Nature: an investigation of nature, value and ecology*, London, Routledge, 1988, 221pp., £30

This book is a valuable contribution to the often arcane, but currently extremely important, debate concerning the relationship between human beings and the non-human natural world. With environmentalism presently fashionable, it's as well to be made to pause to consider just why we should concern ourselves with making our peace with the environment. The loudest noises undoubtedly come from those who argue that a truce should be called in the interest of human beings. The ozone hole will increase skin cancer, deforestation alters the climate adversely (for us), and global warming will result in melted ice-caps and the possible flooding of Downing Street. Little wonder that – along with the Tory cabinet – we're all environmentalists now.

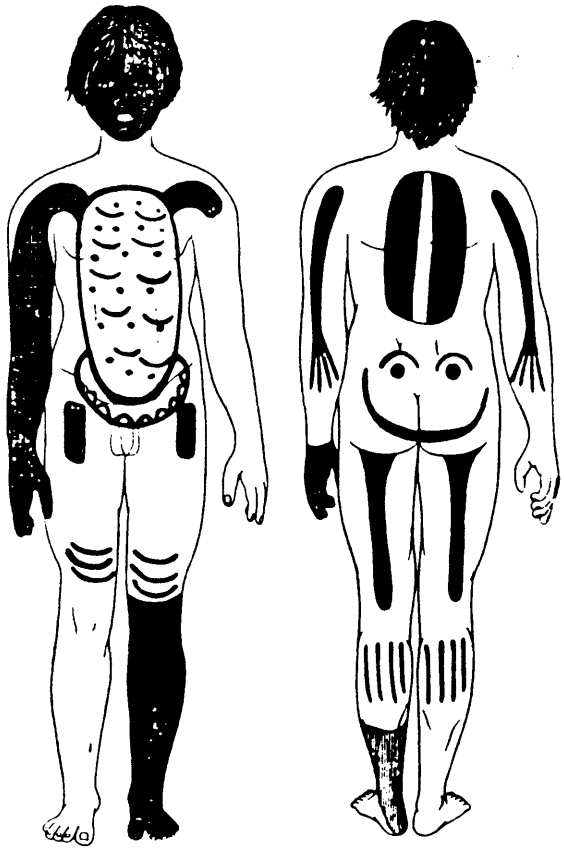
Quieter voices have been arguing for some time, however, that these anthropocentric reasons for care for the environment are at least as much a part of the problem as they are a solution: this attitude has underpinned the dominant view of the environment as a resource, rather than as having intrinsic value. The work of these theorists has been aimed at shifting the onus of justification from those who want to interfere with it. This attitude is often referred to (after a distinction first pointed out by Arne Naess in 1973) as 'deep ecology', to distinguish it from its 'shallow', or anthropocentric, counterpart.

As I understand it, Andrew Brennan's book is an attempt to arrive at a deep ecological position without subscribing to the kind of metaphysics usually deployed by deep ecological thinkers. His conclusion is that 'objects, systems, even the land forms around me deserve my respect, deserve ethical consideration simply by being what they are, where they are and interacting with other items the way they do'. Along the way he dismisses two strategies which he attributes to deep ecological theorists, and which he characterises as 'idealism' and 'various kinds of global holism', and makes some pertinent remarks about the problematic conclusions which such theorists have drawn concerning the implications of scientific ecology.

Brennan's comments about scientific ecology are essential reading, although I think he pushes thinkers like Fritjof Capra too far. Brennan asks: 'Is the duality of objective and subjective false?' and suggests that 'so far, nothing said about scientific ecology seems to suggest that the duality in question needs to be abandoned'. I had always thought that Capra's questioning of the duality has more to do with his work as a physicist than as a student of ecology. Finally, the distance between Brennan and the global holists whom he criticises seems to decrease as the book progresses.

But these are small points. Andrew Brennan has written this book because 'if it makes sense to think about worth and value in human life, then it makes sense to worry about the emptiness, triviality and banality of life in the consumer society.' His work ought to be read in that context, even if his dispassionate philosophical style of claim and counter-example ultimately puts out the fire of his preface.

Andy Dobson



GRAMSCI & REVISIONISM

H. Tudor and J. M. Tudor (eds.), *Marxism and Social Democracy: The Revisionist Debate, 1896-1898*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, xii + 384pp., £30 hb.
David Forgacs (ed.), *A Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1988, 447pp., £20 hb, £8.95 pb.

Gramsci and Bernstein – beauty and the beast. 'New Times' or 'New Revisionism', current political debates on the left continue to be structured by reference to a past which grows more mythic by the day. Each of these two books should help, in its own way, towards a more informed discussion of the relationship of these debates to the history to which they remain, despite themselves, in thrall.

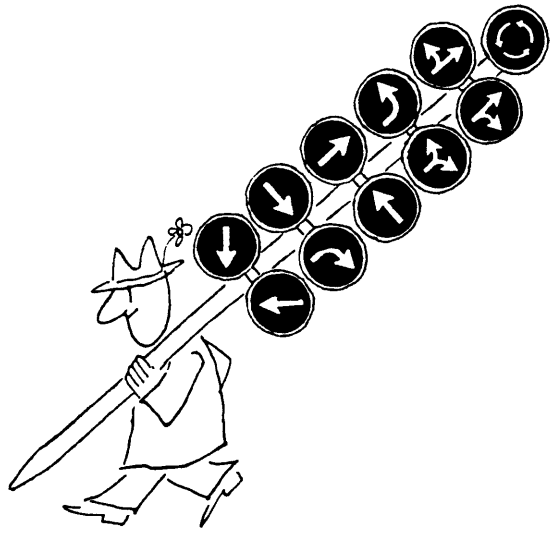
Marxism and Social Democracy is a translation of a selection of the main contributions to the 'first phase' of the revisionist debate within the German Social Democratic Party in the closing decade of the last century: from Bernstein's early exchanges on colonialism with the English Marxist Belfort Bax, through Parvus's and Luxemburg's critiques (and Bernstein's defence) of his growing 'revisionism', to the debate on the press at the Stuttgart Conference of October 1898, at which the party leadership joined the radicals in repudiating Bernstein's position. It opens with a substantial, scene-setting introduction by the editors, contextualising and analysing the debate. And whilst the book is obviously primarily directed towards an academic audience, it should be of interest to anyone who is concerned, in any detail, with the history of the European socialist movement.

A number of things stand out. One is the level and volume of theoretical debate in the party press (*Sozialdemokrat, Neue Zeit, Justice, Vorwarts*, etc.). Another is the peculiar ambiguity of Bernstein's arguments. Was he, for example, as he himself clearly believed, at least to begin with, contesting what was essentially the same theoretical and political ground as his opponents? Or was he always, as the editors suggest in their introduction, 'advocating a completely different point of view'? The instability and lack of clarity in Bernstein's position during this period makes it hard to tell. Bebel probably comes closest when he castigates him for undergoing a fundamental change of views every time he is exposed to a new set of influences. It is here, perhaps, as much as in the theoretical content of the debate itself, that the current political relevance of these exchanges lies.

It is ironic, in this respect, that the theoretical meaning of Bernstein's position should have become so unequivocally fixed in the historical consciousness of the left, whilst battles continue over the Gramscian heritage. For there can be little doubt, on inspection of his writings, of the main line of Gramsci's thought. *A Gramsci Reader* collects into one volume a selection of the most important pieces from the four volumes of Gramsci's work already published in English by Lawrance and Wishart, along with a handful of short, previously untranslated pieces. Arranged chronologically, the text is sub-divided into fourteen thematically defined sections, each with a brief editorial introduction. The bulk of the material is drawn from the existing *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, but it is rearranged. The glossary of key terms at the back will be particularly useful to those struggling with Gramsci's work for the first time.

The editorial material wears its scholarship lightly, and is free of the more dubious political interpretations to which Gramsci's work has recently been subjected in England. The book should serve as a convenient teaching text, since it presents a representative range of material which would otherwise be difficult to muster. The collection is especially valuable for the way in which, by showing the development of Gramsci's thought, it places it firmly in the context of its place and time.

Peter Osborne



PRAGMATIC CONVERSATIONS

Richard Bernstein, *Philosophical Profiles, Essays in a Pragmatic Mode*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986, xii + 313pp., £19.50 hb, £7.95 pb.

In the introduction to this provocative collection of essays, Richard Bernstein tells us of the 'sense of scandal and even moral outrage' felt by the 'analytic establishment' at the popularity of Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* and Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*. This he contrasts with the welcome given by younger and more radical philosophers and theorists in adjacent disciplines both to their thesis and to their recognition of the significance of the works of Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Habermas, Gadamer, Derrida and other continental philosophers. The source of this concern Bernstein considers to be that these two 'insiders', like himself, were supping with the devil, and were trying to deconstruct the 'foundational' assumptions of the Cartesian-Lockean-Kantian tradition.

'Anti-foundational' philosophy, as Bernstein calls his own position, recognises the inevitability of philosophy spawning a complex plurality of contending paradigms about its methods, patterns and tasks, and of incommensurability in their relationships. His uncomfortable position leads him to search for a 'post philosophical philosophy'. In the first essay, Bernstein opts for the notion of philosophy as conversation, originally made famous by Michael Oakeshott in 1959. This apparently radical approach emerges from a critical dialogue with Hegel and Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Wittgenstein, Habermas, Arendt, Rorty, MacIntyre, Derrida, Dewey, James and Pierce. Bernstein's own position is set out in his

The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory (1979) and *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* (1984), and in this collection we can observe the history of the critical engagements which have focussed his views.

Much of Bernstein's optimism for a new syncrety seems to rest on the claim that if only thinkers would apply their own logics to themselves and make explicit what is implicit in their arguments then agreement would follow. Marcuse's negative dialectics are considered to imply a positive philosophy, Heidegger's anti-humanism conceals a new humanism, Gadamer turns out to concede much more to Habermas than he admits and vice versa, Rorty to be more deeply touched by what he is attacking than he realizes.

While rejecting objective foundations Bernstein argues that we can rationally adjudicate between different claims and while nailing his flag to the contextual, historical, heremeneutic mast he sometimes tries to speak across generations and cultures as if the conversation were a contemporary debate.

Bernstein writes with great clarity and precision; he is insightful and fairminded and, somewhat ironically, he contributes a great deal to the tradition that is modern philosophy.

John Gibbins

SARTRE AND POST-SARTRISM

Christina Howells, *Sartre: The Necessity of Freedom*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, 285pp., £30 hb.

Christina Howell's intentions in this book are at least twofold: to provide us with a survey of the whole of Sartre's work (literature, philosophy and political reflections) and to show that the distance between his thought and that of his post-structuralist critics is not as great as is generally believed. In terms of the first intention the book is highly successful. Howells provides us with a sustained and original perspective on Sartre which from now on will have to be read alongside longer-serving interpretations such as Aronson's *Jean-Paul Sartre: Philosophy in the World.* She has picked up where she left off in *Sartre's Theory of Literature* and added a philosophical dimension which allows her to challenge the Structuralist and Post-Structuralist 'cacophony of polemical criticism to which Sartre's views have been subjected'. At this point, I think, the twin intentions referred to above come into conflict: the breadth of the study precludes the depth of analysis required for successful blunting of the Derridean (for example) challenge. Howells' lucid interpretation of Sartre's intentions in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* ('is there a Truth of man?') does not wholly convince me that Sartre's answers to his own questions were not, respectively, 'Yes' and 'Everything'. Sartre was once asked, 'Aren't the people you fully respect the ones who have a "thirst for the absolute", as they used to say in the nineteenth century?'. He replied: 'Yes, certainly: the ones who want everything. That's what I wanted myself!'. My own feeling is that the spirit of Sartre's work is more totalising than Christina Howells allows, and that in this context his reading of Marx and Alexandre Kojève left him a legacy not so easily neutralised. It is this spirit which – despite his description of the 'decentred subject', so persuasively argued by Howells – consistently separates him from Foucault, Derrida and Lyotard.

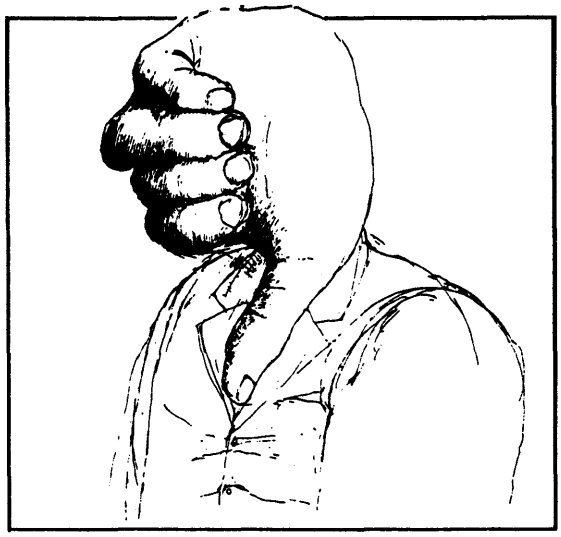
Andy Dobson

ORTHODOX DECONSTRUCTION

M. C. Taylor (ed.), *Deconstruction in Context*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986, 420pp., £35.95 hb., £13.50 pb.

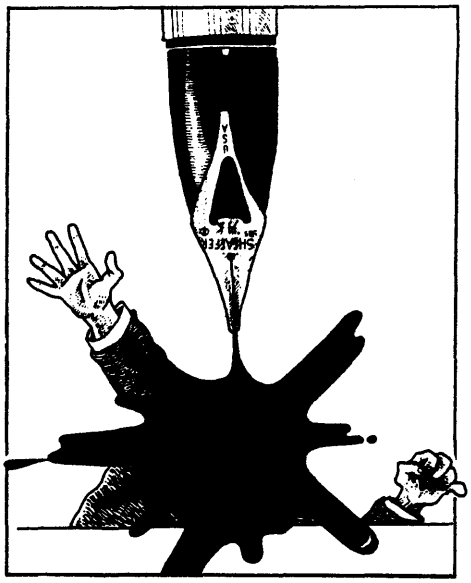
Very favourably reviewed when it first appeared in the United States in 1986, Mark Taylor's edited collection of writings associated with Deconstruction has only just become available in Britain and Europe owing to rights problems. Taylor has selected texts from Kant, Hegel, Kojève, Husserl, Saussure, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Bataille, Blanchot and Derrida and prefaced them with an introduction described by Derrida as 'remarkable'. Both the introduction and the selected texts are designed to show that at least since Hegel 'the Western philosophical project ... of overcoming plurality and establishing unity by reducing the many to the one' has been haunted by an uncomfortable 'excess' which refuses to be reduced. 'For Bataille,' writes Taylor, 'the history of Western theology and philosophy, of which Hegel is the culmination, represents so many efforts to exclude the negative in its multiple guises. What Hegel cannot tolerate is senseless sacrifice, meaningless loss, and profitless expenditure. Constructed upon the religious belief in crucifixion and resurrection, Hegel's dialectic *works* by transforming loss into gain. Since this dialectical process is intended to be all-encompassing, there is supposed to be nothing left out, no lingering remainder - nothing *désoeuvré*, no *hors d'oeuvre*. The closure of absolute knowledge overcomes time by a-mortizing death itself.' As for Bataille, so for post-modernity in general: modernity has sought to unify at the cost of suppressing heterogeneity. Taylor's collection tells this story by identifying a dominant Western philosophical project (Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Husserl) which has always been called into question by subordinate voices (Kierkegaard, Nietzsche), whose contemporary representatives (Bataille, Blanchot, Derrida) appear likely to constitute a new orthodoxy. In this sense post-structuralism provides us with an alternative vantage point from which to view the history of Western philosophy, and reveals agendas which otherwise remain hidden. *Deconstruction in Context* shows a route to that vantage point.

Andy Dobson



SHORT REVIEWS

First published in French in 1968, Jacques D'Hondt's *Hegel In His Time* (translated by John Burbidge, with Nelson Roland and Judith Lavasseur, Peterborough, Ontario, Broadview Press, 1988, xiv + 224pp.) aims to help those who wish to claim Hegel for the left by exploding the myth that when in Berlin between 1818 and 1831 he simply acted as a supporter of the oppressive Prussian regime. D'Hondt begins by examining the difficulties Hegel faced in securing his academic position there in 1818, and how he owed it not to the forces of reaction, but to the more enlightened reformers, like Hardenberg, Altenstein and Schulze. He then considers Hegel's relation to the progressive elements in Prussian society at the time, and argues that, in spite of some appearances to the contrary, many factors point to Hegel's sympathy with those who worked for change. Finally, D'Hondt considers the judgement on Hegel offered by Marx and Engels, pointing out that neither made the mistake of simply treating him as a reactionary; however, he does suggest that, had Marx raised the question 'of whether Hegel *in his own times* was progres-



sive or conservative', he might have come to acknowledge the latter's status as 'a progressive reformer'. This translation of D'Hondt's classic study is very much to be welcomed; Burbidge and his associates have done an excellent job in preserving the lively and impassioned style of the original, conveying in full the conviction with which D'Hondt puts his case for the defence.

Exceedingly Nietzsche, edited by David Farrell Krell and David Wood (London, Routledge, 1988, 179pp., £22.50 hb) is the first book in a new series called 'Warwick Studies in Philosophy and Literature'. Its theme is the attempt to get outside metaphysics, and the object of discussion is Heidegger's Nietzsche, and Deleuze's, Derrida's, and Foucault's, rather than Nietzsche's. The papers (by Alison Ainley, Peter Dews, Michel Haar, Alphonso Lingis, David Pollard, John Sallis, Alan D. Schrift, Hugh Tomlinson, and the editors) range in style from straightforward summary and critique to clever and self-conscious performance. Except for the suffocating coyness of the title, the book is an attractive sampler of contemporary Nietzsche interpretation.

In *The Cunning of Reason* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, 222pp., £25 hb, £8.95 pb), Martin Hollis sets out to challenge the methodological assumptions of microeconomic theorists. Through a discussion of rational choice theory and game theory, Hollis shows the severe limitations of understanding human agency and rationality on premises derived from methodological individualism. The chicken and egg paradoxes of the social sciences are resolved by Hollis, following Rousseau, in arguing that it is not possible to conceive of individuals prior to the institutions which form their (social) identity. This social determinism does not, it is argued, need to be corrected by adopting a notion of a pure, independent ego, because 'the social factor is not a moulding force but an arena where role-players learn and shape their relationships. A self robust enough to resist being absorbed into the social system need not be so independent that it vanishes into darkest privacy. On the contrary, it belongs in the arena, where its identity is at stake'.

Although the conclusions Hollis reaches about rationality (that, essentially, it is the expression of the self in a social world) are far from constituting a set of earth-shattering revelations for radical social and political theory, his book does succeed in exposing, in a lucid and entertaining manner, the severe epistemological weaknesses of current economic theory.

Interpretations of Marx (edited with an Introduction by Tom Bottomore, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988, 328pp., £9.95) brings together two earlier collections of essays edited by Tom Bottomore, *Karl Marx* and *Modern Interpretations of Marx* to form a wide-ranging survey of writing from a variety of political traditions.

Making no comment on the texts he presents, Bottomore provides them with an excellent introduction which surveys those areas of Marx's work which have received the most critical attention, and establishes, without insistence, his own interpretation of Marx. Although this collection tends to present a Marxism valuable for its contributions to the debates of social science rather than the development of revolutionary theory, it neverthless provides an excellent basis for the study of both discourses.

Selections from a huge body of literature will inevitably be determined by their editors' own sympathies. Bottomore's collection does not pretend to be a definitive survey of Marxist thought, but to indicate the directions in which subsequent interpretations of Marx's work have moved. The result is an ideologically and historically broad collection of works which reveal their points of departure in Marx and the significance of the social context in which they develop. A passage from Croce is followed by excerpts from Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* and Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness*, with more than twenty passages, often short, charting the subsequent development of Marxism. At the other end of the historical scale, the selections from Habermas and Poulantzas represent the somewhat premature conclusion of the debate.

Any text as diverse and succint as this may be criticised on the grounds that significant figures are either omitted or misrepresented by truncated passages removed to a context dictated by the editor's interests. While Bottomore cannot escape such criticism, he is on the whole to be commended for the scope and eclecticism of his collection.