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Reviews

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REVIEWS

Baker, A. J., *Anderson's Social Philosophy: The Social Thought and Political Life of Professor John Anderson*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1979, pp. x, 152, $12.95 (cloth), $7.95 (paper).

This book is in two almost equal parts: the first deals with Andersons' social and ethical theory, the second with his participation in political life and public (especially religious) controversy from the time of his arrival in Sydney until his death — or a little beyond, since Baker adds an Epilogue which considers the implications of Anderson's views for some more recent issues.

After sketching Anderson's general realist and empiricist philosophy, Part I traces his deterministic pluralism (with its rejection of 'voluntarism', 'atomism', and 'solidarism'), his objectivist non-normative ethics, his critcisms of Marxism (which, however, recognised some correct elements in Marxism, more in its social theory than in its philosophy), some ideas which he shares with Georges Sorel and several other thinkers, and his theory of democracy and education. Part II records Anderson's participation in controversies within the Communist (Stalinist) Party up to 1932, his support of Trotskyism from then until 1937, his growing disillusionment with Marxism and socialism as a whole, culminating in an explicitly and vehemently anti-Communist stand; it also records his constant devotion to free thought and to the exposure of illusions of all sorts, and his concern for liberal and classical education as opposed to practical and utilitarian trends. It also highlights some of the controversies that made him famous: his conflict over patriotism with the University Senate and with right-wing parties in the N.S.W. State Parliament in 1931, and with the Legislative Assembly over his attack on religion in education in 1943; also his involvement in the Orr case, and his final clash with Archbishop Gough in 1961.

The accounts given both in Part I and in Part II are accurate and complete. They are fully backed up by the evidence of published papers, student newspaper reports (which Anderson often checked himself) of his talks, as well as by the recollections of people still alive who were associated with Anderson at the times in question. I can myself vouch for the accuracy of what is said about the periods when I was in close touch with Anderson, though (for obvious reasons of distance) Baker did not actually consult me about them. It is true that in Part I Baker has given a special stress to comparisons between Anderson's views and those of such thinkers as Georges Sorel and Wilhelm Reich, in whom Baker himself has a particular interest. This is not strictly proportionate to the importance of these thinkers in Anderson's own development, but it does not produce any distortion of Anderson's position.

Historical record, therefore, and exposition are admirable. But what of criticism? As the Preface admits (p. viii), there is practically none. This is ironical, since Anderson himself always insisted that the exposition of a philosopher's views cannot be detached from criticism. Perhaps Baker thinks (though the preface gives a contrary hint) that Anderson's social and ethical thought is so sound as to leave no room for criticism. But should he not at least consider objections that others would think damaging?

One general difficulty is that almost all of Anderson's theoretical efforts in the social field were devoted to asserting a certain view of the *categories* of social science and to attacking those whose work in one way or another violated those categories. But there it ended. Having got the categories right, should not one go on to the positive study of

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history, of the interactions of social movements, and so on within this correct framework? But neither Anderson himself nor any of his closest followers was willing to do this. Does this suggest that those categories may have been too restrictive, that any positive work would at least invite criticism as falling into 'voluntarism' or the like? At the least, this is a charge that calls for a reply.

Again, while Anderson's doctrines are empiricist, are they empirical? Is there really good evidence for his categorial system? In theory it was based on his logic — never itself adequately presented in public — but this would itself be a questionable foundation for empirical claims. It may well be, however, that there *is* sound empirical backing for them, and that contrary opinions can be traced wholly to confusions and distorting motives. But, again, more needs to be said.

In particular, Anderson's strict determinism may be challenged. One argument on which he relied here is that the denial of determinism would make scientific inquiry impossible. This is demonstrably false, but in any case it is irrelevant to the question of the truth of determinism. Again he referred to the bad motives of the indeterminists: 'The indeterminists are those with an axe to grind, with certain "values" to defend, with the view that certain things *ought to be* or *are to be done*. Theoretical concern with what is the case is, it seems to me, coextensive with determinism.' (*Studies in Empirical Philosophy*, 1962, p. 125). Again this is doubtful, but in any case it has little bearing on the factual, empirical, issue.

Further, Anderson's condemnation of 'voluntarism' goes beyond the assertion of general determinism to a downgrading of the importance in political and historical affairs of individual choices and decisions (pp. 11-13, 15-17, etc.). But what is correctly criticised is a very exaggerated individualism, which sees (some) individuals as pure agents, not patients, as somehow standing outside the social order but intervening in it, and which denies either the significance or perhaps the very existence of movements and institutions and traditions. By all means let us reject this caricature, and agree that every individual is largely a product of traditions that have gone into his making and is constantly caught up in perhaps diverse and conflicting movements. It still does not follow that what he does is wholly explicable in terms of these general forces. The precise way in which they interact in him may still be determined, but by individual factors which no general account can capture. No doubt this makes socio-historical explanation more difficult — but not (as p. 12 suggests) impossible. Still, if it is the case, we have to put up with it. Anderson's arguments in this area are greatly weakened by resort to exaggeration, and by failing to distinguish with sufficient care between uncaused individual choices and the importance of caused and yet essentially individual choices. One particularly unfortunate effect of this rather superficial treatment is that Anderson fails to bring out one very significant model of social causation, the ways in which independent *intentional* actions interact to produce results which none of the agents has intended.

Finally, we must come to Anderson's ethics. The one subject of ethics is, he holds, *goodness*, which is a particular spirit or quality which characterises certain kinds of human activities and movements, and which has characteristic ways of working: goods cooperate and communicate, they are spontaneous and non-compulsive, they are 'productive', not 'consumptive'. This positive, empirical, qualitative ethics is concerned wholly with what is the case, not at all with rules, requirements, prescriptions, obligations. All the latter belong in a 'relativistic' approach which, Anderson admits, has largely filled the traditional subject of ethics. But then, supposing that there is such a subject as Anderson's ethics, why call it *ethics*? Would it not be less misleading to find it, and Anderson's goodness, new names? Anderson's reply is that this traditional ethics is a muddle, a confused combination of his subject with relativistic intrusions. But this is a most implausible account, and his attempt to recruit Cudworth and particularly G. E. Moore as thinkers who had partly seen his point is demonstrably mistaken. Cudworth rejects an anlysis of moral qualities as relations to God, but only to retain their essentially prescriptive character in a purer, more absolute form. And the same is

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true of Moore, whose 'non-natural quality' of goodness is plainly a re-reading of certain kinds of demand and interest as an intrinsic quality of the items demanded. Similarly Nietzsche, whom Anderson would like to take as expressing a qualitative ethics with some grasp of spontaneity and enterprise as features of the good, is plainly the advocate of a rival relativistic ethic to the conventional one — equally relativist, but centring on the relations of being admired and being desired by the agent himself. No doubt Moore's view helped to *suggest* Anderson's, but this was through a misunderstanding, and was not due to any real anticipation of a non-normative ethics.

Again, the notion of a science devoted to the study of a single spirit or quality is very strange. Apart from the closely related and equally dubious example of aesthetics, we simply do not find sciences with such restricted subjects. As Baker says (p. 147), 'Freedom . . . is only *one* social force among many'. There may be room for a science of the various spirits and qualities of human activities and social movements: but there is every reason why it should not focus on 'goodness' alone.

There is all the less excuse for Baker's avoidance of critical discussion of Anderson's ethics, in that this side of his work was strongly challenged by such contemporary criticis as A. D. Hope and A. N. Prior, who could not be brushed aside as simply having failed to understand it. While their objections by no means exhaust the field, they could at least have led on to a thorough examination of this vital but questionable part of Anderson's work — one which has, I believe, like the above-mentioned dismissal of voluntarism and individualism, contributed to the barrenness of the pure Andersonian tradition in both philosophy and social theory.

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Johnson, Oliver J., *Skepticism and Cognitivism: A Study in the Foundations of Knowledge*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978, pp. xiii, 292, $19.75.

Rescher, Nicholas, *Scepticism: A Critical Reappraisal* Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1980, pp. xii, 265, £12.50.

Knowledge-claims come in divers forms — factual, formal, normative, theological, perhaps more — and to each, as Rescher remarks, there corresponds a version of skepticism. Can any of these matters — even the purported everyday facts typically expressed in 'singular observation statements' — properly be said to be knowable? The answer must depend on the standards we set for knowledge, and a key consideration is how these standards accord with our notions of *rational* usages and practices. Taking, with Rescher and Johnson, a 'justified true belief' conception of knowledge as a point of departure, we may ask: does a reasonable definition of knowledge preclude its possibility? The skeptic (of the extreme type treated in these two books), invoking *absolute* standards of justification, certainty and like criteria, answers *yes*: he denies that his knowledge-concept is defective, and insists that knowledge is indeed impossible, typically because satisfaction of his criteria would involve a vicious regress or circle. The cognitivist (as both authors call the opponent of skepticism) finds this bleak thesis too strong to stomach — too much at odds with the very bases of his normal intercourse and action. Two directions, at least, lie open to him. Like Rescher, he can reject the exaggerated (in his view) concept of knowledge which compels the skeptical conclusion, arguing in effect that impossibly-high standards are no standards at all; or, with Johnson, and with misgiving, he can try to meet the skeptical challenge, and to produce one or more genuine instances of knowledge, as specified in the absolutist terms of the skeptic (absolutely incorrigible, absolutely indubitable, etc.). Rescher here is straightforwardly a pragmatist, in his approach both to knowledge and to dealing with the skeptic: he argues that skepticism is irrational, self-defeating — but incurable. Accordingly, attempted therapy is a waste of time; the cognitivist must aim at prophylaxis, at a *rebuttal* of skepticism which will be persuasive to as-yet-uncommitted

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reasonable people, rather than at the hopeless goal of a *refutation* of entrenched skepticism. Johnson, in contrast, while also urging that skepticism is ultimately self-defeating, is readier to accept it on its own terms: he attempts a refutation, not a rebuttal, by seeking some genuine instances of knowledge, to counter the skeptic's denial that knowledge exists. He is at once more ambitious than Rescher, and less successful.

Johnson's book is couched in the analytic mode, and is an up-to-date contribution to the continuing debate on the character and possibility of knowledge. The work progresses through three stages: a historical and conceptual introduction; a very detailed critique of three contemporary skeptics — Lehrer, Naess and Unger; and the author's own grapplings with skepticism. In this last section, he seems to follow in the footsteps of that great *cognitivist* Descartes. He makes the strongest case he can for skepticism, learning from the mistakes of the skeptics he has criticised. Briefly he seems to have succeeded all too well (pp. 211-212): like Descartes, he almost abandons hope of knowledge; then he finds epistemic security in a purportedly self-justifying type of claim, eerily reminiscent of the *Cogito*. Neither his rendering of the skeptical case, nor his answer to it, is satisfactory, as I shall argue; but his mistakes are instructive, and his critiques of three modern skeptics have topical interest.

Lehrer's case for skepticism ('Why Not Scepticism?' *Philosophical Forum II*, pp. 283-298, 1971) is, in effect, an elaboration of the Cartesian Demon argument. It has two devastating flaws, the second of which Johnson notes and later tries to mend. The first defect is that it is a 'logical possibility' strategy: we can never be justified in a belief, it is said, because it is always logically possible that we are deceived, or, at least, mistaken. The flaw in this argument-strategy is that the mere logical possibility of something is *no ground whatever* for accepting, entertaining or even considering that it is so; without this constraint, one's garden of beliefs would be an incoherent jungle. The distinction between being deceived and being mistaken is missed by Lehrer — this is his second mistake — who has to postulate an infinite series of ever-more knowledgeable deceivers to try to make his argument go. This point is appreciated by Johnson, who remarks subsequently that all Lehrer needs is the logical possibility of beliefs being mistaken (not believers being deceived) — e.g. the logical possibility that natural forces slightly distort human brain processes (pp. 175-6). The crucial question, for this strengthened version of the Demon argument as much as for the Cartesian original, remains: does logical possibility of error alone suffice as a reason for doubt? I have suggested that it does not. In any case, Lehrer's version of the deceiving demon strategy involves a *vicious* regress of deceivers, and so fails on this count, as Johnson neatly shows.

The other two skeptical positions, defended by Naess and by Unger, hardly seem to deserve the effort Johnson spends on them. Pyrrhonism, a species of agnosticism advocated in modern guise by Naess (*Skepticism*, 1968), turns out to be not even a philosophical stance. As Johnson concludes, 'Pyrrhonism, rather than being the only true skepticism ... is no skepticism at all.' (p. 115) Unger (*Ignorance: A Case for Scepticism*, 1975), appears to offer an idiosyncratic definition of knowledge, and then to employ this definition in order to show that knowledge is impossible. The notion of *certainty* bears the weight here. As Rescher has argued (his Chapter II), this can be understood in either a 'mundane' or a 'transcendent' sense. The latter is unattainable in principle: to require it of knowledge-claims is to impose a rationally unjustifiable demand thereon. Johnson, too, rightly points out that of course one can define 'knowledge' so narrowly as to render all *ignorant* in Unger's sense: this recognition of the power of stipulation is no more illuminating than it is original to Unger. The real venture is so to account for knowledge as not to violate (which Unger does) our ordinary conceptions and usages, and then to ask whether, on such a fair account, the common cognitivist intuition that knowledge is possible turns out false. Skepticism so construed is a worthy challenge to epistemologists; skepticism by definition is not.

In his penultimate chapter, Johnson tries to make the best original case he can for

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skepticism, in the hope that if he then can refute this 'strongest case', he will have provided adequate ground for cognitivism. He considers three skeptical strategies: an enhanced Lehrer-type argument; a muted 'non-dogmatic' form of skepticism; and a negative or crypto-skepticism. The first and last deserve comment.

The extreme to which the 'logical possibility of error' skeptical strategy can be pushed is the point at which logic itself — e.g. the principle of non-contradiction — is called into question. Johnson concludes a very intricate to-and-fro discussion of this by showing that it is simply self-defeating for the skeptic to abandon logic. Two remarks are in order. First, I think too much is conceded to the skeptic by Johnson from the beginning, in his readiness to allow that logical possibility of error *alone* is sufficient to invalidate a knowledge claim. This concession forces him, in his final chapter, to seek propositions immune to even this 'transcendent' kind of uncertainty (Rescher, Chapter III), as the only genuine instances of knowledge. How successful he is in this quest we shall presently see. Second, his discussion is vitiated by what appears to be a simple slip in reasoning. At one point (p. 188), he infers from 'p has been demonstrated to be logically necessary' to '$\sim p$ is logically self-contradictory'. This move would go through if 'demonstrated' were treated as a success-word; but Johnson is considering the case where the skeptic denies this sense of 'demonstrated' — or, better, denies the claim that p has *really* been demonstrated to be logically necessary. ('. . . we may be led astray by the actions of the [reason-subverting] natural forces. Although we have demonstrated them [some propositions] to be logically necessary they may still be false.' p. 188). This sub-argument of Johnson's, designed to show that 'If a person can demonstrate a proposition to be logically necessary, then he can claim it as something he knows . . .' (p. 189), is thus a *non-sequitur*. However, the failure does not weaken Johnson's main conclusion, defended on his pp. 196-8, that skepticism, like cognitivism, remains bound by logic. The failing sub-argument is designed to prepare the way for his stance, in the final chapter, that there are some 'logically necessary' informative propositions which are immune to even the logical possibility of falsity. Failing, the sub-argument suggests the failure of this larger, later case.

By page 206, Johnson has concluded that *positive* skepticism — the claim that knowledge is impossible — is self-defeating; and that Pyrrhonism in fact leaves cognitivism untouched. There is still, he thinks, a third option: *negative* or crypto-skepticism. The skeptic of this colouration carefully refrains from claiming anything: he merely challenges the cognitivist to justify his thesis that knowledge exists. Since the latter apparently cannot do this without vicious circularity (p. 211), the game must go to the skeptic. But this will not do, on several counts. There is an explicit shift, at this point and elsewhere in Johnson's writing, from characterising the skeptical thesis as 'Knowledge is impossible' (e.g. p. 206), whence presumably it follows that the cognitivist thesis is 'Knowledge is possible', to the *stronger* characterisation of cognitivism as insisting that 'Knowledge exists' (p. 207). The possibility-claim does not entail the existence-claim (whereas the converse entailment does hold). By taking the refutation of skepticism to involve demonstrating the existence, not merely the possibility, of knowledge, Johnson is assuming a much heavier burden of proof than he needs to do. For Occam's Razor menaces existence-claims more obviously than possibility-claims. The logical possibility of knowledge may be demonstrated by showing that no contradiction is involved in the conception of knowledge; and here Rescher's *ultra posse* principle (see below) is critically relevant. For if knowledge is by definition impossible, then according to this pragmatic principle there must be something defective about the definition employed; and if knowledge is by definition possible, then this is all the minimal cognitivist case requires.

Johnson, in overstating the cognitivist thesis as 'Knowledge exists', commits himself to showing something more than this possibility: he accepts the onus of actually producing one or more items of knowledge. Even with this concession the question of onus of proof is not cut-and-dried. It might well be argued — as Rescher surely would — that if one produces a true belief that is thoroughly justified in the cognitive setting in

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question, and which there is not the slightest actual reason to doubt in the prevailing circumstances, then the *onus* shifts to the skeptic to show why this does not qualify as a genuine case of knowledge. The negative or cryptoskeptic can only object that it remains logically possible that the belief in question is false, so that the required absolute justification for it is lacking. But this move is excluded by the *ultra posse* principle; and any reason for doubt stronger than the logical possibility of falsity would involve the skeptic in a *positive* knowledge claim — i.e. would be self-defeating for him.

Further, the *prima-facie* circularity of the cognitivist's case — namely, that 'to establish the existence of knowledge, he must presuppose that he knows things' (p. 211) — which Johnson takes to defeat cognitivism at the end of his penultimate chapter, need not be as devastating as it appears. Rescher's distinctions between 'ground-level knowledge' and 'metaknowledge' (p. 14), 'mundane' and 'transcendent' certainty, and realistic *vs* logical possibility of error point the way out. This way is not open to Johnson, with his absolutist commitments.

Since Johnson does not opt for any of these counter-moves to skepticism, he finds himself, at the start of his final chapter, still facing the skeptical challenge to produce a genuine instance of knowledge. It would appear that the only type of statement which is immune to even the logical possibility of error is a 'logically necessary' self-justifying one. Johnson tries to argue that the (strong) cognitivist thesis itself, 'Knowledge exists', is of the required type. First, it is not merely analytic, but genuinely *informative*, in that it connects two concepts independently of their meanings. Second, he avers that it is logically necessary. If this is so, we have a case of a *necessary synthetic* statement, which is straightforward old-fashioned rationalism in the Cartesian manner. (Johnson in fact avoids the term 'synthetic', perhaps for fear of giving this game away.) Cognitivists who are also empiricists will hardly be comforted by *this* anti-skeptical manoeuvre.

Why does Johnson think 'Knowledge exists' is logically necessary? Because, he says, it is of a type whose 'denial involves a contradiction' (p. 240). But does it? Leaving aside the whole debate about synonymy, analyticity and thence the status of the usual notion of logical necessity, as Johnson ignores all this, we may agree that there is certainly something odd about denying 'Knowledge exists', just as there is an oddity about denying the Cartesian 'Cogito ergo sum' — compare 'Nothing is known' or (simply) 'Non sum'. Such denials — for instance, the denial (not the logical negation, but the *action* of denying) that one is affirming (or, for that matter, denying) anything — do indeed incorporate a tension; but this tension differs from the *logical* tension exhibited by contradictions. Rather, it is a pragmatic, circumstantial or *empirical* tension between the state-of-affairs portrayed by the proposition and some circumstances causally necessitated by the fact of its being affirmed. Such propositions may be dubbed 'self-belying if affirmed'. Their negations are then (pragmatically) self-authenticating if affirmed. However, this feature of some propositions is a far cry from logical necessity. To be sure, the pragmatic tension noted here can yield a logical contradiction: the negation of 'No one truly affirms that he/she is not at the same time affirming anything' is a straightforward contradiction; and this reveals that the claim itself is logically necessary. But is it *informative*? Does it tell us anything, beyond what the principle of non-contradiction itself tells us? Evidently not. One thing it surely does not tell us is that anyone is, or even can be, affirming anything. Similarly, the oddity of 'Nothing is known' does not reveal the *logical* necessity of 'Knowledge exists', but only the self-belying consequence of denying this. If Johnson regards logical necessity as the sole basis of immunity to the logical possibility of falsity, then statements of this type will not suffice. In fact, he does not really need logical necessity at all, in order to justify cognitivism. (I can scarcely claim originality for the foregoing argument, although I formulated it independently. I believe it echoes discussions of the *Cogito* and similar locutions by various philosophers (Jim Baker, for one) over the last two or three decades.)

So Johnson fails in his self-imposed task of finding a genuine necessary synthetic statement. He is, of course, in excellent historical company. But this is not to abandon

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cognitivism. The defence of knowledge has two aspects not sufficiently developed by Johnson. One is the onus of justification point, which I have mentioned. The other is the importance of challenging some of the skeptic's own principles, particularly the absolutist or transcendent notion of knowledge he tends to employ. This is where a more commonsense, pragmatic approach has much to recommend it; and this is the cognitivist strategy developed, with considerable flair, by Rescher.

The guiding principle of Rescher's approach to the possibility of knowledge is expressed in Latin as *Ultra posse nemo obligatur* (p. 46, p. 79 *et passim*) — in other words, to impose impossible conditions on knowledge is not merely unrealistic but irrational. '. . . it makes no sense to set up as a necessary condition for something (be it knowledge or anything else) a demand which it is in the nature of things impossible to meet.' (p. 79) The resulting account of knowledge is in line with Rescher's overall pragmatism: he views knowledge as fallibilistic and defeasible, and hence un-dogmatic — against the skeptic's frequent charge that cognitivists are dogmatists. This account relies on certain key distinctions, such as that between 'categorical' and 'practical' certainty, or between 'mundane' and 'transcendental' construals of absolutes. These distinctions enable Rescher to bridge the ever-present 'evidential gap' between what is asserted in even singular factual knowledge-claims and the grounds therefor — the gap which is the lynch-pin of the skeptic's case. The greater part of the book consists of a series of responses, in these pragmatic terms, to the traditional skeptical criticisms of cognitivism.

In his Chapter IX Rescher deals most directly with the difficulties so painfully grappled with by Johnson, namely the skeptic's demand for a bedrock of *absolutely* incorrigible claims. No such bedrock can be found, says Rescher, and this is in the nature of the case: there is a *social contract* underlying our conception of knowledge, and this involves a non-foundationalist view, using mechanisms of plausibility and presumption. Knowledge thereby is not rendered defective; rather, the defects in the skeptic's impossibly high standards of knowledge are brought into relief by this analysis. Thus, in saying that genuine knowledge-claims must be incorrigible, the pragmatist Rescher *means* that they must be beyond any reasonable, realistic possibility of error — not beyond any conceivable possibility of error. To insist on the latter would be to render knowledge impossible (at least for an empiricist — as I remarked in my discussion of Johnson); and Rescher here invokes his *ultra posse* principle to reject such an impossibly-high standard of knowledge. As he puts it (p. 86), "The idea of 'potentially fallibilistic knowledge' is *not* a contradiction in terms."

The argument for cognitivism, as Rescher develops it, is an instance of pragmatic vindication. There is no higher kind of knowledge than reasonable belief: in the nature of the case, the reasonable belief is our best bet for attaining our ends. 'The reasonable belief is precisely and by definition that whose acceptance . . . affords the best promise for realizing our goals.' (p. 223) A problem remains for Rescher, however, especially in regard to generalisations. While a pragmatic vindication strategy has seemed to many to be the only adequate approach to Hume's *inductive* skepticism (see Reichenbach, *Experience and Prediction*, 1938; Salmon, *Foundations of Scientific Inference*, 1967; and forthcoming essays by Salmon and by Clendinnen in McLaughlin (ed.) *What? Where? When? Why?*, Reidel, 1982), Rescher merely sketches the rationale for this in his Chapter XI. The problem remains of justifying the conclusions of (what we take to be) correct ampliative inferences, which amounts to justifying a choice among possible asymptotic inference rules; or, as Hacking construed the problem in 1965 (Hacking, 'One Problem About Induction', in Lakatos (ed.) *The Problem of Inductive Logic*, pp. 44-59, 1968), of justifying a set of three criteria for such a selection. That job, in the view of at least some leading epistemologists, remains undone. Rescher may be on the right track, in his pragmatic vindication approach; but he has certainly not solved the problem of induction. Johnson, by contrast, cannot fairly be said to have addressed it — not, at least, in terms acceptable to an empiricist.

In sum, Johnson's book is dense, intricate, prolix; it is a closely argued, ambitious

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work which does not entirely come off. It falls short of its goal — the absolute justification of cognitivism — largely because its author grants his opponents too much: he allows the skeptics to set, and even to twist, the rules. In places his arguments seem confused. He nevertheless succeeds in the more modest ambition of revealing positive skepticism as self-defeating, and Pyrrhonic agnosticism as empty. In these terms, Johnson's is a worthy and fairly well-sustained venture. Rescher seems to breathe clearer, calmer air than Johnson, perhaps because he is not trapped into playing the skeptic's own game; his treatment throughout is balanced and spacious, with a lucid, commonsensical authority that derives from his fundamental pragmatism. He deals fairly and fluently with an extraordinary range of contemporary arguments and stances, and also reveals an encyclopaedic acquaintance with classical sources. His fidelity to normal usages and practices enables him to deploy his *ultra posse* principle against skepticism with great effect. The result is a satisfying vindication of the cognitivist intuitions shared by most of us, even if fewer share his pragmatist theory of knowledge.

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Armstrong, D. M., *The Nature of Mind and Other Essays*, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1980, pp. xii, 175, $17.95.

In the last essay in this collection, 'Naturalism, Materialism and First Philosophy', naturalism is defined as the view that 'reality consists of nothing but a single all-embracing spatio-temporal system' (p. 149). Materialism goes further in claiming that the world contains nothing but the entities recognized by physics, and Armstrong's version of materialism adds realism about the entities of physics. Physics, or, more generally, physical science, is regarded as a reliable guide to the nature of the universe because in science it is possible to reach a rational consensus. Rational consensus has also been achieved about some of the central beliefs of common-sense, including beliefs about the existence of mental states. This blocks eliminative materialism about minds (the 'disappearance theory'). Minds must be reduced, not eliminated.

The two major difficulties for materialism about the mind are intentionality and consciousness. Armstrong's strategy is to reduce the former to causality and the latter to its physical correlates. I will consider intentionality first.

Mental states point towards objects or states of affairs but these objects or states of affairs need not exist. This is intentionality (pp. 25 and 158). Now just as, say, a thought points to its object so a cause points to its effect. Poisons, for instance, point to sickness and death (p. 25). Causes also capture the possible non-existence of intentional objects: poisons retain their causal powers when there is no-one left to poison. If this is all there is to it intentionality is much more common that we thought. A footstep is the cause of, and therefore points to, a footprint. Is a footstep then intentional, or would a suitably complex cause qualify? Moreover it evidently does not matter which direction the causal connection goes. In the case of purpose it is natural to trace it from cause (purpose) to effect (appropriate behaviour), in the case of perception from effect (experience) to cause (the object of experience). Effects point to their causes just as causes point to their effects, so perhaps a footprint counts as intentional too. This might be ruled out because it fails to exemplify the possible non-existence of the intentional object. But this leaves the problem, which is not discussed, of the intentionality of perception. This is particularly so if we accept a causal theory of perception as Armstrong does: my perceiving an object entails that the object causes my perceiving (p. 126. cf. p. 48). And 'if O is to cause A's perceptions O had better exist' (p. 128). Perhaps while all instances of intentionality involve pointing to an object they may differ in other respects. So, for example, the intentionality of perception may be characterised by referential opacity in reports about the object but not by the possible non-existence of the object. The causal theory may be on firmer ground here because

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referential opacity does occur in causal contexts and Armstrong's account of cause is well adapted to explain that fact. According to the 'lightning sketch' in the last two pages of the book, causality is a particular and complex case of an empirically discoverable relation of natural necessitation between universals. Referential opacity presumably occurs because not all co-designative terms employ the causally relevant universals.

The other attempt at reduction receives a much fuller treatment. The fourth essay, 'What is Consciousness?', distinguishes between three types of consciousness. The first, minimal consciousness, is simply present mental activity. The second, perceptual consciousness, is awareness of the subject's environment, and the third introspective consciousness, is inner sense, the awareness of the subject's own mental activities. As an example of perceptual consciousness without introspective consciousness Armstrong discusses the driver who snaps back into (introspective) consciousness with the realisation that he has driven a considerable distance during which he must have been (perceptually) conscious. This 'curious state of automatism' (p. 12) is a state of the person apt for the production of discrimination about the environment. If this analysis is acceptable the way is open for the reduction of bare perceptual consciousness by identifying it with some suitable condition of the brain. Introspective consciousness is treated similarly. It is that state of the person which causes discrimination with respect to perceptual consciousness, and it is reduced by being identified with some other suitable condition of the brain.

A crude eliminative or 'disappearance' materialism would do the job more quickly but Armstrong is implacably opposed to such a strategy. He says that it is part of the rational consensus of common-sense that there are mental processes (p. 40). A rational consensus is defined as unanimity among those who are conversant with the matter in question and whose judgement is not hopelessly impaired (p. 39). Serious doubt about the central core of common-sense is considered a clear proof of madness (p. 40). The application of the disappearance strategy to purposes is described as foolish (p. 151), and the disappearance strategy generally is subject to a Moorean argument for common sense (p. 44). In the light of these severe judgements it is worth asking whether Armstrong himself is guilty of the disappearance move, though at a different point.

Suppose that we accept the identification of consciousness with a state of the brain but insist that there are phenomenal properties of at least some states of consciousness and that these are irreducibly non-physical. We then have the dualism of properties (though not of substances) which motivated the disappearance form of materialism in the first place. Armstrong will not accept this form of dualism either, but how is he to avoid it?

One solution which would be an obvious form of the disappearance theory would be simply to deny that there are phenomenal properties. There is little to choose between a theory which denies the existence of consciousness and one which asserts the existence of consciousness but insists that it is phenomenologically empty. Now it is not Armstrong's view that consciousness is entirely empty.

> the identification of the phenomenal qualities is *not* the identification of a feature previously specified only in terms of the causal role of things that have that feature. Identifying phenomenal with physical properties is instead a matter of identifying a property, grasped in a totalistic, holistic, unanalyzed way by sense and/or introspection, with a complex physical property either of the physical phenomena perceived or of the brian. (p. 37)

Similarly, he says that phenomenal qualities yield a rather overpowering impression of (a) relative simplicity and (b) irreducibility. (p. 50) Perhaps they do, but these are entirely general characteristics which are said to attach to *all* phenomenal qualities. What about the particular phenomenal qualities which provide the basis for a subjective discrimination between states of consciousness, which generate worries about inverted spectra, which are the building blocks of phenomenalism? These do not figure in the story and Armstrong tries to make a virtue of this with the claim that 'the realm of

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mind is a shadowy one, and . . . the nature of mental states is singularly elusive and hard to grasp'. (p. 24-25) The admittedly unusual case of (introspectively) unconscious driving seems to function as a paradigm for the analysis of all forms of consciousness. A consequence of the emptiness of consciousness is that we know very little about it. Our knowledge of the content of our own consciousness is likened to the ability to 'perceive that certain people are all alike in some way without being able to make it clear to oneself what the likeness is' (p. 30). So the only phenomenal features of consciousness which have to be dealt with are the two general features of simplicity and irreducibility. These are dealt with fairly effectively but the others, it seems, simply disappear.

The idea that consciousness is essentially a means of scrutinising and controlling the environment and the mind is compatible with the existence of phenomenal properties. Indeed it is difficult to see how this approach manages to identify consciousness at all if phenomenal properties are denied. For any control system we can ask, 'Is it conscious or not?' If the positive answer depends on there being a higher level control system the question can be re-iterated. It is possible, not only logically but physically, that there be, say, fifty control systems, the first focussed on the environment and each of the others focussed on the operations of its immediate subordinate. A sufficiently insecure and compulsive engineer could exemplify this with a highly ramified burglar alarm. If no stage of the system involves consciousness then system 1-50 is not a conscious system. And if all the control systems within the repetoire of an individual are like that, then that individual is not conscious. So it seems that the existence of a series of control systems is not sufficient for consciousness.

Is it necessary? Is it, for example, possible to drive a car without being in that 'curious state of automatism' (p. 12) even though there is no present higher order control system? Let us suppose that the higher order control system is necessary. It then follows, *inter alia*, that we are never directly aware of our environments in the full non-automatic sense. We are fully, non-automatically aware only of our mental contents. This comes perilously close to the representative theory of perception, a theory which Armstrong has consistently rejected in the past and continues to reject in this book (particularly at pp. 137-39).

Finally, a question fundamental to the entire discussion is the meaning to be given to 'physical'. Physical properties are defined as 'the properties' that the physicist appeals to in his explanations of phenomena . . . not . . . the current set of properties to which the physicist appeals, but . . . whatever set of properties the physicist in the end will appeal to' (p. 29). But physics could develop in such a way that materialism would be a most uninteresting theory. This would be the case if physicists generally engaged in imperialist annexation of areas resisting the success of their theories and declared such annexations to be part of physics. If biology, for example, could not be reduced to physics in the ordinary way, the physicists might decide to supplement physics with the irreducible parts of biology. What is to keep the physicists honest? Reliance on their good intentions can have no part in the analysis of the concept of the physical. We might define a subject matter for physics by reference to various paradigm physical objects. Then materialism would be the contentious and interesting claim that the theories adequate for the explanation of the behaviour of such objects are also adequate for the explanation of everything that exists. (This suggestion does not seem to be too severe because it absolves the physicist of the necessity to reduce chemistry to physics). Some such fairly severe restriction seems to be necessary if materialism is to retain its interest.

The book is a collection of papers originally published between 1966 and 1979. It is offered as a supplement to *A Materialist Theory of the Mind* but as one which can be read independently. With the exception of a paper on political philosophy ('The Nature of Tradition') the book can be read as a unified treatment of some of the themes of the earlier work though there is a good deal of repetition. I think it is a useful book for its intended purposes. More importantly, since it is written with that clarity of expression

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and ambitious canvassing of views which characterise all of Armstrong's work, it is a pleasure to read.

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Rescher, N., *Cognitive Systematization*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1979, pp. xii, 211, £9.50.

This book concerns the systematisation of knowledge. It takes us, at a fairly gentle pace, through a number of related questions such as: 'What is the connection between systematisation and truth?', 'What legitimates the procedures of systematisation?', 'Are there insuperable limits to systematisation?' and so on. Rescher's perspective is his own brand of idealism-cum-pragmatism which has become familiar to us. (The book is peppered with quotations from his two mentors, Kant and Peirce.) Indeed the book develops and sometimes repeats issues treated in his *Coherence Theory of Truth, Methodological Pragmatism, Plausible Reasoning* and other books.

The central notion of the book is that of a system. This is a set of statements connected by inferences (deductive and inductive) such that, in general, everything is inferentially supported by other things. The 'parameters of systematisation' are things such as connectedness, simplicity, consistency, and so on. A system may have each of these parameters (including consistency) to various degrees — though how one determines the degree to which a parameter is present is not discussed. Epistemologically, systematisation functions as follows. Given an initial set of fallible data, we try to determine the systems into which a substantial part of the data can be fitted. We then select the optimum such system according to the parameters of systematisation — though again, exactly how this is done is not explained. This kind of picture will be familiar from the work of Quine (to whom the book is dedicated). However Rescher then adds a coherentist move of his own. According to him, to be in the selected system is *ipso facto* to be true, or known to be true (Rescher's pragmatism shows itself here since he tends to run the two together) at least provisionally. Rescher cites with approval the idealist views of Green and Bradley.

The question of the correctness of this kind of idealism is a well-worn one and I will not discuss it. However I will discuss one argument Rescher uses for it. For contrary to most people who have taken this view, Rescher takes the coherentist claim to be empirical, and not *a priori*: it is logically possible that the world should have been such that systematisation is not 'an appropriate cognitive *modus operandi*' (p. 112). What then, is the evidence that it is? Simply, that what we take to be knowledge is, as a matter of fact, arrived at by systematisation (to which I will return below) and, if it were incorrect, the human race would be unlikely to have survived because of evolution and maladaptation to its environment. I hope that Rescher's thesis is not proved wrong by a nuclear holocaust. However the main point I wish to make here is that this kind of justification of coherentism is ultimately subversive of it. For the appeal to evolution concedes that there must be processes and mechanisms in nature which act quite independently, and in fact act on, human consciousness. If this is so, then the question of how well our understanding of these processes and mechanisms succeeds in grasping them is unavoidable. To be sure (a phrase which is somewhat overworked in the book), how the relation of grasping is itself to be understood is a difficult and important problem. Yet once its existence has been admitted, it cannot but provide the locus for some kind of account of truth (attempted by classical correspondence theorists) which makes coherence-truth an *ersatz*. Rescher seems to realise this at times. For example, he says that the "sequential and developmental process of historical mutation and optimal selection assures a growing conformity between our systematising endeavours and the 'real world' " (p. 107). The scare quotes underline rather than solve Rescher's problem.

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I want now to discuss Rescher's approach to the justification of induction (not because this is a particularly central part of the book, but because it raises a number of issues pertinent to it). Essentially it is this. Given $F(a_1) \ldots F(a_n)$, should we infer (i.e. add to our system of beliefs), $F(a_{n+1})$ or $\sim F(a_{n+1})$? *Ceteribus paribus* we should add $F(a_{n+1})$ because the resulting system is simpler than its alternative, and simplicity is one of the parameters of systematisation (pp. 84-5). However, this raises the problem of how to justify systematisation (and its attendant parameters). This is justified since it is a) self-correcting, b) self-substantiating, and c) works (pp. 93-100). This chain of reasoning faces a number of problems. First, whether or not the first step works depends crucially on the notion of simplicity. The system with $\sim F(a_{n+1})$ added might be equally simple from a different perspective. (See my 'Gruesome Simplicity', *Philosophy of Science*, 43, 1976). Indeed the notion of simplicity is a thoroughly problematic one, and I found it disconcerting that Rescher should use this notion all the way through the book without any attempted clarification. The justifications of systematisation are also problematic. To say that systematisation is self-correcting is vacuous if the result of systematisation is *ipso facto* correct. To say that it is self-substantiating is just to say that it is not self-refuting. Thus, as Rescher admits (p. 100), c) must bear the brunt of the argument. c) is argued as follows. To be systematic is to be scientific. But science has proven itself to be far superior at 'explaining, predicting and controlling nature' (p. 106) than any other method, i.e. it works. A major gap in this argument is that Rescher never shows that to be systematic is to be scientific. Have figures in the history of science always obeyed the canons of systematisation? Detailed studies would be necessary to substantiate this. It can certainly not be assumed. (One is not encouraged by the fact that one of Rescher's few historical allusions attributes the belief that rectilinear motion is natural to Galileo (p. 146)). The door is wide open for Feyerabendian counterexamples. In fact the book mentions neither Feyerabend nor Lakatos (despite the similarity of some of Rescher's and Lakatos' views on Euclideanism). And whatever the correctness of their views, no book on epistemology can now afford to ignore their arguments. Finally the claim that science produces the goods can be established only by induction from its track record. Thus in our attempt to justify induction we have gone in a circle. Rescher admits this but claims that the circle is not vicious (p. 114). Perhaps he is right. However it is not clear why this large circle is an improvement on the simple attempt to justify induction inductively.

One very general criticism of the book that I have is that it has a tendency to slide over issues too quickly. I have already mentioned a couple of fairly crucial issues (details of optimisation, simplicity) but there are others. For example it is not at all clear how Rescher's approach is supposed to avoid the Gettier paradoxes (p. 76) and it is suggested (pp. 164-5) that all knowledge is connected, though the connection may be 'purely formal'. What this means is not made clear. Be that as it may, this book gives an important piece of the jig-saw puzzle of Rescher's thought. However I doubt that it will have many converts from those who were not already very sympathetic to his basic perspective.

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Bailey, George W. S., *Privacy and the Mental,* Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1979, pp. 175, Dfl 40.

The conclusions reached in this book are that we ought to accept necessary ownership as an essential characteristic of all mental phenomena, and we ought to reject all other forms of privacy or epistemic superiority. The necessary ownership thesis says of mental phenomena that 'it is logically impossible that they should exist without there existing some being capable of experience who has them'. (p. 46) The discussion of this positive result is quite brief and most of the book is, therefore, negative. It is a

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systematic and comprehensive examination of various claims and a series of objections and counter-examples to each of them in turn. The book incorporates taxonomies of types of privacy and epistemic superiority thesis. These are thorough enough to save some unnecessary effort: thus, for example, Bailey points out that self-intimation is a necessary condition for omniscience, and so, having dealt with self-intimation he has *ipso facto* dealt with the stronger claim. The taxonomy also contributes to clarity: for example, once the possible claims are set out it becomes obvious that one must avoid the common error of confusing incorrigibility (not being subject to correction) with infallibility (not being subject to error).

The book is divided into two sections, one dealing with privacy and the other with epistemic superiority and there is a tendency to treat the two as distinct (see pp. 2, 3, 62). But consider the first privacy thesis discussed (p. 12):

> Some kinds of mental phenomena (and only mental phenomena) are such that in principle one and only one person can be directly aware of them.

There is a first person/third person assymetry here and the first person enjoys an epistemic advantage: he alone has direct awareness. So this form of privacy is also a form of epistemic superiority. The second, third and fourth forms of privacy discussed are also about direct awareness and the same point can be made about them. The remaining forms of privacy are less directly connected with epistemic superiority since they concern imperceptibility by the senses. The connection can readily be made, however, by way of a representative theory of perception: that which is known through the senses is known indirectly; that which is known other than through the senses is known directly. At this point psychology and epistemology meet and matters of which we are directly aware are said to be directly *evident* because not subject to the usual sources of error. So on at least one theory of perception Bailey's second group of forms of privacy are also forms of epistemic superiority. (In his discussion of this group Bailey attempts to show that it is conceivable that one may be directly aware of some physical event by way of clairvoyance (p. 24). But awareness of features of a distant event might well be mediated by a mental state even if not by the senses.)

One way in which the wedge might be driven between privacy and epistemic superiority is briefly dealt with (p. 12). There are two logically distinct senses of awareness, *viz.* awareness *of* and awareness *that*. Of the former Bailey says:

> Someone's being aware of something will involve its being an object of his conscious attention, and will involve his being conscious of its presence, but it will not require his recognizing or identifying it for what it is nor his having any other beliefs about it.

An example is a baby's awareness of its mother when she feeds it (p. 30). Certainly if there is no belief there is no actual epistemic advantage. But private awareness in this sense can be the basis of epistemic superiority for any being capable of belief. What we ought to say, at the least, is that privacy (if any) explains epistemic superiority (if any).

The task of refuting the various forms of epistemic advantage raises questions of balance. There is little point to refuting laboriously what seems less probable while devoting little attention to what is more probable, but to some extent this is what Bailey does. His discussion of omniscience, self-intimation and infallibility takes up sixty pages, that of incorrigibility and self-warrant only thirty-four. Granted that there are difficulties in all these areas it is still clear that the first group is more difficult to accept than the second. For if the mental were marked by omniscience, self-intimation and infallibility, self knowledge would be automatic, not difficult to achieve. (Cf. pp. 96 and 98)

A related problem is the logical modality and scope of the theses to be examined. If they are universally quantified, and if they claim that something is logically impossible they are more subject to refutation than if they suggest an empirical impossibility or if they extend only to some members of a class. Bailey notes that the more ambitious

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theses, such as those considered by Alston (p. 108) are relatively easy to refute. What happens if we try to make them less ambitious and therefore more invulnerable? He discusses at some length Richard Rorty's incorrigibility thesis which makes incorrigibility a contingent matter of the lack of accepted procedures for overruling avowals. (p. 101ff) The treatment of this move is fairly effective. On the other move he has less to say. He alludes to the possibility that epistemic superiority claims might be made for some rather than all mental phenomena. At one point he castigates such a move as ad hoc (p. 91). But in every case where he considers a restriction of scope the restricted form envisaged still applies to *all* the members of a class of mental phenomena — for example to all thoughts even if not to all mental states.

This overlooks the further possibility that one might say that it is necessary that anything that is mental should have the possibility of being known directly, or non-inferentially or however it may be. If the *possibility* of being known in some superior way is essential to everything mental it does not follow that everything mental *is* known in that superior way. This allows us to advance a thesis which resists refutation better than Alston's theses but which, since it asserts necessity and universality, can still claim to be a characterisation of the mental.

The discussion of self intimation, among others, illustrates the point. Bailey quotes Don Locke as saying:

> Thinking and perceiving are essentially conscious processes . . . which means that they cannot be said to occur unless the person to whom they are ascribed knows that they occur (p. 80).

And at the end of the chapter he says:

> we now have good reason to reject the claim that mental phenomena are self-intimating . . . The examples I have described . . . provide such reasons, since they show that it is at least conceivable that mental phenomena exist independently of a person's being aware of their contents (p. 98).

Here we have a strong self intimation thesis and a justified rejection which depends on that strength. But if we take Bailey's own thesis of necessary ownership as a model we can construct a weaker thesis of self-intimation which resists Bailey's attack. An example of such a weakened thesis might be: It is logically impossible that thinking or perceiving should occur and that the thinker or perceiver should be unable to come to know that they occur. I am sure that there are more promising candidates for this treatment but this will do. It is compatible with a thinker's not being aware of his thoughts and so is not refuted by Bailey's examples. And it is a form of epistemic superiority even if a very weak one since it contrasts the subject's own thought and perception with a vast category of events which it is logically possible that he be unable to know anything about. (A much more interesting thesis of this kind is advanced by Herbert Heidelberger in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research vol. XXVI*, 1965-66.)

Bailey is interested in the application of his conclusions to the mind-body problem. He makes the appropriate allusions without devoting very much space to advancing the discussion of that issue. His briefly stated conclusion is that necessary ownership does not provide the basis for an argument against materialism since it is quite possible 'that mental phenomena possess essentially some characteristic which physical phenomena do not possess essentially' (p. 168). This application is very much secondary to his main interests in the book and to these he has made a useful contribution.

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Lamb, David, *Hegel — From Foundation to System*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1980, pp. xviii, 234.

This is a volume rich in content. The author's intention is to make Hegel's thought more accessible by showing that many of his concerns have analogues in Anglo-American philosophy and philosophical science of this century. Most of the text explicates Hegel by pointing out parallels between him on the one side and Russell, Moore, Kuhn, Feyerabend, Bertalanffy and especially the later Wittgenstein on the other. The focus on the overlapping concerns dictates, of course, that neither Hegel nor the more recent thinkers are given full coverage, but Lamb accepts this disadvantage as the price he has to pay for revealing the systematic continuities. These continuities turn out to be extensive and, in the area of philosophical biology, sometimes quite surprising.

The title of this book may suggest that it deals with Hegel's development towards the System. In fact, it telescopes the main theme of the book, namely, that Hegel rejects the 'foundationalist' approach to theory-formation (as seen e.g. in Descartes's and Husserl's search for an unshakeable foundation, the standpoint of the early Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, etc.) and replaces it with the 'immanent', ever-questioning and ever-spreading growth of knowledge — a paradigm for which there is a parallel in the later Wittgenstein's remark that 'it is not single axioms that strike me as obvious; it is a system in which consequences and premises give one another *mutual* support' (*On Certainty*, para. 142, quoted p. 14). For Lamb, Hegel's rejection of foundationalism is so complete that Hegel would have rejected even Popper's 'dynamic foundations', just as he criticised, on similar grounds, the now forgotten Kantian Reinhold. A further parallel between Hegel and the later Wittgenstein is seen by Lamb in the movement 'from the concept of knowledge as a passive property to the concept of knowledge as an activity to be described as it appears' (p. 5); in Hegel's case it is the road of his *Phenomenology*, for Wittgenstein it is the switch from a critique of language to the description of the use of language.

Lamb reinforces the anti-foundationalist parallel between Hegel and the later Wittgenstein by stressing that both moved 'from explanation to description'. This is certainly so in Wittgenstein's case: '. . . it can never be our job to reduce anything to anything, or to explain anything. Philosophy really *is* "purely descriptive" ' (*The Blue and Brown Books*, 18, quoted p. 31). As regards Hegel, this is conspicuously so in his *Phenomenology*, but what about his *Logic* with its 'dialectical' transitions? It is open to Lamb to argue that even the *Logic* presupposes a circular movement where 'the end is in the beginning', but Lamb seems to omit this. A substantial argument that Lamb adduces for the primacy in Hegel of the non-foundationalist position of 'mutual support' is Hegel's treatment of Organic Nature which is 'the heart of his conception of truth, wholeness and system' (p. xiii), and to which Lamb devotes a lengthy comparativist chapter (pp. 111-164). One can easily agree that Hegel's organicist model supports Lamb's general thesis, but his argument would have been enhanced if he had shown that the *prima facie* foundationalism of the *Logic* is only an appearance.

The pairing of Hegel and the later Wittgenstein in respect of their anti-foundationalism has one defective consequence. Lamb makes Hegel too Wittgensteinian by stressing description in the dichotomy of description versus explanation, and thus, oddly, turns Hegel into a relativist. This occurs in the following manner. An essential strand in Hegel's philosophy is progression and, whether or not this strand is justifiable, the fact is that Hegel sees progressive development not only in metaphysical and epistemological terms but, more concretely, in the historical, social, ethical, and aesthetic spheres. Lamb is either too much influenced by Wittgenstein or else wishes to save Hegel from error; Lamb thus ignores Hegel's progressivism, emphasises non-hierarchical description à la Wittgenstein and finishes by ascribing to Hegel a relativistic position. Thus, though Hegel clearly rejects Kantian noumena, it is strange to read that 'Hegel asks us to recognise the ultimate relativity of truth' (p. 39). Surely, it is one thing to say that Hegel does not elevate 'a favourite standard such as

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universal doubt (Descartes) or Newtonian physics (Kant), the unity of language (*Tractatus*), the verification principle, or even commonsense so favoured by Hegel's contemporaries as well as today' (p. 39), it is an altogether different thing — and non-Hegelian — to contend that for Hegel 'the end of epistemology, or indeed the quest for foundational certainties, is achieved by no other means than a presentation of every epistemology, or ontology, as the correct one' (p. 39). Lamb supports his remarkable conclusion by writing that 'neither Wittgenstein nor Hegel were advancing a theory [of knowledge]; they were doing away with theory of knowledge' (p. 211), but this is reading Wittgenstein into Hegel and thus ignoring Hegel's pervasive point that where there is restlessness there is inadequacy, and that this immanent progression leads to a stability, the position grasped theoretically by genuine Idealism. Whether we do or do not agree with this is a different matter, but the progression from 'lower' to 'higher' is an element which cannot be eliminated from Hegel's theory. At this point (and others, of course) Hegel and Wittgenstein part company, though Lamb partly corrects this omission (or appears to do so) by remarking that 'it was Hegel who showed much more clearly than Wittgenstein that life forms have histories and prehistories' (p. 88).

A large part of the book consists of showing how Hegel's anti-foundationalism works in specific areas of knowledge. There is an interesting chapter on perception and language, though a more detailed analysis of these can be found in Lamb's earlier book *Language and Perception in Hegel and Wittgenstein* (Avebury Publ. Co., 1979). There is also a penetrating interpretation of the trial and death of Socrates in Hegel's *History of Philosophy*; Lamb sees correctly that for Hegel this episode was not a local affair but 'a clash between two ethical world-views' (p. 65), and that Hegel here, and also in his *Phenomenology*, was recognising the significant radicalness of successive ethical 'shapes of consciousness', just as Kuhn later saw paradigms and paradigm switches in the history of science. (Parallels between Kuhn and Feyerabend, and Hegel, are discussed esp. on pp. 104-108. There Lamb also claims that Hegel's position is more radical than J. J. C. Smart's.)

Lamb's account of the Socratic event, excellent as it is, suffers from his failure to recognise adequately Hegel's progressivism. This defect becomes even more obvious when Lamb moves on to Hegel's treatment of religion, and thus deserves a lengthier comment. Lamb perceives correctly that Hegel is far from being a theist; that a 'spiritualist' interpretation has to be rejected; and that on the issue of Hegel's assessment of the *truth* of religion 'a re-examination of Hegel's texts suggests a very different Hegel to the one Marx overturned' (p. 168). Lamb suspects, rightly, that Marx and Lukacs after him (and, we should add, Feuerbach before him) pushed Hegel in the religious direction in order to emphasise their own radicalness. Referring to Hegel's characterisation of religion as pictorial thinking, Lamb asks, 'If pictorial theism is mistaken, what is left of religion? A denial of the literal account of the crucifixion and resurrection . . . suggests a change in the meaning of faith which is incompatible with the old ontology' (p. 173). But Lamb's own interpretation, while stressing Hegel's rejection of external revelation as consonant with his anti-foundationalism, stays ambiguously within the relativist mode: 'A philosophical knowledge of God, we might say, is the recognition that the meaning of a religious symbol is the role given in human *praxis*' (p. 174). This, on Lamb's admission, is Wittgensteinian (p. 172), but Hegel's emphasis on the pictorial and therefore restless or inadequate nature of religious beliefs must be taken more seriously. Bosanquet (quoted p. 173) or Findlay (*Hegel: a Re-Examination*, p. 143) are closer to Hegel's meaning. Christianity is for Hegel the Absolute Religion because — as maintained since his early Frankfurt days — it elevates the principle of love. It is true that Hegel's position is not to be identified with Feuerbach's; while the latter elevates empirical love, Hegel has a theory of Spirit as a cosmic uniting force, but this force does not extend beyond the world. The view that religious truths are pictorial symbols of what is grasped truly in philosophy is tantamount to an ontological denial of the reifications postulated in religion. Lamb's replacement of Hegel's progressivism by relativism waters down Hegel's position in

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respect of religion and would, by the same token, take any 'lower' stage of consciousness to be equally correct. But is this Hegel's position?

In many ways, Lamb's volume is a refreshing book wealthy in observations and discovery of parallels. It often achieves what many scholars even more committed to Hegel — when they merely paraphrase him — do not. But there is a desideratum. We can agree that Hegel was an anti-foundationalist; that he was descriptive rather than explanatory (descriptive not only in the phenomenological sense of portraying mental frameworks 'from inside' but also descriptive in letting various principles do, as it were, their own self-refutation); but then we may want to know *why* Hegel took up these positions. The answer (though Lamb may say that this sort of attempt exceeds the intention of his book) has to be sought in Hegel's intellectual development. There is no mention by Lamb of recent West German scholarship (esp. Duesing, Kimmerle, Henrich, Poeggeler), but it is precisely among the editors of the new monumental edition that work is being done on Hegel's rejection of various traditional starting points and on his early struggles with the developing System as a 'circle'. However, it is gratifying to add that the new discoveries about the young Hegel, while suggesting a revision of several subsidiary claims, do in the main support Lamb's basic thesis.

W. V. Doniela *The University of Newcastle*

Wood, Allen, *Karl Marx*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, pp. xviii, 282, £13.50.

Karl Marx is a volume in the 'Arguments of the Philosophers' series edited by Ted Honderich. This series provides much more detailed discussions of the thought of the philosophers covered than is to be found in the briefer and more popular Fontana 'Modern Masters' and Oxford 'Past Masters' series. Allen Wood's book would therefore suit undergraduate students, especially those in later year courses, and there are several points in his discussions which should be of interest even to specialist scholars.

Although Wood states at the outset that the core of Marx's thought as a whole is the economic theory of *Capital*, he modestly disclaims competence in this field, and instead settles on the task of writing 'a sort of philosophical prolegomenon' to a study of Marx's economics. To this end he discusses successively alienation, historical materialism, morality, philosophical materialism and the dialectical method.

In discussing Marx's account of alienation, Wood takes a middle line on the vexed issue of the persistence into Marx's later work of this preoccupation of his early writings. In opposition to those who have claimed that Marx abandons the concept of alienation altogether, Wood maintains that Marx continues to use it, though its role ceases to be explanatory and is reduced to that of describing a certain sort of malady of modern society. At the same time Wood rejects as 'preposterous' a view represented by a quotation from Istvan Meszaros, to the effect that alienation is 'the basic idea of the Marxian system'.

I wonder if Meszaros's claim really is so absurd. Elsewhere Wood himself points out that *Capital* contains a quite explicit parallel with Feuerbach's concept of alienation: 'As in religion man is ruled by a botched work of his own hand, so in capitalist production he is ruled by a botched work of his own hand.' The second part of this quotation expresses the idea that under capitalism our own productive capacity (which is, for Marx, the essence of our nature) has escaped our conscious control, so that we serve it instead of it serving us. This is clearly a concept of alienation, and I see nothing preposterous in regarding it as the basic idea of the Marxian system. I would even be prepared to argue — but not here — that for Marx it is an explanatory and not simply a descriptive idea.

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In his Preface Wood notes that his chapters on historical materialism would have been more original had it not been for the prior appearance of G. A. Cohen's excellent book, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*. There certainly are strong similarities. Like Cohen, Wood defends an interpretation of Marx in which the driving force of history is the development of productive forces. This is a version of old-fashioned 'technological determinism' which insists on the primary role of the productive forces, notwithstanding the undeniable interaction between base and superstructure. To overcome the obvious difficulty posed by such interaction Wood, again like Cohen, claims that the materialist conception of history is a form of teleological explanation: it explains social changes as taking place *in order to* allow the development of the productive forces. Thus Marx's theory is not itself a causal explanation, although it is compatible with the truth of more detailed causal explanations.

Wood puts a brave face on the resemblance between his work and Cohen's, saying that he was 'gratified' by the extent of Cohen's agreement with his own thoughts, then in draft form. If gratification is the only emotion he felt, he is a most unusual person. Be that as it may, Wood's account of historical materialism is a lucid and careful piece of argument; its brevity makes it likely to be read and understood by undergraduates who may be put off by Cohen's much fuller study.

Wood gets his chance to be original when he attempts to elicit Marx's attitude to morality. Readers of *Philosophy and Public Affairs* will be familiar with his contention that Marx did not regard capitalism's exploitation of the workers as unjust. Here this claim is part of a broader picture. Marx, according to Wood, distinguished between moral and nonmoral goods. His contempt for moralism is explained by his belief that moral norms always serve the dominant mode of production; his condemnation of capitalism, on the other hand, is based on its frustration of objective human needs for food, shelter, and self-realisation. The fulfilment of these needs is, in Wood's terminology, a nonmoral good. This may well be the most plausible way to make consistent Marx's utterances on this topic. It does, of course, leave Marx with a theory that is definitely a moral theory in a broader sense of the term 'morality', a sense which would include what Wood calls nonmoral goods. This broader sense of the term is the one we use when, for example, we refer to utilitarianism as a moral theory. Wood tries to show that Marx differs from the utilitarians, on the grounds that 'utilitarians still believe that the right way to bring about economic change is to reform the moral ideas people carry around in their heads'; but Wood gives no evidence for the truth of this claim, and even if it happened to be true, it would be irrelevant to utilitarianism as such, for it would merely be a belief about what is an effective means to the utilitarian end. One could abandon such a belief altogether without in any way ceasing to be a utilitarian.

The final two sections of Wood's book are perhaps of less interest to most readers than the first three sections. In the pages on philosphical materialism Wood gives the impression of straining to unearth issues that are clearly 'philosophical'. Metaphysics and epistemology were never central to Marx's concerns, though they did give rise to much debate after Engels attempted to provide Marxism with a complete philosophical world view. In the last chapter, on the dialectical method, Wood discusses dialectic in *Capital*. In order to give some concrete illustrations he is drawn, reluctantly, to touch on the content of *Capital* as well as its method. He thus reminds us of the omission of a sustained discussion of this topic; and his few, compressed pages about economics suggest that, useful as the book is, it might have been better and more complete if its author had been less modest in his assessment of his competence to consider, at least in outline, Marx's economics.

Peter Singer *Monash University*

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Walker, Nigel, *Punishment, Danger and Stigma: The Morality of Criminal Justice*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1980, pp. xi, 206, £9.95

Nigel Walker's contributions to criminology are well-known. In this, his latest book, he seeks to mediate between law enforcers, criminologists and legal philosophers. The assumptions and rationales operative in the decision-making activities of the courts are laid out and then subjected to criminological and philosophical scrutiny. There are crisp and generally judicious surveys of empirical data concerning sentencing policies, and forays into the classical and recent philosophical literature on punishment. Both judicial optimism and philosophical 'monism' come out looking somewhat worse for wear. His strategy is 'to undermine all three of the main justifications of punishment: retributive, reductive, denunciatory' (p. vii) in so far as they claim exclusive rights to the moral territory, and to install a coalition, in which justificatory responsibility is shared by the three classic contenders. This is not quite so bold as it first appears. There are many justificatory questions to which the practice of punishment gives rise, and though some may be accorded greater centrality than others, few, if any, defenders of the traditional positions claimed that their position would accommodate all of them. Rather, they claimed only that their position played a decisive role in relation to what they saw as certain central questions. (In my view, it would be wrong to see them as being agreed about what those central questions were or are.) But despite this slight quixotism, philosophical readers will find a good deal of shrewd observation on attempts to encompass the complexities of the real world within simplified theoretical frameworks. Where philosphers are inclined to leap to practical conclusions about punishment, they are shown to have an excessively rarified understanding of the world within which those conclusions are to be concretised. At the same time, however, philosophical readers will be understandably irritated at the overly swift treatment given to some well-worn debates and positions. The book tries to do too much to qualify as a major contribution to the literature.

As the chapter headings indicate, the discussion ranges widely: 'Criminalising', 'Punishing, denouncing or reducing', 'Treating', 'Deterring', 'Protecting', 'Mitigating and aggravating', 'Stigmatising', 'Righting' and 'Simplifying'. The argument is tightly packed, and it would be futile to try to summarise it or to catalogue the points of contention. One three-page discussion might serve to illustrate the book's strengths and weaknesses: the relevance of a person's criminal record to the sentence he/she should receive. This is a problem rarely addressed in the philosophical literature, yet it clearly raises moral issues of the first order. The universal practice is to take the prior record into account: prior convictions warrant a heavier sentence. But why? Walker offers a number of inconclusive suggestions. A reductivist might argue that a previous conviction for a similar offence would justify a heavier penalty: if a lighter sentence has failed to deter, maybe a heavier one will succeed. 'Sometimes', Walker asserts, reductivist reasons will suffice (p. 126). But when? And how far can one go? If an offender has been convicted of the same offence thirteen times would it be reasonable to expect there to have been twelve increases of sentence? Or why not have a system of draconian penalties for recidivists? Walker's partial sponsorship of the reductivist argument is left dangling in the air. Rather more effort goes into the discussion of retributivist strategies. One such strategy is to argue that repetition increases culpability, because, as one author puts it, the first offender is 'only one of a large audience to whom the law impersonally addresses its prohibitions'. But with that first offence, it has been brought 'dramatically and personally to his attention that the behaviour is condemned'. Repetition, therefore, increases culpability, since the offender has 'persisted in the behaviour after having been forcefully censured for it through his prior punishment'. This argument, Walker allows, may (given its premises) work for the second offence, but can it justify increases for further repetitions? He thinks not. This is fair enough, as far as it goes; but the position criticised is sufficiently interesting to warrant a bit more attention than a one-sentence refutation. A further, purportedly retributive, strategy is

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offered by the English Court of Appeal: 'if they have got bad records nothing can be taken off by way of mitigation, while if they have not got bad records a great deal can be taken off'. Walker has difficulty making sense out of this. After exploring and rejecting some implausible interpretations, he takes the Court to be arguing that the recidivist 'is getting the appropriate sentence for his present offence, but would not have done if his record had been clean.' But if that is the case, it would follow that 'the appropriate sentence for a given offence is more accurately defined as the appropriate one for that offence when committed by a person with previous convictions, or at least similar previous convictions' (p. 128). And, he thinks, if that is so, the argument 'belongs to the moral book-keeping rather than to the strictly retributive approach'. The former, which focuses not on the particular offence but on the offender's total moral worth, is questionable because 'it assumes a superhuman level of insight into the individual' (pp. 138-9).

This represents the extent of Walker's discussion of the arguments for taking prior convictions into account. To anyone who has thought about the question, its brevity will be a source of irritation. It is not at all clear, for example, why the Court of Appeal's assertion should be interpreted in the way Walker suggests. A much more plausible, and more obviously retributive, interpretation is available. It is that judgments of wrongness are agent- as well as act-related, and that in assessing a person's conduct we are also reflecting on that person's character. In the case of a first offender, however, though we may establish a requisite *mens rea*, we may legitimately have doubts about the extent to which the behaviour was *in character*. We may therefore make allowance for this by awarding a lighter penalty. Repetition, however, makes such doubts less plausible, and there is not as good reason for taking something off 'by way of mitigation'.

It is only fair to repeat that my comments have been confined to one brief section in Walker's book, and though its merits and failings are not uncharacteristic of the book as a whole, it is not my intention to deny that it can be read with profit. It contains many stimulating and prevocative tidbits.

John Kleinig *Australian National University*

Blum, Lawrence A., *Friendship, Altruism, and Morality*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980, pp. ix, 234, £10.00.

In *Friendship, Altruism, and Morality* Lawrence Blum criticises certain views about the nature of morally good persons and defends an alternative account. The views which Blum criticises he refers to as Kantian, though he says that 'my main interest is less in Kant's own views than in some lines of thought, associated with him, which have been influential in moral philosophy' (p. 2). According to these views, a morally good person acts from reason, not from emotion, from a sense of duty or obligation, not from inclination. A good person acts according to (universalisable) principles and is not influenced by his particular interests and concerns. A good person is impartial, and can be relied on to do what is right. A good person will therefore not be led astray from the path of right action by the partiality of his affections for particular people. These sorts of views help make up a familiar picture of the moral person.

This picture of the morally good person presupposes that emotions are irrational (or at least nonrational), capricious and unreliable, biassed and partial. Blum argues that such a view of the emotions is simplistic and badly distorted. He focusses his attention on altruistic emotions such as sympathy and compassion and tries to give a detailed and accurate account of what is involved in being genuinely concerned about others. He argues that once the nature of altruistic emotion is properly understood, concern and compassion can be seen to often be morally appropriate and, indeed, to have great moral value.

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This is not to say that Blum joins those who view the Kantian conception of morally good persons as entirely misguided, the unfortunate legacy of a sheltered German academic in the grip of a severe Protestant upbringing. While Blum argues that the Kantian view is mistaken in many respects, he does not reject it completely. He says that 'in defending the moral significance of the altruistic emotions I will not also be attacking the moral significance of some of the moral qualities important to the Kantian view. Another way to express the relationship between my view and the Kantian view is that much of the Kantian view of morality (though not of the emotions) is true — if confined to its proper scope or arena within the moral life' (p. 8).

As an example of the tendency to extend Kantian views beyond their proper sphere, consider the claim that morally good persons must be impartial. Blum suggests that, among other things, friendship seems 'morally condemned on this view, for it appears to be an integral part of what friendship is that we do often act for the sake of our friend's good simply because he is our friend, and without thinking that such action is or needs to be vindicated from an impartial point of view' (p. 45). Blum argues that we must recognise that impartiality is a virtue only in certain restricted sorts of situations. And it is indeed true that favouring one's friends in these situations can be morally condemned (e.g., consider someone in an official position to dispense jobs who uses his position to get jobs for his friends, irrespective of their qualifications for the jobs). But there are many other situations in which it would be permissible, and indeed admirable, to benefit someone simply because he is one's friend or, indeed, to benefit a stranger simply because one felt like it. Furthermore, even in those contexts where one is expected to be impartial, Blum argues that 'there is a limit to the demand of impartiality, and in most cases a scope outside of that limit for benefiting those whom we choose for whatever reason (e.g., personal attachment or liking) to benefit. Thus if a doctor, having fulfilled his obligations to his patients, spends extra time on the case of a friend, this would not be a violation of impartiality, but on the contrary would be admirable behavior on his part' (p. 48).

The remarks made so far may suggest that Blum thinks that the basic error of the Kantian is to overgeneralise, to think that virtues appropriate in certain limited spheres are essential to moral goodness in all areas of life. Such a suggestion would be quite misleading. Blum details many other mistakes in the Kantian view, many of them connected with false views about the nature of altruistic emotions. For example, consider the Kantian view that a morally admirable person must be reliable and consistent. Kantians often argue that persons who act on their emotions are unreliable and inconsistent since, e.g., emotions are transitory and changeable. So we must look to people who act from a sense of duty for reliability and consistency.

In response to this sort of argument, Blum distinguishes importantly different senses of 'reliable' and 'consistent'. (Even someone firmly convinced of the truth of Kantian views about moral goodness would find Blum's discussion of these extremely valuable.) He then argues, first, that not every kind of reliability and consistency is necessary for moral goodness (cf., e.g., p. 115). Second, he argues that the view that people motivated by altruistic emotions are unreliable and inconsistent often depends upon confusing altruistic emotions with superficially similar phenomena (e.g., exuberant moods) and that while it is true that people who are motivated by altruistic emotions *may* be unreliable in various respects, they often are not. Third, he argues that persons motivated by (universalisable) principles and a sense of duty are often not as reliable as the Kantian likes to believe. For instance, Blum argues that sympathetic, concerned agents are more likely to help people in need than are Kantian agents, since sympathetic persons are more likely to perceive that others are in need. 'It is thus misleading of Kant to imply, as he seems to, that the unsympathetic man of duty and the man of sympathy differ only in the motives for which they perform beneficent acts; for they differ also in the scope of their beneficent activity, and this stems from or is connected with differences in the ways they apprehend situations in terms of weal and woe.' (p. 136) Furthermore, even someone who comes to believe that he ought to help someone

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cannot always be counted on to do it. The reliability of the person of duty in this respect can be just as much subject to his moods as the reliability of the person of sympathy and concern. Blum argues that the failure to see this point (and many analogous points) is due in part to many Kantians' tendency to compare an *ideally* functioning person of duty with a *poorly* functioning person of sympathy. Such comparisons are illegitimate and prove nothing.

Blum maintains that another major error of Kantians (and, in fact, of many non Kantians as well) involves a 'focus on motivation as the sole locus of moral value . . .' (p. 140). This focus involves the assumption that a person's psychological states have moral value *only* insofar as they are *motives* to beneficent acts. Blum suggests that people who hold this assumption will fail to see that altruistic emotions are prime examples of psychological states whose moral value is not captured solely by the fact that they do or might lead to beneficent acts. Thus Blum presents several examples to illustrate the point that people often value and appreciate the care and concern which others have for them, not (simply) because they realise that such care and concern will or might lead others to benefit them but (also) because they regard others' concern for them as good in itself. Indeed, people often appreciate others' concern even in situations where it is not possible for the concern to issue in any beneficial act. Blum defends the view that such examples are indicative of the fact that altruistic emotions have a moral value which is additional to the value they have as motives to beneficent acts and tries to characterise what this value consists in.

In this short review, I have been able to touch on only a few of the points raised in Blum's book. In summing up I shall simply say that *Friendship, Altruism, and Morality* is absolutely essential reading for philosophers interested in issues related to the moral evaluation of persons and to the nature and moral significance of altruistic emotions. Blum's discussion of such issues is comprehensive, careful and perceptive and is surely one of the best discussions available.

John Campbell *La Trobe University*

Matthews, Gareth B., *Philosophy and the Young Child*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1980, pp. xii, 115, US$10.

Matthews thinks that there is 'a certain innocence and naivete about many, perhaps most, philosophical questions' (p. 73). It is this which makes them natural for children. Adults, however, have to cultivate some sense of this innocence and naivete when they come to study philosophical questions. At one point in his teaching career Matthews decided that it would help in introducing teaching of philosophy to college students to show them something of 'children at philosophical work' and thus to reintroduce them to the naturalness of the activity. From this starting point he began to research and think more systematically about the philosophical thinking of children. This book is one product of the process.

The book contains anecdotal and observational material; interesting criticisms of some famous writers on the thinking processes that children engage in — Piaget and Bettelheim in particular; reflections on the philosophical ideas to be found in certain works of children's literature; and various pedagogical hints for those who would like to 'do some philosophy' with young children (their own or others).

The anecdotes and observations are well chosen and stimulating. Matthews' subjects (his own son, children of friends and siblings of students) emerge as somewhat more philosophically schooled than the children of my acquaintance, but since Matthews disclaims the atypicality of his subjects (p. 36) it may be that I haven't been as alert to the 'philosopher in the machine' as I should have been.

The critical bits on Piaget and Bettelheim are brief but convincing. They deserve a wider audience than I imagine they'll receive.

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The drawing out of the philosophical ideas in various children's stories and the hints about how to set in motion a philosophical conversation with a child would be found helpful as a starting point by parents and any philosophers engaged in philosophising with children or preparing others (like trainee teachers) to do so.

Robert Young *La Trobe University*

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