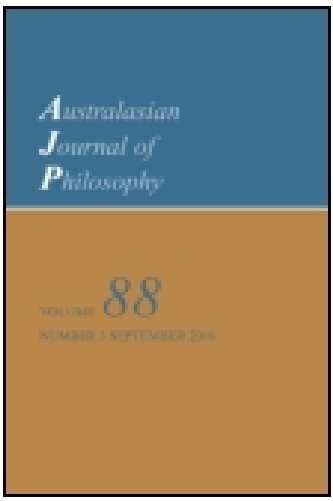

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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

Mares, Edwin, *Relevant Logic: A Philosophical Interpretation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. x + 229, US$65 (cloth).

I think that, to many logicians, relevant logic is something of an ugly duckling. Its natural deduction systems involve somewhat odd-looking constraints; its world-semantics contain rather complex-looking conditions; and the notions involved in the semantics, such as the ternary relation, appear to defy intuitive understanding. Whilst it is hard to deny that there is some truth to these appearances, the situation is nowhere near as bad as it might appear. When you adjust your spectacles, things click into place. It must also be conceded that aficionados of relevant logic have not done a great job of helping their non-relevant cousins adjust their spectacles. Ed Mares's book does. He presents the ideas involved, both technical and philosophical, in a simple and appealing fashion. Logicians who know little about relevant logic will find this an excellent primer. And even those who know about relevant logic will find illuminating new insights. I did.

The book is in three parts. The first explains some of the basic ideas behind relevant logic, Fitch-style natural deduction, Routley-Meyer, and neighbourhood semantics. Drawing on the ideas of situation-semantics and non-well-founded set theories, it then provides a philosophical interpretation of the world-semantics. Negation (in terms of an incompatibility relation), modality, and quantification, then get singled out for further discussion. The second part of the book has an insightful discussion of indicative and counter-factual conditionals. (The Lewis-Stalnaker techniques concerning the world semantics of modal logics can be applied just as well to the world semantics of relevant logic.) The final part of the book explains a number of other useful concepts in relevant logic and applies them to a variety of philosophically touchy issues, such as the use of the disjunctive syllogism in consistent contexts and the use of a classical metatheory for relevant logic. (I particularly liked the idea that we may use the disjunctive syllogism in certain contexts because the corresponding conditional is true due to the consistent nature of the situations relevant to the evaluation of the conditional.) The final chapter is a Cook's tour of various other applications of relevant logic: deontic logic, essential predication, relevant arithmetic and set theory, and others. (I think that there is one false technical claim in the discussion of arithmetic [197]: the finitary consistency proof of $R^{\#}$ *can* be performed in $R^{\#}$.)

Appendices give a formal specification of the proof-systems and semantics for relevant logic. The book does not attempt to provide any formal metatheoretic proofs for relevant logic. Fair enough: those who want to know can find them elsewhere. But there are a few more technical details that it would have been good to have; for example, proof systems for the modal and conditional operators discussed. And the formal semantical specifications concerning some of the material really need more discussion

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than they get in the book if they are to be of use. The discussion of quantification in the text hardly prepares readers for the complexities of the Fine semantics (B9); and the semantics for counterfactuals makes use of a selection function, B, not mentioned at all in the text. (Also, something seems to have gone wrong with the specification of the semantics for identity (B7); conditions 10 and 11 can't both be right.) There are a few typos in the book, but they are not likely to throw most readers. A few of note: [116], 'cicero' should be 'Tully'; [134, line. 2], 'does not win' should be 'does win'; [136, line 13], 'that-would' should be 'that I would'; [191, line 17], 'Dunn (?)' should be 'Dunn (1987, 1990)'; [201, line 28], a spurious fn. 2 has inserted itself.

A feature of the book worth mentioning is that it is R-ocentric. Mares clearly decided to make this a book primarily about in the system R. Other systems and their properties get a look in only by accident. Now, R is one of the most important and natural relevant systems, but I, at least, was sorry that there was not more discussion of some of the other systems. The system B, for example, is arguably the most basic and simplest system of relevant logic. (It is the analogue of K in modal logic.) Mares also goes with the original Routley-Meyer semantics for R, rather than the simplified Priest-Sylvan-Restall semantics.

One of the nicest things in the book is Mares's discussion of the meaning of the ternary accessibility relation in the world-semantics. Consider the truth conditions for the strict conditional in modal logic in terms of a binary accessibility relation, R:

$A \hookrightarrow B$ is true at x iff for all y such that Rxy (if A is true at x then B is true at y)

Given that R is the relation of relative possibility, this says that $A \hookrightarrow B$ holds at a world just if every world possible relative to x where A holds B holds. This is perfectly natural. The truth conditions for $\rightarrow$ in a relevant logic deploy not a binary relation, but a ternary relation:

$A \hookrightarrow B$ is true at x iff for all y and z such that $Rxyz$ (if A is true at y, B is true at z)

The worlds of the antecedent and consequent have come apart. What on earth could this mean? Mares, taking a leaf out of the situation-semantics book, interprets x, y, and z not as worlds, but as situations—parts of worlds—and observes that when we reason about some situation, y, our conclusions may not be about y at all, but about some different situation in the same world, z. Thus, from the fact that there are certain words in a leaflet in my room, I can infer that a bus will leave the bus station downtown at a certain time. The falling apart of y and z is therefore quite natural. (Of course, sometimes they could be the same.) It is required, though, that y and z be parts of the same world. (In fact, Mares requires that x, y, and z all be part of the same world, though why isn't clear to me. It would seem that the information present at this world—e.g., what is said in a novel—could deliver results concerning situations at another world—e.g., one where the events of the novel are realized.)

But now another question arises. In the logic B, the relation R is an arbitrary one. To get to the logic R, one has to impose certain constraints on it. The simplest of these, for example, $Rxxx$, guarantees Contraction ($A \rightarrow (A \rightarrow B) \vdash A \rightarrow B$). Mares notes [54 f.] that some of the other interpretations of the ternary relation do not succeed in motivating these constraints, but he does not attempt to show that his fares better; nor is it clear that it does. Why should one suppose

that the pair $< x,x >$ is always possible relative to x? In the case of the book in my room and the bus leaving, the antecedent and consequent situations cannot be the same! (In fact, at various points in the book, semantic constraints are postulated but the question of their justification is not taken up; e.g., 121, where the modal accessibility relation is discussed.)

The account of the ternary R also raises the question of what worlds are (that two situations may be in the same one). Mares takes a world to be a possible world, that is, one that makes every sentence true or false, but not both [80]. Ignoring impossible worlds would appear to lead to trouble, though. Consider any conditional with a logically false antecedent, say, that intuitionist logic is correct (and if you think it is, just change the example). The conditionals:

> If intuitionist logic is correct, the principle of non-contradiction holds.
>
> If intuitionist logic is correct, the principle of excluded middle holds.

The first of these is true; the second false. But if, in evaluating conditionals, we are restricted to considering only situations in the same (possible) world, the second is true. It would have been better, perhaps, to take worlds to be situations maximal with respect to a common space-time (as did David Lewis). In this context, there is no reason to suppose that such situations are consistent. Mares [159 f.] discusses treating conditionals of the kind in question as 'metalinguistic', but I found the discussion here opaque, and the need to appeal to such a neo-classical stratagem a bit disappointing.

In fact, though Mares is a paid-up relevant logician, he is no dialetheist. He admits that there are inconsistent situations (though not ones that are parts of worlds), but the actual world contains none such. Elsewhere I have argued that once one admits that there are some inconsistent situations, one needs principled reasons if one is to insist that the actual world does not contain some, and that the only thing that will provide such reason is some a priori defence of the principle of non-contradiction. (Clearly, saying that a world is consistent by definition provides no such reason.) Mares replies to this [91], saying that the fact that the law is entrenched provides such a reason; 'entrenched', I take it, means that many people firmly believe it. But this, I think, is not enough; widespread entrenchment can, after all, be the product of brainwashing and ideology. The point is whether the entrenchment is a *rational* one—which takes us back to defences of the principle of non-contradiction.

Mares's book is not only a clear introduction to the techniques of relevant logic and debates about their philosophical underpinning; it makes substantial and novel contributions to those debates. In the second part of this review I have taken up just a few of those with which I happen to disagree. This is no criticism of the book at all. As the development of modal logic has shown, debates around novel logical machinery are exactly what is required if its full potential is to be realized. Mares's book aims to open up the debate concerning relevant logic to those who may well have been put off by the seemingly more impenetrable aspects of the logic. In this aim, it is succeeds admirably.

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Stalnaker, Robert C., *Ways a World Might Be: Metaphysical and Anti-Metaphysical Essays*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003, pp. xii + 287, £47.50 (cloth), £17.99 (paper).

In these days of the resurgence of metaphysics it is refreshing to find a book subtitled 'metaphysical and anti-metaphysical essays'. In introducing this collection of his articles Robert Stalnaker describes his ambivalent attitude to metaphysics. He discusses Carnap's distinction between internal questions, which arise within a metaphysical framework and are susceptible of assessment for truth and falsity, and external questions, which are questions about which metaphysical framework you should choose. Carnap regards the latter as pragmatic questions, although Quine and others have taught us that we can only question a framework if we are already working within one. Stalnaker admits sympathy with the sceptical attitude to metaphysics, and that is one of the features which makes this book rewarding. However, unlike Quine, Stalnaker is no enemy of modal logic or possible worlds. One might say that Robert Stalnaker and David Lewis are the two giants in the debate about possible worlds—they both advocate their use, but disagree about their metaphysics. Stalnaker proclaims himself an *actualist*. Possible worlds are 'ways the world might be' [32]. They are not concrete individuals as Lewis supposes—they are abstract entities, only one of which has the (absolute) property of being the way things actually are. Stalnaker is a little coy in Chapter One about just what a 'way' is; he is a little more forthcoming in Chapter Two, where he contrasts David Lewis's modal realism with what he calls 'liberal Platonism'. The liberal Platonist [44] is a person who claims that the existence of such abstract entities as numbers is in a sense *constituted* by the fact that we can make true arithmetical statements, not of course in the sense that numbers are linguistic entities, and would not have existed if there were no arithmetical language, but in the sense that they are the kind of thing whose necessary existence is guaranteed by our linguistic practices. How does this relate to Lewis's modal realism? Like this: Lewis supposes that possible worlds are great big concrete individuals; but it is plausible that *concrete* entities could play a role in the semantics of our language only if we stand in some causal relation to them, and by definition Lewisian non-actual worlds are things to which we do *not* stand in such a relation.

Chapter Three is about impossibilities, and is an amusing dialogue between 'Will' and 'Louis'. While the arguments against impossible worlds are well-known and persuasive it is good to have them so entertainingly set out. One concerns negation: If 'not' is an operator *defined* in such a way that not-p is true iff p is false, and if truth is classical, then there can be nothing, world or anything else at which p is both true and false. One might of course deny that truth is classical, but then, as Louis rightly protests [60] that is going beyond a debate about worlds, possible or otherwise. In a sense the impasse is a basic one—like using logic to justify the laws of logic. There is of course the trivial point [63] that you *can* have inconsistent sets of propositions—but that just means a set of propositions true at no world.

A number of chapters in Part III indicate qualified support for some version of counterpart theory for actualists, even if actualism can do without it. Stalnaker begins by claiming that possibilism requires counterpart theory. The reason he says is this: 'nothing can be in two places at once. If other possible worlds are really other

universes, then, clearly, you and I cannot be in them if we are here in this one' [114]. This argument is a non-sequitur. Consider the following temporal version: 'Nothing can be in two places. If I was in Auckland yesterday and I am in Palmerston today I am in two places, so I cannot be in Palmerston today'. The argument may appeal to David Lewis, given that he would say that one time-slice is in Auckland and another time-slice is in Palmerston, but for most of us it is no threat to temporal realism to say that properties are time-relative and the 'at once' in the original principle means that nothing can be in two places *at the same time*. But then, if we are engaging in modal discourse we say that nothing can be in two places *at the same time in the same world*. And when we do we see that *this* principle is no threat to trans-world individuals, even for a modal realist. Of course such a realist would not be David Lewis, but you don't need *any* philosophical argument to show that David Lewis accepts counterpart theory. I intend these comments not so much by way of criticism of Stalnaker, but by way of illustrating how easy it is for controversial assumptions to creep in to metaphysics when we are not on our guard.

Most of Chapter Six however is about the problem of identity, illustrated by puzzles like the ship of Theseus, the statue and the clay, and (in Chapter Seven) a fish restaurant in Philadelphia. Like Stalnaker I find that the source of the puzzles is not identity itself (everything is what it is and not another thing). It is the notion of 'thing'. Counterpart theory attempts to reduce the problem. If the 'things' we quantify over in our modal talk are puzzling why not reduce them to combinations of simpler and less puzzling things, and connect the less puzzling things by a 'counterpart' relation, which can be tailored to our needs of the moment? I am, to be frank, a little sceptical of this procedure. It can too easily lead to what Arthur Prior called such 'pseudo entities as me-at-*t* and me-at-*t*'', which seem to many of us more puzzling than the entities we began with. Take the two restaurants in Philadelphia that according to Stalnaker vie for being the original 'Bookbinder's'. I point to one and say: 'That has been around since 1865'. One might ask the speaker to be more precise, and perhaps there is a history to be told. When one has learned the history one might want to give a 'yes and no' answer to someone who questions the original assertion. But how should that be incorporated into the semantics of the assertion? These are hard problems for anyone, and while modal statements about the restaurant may be even more difficult to assess than temporal statements, that is something we have to live with independently of what we think of times or worlds.

Part IV begins with an assessment of recent work by Kripke and Putnam. Stalnaker holds that the causal theory of names is liable to being misunderstood. For Stalnaker the causal theory consists of a semantic component—that the meaning of a name is no more than its bearer—and what he calls a 'metasemantic' component—that we are able to use a name in this way because we stand in an appropriate causal relation to it. In uttering a sentence two things are needed. First the way the world is determines what we are using the sentence to mean, and then, given that it does mean what it does the world determines whether the sentence is true or false. It can transpire that we in world 1 might use a sentence in such a way that it is false in world 2, even though the speakers in world 2 use that very same sentence to mean something true. Thus we on earth use water to mean H_2O, and speakers in world 2 (twin earth) use it to mean XYZ. So we use 'water' in such a way that a given body of what twin-earthians call 'water' is not water, because it is not H_2O. But they use 'water' to mean XYZ, and so what they say when, in the same circumstances, they

call something 'water' will be true. The distinction between semantics and metasemantics is important, but, as Stalnaker rightly insists [211] it applies to *all* terms, not just names and natural kind terms.

Now take the words 'I' and 'here'. If Stalnaker utters 'I am here' in Cambridge what he says will mean that Stalnaker is in Cambridge (at whatever time the sentence is uttered). There is no sense in which it is a necessary truth that Stalnaker is in Cambridge, yet any speaker of English knows that a genuine utterance of 'I am here' has to be true. One feature of this book which in my view on its own makes it worth buying is the excellent explanation on [202f.] of why logical or 'conceptual' necessity is *not* a stronger kind of necessity than metaphysical necessity, as if metaphysical necessity is not the strongest kind there is. The error of thinking that logical necessity just a stronger kind of necessity than metaphysical necessity is one of the more deplorable misunderstandings of Kripke's work. Stalnaker [192] considers Kaplan's account of 'content' and 'character'. The character of a sentence is a function from a possible world, call it w_1, which specifies such facts as who is uttering the sentence and when and where, to a *content* a set of worlds—in the case of 'I am here' it is worlds w_2 in which the utterer of the sentence in w_1 is (in w_2) in the place where the sentence is uttered in w_1. In knowing that a genuine utterance of the sentence is true one knows that for any world w_1 if the sentence is uttered in w_1 it is true iff its speaker is where the speaker is in any world w. In particular it is true in w_1 iff its speaker in w_1 is where its speaker in w_1 is. And it is this which gives us a priori knowledge. Stalnaker refers to this analysis [189] as the 'two-dimensional framework', because it makes use of two world indices; one is the world in which the language is used, and the other is an index at which the sentence as used in the world of the first index is true or false.

There is much of value here, and it is vital, as Stalnaker stresses, to remember the double contribution the world makes to the truth of what we say. But things are a little more complicated than the impression Stalnaker gives. He points out that Kaplan's character is a semantic notion—indeed it has to be if it is our knowledge of English which enables us to know that the sentence is a priori true. Stalnaker contrasts this [194] with a *metasemantic* interpretation, whereby what is going on is not that the character Kaplan has described is a part of meaning, but rather the second index describes a world in which the same word has a different meaning—as 'water' is supposed to have a different meaning on twin-earth. Clearly this won't do for 'I am here'. Take a world in which Stalnaker (the utterer of 'I am here' in Cambridge in this world.) uses 'I' to mean 'you'. In such a world the utterer of 'I am here' need *not* say something which is true in that world. The reason we have a priori knowledge of the truth of 'I am here' is that the possible worlds in the second index *are* constrained by the meaning of 'I am here' in this world. Nor will it do for water. Let the actual world w_1 be ours. Let w_2 be a twin-earthy world in which what they call 'water' is not H_2O but is XYZ, and let w_3 be a world just like ours except that the words 'water' and 'wine' are interchanged in the speakers of w_3's 'English'. Surely it is the case that *in some sense* w_1 and w_2 differ in *matters of chemistry*, while w_1 and w_3 differ in *matters of linguistic usage*. Suppose you were transported to w_2 and to w_3. When you got to w_2 you would talk as normal until you got into conversation with a chemist, and you would then learn interesting chemical facts about twin earth. But in w_3, although you would initially be very puzzled, you would soon say 'Oh I see, they use ''water'' to mean ''wine'' and vice versa'. Once you had seen that there would be

no more 'facts' you would need to know. The problem that Putnam has highlighted, as I understand it, is to explain the sense in which we seem to learn new chemistry on twin earth, not just a new linguistic usage. And it is not clear to me that the second index helps in *this* task, *unless* perhaps, *pace* Stalnaker, we can produce a two-dimensional *semantics* for 'water'. When Stalnaker speaks [209f.] of O'Leary's desire to make gold of copper and tin he speaks of a world in which 'bronze plays the role that gold in fact plays'. When we move to such a world we have to refer to the gold role, and this role seems determined by *our* use of the word 'gold'. How this is done is the hard problem, and is not obviously illuminated by the fact that in other worlds our sentences could be used to mean something different from what we use them to mean in this world.

Part V contains some essays in the philosophy of mind. Could I see red when you see green? Could there be zombies? These questions are too hard for me, so let me end by saying that Stalnaker's collection confirms his reputation as one of the finest philosophers currently working in semantics, not least because he raises the issues in a clear enough form for the rest of us to find the occasional weakness in them. The collection would make an excellent graduate text, and a very thought-provoking book for all who value both honesty and clarity in philosophical thinking.

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Oaklander, L. Nathan, *The Ontology of Time*, Amherst NY: Prometheus Books, 2004, pp. 366, US$30 (paper).

Oaklander has long been an important defender of what has come to be known as the B-theory of time, and a strong controversialist against the A-theorists who defend a tensed view of time and think of 'past', 'present', and 'future' as corresponding to intrinsic properties of events whereby they change with time. I would also count as an A-theorist Arthur Prior who did not refer to A-properties, but who regarded tenses as operators on propositions whose truth values could change with time. The book consists of a collection of essays nearly all of which have been published before in a variety of places, but skilfully juxtaposed so as to function very much as chapters in a book.

Oaklander is rightly concerned with ontology in which he strongly supports a tenseless view of time, but he does make a small bow to A-theorists over the question of the meaning of tensed expressions. I shall say something about this later. The book is valuable for the author's interesting original variations on the B-theory but for his taking on the A-theorists sympathetically on their own terms, which is the analysis of commonsense language. Though I am far from wanting to reject this approach I miss (in this particular book anyway) much about the complementary business of relating the bearing of physical science to the question of the ontology of time. It amazes me that the A-theory, or tensed view of time, survived Minkowski (to whom there is only one reference in the index). Indeed we advocates of a tenseless view of time should really say that we do not believe in time but only in space-time, though in common sense talk we do talk of space and time separately. It should be noted, however, that in common sense language 'space' is not used in the mathematical sense of the word but refers to a continuant, as a man might say

that he has returned to the place of his birth and refer to the place of his birth and that of his return as the same place, even though the two events are far apart in space-time. Neglecting this can muddy the ontological issue.

However, having got this mild gripe off my chest, let me return to the contents of the book. To prevent this review getting too long I shall be selective in mentioning the A-theorists with whom Oaklander engages. The variety of the discussions makes the book valuable not only for its intrinsic merit but also as a help to those who are overwhelmed by the proliferation of journal articles and books. I shall be a bit selective in mentioning the controversies into which the author engages in this book.

The essays (or chapters) are grouped into parts and in Part 1 Oaklander examines the ontologies of the A and B theories of time. In the first two chapters he sets the scene and clarifies the issues and in the following one he defends McTaggart's contention that the A-theory leads to contradiction, or perhaps it leads to an infinite regress of hypertimes. Even if this regress is not logically vicious it is surely implausible.

In Part 2 Oaklander gets down to serious criticism of A-theories. He begins with presentism, one of those who are discussed as supporting this view being my ingenious colleague, John Bigelow. The view had hitherto seemed to me to be too absurd to be worth discussing. (I once said to Bigelow that I did not like to think that so fine a person as he should be only instantaneous.) However while Oaklander rejects the theory, he manages to give it a good run for its money. He argues that the use of the notion of possible worlds does not enable Bigelow to escape McTaggart's paradox. He holds that other versions of presentism suffer from the same weakness and in Chapter 8 he examines a version due to the indefatigable William Lane Craig.

Oaklander treats Michael Tooley's book *Time, Tense and Causation* with great respect but concludes that despite Tooley's considerable ingenuity the approach fails because it 'collapses into a pure tenseless theory or a tensed theory that is despite [Tooley's] assertions to the contrary, susceptible to the dialectical difficulties of the traditional version'.

In Part 2 after discussing an attempt by George Schlesinger to defend temporal passage as flow relative to a hypertime, Oaklander (Chapter 14) takes on the prolific Quentin Smith's slightly hybrid tensed theory of time, once more in relation to McTaggart's paradox. Oaklander interprets McTaggart as holding that for time we need both an A-series of past, present, and future and also what McTaggart called a C-series. Unlike the B-series which is ordered by an asymmetrical relation of earlier and later, the C-series is ordered simply by a symmetrical relation of betweenness. In my opinion we should not talk of the direction of time itself but only of the temporal asymmetry of the universe or at least our cosmic era of it. Moreover Huw Price has argued that we can easily be led into supposing spurious asymmetries. Why should we not say not that the universe is expanding but that (pace Kant) is contracting from infinity? Still there are relative asymmetries. There is the asymmetry of traces of earlier events, not of later ones. (Of late the time symmetry of laws has been supplanted by CPT symmetry, which from a space-time point of view can be seen as a deeper symmetry. This does not affect the present concerns.) This temporal asymmetry of the universe, or at least of our cosmic era, despite the symmetry of the fundamental laws has been studied by physicists and philosophers from Boltzmann to such as Reichenbach and Gruenbaum , and for understanding the asymmetry of traces, including memories, particular mention should be made of Reichenbach's

notion of branch systems. The present book does not make much of the connection with physics, which might have enabled its author to strengthen his already good replies to Prior and Schlesinger over the problem they see for B-theorists in the temporal asymmetry in 'Thank goodness that's over'. Because of the asymmetry of traces our decision making is naturally future oriented and on top of that there are good evolutionary reasons why we care about the future not the past.

Part 3 is in defence of the B-theory. In Chapter 15 Oaklander discusses Hugh Mellor's *Real Time,* but except in a footnote not the later *Real Time II*. Like Oaklander, Mellor has an ontology that includes *facts* as truthmakers of propositions. Contrary to this I would urge that the world consists of things and not of facts, nor of things and facts. As argued in Donald Davidson's paper 'True to the Facts' it is Tarski satisfaction of predicates by things or sequences of things that hooks language on to the world. The word 'fact' in ordinary language has an epistemological rather than an ontological use, which is to endorse a proposition or set of propositions as well tested by observation and theory. Thus contrary to the fundamentalist Christians we could say that the theory of evolution by natural selection is (perhaps *modulo* some very minor tweaking) a fact because it is well tested and accepted by experts. (Fundamentalists who say that evolution is not a fact but only a theory seem to be flirting with an extreme empiricism or logical positivism!)

More puzzling in Mellor's otherwise congenial position is his assertion that the whole person or thing (from birth to death or beginning to end) is at a time t. Surely we should say that only a time slice or temporal stage could be at t, though we could interpret Mellor's assertion as saying that the time slice of the person at t is part of the whole person from birth to death.

In Chapter 18 Oaklander defends the Russellian theory of time, according to which the present tense and 'now' name a time, namely the time of utterance of a token sentence containing the word in question. Alternatives are the token reflexive account originating from Reichenbach and recently well revived by Heather Dyke, and the account that Oaklander calls 'the new theory of time' and which derives from Donald Davidson's semantics for tenses, in which the truth conditions for tensed sentences are given in a tenseless metalanguage, and is the one that I prefer. Nevertheless all three accounts come ontologically to the same thing. Oaklander complains, however, that though giving truth conditions for tensed sentences makes for good ontology it does not adequately give the meaning of tensed sentences. (In particular in Chapter 26 where he discusses objections to 'the new theory of time' put forward by Quentin Smith.) I am not clear about this. Giving the truth conditions seems to me to be an excellent way of giving the meaning, *modulo* the fuzziness of the concept of meaning. It is true that children do not learn tensed language (or any other language) by being told Davidsonian truth conditions but they do learn to use tenses in ways that conform to the metalinguistic truth conditions. We might usefully remind ourselves of Wittgenstein's rough and ready 'Do not ask for the meaning, ask for the use'. Thus we do not need to give the slight concession to A-theorists that Oaklander irenically extends to them. So in Chapter 25 Oaklander distinguishes the question 'What is the meaning of tensed discourse?' from that of 'What are the truth conditions of tensed discourse?' Oaklander holds that the tenseless truth conditions cannot give both the correct ontology and the meanings. (I have suggested above that the distinction is dubious.) He contends [282] that 'the meaning of an A-sentence is a tensed proposition'. However he goes on to say that the apparent difference

between A and B- facts is accounted for without positing A- facts. I myself would not posit B- facts either, but obviously the tensed sentence 'the meeting begins in ten minutes' will not be useful to someone who has no watch, whereas 'the meeting begins at four o'clock' will not be useful to someone who has a watch and knows that the meeting begins at 4 p.m. I see no need for an ontology of facts, tensed or tenseless. Oaklander says that the A-theorist's claim of tensed ontological meaning is false because of the logical paradoxes that arise from tensed ascription of properties [287]. I would suggest that the A-theorist is led into trouble, whether ontological or not, because sentences containing indexicals cannot be translated into sentences not containing indexicals, an unmysterious fact., readily explicable by Davidsonian truth conditions for indexicals. There is of course more to be said and Oaklander's discussion is intricate. Some of the final chapters are concerned with the phenomenology of our experience of freedom and our attitude to responsibility. The discussion is good and I think a defence of compatibilism. B-theory plus four-dimensionalism might even imply a form of fatalism, but in my opinion a harmless form of it, not the silly sort of fatalism that implies that our decisions (for example the soldier's decision whether to put his head above the trench or keep it prudently down) do not matter.

To sum up, this book is packed full of interesting good things. It is also a guide to, and criticism of, much of the perhaps over abundant literature on the subject. The chapters have been written as articles over a long time, and this leads to a little repetitiousness though not too much, and there is a general consistency allied to an interesting movement of thought.

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Rodin, David, War and Self-Defense, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002, 2005, pp. xvi + 213, £30.50 (cloth), £14.99 (paper).

Of all the rights which permit us to intentionally inflict harm on others, the right to self defence has historically been one of the least controversial. Unlike moral permissions to abort a foetus, euthanase a terminally ill person, or execute a criminal, the right of an individual to kill an aggressor in order to defend himself, and the right of states to attack an enemy in order to defend their territory or sovereignty, have been widely treated as the sorts of rights which, rather than standing in need of justification by a particular moral theory, are rather a test of its success.

In the last decade or so, however, the self defence justification for killing has come under closer scrutiny, and David Rodin's *War and Self-Defense* is a valuable addition to the attempts of rights theorists to explain how defensive permissions might fit into a system of rights aimed primarily at preventing harm. Rodin's project is, first, to ground the individual right to self defence in a Hohfeldian model of rights; and second, to examine the application of these individual rights to nation-states. His central thesis is that, despite the widespread assumption that individual self defence and national-defence are commonly justified, the relationships necessary to justify defence in the personal case do not hold in cases of nation-defence, and thus nation-defence stands in need of separate justification. Rodin's concluding chapters suggest

that any such justification will result in permissions very different to those currently enjoyed by nation-states.

The first section of the book is devoted to investigating how we might justify personal self defence by appeal to rights. In Chapter 1, Rodin explains the Hohfeldian account of rights, according to which every right consists of a 4-way relationship between the *subject*, who holds the right, the *object*, on whom the right is a claim of some kind, the *end* of the right, which is the good protected, and the *content* of the right, which is the act the right permits or requires. Rodin makes some amendments to this general model, in particular defending the view that not all rights entail a claim on others. He cites self defence as one such 'simple liberty' [23]. Rodin also discusses the difference between justification and excuse, asserting that because we think that an aggressor killed in self defence is *harmed* but not *wronged*, a defensive act of killing must be justified and not merely excused.

Rodin explains this justification in Chapters 2 and 3 via a 'three-legged stool' account of defensive rights: three special types of relationship must hold for an agent to have a right to self defence, the most interesting of which is that the object of the right (the aggressor) must be at fault for bringing about the state of affairs which makes the act of self defence necessary. In other words, we have no right to defend against innocent aggressors. Rodin discusses and rejects the alternative view, that I am excused from killing an innocent aggressor either as a result of forced choice or because 'ultimate' responsibility lies elsewhere, arguing that it misconceives the nature of moral responsibility. In support of his conclusion, he presents the case of a Rwandan man, Vénuste, who is forced to kill his brother to prevent the slaughter of the rest of his family. Although Vénuste makes a forced choice, and the Hutu death squad are 'ultimately' responsible for his having to make it, Vénuste is (says Rodin) still responsible for his brother's death. Rodin's conclusion at the end of this first section is that although the individual right to self defence can be successfully accounted for within rights theory, it does not permit the killing of innocent aggressors.

In Section II, he goes on to explain why our individual defensive rights cannot explain the rights attributed to nation-states to defend themselves, nor the permission of individual soldiers to kill one another in defence of their nation-state. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the current defensive rights accorded to nation-states by international law, and argues that they are vastly more permissive than our individual defensive rights should lead us to expect. Rodin points to a need for some normative foundation for these rights, and identifies two possible methods of finding it: either by aggregating individual rights; or by making an analogy between the rights held by individuals and those held by states. The former view he rejects as inadequate on every possible formulation; the latter he considers problematic as soon as we ask what constitutes the *end* of the right. Rodin regards the most promising answer to this question to be the 'common life' of members of a state, but argues persuasively in Chapter 7 that due to the lack of truly discrete communities, appeals to a common life cannot ground anything resembling nation-defence as we know it. His 'surprising and disconcerting' conclusion is that the right to national-defence cannot be explained either by an aggregation of individual rights, or by an analogy between the individual and the state; and given that self defence 'has always been the central ''just cause'' for war within the Just War theory', the normative foundations of the that theory stand in need of revision [162].

Rodin's closing chapters comprise a thorough discussion of the notion of responsibility as regards soldiers and states at war, and contain further claims which fly in the face of the Just War tradition: soldiers fighting an unjust war have no permission to kill their enemy; even in unjust armies, most soldiers are not 'appropriate objects of violence' [163]; the rules of *jus in bello* encourage the illegitimate attitude that war consists of punishment of violations of international law. His conclusion is that 'the traditional just war categories of aggression and defense are failing us' [195], and a new approach to normative discussion of war and nation-defence is needed. He makes some preliminary suggestions regarding the lines along which it might develop, discussing the need for a robust body of international law enforcement and the need for 'moral transformation in the system of political relations itself' [197], including the desirability of a universal state.

These conclusions are well-supported and persuasively presented, and indeed throughout the book the lucidity of the writing and clear but impassioned argument make for compelling reading. However, Rodin's project, particularly in the first section of the book, is hampered by an approach to moral thinking which, although intuitively attractive, may be unpalatable to some theorists, including some rights theorists. In his introduction, Rodin makes it clear that he does not endorse any one theory of the foundation of morality, nor does he believe that any one will be sufficient: 'A moral explanation which has any hope of being true, will have to recognize the force of a number of different theoretical perspectives' [9]. Sometimes, he says, considerations of utility will trump rights, and sometimes, rights will trump considerations of utility, 'even at the cost of admitting conflicting moral judgements and insoluble dilemmas'. He introduces such a dilemma in his discussion of Vénuste, who is forced to kill his brother and yet is responsible for his death. Vénuste is placed, through no fault of his own, in a situation in which there is no right action which he can take. This is, claims Rodin, a 'genuine moral dilemma' [68], and such dilemmas tells us much about the fortitude of personal responsibility.

This notion of a genuine moral dilemma will be troubling to those who believe that, whatever its foundation in theory, our moral judgements must adhere to the principle that we are not culpable for any action we are unable to avoid taking. This kind of negative corollary of '*ought* implies *can*' reflects our conviction that we should only judge that an agent acts wrongly if there was some right action she could have taken. In discussing Vénuste, Rodin fluently depicts an experiential moral dilemma, or crisis of conscience, and certainly we are sometimes so placed that we will feel guilty no matter what decision we take. But to argue from our sensations of guilt to our actual moral wrongdoing is a large step, and one which will see Rodin leaving some of his audience behind. Because Rodin's arguments against the claim that we are excused from killing innocent aggressors rely heavily on this robust notion of personal responsibility, those disinclined to accept his stance on moral dilemmas may be reluctant to accept the limits he places on our defensive permissions in the case of individual self defence.

Having said this, the second half of the book is less affected by these concerns, and Rodin's discussion of the need to revisit the normative foundations of Just War theory is persuasive, timely, and excellently researched. His claim that *jus ad bellum*'s permission of 'national-defence' is vague and lacking in normative foundation does not rely on the success of his earlier arguments about responsibility, and indeed it readily garners support from a number of the different moral theories he discusses.

Although we might be cautious about accepting all of Rodin's methodology in arguing about defensive rights, *War and Self-Defense* is a valuable and provocative addition to the literature on the subject.

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Young, Julian, *The Death of God and the Meaning of Life,* London and New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. xii + 236, £16.99 (paper).

In this interesting and engaging book, Julian Young uses the phrase 'Death of God' to refer to the loss of belief (at least in the West, and in relatively recent times) in what some writers (e.g., Paul Edwards) have called *cosmic meaning*. A cosmic meaning is most commonly thought of in religious terms, as a divine plan, according to which humanity or perhaps even more broadly, the universe, is moving towards some goal. Human lives are given meaning (all human lives thus having the same meaning) by virtue of the fact that human action can in some way assist or hasten the attainment of the goal, and that in doing so the humans providing this assistance will themselves also benefit. Human life is seen in terms of a 'story' or 'grand narrative', a journey or progress toward the goal, which is referred to by some as the 'True World'. 'The Death of God' also covers the loss of faith in secular versions of the grand narrative such as Marxism, which set their own True World in the future of this world rather than in a supernatural realm. Cosmic meaning is of course often contrasted with *personal meaning* which is a matter of what any individual may happen to select as her own goal or principal value in life, and may vary from one person to another.

The first part of the book discusses grand narrative accounts from Plato through to Hegel and Marx; the second part discusses philosophical responses to the Death of God, taking up the ideas of Nietzsche, the early Heidegger, Sartre, Camus, Foucault, Derrida, and, after critical reflections on most of these ideas, finishing with something of an endorsement of the views of the later Heidegger.

Young's discussions of his chosen philosophers are clear and engaging. He—usually very crisply—makes intelligible their general philosophical views where appropriate as background to their thoughts on the meaning of life topic. He is appropriately critical, yet largely respectful of those he criticizes. (Foucault takes a drubbing.) He writes in an easy, conversational tone, and judges the needs of student readers nicely. Students will benefit also from Young's continually making issues relevant to issues in our ordinary lives and from his useful discussions of conceptual points relevant to those ordinary lives. (A random example: the discussion of the distinction between being committed to a goal and being obsessed by it [169–70].)

Young is explicit that the work is a study of 'Continental Philosophy' [4]. This is true, but it is a pity that he is so exclusively 'Continental'. On a topic as rich as this it is regrettable to see no references at all to the contributions of recent English-speaking writers such as Joel Feinberg, Paul Edwards, Bill Joske, Donald Crosby, Oswald Hanfling, Robert Nozick or the older but still useful work of Karl Britton. Or going back a little further, what about William James? Thomas Nagel gets a brief mention, but no real attention. A consideration of such writers would have brought a

wider perspective on the issues, as well as usefully bringing into the discussion some of the conceptual tools they use, and the distinctions they draw.

I have a problem with the general structure that the form of the book imposes on the discussion. It is not clear that such threat to the meaningfulness of life as might emerge from the abandonment of religion (or its secular surrogates) is simply a matter of the loss of the grand narrative. Religion provides its adherents with a package of values quite apart from that embodied in the divine plan. Loss of faith threatens loss of values—even in some cases moral values—even for those who do not have any strong or clear commitment to a grand narrative involving the attainment of the Kingdom of God (or anything like it).It is of some importance that for many people *personal* commitments to life projects are threatened by apostasy just as much as cosmic meaning. (I think Young misses this in his discussion of Camus: the wild longing that (Camus says) the world fails to meet once God is dead is at least in part for objective values, or as Young would call them, values with authority—not just for a grand narrative.)

Young's positive views emerge in a rather piecemeal way, scattered through the book. 'The meaning (point, purpose, goal) of my life, if it has one, is my fundamental project', he says [5]. It is one's 'highest value' [ibid.].To be meaningful, one's life must have a goal (personal or universal) which one is capable of pursuing [ibid., and 172]. But one's commitment to a value or purpose cannot be a matter of nothing but personal choice [(e.g.,) 186 – 7]. Meaning is—*has to be*—discovered and not invented [96]. (This is the fundamental problem with the easy answer many would make to the loss of cosmic meaning: simply substitute personal meaning in place of the abandoned cosmic meaning.)

But there is, he argues, a meaning which we can discover, and surprisingly enough, a universal one, a meaning for all of us. This is, in brief, guardianship of our world (as it is conceived by the later Heidegger): 'there is a meaning to life as such, a task which belongs to, constitutes the "essence" ... of the human being as such. This is the task of being the guardians of our world, of living in such a way that the changes we make to it are always "bringings forth" rather than violations' [208]. Although the world of which we are to be the guardians is characterized as holy or sacred, Young insists this is not resurrecting the dead god. The difference, he says, is that the guardianship task is ongoing; there is no stepping out of this world into a True World, as there is in the standard grand narrative.

I will make two points about these claims. The first is that the reader will have to study the quite complex argument of the final chapter of the book, and probably also go back to Heidegger as well, before finally evaluating the success of the extraordinarily daring claim that an objective value of supreme importance, a meaning of life—for everyone—has been shown to be *knowable*. I have to say I remain very much unconvinced.

Second, I have misgivings about the claim that a meaningful life needs a goal or project. Why not goals and projects? Why not just *things that one takes to be worthwhile*? The world is full of good things. There are more valuable things than an individual can possibly get round to pursuing, but I see no problem about a certain promiscuity in one's pursuits of them. Why not have several projects—some at the same time, some in succession? Those who find life meaningless are not just those who have lost the grand narrative, or their ultimate value; they are those who have lost *all* their values, and who end up saying *nothing* is worthwhile, *everything* is

pointless. Further, the idea that a meaningful life needs some over-arching, single project or goal would, I suspect, have the consequence that most people's (perfectly satisfactory) lives are to be counted as meaningless.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that, despite the author's frequent effective use of everyday-life examples, this is very much a book for philosophers about the views of philosophers. Most people who find life meaningless, and speak of nothing having any point, nothing mattering to them, and who are miserable and apathetic in consequence, are that way for local reasons—trauma, burnout, being bullied, biologically-originating depression, and a host of similar factors—not because they have discerned some awful general feature of the human condition. These people have not (in general, anyway) come to realize that there is no grand narrative, nor have they (in general) lost commitment to their values upon a realization of the subjective or freely chosen character of those values. This is not to say that such considerations are unimportant. Young is dead right to make a good deal of the latter point, but of course that particular threat to the meaningfulness of our lives is a threat whether of not there is a god with a plan for us.

I would like to stress that despite my critical comments, this is a very good book, which should be read by anyone interested in the meaning of life issue. It can also be usefully consulted for lucid expositions of the views of the writers discussed. It is certainly an appropriate addition to reading lists in courses on any of these philosophers, or on the meaning of life issue.

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