

COMPTES RENDUS

COONEY, WILLIAM, ed. *Contributions of Gabriel Marcel to Philosophy*. Vol. 18, Problems in Contemporary Philosophy Series. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989. 192 pp. ISBN 0-88946-346-8

In his essay, "Gabriel Marcel, Today and Tomorrow," an address delivered to the American Gabriel Marcel Society in 1987, Kenneth Gallagher proposes that the "greatest service that Marcel's admirers and interpreters could now do his thought and his memory would be to utilize his thinking to address our very concrete contemporary concerns and to dispel the confusion in which they are mired" (p. 8) Gallagher amplifies his recommendation by exhorting that "what is needed now are not discussions *about* Marcel, but meditations on present day issues *inspired* by Marcel." (p. 9) Now although Gallagher's exhortation is probably right in regard to what Marcel himself would have desired and what his thought ultimately expects, concrete philosophizing nonetheless requires a foundation--a basis which can be at least partly established by lucid explications and evaluative critiques of Marcel's thought. The articles in this anthology are mainly *about* Marcel, and though they are authored by many different scholars and treat different aspects of Marcel's works, their collection in one source does, perhaps serendipitously, insinuate a unifying theme; the tacit objective correlative that Marcel's most significant contribution may be the groundwork he laid for a *hopeful* Postmodern philosophy.

As a collection of discussions about Marcel, this text is an invaluable scholarly tool. Of the thirteen articles which comprise the volume, eight appear to have been written especially for it or are, like Gallagher's address, papers previously delivered but published here for the first time. The other essays represent some of the best Marcellian scholarship that has been published during the past fifteen years.

After a provocative introductory article by the editor ("Gabriel Marcel's Philosophy of Participation: Homo Spectans vs. Homo Particeps"), the remaining essays are grouped in four parts

according to content. What is worthwhile about the groupings is that the reader becomes acquainted with Marcel the person, the variety of his personal accomplishments and the personality of his philosophy. Along with Gallagher's address, Henry Bugbee's "A Point of Co-articulation in the Life and Thought of Gabriel Marcel" in *Part One: Marcel, The Person and His Thought*, offers some illuminating recollections of time spent with Marcel. *Part Two: Marcel and Theatre* contains two studies of Marcellian drama by Katherine Rose Hanley. Of special scholarly value in this section is her chart "Prospective Role of Theater in Relation To Philosophy" (pp. 35-7), which details the chronological parallels between Marcel's dramatic and philosophical works. Familiarity with Marcel's literary accomplishments is fundamental to appreciating his philosophical works since as Hanley indicates, "For Marcel dramatic inquiry was practically indispensable as preparation for philosophic reflection, and it can also prove to be so for others who would enter into and follow the pathways of Marcel's philosophic inquiry." (p. 26).

The third part, *Marcel and Ontology*, contains penetrating articles by Thomas Anderson and Francisco Peccorini which explore some of the very subtle features of the Marcellian encounter with Being. For instance, Anderson's "Gabriel Marcel's Notions of Being" masterfully articulates the various Marcellian meanings of "Being" as well as identifying the lacuna in his thought involving the restriction of "existence" only to what is manifest to the physical senses as opposed to "Being" which has the connotations of "transcendent" and "suprasensible."

The last part, *Marcel and Other Existentialists on Death, Hope and God*, seems to be a mixed bag of five worthwhile but unrelated articles. However it is these articles which most strongly suggest Marcellian possibilities for a hopeful Postmodern philosophy. Thomas Busch's "Marcel and the Death of Man (A Response to the Dissolution of the Self in Recent Thought)," for example, focuses explicitly on a Marcellian rejection of the post-structuralists' and deconstructionists' (specifically Michel Foucault) nihilistic elimination of the Modern subject. Busch argues that although Marcel also refuses the egological anthropocentrism of the Modern subject, he advances an authentic humanism based on a relational subjectivity and an ethic of other-regardedness, responsiveness, care and availability.

Other articles in the section by Clyde Pax ("The Time of Death"), Albert Randall ("Camus' Absurdity and Marcel's Mystery: Comparative Foundations for Hope"), Joseph Godfrey ("Appraising Marcel on Hope") and Thomas Anderson ("The Experiential Paths to God in Kierkegaard and Marcel") serve to elaborate Marcel's Postmodern subject and ethic with their reflections on the significance of hope. Randall's observation that to hope is to rebel casts Marcel's hope as a rebellion against Modern paradigms. For Pax, Marcel's hopeful rebellion challenges the old egological metaphysics with a metaphysics of presence which affirms the experience of a primordial being-with and the understanding that "authentic human reality is more deeply and more accurately described by the experience of 'belonging to. . . ' than by the experience of being who I am as myself." (p. 123) For Anderson and Godfrey, Marcellian hope grows from his ontology of intersubjectivity to culminate in a community of Being, an incorporation of the "all in all" (p. 156) which is actually of the transcendent Being, God.

Though further detailing the many ways in which this collection reveals Marcellian prospects for hopeful Postmodern thought would extend beyond the scope of this review, focusing on just an additional few of them will perhaps emphasize that Marcel's contributions are most significant. Instead of terminating the Modern quest for certitude without offering hopeful alternatives as the deconstructionists do, Marcel challenges the Modern assertion of the primacy of knowledge over Being by describing how knowledge issues from Being. Cooney's discussion of the Marcellian knower as "homo particeps" rather than the disengaged Modern "homo spectans" identifies the ontological ground of knowledge as the intersubjective "we are" rather than the intrasubjective "I think." "Homo spectans" aims to assuage his metaphysical uneasiness about being uncertain as to whether he actually knows Being by freezing all facets of Being as problems which can be solved by calculating, objectifying rationality. The deconstructionists condemn this rationalism, charging that it merely sublimates metaphysical "angst" with the epistemological techniques of power which seek only dominance and control. Marcel's antidote for the "angst" is to encourage openness to an assurance of Being which is grasped beneath all beings as their bond and ground, and which renders impossible a nihilism which would claim that Being is not or

cannot in some way be known (Anderson, p. 54). This assurance is originally given through a basic, intuitive feeling which confirms one's being as an interactive participant in the world-with-others. As Cooney states, "'Homo particeps' is part of the world. Because he is part of the world, he feels it. At the same time, the world is felt by him. The participant is in a creative situation. His touch feels and is felt at a particular place" (p. ix).

This intuitive assurance of Being founds Marcellian epistemology and indexes hopeful possibilities for a metaphysics which can rationally express, albeit inexhaustibly, the intelligibility of Being. The intuition is the feeling of being bound-up-with-others; it is a feeling of ineluctable interdependence which conveys the sense that one's self-affirmation, both psychological and ontological, requires a conjoint affirmation-by-others. In contrast to Modern thought which founds its epistemologies on a hermetically affirmed "I," Marcel's subject is birthed by others, and only with and through others does one come to know oneself, the world and Being itself. It is in the concrete situation of valuing others and being valued by others that one encounters the value of one's own being and of Being itself.

For Marcel, then, the primary access to Being is not epistemological but axiological. Modern thought persistently hit dead ends in attempting to know Being through its rationalisms and/or empiricisms. Postmodern pessimisms like deconstructionism, frustrated by these failures, sardonically revel in the absurd and anarchic. Marcel's ontology of intersubjectivity proceeds from describing the intuitive feeling of participation to rational discourse about the communitarian nature of Being itself. In other, perhaps more clear words, Marcel shows that a primordial intuition of community can become the basis for rationally articulating features of Being itself since Being is relation.

The importance of intersubjectivity as providing axiological access to Being is established throughout this anthology. Godfrey's caution that "it is not wise to consider the realm of the intersubjective as just an overlay on the ontology of things and free selves" alerts one to recognize that intersubjectivity inspired Marcel's rebellion, one which exposes and rejects even the anthropocentrism of a Heidegger. As Pax indicates, "In Heidegger's

analysis of Dasein, the wholeness of Dasein is thought in relation to Dasein's own temporal way of being, that is, to Dasein's historicity. With the (Marcellian) change in perspective the issue of my wholeness is thought in direct relation to the other and to the intersubjective structure in and by which I am related authentically to the other" (p. 121). Pax illustrates the way in which intersubjectivity opens axiological access to ontological reflection with his insight that being-unto-the-death-of-the-other is more metaphysically revealing than being-unto-my-own-death because the face-to-face experience of the former centers my whole being primarily on being-with, which is the very nature of my being (see Pax, p. 121). And, since Being is relation, an understanding of my being-with serves to illumine cognitively the very essence of Being itself.

Gallagher accurately remarks that Marcel "is not the sort of philosopher who can generate a publishing industry--as Husserl and Heidegger have done" (p. 9). The Schilpp volume (*The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, ed. Paul Schilpp and Lewis Hahn. LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1984) has decreased the need for Marcellian scholarship, as Gallagher also notes. However, what the Cooney volume offers, and perhaps what future Marcellian scholarship should consider, are the suggestions for Marcellian Postmodern directions. Though the review copy I have suffered from some distracting infelicities of print (e.g., pp. 144 and 181), the Edwin Mellen Press is to be commended for its commitment to publishing high quality but certainly not wide selling works and collections of scholarship as this text and others about Marcel, as well as the seventeen or so other volumes in Mellen's Problems in Contemporary Philosophy series.

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THOMAS MICHAUD

GROSZ, ELIZABETH. *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction.* USA, Routledge, 1990, pp. 218, ISBN 0-415-01400-X.

In much the same way that Sartre, in *The Critique of Dialectical Reason*, declared Marxism to be the determining theoretical frame of history, Elizabeth Grosz, in *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction*, identifies psychoanalysis as the privileged theoretical frame of feminist thought. This does not mean that she takes an uncritical stance with respect to either psychoanalysis or Lacan. She does not. It rather means that though she warns us against being seduced by psychoanalysis, she also warns us of the dangers of ignoring it; for psychoanalysis, Grosz tells us, is the crucial tool for assessing the questions of woman, women and the feminine.

This understanding of the relationship between psychoanalysis and feminist thought determines the overall scope of Grosz's book as well as its particulars. That is, it marks her project by determining which theories of Lacan will be attended to and which will not, and by determining which feminists she will find relevant and which she will not. Further, given these determinations, Grosz's analysis of the relationship between psychoanalysis and feminism is the grid through which the further determination is made concerning which feminists, from amongst those identified as relevant, will be given expositional space and which will not. In a work which dedicates most of its pages to Lacan this last determination sets the tone of the text.

Grosz identifies three categories of feminists:

those committed to Lacan's work and ultimately to his underlying framework, seeing it as a means of describing and explaining patriarchal power relations; . . . those who reject it from a pre-or non-psychoanalytic position . . . [and those] who seem to have an impressive familiarity with Lacan's work while maintaining a critical distance from it. (141-2)

She places Mitchell, Ragland-Sullivan, Kristeva, Plaza and Clement within the first category; Spender and Greer within the second; and Irigaray, Rose, Gallop and Kofman in the third. The work of

Spender and Greer is dismissed. From amongst the others, two French feminists, Kristeva, one of the committed Lacanians, and Irigaray (with, Grosz says, Irigaray's name representing Cixous, Kofman and perhaps even Gallop), one of those familiar with but critical of Lacan, are the subject of the book's final chapter, "Lacan and Feminism."

Like all books, this one is intended to be read from front to back, from beginning to end. But, given Grosz's attention to Irigaray's account of non-linear feminine readings, I would suggest that this book be read in a way which considers the effects of its conclusions on its beginnings. This allows us to see that the account of Freud that opens the book and the account of Lacan that is the center of the book is both going to and coming from somewhere. These accounts are not for the sake of exposition *per se*. They are intended for those feminists interested in/concerned with theorizing subjectivity, knowledge and desire.

Reading in a linear way we see Grosz setting up the Freudian antecedents of Lacan's moves. Here Grosz concretizes Lacan's claim that he is engaged in the project of reading/re-reading Freud. Here, she shows us the workings of this reading/re-reading, introduces us to its dynamics, and allows us to catch the irony in Lacan's claim that his work vis a vis Freud offers nothing new.

But, if her analysis of the Freud Lacan relationship allows us to catch Lacan's irony, it also directs us away from the simplistic idea that Lacan is an improvement on Freud. Her non-linear readings reveal Freud and Lacan confirming each other on such issues as the heterosexual love relationship and shows Lacan continuing Freud's analyses in a different register. Grosz's non-linear and linear readings challenge each other as they challenge us to attend to the intersections as well as the divergences of the Freudian and Lacanian frames.

Grosz's feminist and expository projects confront each other in much the same way as her linear and non-linear readings challenge each other. Set within her feminist perspective, her expositions of Lacan, show us an heir of Freud who, in going beyond Freud, goes nowhere. For example, Grosz reads Freud as a biologist and Lacan as correcting Freud's biologisms. Given

Freud's biologism, she harbors no doubts as to his misogyny. But Lacan's rejection of biologism does not guarantee his feminist credentials. For however important Lacan's escape from biologism is, biologism is not the whole story of psychoanalysis's misogyny. As Grosz sees it, it is not only in Freud's hands, but also in Lacan's, that psychoanalysis is a risky and dangerous tool for feminists. Against Sullivan and Mitchell, Grosz does not accept the Lacanian phallus as a neutral signifier, "a neutral third term against which both sexes are analogously or symmetrically positioned" (121). She finds no place for a grounding signifier in a system of difference and insists that inserting such a signifier into a system of difference reduces the system to a binary oppositional set (and we all remember what this means for the so-called male-female binary pair).

As a sympathetic critic of Lacan, Grosz delivers what her book's title promises, a good, clear sensitive account of Lacan's ideas and an intelligent rendering of why these ideas are important for feminism. I am impressed with this piece (the bulk) of her project and recommend it to anyone wanting to get a start at cracking the Lacanian code. I also appreciate her accounts of Kristeva and Irigaray. Yet there is a discomfort. There are in the "Psychoanalysis and Feminism" chapter repeated allusions to the problem of women's autonomy. This question of autonomy is aligned with the work of Kristeva and Irigaray. As I see it, goals of autonomy make sense within the contexts of a Cartesian, non-psychoanalytic perspective, or within the context of an ego-psychology reading of Freud. Within the frame of psychoanalysis, however, this ideal of autonomy is called into question and within the field of Lacanian psychoanalysis it is rejected altogether. Given Kristeva's and Irigaray's Lacanian grounding I am suspicious of the suggestion that the issue of autonomy has a place in their work. Their more or less critical distance from Lacan does not, I think, move them away from his non-autonomous view of the subject.

My point in raising this issue is not to insist that the book is infected with a wronged reading of Kristeva or Irigaray (it may be that I am wrongly reading Grosz), but to pursue Grosz's insight regarding the psychoanalytic paradigm. This pursuit may be formulated as follows:

if feminism must attend to the psychoanalytic frame;
if the psychoanalytic frame puts the idea of autonomy in question;
if the idea of autonomy has been the ideal of feminist aspirations;
then
what are the social and political implications of a feminism which, under
the guidance of Lacanian psychoanalysis, attributes visions of autonomy
to the seductions of the imaginary?

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PECCORINI, FRANCISCO L. *Selfhood as Thinking Thought in the Work of Gabriel Marcel: A New Interpretation.* Lewiston, New York, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987. 190 pages, including Select Bibliography and Name Index. ISBN 0-88946-329-8.

Appropriately, the author begins his "new interpretation" of Marcel's thought with a warning to the reader not to expect a general study of the important themes of Marcel's philosophy. This book is a specialized study. It grew out of the second biennial meeting of the Institute for the Encyclopaedia of Ultimate Reality and Meaning, and seeks to answer one question only, namely, what is ultimate reality and meaning as revealed in Marcel's philosophical reflections. The claim to giving a new interpretation of Marcel rests upon the author's focussing his attention on Marcel's notion of the "thinking thought" (*pensée pensante*) as the locus, and, indeed, in the last analysis and in a participatory form, the very identity of ultimate reality and meaning.

The book proceeds in six chapters whose close connection becomes evident only in the thoughtful reading of the text. Chapter One may appear at first to be merely an intellectual biography of Marcel, but its intent is to establish early on, the close connection between philosophical thinking and lived experience, a connection which is then relied upon and made central to the whole work.

Chapter Two, entitled "Being as the Pure Subject: The Root of Existence," undertakes the difficult task of showing how the

"pensée pensante" is at once both the deepest meaning of self and the presence of ultimate reality. The interpretation begins with the distinction between thought as content grasped by the mind and thought as the spiritual act wherein any content is grasped or known. This latter, dynamic act of becoming, which remains always beyond the grasp of the conceptualizing thought, is seen as constituting the selfhood of the human person in its lived and unverifiable, and always incomplete, coming to be.

The passage to the question of ultimate reality and meaning is achieved in the understanding that this thinking thought is nothing other than the finite mind's participation in Being. Understood fully and concretely, from the other side as it were, this participation of the human self in Being is, in fact, "nothing but Being asserting its presence in me" (p. 25). Like the passive intellect (the "blank slate") of Aristotle's *De Anima* the "pensée pensante" is potentially all things while it is actually none of them.

As a study of Marcel, the form of the author's argument properly relies upon both early and late texts of Marcel, especially upon texts discussing the "blind intuition" of Being understood as "an assurance which underlies the entire development of thought, even of discursive thought." The value of the argument depends to a great degree, it appears, on the reader's ability and willingness to enter into a reflection on self which goes beyond the positivist experience of the "I" as content.

Sensitive to the fact that neither logic nor everyday experience require a person to go beyond the cogito, Peccorini devotes chapter three to a discussion of faith and freedom as the foundation of that knowledge which goes beyond immediate feeling. Only in a free act of faith can one transcend the self as content and gain a perception of the pure subject. This freedom, however, is not arbitrariness. It must be understood rather as fidelity to the mind's nuptial bond with Being. In such an understanding the skeptical doubt about the actual existence of the external world, which has troubled so much of modern western philosophy, is revealed as the pseudo problem that it is. More important for Peccorini's purposes is that the uncovering of the "pensee pensante," which is inseparable from the mind's faithful commitment to Being, can be seen as the universal condition for the possibility of authentic human life.

The first thing that strikes us is that the conditions of possibility of so many and so important features of human existence--logic, perception, faith, the metaphysical value of the ontological appetite and of the moral law, as well as love, hope, and absolute fidelity--do in fact reduce to one, namely, the makeup of the human subject as pure thought and its direct participation in Being. (p. 73)

The fruitful realization of the promise contained in this condition of possibility depends upon the adoption of a disposition of "recollection." That the present age is prepared to adopt this disposition is far from clear, and Peccorini rightly ties the idea of recollection to the difficult notion of the blinded intuition of Being which grants not comprehension but assurance that Being is on my side. In this connection he quotes Marcel as the latter expresses his fundamental agreement with Heidegger's equally difficult idea of the forgetfulness of Being: "Upon reflection it is there that my essential agreement with Heidegger on what he has called the oblivion of Being seems to become more apparent to me" (p. 75. see *En chemin vers quel eveil?*, 1971, 9.202).

The remaining three chapters of the book seek to elaborate the meaning of this direct participation in Being, "that constitutes my own interiority" (p. 67), in the areas of human community, immortality and ethics.

Since that direct participation in Being which constitutes the self as thinking thought is a participation in light, the participation in Being is at the same time a bonding with all that participates in this light. Peccorini sees in this teaching a profound agreement with Aristotle's teaching concerning the agent intellect which enlightens the passive intellect and eventually the senses as well. The chapter ends with a discussion of "The Christ as the Foundation of The Community" which presents Marcel's acknowledged affinity to the Johannine teaching on Christ as the Light that enlightens everyone who comes into the world.

This participation in the light, especially in its Christian exemplification, cannot be separated from love. It is a participation in the light which is joy to be light. This understanding is the ground for the faith in immortality, that is, the refusal to despair over the death of the beloved. Although Marcel is one with

Heidegger in seeing death as other than a biological event, he distances himself from Heidegger's understanding of "being-unto-death" as a structure of human existence on the grounds that Heidegger's analysis neglects the central importance of love in the constitution of personhood. One might wonder with Ricoeur, however, whether Marcel (and Peccorini) fail to do justice to the Heideggerian notion of "care."

The culmination, and not just the end, of the study is the final chapter called "The Nuptial Bond of Life as an Ethical Arrow for a Lay World." Here the author successfully, if not always clearly, brings the central features of the "pensee pensante" discussed earlier into an intelligible and working harmony. As a participation in light, and not itself the light, the free self in its freedom is essentially an ethical self, bound by the necessity of love toward all who participate in the light. The ethics following from this understanding is an ethics which demands a creaturely humility on the part of the individual person. It also provides, contrary to the view of Sartre against whom Marcel struggled, a way of understanding human nature as essentially an openness to life rather than a "pour-soi," and thus suitable to serve as a criterion for morals "for all seasons." As a free participation in the light which is the absolute recourse, the self as thinking thought is itself the manifestation of, and the pointer to the divine perfection.

A certain lack of ease might well accompany the reader of *Selfhood as Thinking Thought in the Work of Marcel*. If so, this will surely be due in part to the subject matter itself, whose exposition must be done chiefly not by logical argument but by inviting the reader to partake in a search for insight and understanding. Furthermore, the search itself can be entered only by those willing to make a prior commitment.

The lack of ease is due also in part, however, to an unnecessary lack of clarity, arising perhaps from a placing of the text in the hands of the printers before it was fully ready. I repeatedly found myself wishing the matter had been thought through more clearly rather than hinted at and left to the reader's own efforts, that the transitions had been made more evident, that the use of the work of other philosophers, sometimes quoted, had been more fully integrated into the study of Marcel's work. The

author tells us on page 148 that "The lack of time forces us to leave that task [of showing how Sartre's misgivings about the non-human character of Being are on rather weak grounds] to the reader." This reader, at least, felt that in other places also, too much was left to the effort of the reader. Any reader's patience will surely be tried by the lack of accuracy of the printed text. Typographical errors are numerous, so numerous as to be distracting, and occasionally, when several words are run together, to be at first unintelligible. Irritating also is the lack of factual accuracy with which the author reports Marcel speaking to Pierre Boutang in 1977 (p. 92), to Rene Poirier in 1976 (p. 94) and writing his testament in 1976 (p. 97). Even if one agrees that Marcel continues to be active after his death, these particular activities presumably took place before his death.

Having voiced these criticisms, I wish to end this review by acknowledging that Peccorini's study has brought me a fuller understanding of Marcel, and has provoked me to search out Nishitani and other thinkers whom he brings into proximity with Marcel. Reading his text has also caused me to think further on the issues of personal interiority, immortality, and natural religion.

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CLYDE PAX

LA PENSEE ABSURDE PEUT-ELLE ETRE CONVERTIE EN DISCOURS POSITIF?

GARDIES, JEAN-LOUIS. *Le raisonnement par l'absurde*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1991; 206 pp. ISBN 2-13-043829-6.

Pour les logiciens et les épistémologistes le raisonnement par l'absurde a été et reste une énigme. On aimerait l'éviter, mais on ne peut s'en passer. Depuis Aristote on reconnaît, de façon explicite ou implicite, qu'il n'appartient pas à la voie royale de la

preuve syllogistique ou de la démonstration mathématique. Marginal, sorte de parent pauvre et honteux de la justification du vrai, il subsiste néanmoins, ironique et provocateur: "Vous aimeriez m'oublier, semble-t-il dire, transposer ma démarche en une autre jugée plus convenable; mais vous ne parvenez pas à éliminer mon 'effet' démonstratif dès que vous tentez d'élaborer une théorie du vrai, et pour me comprendre, vous invoquez toujours des raisons secondaires." C'est pourquoi on ouvre avec espoir et impatience la nouvelle monographie de Jean-Louis Gardies.

Admirons d'abord la compétence exceptionnelle de l'historien de la pensée logique et mathématique, la rigueur des analyses du logicien, son souci de faire face au problème de l'absurde, hier et aujourd'hui, avec précision et honnêteté, en citant des exemples, en évitant des généralisations philosophiques hâtives, en naviguant au plus près de la réalité démonstrative. Refermant le livre, on se sent plus riche de savoir, plus conscient d'une problématique historique qui a toujours été évasive, ayant en main les éléments du matériau conceptuel qui rend possible une théorie du vrai. L'étude de Gardies se compose de sept sections qui décrivent les "domaines dans lesquels le raisonnement absurde a ou n'a pas sa place. "Les trois premières sections examinent sa présence chez Euclide et Aristote; la quatrième et la cinquième se concentrent d'abord sur Archimède, puis nous conduisent vers la méthode cartésienne; la sixième étudie le raisonnement par l'absurde dans le calcul des prédicats et les logiques modales contemporaines; enfin la septième s'engage dans une réflexion originale sur l'épistémologie, de la théorie platonicienne de la réminiscence à l'intuïtinnisme cartésien, à Spinoza et Pascal, au Kant de la *Critique de la raison pure* essayant de justifier le raisonnement par l'absurde et reconnaissant dans *le modus tollens* un discours démonstratif facile et pourtant rigoureux (cf p. 185).

Suivant une tradition consacrée, Gardies qualifie le raisonnement par l'absurde de preuve indirecte, apagogique, négative, et s'opposant à la démonstration qui est directe, ostensive, positive, celle qui, selon l'Aristote des *Seconds Analytiques*, "étant antérieure, plus connue et plus certaine, sera supérieure" (p. 157). A la fin de la sixième section l'auteur formule clairement le but de sa recherche; non seulement "montrer que la convertibilité de l'apagogique en ostensif ne soulevait pas de

difficulté insurmontable, mais surtout que la maîtrise de cette convertibilité pouvait contribuer à simplifier la présentation de certains systèmes, éventuellement à l'alléger de quelques problèmes, qu'on pouvait donc être tenté de considérer comme un héritage contingent des tâtonnements de la découverte" (p. 150). Ainsi Gardies, fidèle à Aristote, semble accorder la priorité à la preuve ostensive, soucieux qu'il est de prouver que le discours indirect et négatif peut, plus ou moins aisément, se convertir en discours direct. La présence du raisonnement par l'absurde s'expliquerait par ce qu'il appelle "un héritage contingent des tâtonnements de la découverte." L'adjectif "contingent" est révélateur. Faut-il conclure que l'intervention du raisonnement par l'absurde dans le développement de la pensée occidentale et tout spécialement de son appareil logico-mathématique, est contingente, c'est-à-dire non nécessaire dans l'établissement du discours vrai; il naîtrait d'une sorte de commodité; il serait simplement possible parce que pratique. Gardies revient souvent sur ce caractère pratique et facile du raisonnement par l'absurde dû à sa simplicité. Citons par exemple ce texte très significatif relatif au calcul des prédicats: "Le raisonnement par l'absurde demeurera Réversible en une preuve ostensive équivalente. Mais il gardera, par le fait même, son privilège pragmatique d'être un authentique moyen d'inventer la démonstration" (p. 137, je souligne).

On rapprochera cet aveu d'une remarque qui apparaît à la dernière page du livre: "On aura perçu derrière nos propos, le *leitmotiv* de la distinction qui n'est nullement la nôtre, puisqu'elle remonte au moins à Charles Morris, entre *syntaxe* et *pragmatique*. Il nous semble en effet impossible, sans elle, de parvenir à débrouiller la question du raisonnement par l'absurde de ce qu'elle peut avoir, au premier examen, de paradoxal" (p. 194). On sait que la pragmatique est couramment définie comme l'étude de la relation entre les signes et leurs interprètes, alors que la syntaxe au sens logique est la théorie formelle des êtres linguistiques indépendamment de leur signification, et qu'elle se rapproche ainsi de la théorie de la preuve telle qu'elle a été conçue par David Hilbert.

Nous voici au coeur du problème: faut-il penser que la démarche parcourue dans le raisonnement par l'absurde relève d'une réaction psychologique contingente, et non d'une nécessité logique

formelle? Dans le dernier paragraphe de sa conclusion Gardies cite Spinoza reconnaissant que ce type de raisonnement est parfois "en accord avec la nature des choses." Cependant notre auteur se défend d'accorder une antériorité ontologique ou épistémologique à l'affirmation sur la négation. Il se limite, dit-il, à la distinction de Morris. Il n'a voulu invoquer dans son étude que les deux notions suivantes, "la nature *logique* des choses, à savoir la constitution syntaxique" des raisonnements et leur "conditionnement pragmatique" (p. 195). Mais, et c'est là ma principale question, est-il possible d'adopter la distinction entre syntaxe et pragmatique sans impliquer une option onto-logique et ainsi une préférence en faveur de l'affirmation sur la négation? A certains moments de son analyse Gardies suggère que la démonstration directe se rattache à l'opération logique de la conjonction tandis que la preuve apagogique suppose la DISJUNCTION (Cf. p. 134). On pourrait même aller plus loin et penser que la possibilité du raisonnement par l'absurde est présente dès l'apparition de la négation et de la conscience de contradiction dans le discours logique, c'est-à-dire dès son origine. Entre vérité et non-contradiction y a-t-il priorité? Pourquoi "affirmer" que la fin du discours doit être affirmative, et non négative? Enfin, si le raisonnement par l'absurde relève de la pragmatique, pourquoi ne serait-ce pas aussi le cas pour le raisonnement dit direct?

Gardies s'appuie sur une longue tradition de positivisme méta-physique, même quand il s'efforce, mais en vain, de prendre ses distances par rapport à elle. Pensons à Spinoza qui a écrit "*Omni determination negatio est*" et qui reconnaît que la négation appartient à "la nature des choses." Pensons surtout à Pascal que notre auteur interprète avec une rare clairvoyance et qui oppose à la naïveté ontologique du chevalier de Méré l'absolue divisibilité de l'espace. "Ainsi l'originalité de Pascal sera-t-elle de ne pas tenter, comme le faisait Arnauld, de faire l'économie des procédés apagogiques. . . ." (p. 168). Gardies a mis en exergue de son livre cette question du chevalier de Méré: "Croyez-vous que ce soit connaître une chose que de savoir seulement ce qu'elle n'est pas?" Et il cite plus tard, p. 168, la réponse de Pascal extraite de l'opuscule "De l'esprit de géométrie et de l'art de persuader"; j'en rappelle le début: "*C'est une maladie naturelle à l'homme de croire qu'il possède la vérité directement; et de là vient qu'il est toujours disposé à nier tout ce qui lui est incompréhensible. . . .*" (je

souligne). Et Pascal conclut "hardiment" en faveur d'un raisonnement métaphysique par l'absurde. Il ira même plus loin dans les *Ecrits sur la grâce* quand il demandera d'accepter la vérité de deux propositions contraires. Mais nous n'avons pas le droit d'entraîner Gardies dans les aventures du discours religieux. C'est son droit indéniable de s'en tenir à la distinction, elle-même commode, entre syntaxe et pragmatique. Il nous a ainsi présenté un superbe état des lieux pour le raisonnement par l'absurde. En même temps il a le mérite d'avoir fait surgir un problème trop souvent négligé, celui d'une pensée négative qui est à l'oeuvre dès le moment où la connaissance se constitue et se formalise. Faut-il rappeler que la vérité a toujours pour synonyme inévitable l'infalsiabilité de son propre discours, et que le détour par l'absurde est toujours nécessaire?

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EDOUARD MOROT-SIR

FERRY, LUC & ALAIN RENAUT. *Pourquoi nous ne sommes pas nietzscheens.* Paris: Grasset, 1991.

This is a collection of essays on Nietzsche, often by very well known writers who have been deeply involved in the French Nietzsche discussion. To understand the nature and significance of this work, it is necessary to consider it against the background of the ongoing French debate about Nietzsche's theory. The French Nietzsche debate that began at the end of the last century, continued in desultory fashion until it was given a decisive jolt by Heidegger's two volume study of Nietzsche. In France, and as a result of Heidegger's influence, attention to Nietzsche, as well as to Freud and Marx, three thinkers whom Ricoeur has called "the masters of suspicion" was linked to an attack on the values of the Enlightenment. This attack required a deconstruction of reason as a mere symptom to be understood in physiological, psychological, or economic terms, in short from an extrarational angle of vision.

The message of the present volume, stated in the title, "Why we are not Nietzscheans." It is a collective effort to indicate why, other than the long enthusiasm for Nietzsche, it is not really possible to be a Nietzschean, a follower of Nietzsche. In the present French philosophical scene, the French Nietzsche is influenced by Derrida and his followers, including J.-L. Nancy and especially Sarah Kaufman, and even more so by Heidegger. It follows that to the extent that the authors reject the French view of Nietzsche they are also rejecting deconstruction, including the Derridean influence, as well as Heidegger's view. Beyond the discussion of Nietzsche, this volume represents an effort to emancipate oneself from Heidegger's main French representative, Derrida, and from Heidegger, still the main "French" philosopher in the postwar period.

The volume contains a preface and eight papers, printed in alphabetical order by author's name. There is no indication of the source of the papers or the affiliation of the various authors. Although the writers are often well known, they are not identified. The level of the contributions is uniformly good. All the writers are very well versed in Nietzsche's thought.

The preface, due to Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, states that for those who began in the 1960s, it was advisable to take a genealogical approach in order to show that the claims of reason were merely symptomatic. But today, it is necessary to abandon deconstruction in return to reason. Since it is not viable to return to reason as absolute knowledge, it is necessary to think with Nietzsche against Nietzsche.

The first two essays, by Alain Boyer and Comte-Sponville, are attacks on Nietzsche's thought itself. In "Hierarchy and Truth," Boyer contends that Nietzsche is obsessed with hierarchy. In passing, he dismisses most of Nietzsche's main concepts, including those of interest to Heidegger, as uninteresting (15). The discussion considers Nietzsche's view of science that Boyer criticizes as uninformed (17-21). He maintains that to leave religion behind is not to abandon value, and he affirms that we need to take a rationalist stance (31).

The paper by Comte-Sponville, whose first book was on Nietzsche, is called "The brute, the sophist, the aesthete: art in the service of illusion." In the course of the discussion, he frequently comments on the views of Clement Rosset, a philosopher at the University of Nice. He begins by stating that every philosopher needs to come to grips with Nietzsche (39).

Nietzsche's works are not so important; it is simply exaggerated to see in them the start of a new era (40). According to Comte-Sponville, Nietzsche is both theoretically and practically immoral (46). His thought is essentially racist (54). Any effort to pass this off as metaphysical, as Heidegger does, is erroneous (57). Nietzsche's pretended fidelity to life betrays the humanity of human beings (61, 64). In fact, Nietzsche's idea of truth is self-contradictory (72). Nietzsche is finally an aesthete who places art over truth (89). One cannot be a Nietzschean unless one prefers brutes, sophists, or aesthetes (90).

Vincent Descombes, who teaches at Emory University and at the Ecole des Hautes études pratiques, contributes a paper on "The French interest in Nietzsche." He begins with a portrait of the typical French Nietzschean (102). For Descombes, French Nietzscheanism is incoherent (107). After discussion of the origin

of this movement, he criticizes Deleuze's influential discussion of Nietzsche (120-126).

Ferry and Renaut, two well known young French anti-establishment figures, provide a paper titled "What needs to be demonstrated is not worth much." They begin by noting that for Constant and Tocqueville, the essence of modern society is the emancipation from tradition (131). They see Nietzsche as a neo-traditionalist who criticizes modern democracy and provides an analogue of the traditional universe (133). For Nietzsche, only tradition is good (141). Yet his effort to combine tradition and modernity is incoherent (148). The paper ends with a warning against abandoning argument in a return to authority (149).

Robert Legros, a well-known Belgian Hegel scholar and phenomenologist, contributes a thoughtful essay, "Nietzsche's metaphysics of life," influenced by E. Fink and M. Haar. Every philosopher needs to follow Nietzsche in criticizing metaphysics, but the critique of metaphysics leads to a disavowal of Nietzsche who finally accepts its distinctions (158). For Nietzsche, metaphysics concerns the essence of truth (159). His critique of metaphysics implies a separation of appearance and reality (170). But this critique is inconsistent in many ways since Nietzsche presupposes what he excludes (173, 184, 190). Hence if we are Nietzschean we cannot be Nietzschean (193).

Philippe Raynaud, who has published a book on Max Weber, provides a paper on "Nietzsche as educator." For students of Raynaud's generation, Nietzsche offered a way to emancipate thought from "metaphysics" (197). Raynaud identifies three forms of French Nietzscheanism linked to the views of Deleuze, Foucault, and Nietzsche's impact on French culture (198-201). Nietzsche's critique of the Enlightenment is essentially irrational (211). Nietzsche provides a critique of modernity (214).

The paper by Pierre-André Taguieff, "The traditional paradigm: Horror of modernity and antiliberalism: Nietzsche's reactionary rhetoric," is the longest in the volume. Taguieff identifies modernity as the commitment to perpetual discussion and traditional antimodernism as opposed to liberal democracy (219). He sees Nietzsche as influencing an alternative to rightwing

traditionalism due to Ronald and Donos Cortes in the political voluntarism of nationalism, exemplified by Action française (220). The paper begins with an analysis of antimodernism and the idea of decadence in virtue of which Nietzsche is a traditional thinker (220-230). This is followed by a summary of Nietzsche's attack on liberalism (230-237). Then there is a discussion of nihilism (238-246), followed by a summary of Nietzsche's attacks on dialectic (246-252), on modern mediocrity and liberal degeneration (252-246), and cultural decadence (256-263). Taguieff notes that for Nietzsche, discussion is a sign of weakness (264). The paper ends with an account of Nietzsche and Action française, a rightwing Catholic monarchist movement (276-284). The treatment of parallels between Nietzsche's thought and his influence on the thought of various rightwing movement is very interesting.

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TOM ROCKMORE

KOLB, DAVID. *Postmodern Sophistications: Philosophy, Architecture, and Tradition.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990. xi 216 pp.

"Do we stand sufficiently above traditions that we can manipulate them and make them from some detached point of view as if they were tools for other purposes" (p. 2), as modernists have claimed? Or are postmodernists right to criticize "the attempt to institutionalize an individual or social subject free from traditional restrictions" (p. 6)? But neither the modernist refusal of the authority of tradition nor postmodern play with historical contents takes history seriously enough. Kolb insists that we are more essentially placed in history, even as he refuses to grant history such authority as would stifle our need and ability to change and adapt.

This thoughtful study, which should appeal to anyone interested in postmodernism, especially to architects, divides into two parts separated by thirteen illustrations. The shorter first part

begins with a sketch of the "Socratic myth," which is said to have presented us with an intellectual ethics for "behaving well" on the path of inquiry: "erotic attraction to the good, communal dialogue, impartial questioning, openness, and refusal to insist on one's own opinions" (p. 15). Of this ethics is born the insistence that inherited standards of belief and conduct justify themselves before the court of reason, the Platonic demand for last words that establish firm ground. This demand is challenged by the Sophism substitution of persuasion for reasoned argument, where ancient Sophism has its recent counterpart in philosophical postmodernism, which seeks to defend humanity against what is all too easily experienced as a rationalist terrorism.

Kolb develops this opposition only to call it into question neither Platonism nor Sophism are able to do justice to the world in which we find ourselves. If the former cannot make good on its claim to seize true reality, the latter's power of persuasion remains bound by pre-given contexts. If the one errs by thinking it possible to rise above our inevitably historical reality to the plane of truth, the other is too ready to exchange critical reflection for a noncommittal play with historical contents. Inevitably "we find ourselves in historical situations we did not create, with good and values we did not choose. We work at revising and correcting as we build new places for ourselves" (p. 34).

Especially important is the fourth chapter, also entitled "Postmodern Sophistications," which confronts the modernism of Habermas with the postmodernism of Lyotard. Kolb steers a precarious course between the two, closer "to Lyotard's innovation than to Habermas's consensual process" (p. 49). Aesthetic judgment is given a greater part than rational consensus in opening up the space for our judgments. Yet finally Kolb agrees with Habermas "that Lyotard's mode of self-criticism does not allow the mutual dialogue that is necessary for living and building in the finite spaces that we must share" (p. 50).

What lets us experience building as more than arbitrary invention? By its very organization, Kolb's study invites us to explore parallels between the work of the architect and that of the philosopher. The latter has much to learn from the concrete ways in which recent architects have challenged and moved beyond

modernism and its presuppositions. Drawing on Heidegger, Kolb insists on the significance of history. Yet to Heidegger's gloomy interpretation of the present age's subjection to the hegemony of the Gestell and the related nostalgic celebration of place Kolb opposes an emphasis on our tradition's many different strands and voices, refusing to embed the self so completely in a particular history or language that it would become incapable of envisioning different languages and histories.

"We need appropriateness, not necessity" (p. 168). Kolb links such appropriateness to creative rereadings or misreadings of the past. But since, as he insists, the past speaks with many voices, we are left with the question of what makes one reading more appropriate than another. Having only many-voiced history and the Habermasian goal of "open discussion and community participation" to appeal to, we are left with the specter of arbitrariness that has taunted so much recent building.

Yale University

KARSTEN HARRIES

This review first appeared in *The Review of Metaphysics* and is reprinted here with the kind permission of the author and editor.

ANNONCES ET NOUVELLES

LE XXV^e CONGRES DE L'ASPLF A LAUSANNE

La Société romande de philosophie accueillera dans moins de deux ans le 25^e Congrès de l'ASPLF.

Veillez retenir dès maintenant les dates du Congrès:

**du jeudi 25 août (en fin de journée)
au dimanche 28 août 1994**

Le thème retenu par la Société romande de philosophie est:

LA NATURE

Pourquoi ce thème?

Si la signification et le statut de la nature pour la pensée et l'action humaines ont été souvent au coeur de la réflexion philosophique, celle-ci se développe aujourd'hui dans de nouvelles directions:

-- la philosophie de la nature connaît elle-même un important renouveau

-- les rapports de l'activité humaine avec son cadre naturel nous posent aujourd'hui des problèmes cruciaux

Le Congrès se déroulera dans les locaux de l'Université de Lausanne, qui se trouve à Dorigny, à l'Ouest de la ville et à quelques pas du lac Léman. Le site est relié à la ville par une ligne ferroviaire rapide (10 minutes de trajet). Le logement des congressistes sera assuré en ville de Lausanne. Des chambres pourront être obtenues dans toutes les catégories de prix (à partir de 25 fs/env 100FF).

**RENSEIGNEMENTS: Comité de préparation du Congrès de l'ASPLF
Université de Lausanne
Section de philosophie, BFSH 2
CH - 1015 LAUSANNE \ SUISSE**

CALL FOR PAPERS

Articles in French or English are invited for a special issue of the *Bulletin de la Société Américaine de Philosophie de Langue Française* devoted to the impact, reception and interpretation of Michel Foucault's work. Some suggested lines of inquiry:

Foucault and his critics: redefinitions, appropriations, (mis)conceptions, defenses, discoveries, recuperations.

Foucault and his contexts: structuralism, Marxism, feminism, poststructuralism, postmodernism, humanism, scientism, historicism, psychologism.

Essays of 4000-6000 words are to be submitted by November 15, 1993 to:

Professors Jean-François Fourny and Karlis Racevskis

Department of French and Italian
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1229

* * *

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