

## Book Reviews

James Aho, Nataša Bakić-Mirić, Nataša Bakić-Mirić, Giorgio Baruchello, Giorgio Barchello, Thorsten Botz-Bornstein, Harvey Chisick, David Coury, Terence Dawson, Donald J. Dietrich, Kristian Gerner, Kristian Gerner, Brian Goldberg, Nicholas Grene, Boris Gubman, Marcel Herbst, Marek Jeziński, Marek Jeziński, David W. Lovell, Martyn Lyons, Jeff Mitscherling, Jeff Mitscherling, James Muir, Michael O'dea, Glenn W. Olsen, Cristina Ortiz, Brayton Polka, Brayton Polka, John Preston, Marina Ritzarev, Mia Roth, Arthur B. Shostak, Arthur B. Shostak, Stanley Shostak, Stanley Shostak, Lora Sigler, Peter N. Stearns, John E. Weakland, Timothy J. White & Heather Wolffram

**To cite this article:** James Aho, Nataša Bakić-Mirić, Nataša Bakić-Mirić, Giorgio Baruchello, Giorgio Barchello, Thorsten Botz-Bornstein, Harvey Chisick, David Coury, Terence Dawson, Donald J. Dietrich, Kristian Gerner, Kristian Gerner, Brian Goldberg, Nicholas Grene, Boris Gubman, Marcel Herbst, Marek Jeziński, Marek Jeziński, David W. Lovell, Martyn Lyons, Jeff Mitscherling, Jeff Mitscherling, James Muir, Michael O'dea, Glenn W. Olsen, Cristina Ortiz, Brayton Polka, Brayton Polka, John Preston, Marina Ritzarev, Mia Roth, Arthur B. Shostak, Arthur B. Shostak, Stanley Shostak, Stanley Shostak, Lora Sigler, Peter N. Stearns, John E. Weakland, Timothy J. White & Heather Wolffram (2009) Book Reviews, , 14:3, 333-373, DOI: [10.1080/10848770902931743](https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770902931743)

**To link to this article:** <https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770902931743>



Published online: 15 May 2009.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 50



View related articles [↗](#)

## ≡ Book Reviews ≡

**Hiroshima: The World's Bomb.** By Andrew J. Rotter (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), viii + 371 pp. \$29.95 cloth.

This is a balanced, comprehensive, and exhaustively documented study in the routinization of violent technology. And like previous cases—the machine gun, TNT, and gas weaponry—it follows a familiar narrative.

The story begins idealistically with a quest to make war unthinkable. Citizens of the “republic of science,” a “traveling seminar” of Euro-Americans united by a “majesterial, almost holy feeling” and with “missionary zeal,” seek to liberate mankind from evil by means of “technically sweet” physics. At this stage the bomb-makers are mythologized as Promethean; their product variously as Vishnu, the Buddhist Hell, or as Christ (pictured by Matthias Grunewald ascending into heaven as a fiery ball). The Bomb “is the greatest thing in history,” enthuses President Harry Truman. Carried by its own momentum, the project then turns tragic when its engineers shockingly realize that they have not solved evil after all, but instead “sowed there a whirlwind . . . which we shall someday reap” (physicist Hanson Baldwin). Now what follows are self-deception and cynicism. Leslie Groves, director of the Manhattan Project, assures audiences that radiation poisoning is a “very pleasant way to die.” Bloodthirsty specters like Edward Teller, father of the so-called Super or H-bomb, emerge. This along with racist contempt for the Other. The Japanese, soon to be victimized at Hiroshima, are caricatured as rats and roaches. The Russians become plodding ox-cart riding peasants, said to lack the deftness and intelligence to keep up with their automobile driving American competitors. Next comes farce. Strutting third-world despots symbolically try to redeem ancient psychological wounds by threatening to inflict the Gadget on their presumed persecutors.

Finally, the rhetoric of the Bomb is absorbed into mundane affairs in the form of Miss Anatomic Bomb contests, as the bikini (site of the first H-bomb test), as atomic cocktails, atomic sales, toys, and songs.

After witnessing what the Japanese would call “flash-boom” at Alamogordo, New Mexico in 1945, one physicist proclaimed, “now we are all sons of bitches.” Andrew Rotter agrees. The Bomb, he argues, was not just America’s offspring, but “everyone’s.” It was “the world’s bomb,” a diabolic invention about which few at the time harbored moral doubts and even fewer posed objections. And yet, while this may have been true in the 1940s, one still wonders whether the Bomb was in fact a singularly grisly incarnation of the name of those who first conceived and constructed it: Occidentals (from *occido* = to perish by one’s own hand). For while it is true that they “hiked, fished, played music, [and] punned,” “loved their wives and children,” and were “widely read” in literature and religion, they seem to have been driven by a *Volkgeist* larger than themselves: a demonic spirit that used them as instruments to accomplish *Its* own self-immolating purpose.

Highly recommended for all academic and public libraries.

JAMES AHO  
Idaho State University, USA  
© 2009 James Aho

**The Cambridge Introduction to Jacques Derrida.** By Leslie Hill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 140 pp. £10.99 paper; £40.00 cloth.

“I became the stage for the great argument between Nietzsche and Rousseau. I was the extra ready to take on all the roles,” Jacques Derrida once said. And indeed, Derrida is

arguably the most prolific and well known philosopher of our time—he who profoundly transformed our understanding of writing and literature. Leslie Hill's book is designed to bring out the philosophical significance of Derrida's thought as well as to suggest further directions for studying this hugely influential thinker.

Hill devotes Chapter 1, "Life," to Derrida's academic career, which may be best illustrated in his own words: "Still today, I cannot cross the threshold of a teaching institution without physical symptoms, in my chest and my stomach, of discomfort or anxiety. And yet I have never left school." Hill carefully traces the development of Derrida's critical thought and interest in literature and philosophy.

Chapter 2—"Contexts"—deals, among other things, with Derrida's interest in Husserl and Sartre, two major influences on his thought. The focus here is on his groundbreaking *Of Grammatology* (1967) where Derrida re-examined two foundational works of Structuralism: the early-twentieth-century linguistics of Saussure and the postwar structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss, which Derrida traced back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The outcome of his research into structuralism led to Derrida's touchstone strategy of Deconstruction, which is tantamount to his critique of the Western philosophical tradition, though more narrowly it proceeds via an analysis of specific texts seeking to expose, and then to subvert, the various binary oppositions that undergird dominant ways of thinking.

Chapter 3—"Work"—is fully devoted to Derrida's prolific literary legacy. In the course of his intellectual career spanning five decades, as Hill notes, he published over 100 volumes, including monographs; lectures, seminar and conference presentations brought together in a series of wide-ranging collections of essays; many other more localized writings, including interviews, prefaces, responses, not to mention autobiographical or other writings. He has enriched our critical vocabulary with terms such as *mimique*, *différance*, *dissemination*, *deconstruction* and, finally, his famous dictum "There is nothing outside of the text."

In the final chapter, "Reception and Further Reading," Hill affirms that in the course of his career Derrida radically transformed the contemporary philosophical,

theoretical and literary landscape. He gradually rose to become the enemy of intellectual complacency, as seen in his *Specters of Marx*, *Force of Law*, *Deconstruction and Criticism*, among others, and especially in his theory of language—all of which laid the foundations of postmodernist thought.

Hill's book provides a useful and accessible introduction to Derrida's works and influence on literary discourse and philosophy by offering close readings of some of his best known essays and key critical terms.

NATAŠA BAKIĆ-MIRIĆ

University of Niš, Serbia

© 2009 Nataša Bakić-Mirić

**The Mathematician's Brain. A Personal Tour through the Essentials of Mathematics and Some of the Great Minds behind Them.** By David Ruelle (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), ix + 160 pp. £13.50 paper.

*The Mathematician's Brain*, written by a renowned mathematical physicist who helped create chaos theory, offers readers insight into some of the most important mathematical minds—not only into their eccentricities, personal tragedies, and plunges into madness but into the their moments of sheer creative brilliance. Written in accessible language with simple examples, it confirms why mathematics has long been considered the mother of all sciences. Looking back to Plato, who saw geometry as the fundamental law of all things, David Ruelle argues that today's mathematicians are philosopher-geometers and mathematics is in fact mathematical Platonism. He then moves on to discuss Euclid, Descartes, Grothendieck, Weil and others focusing on their impact on modern mathematical theories.

Ruelle also dwells on the relation between the human mind and reality, in particular, mathematical reality. Since we live in the age of Information Technology, we will find Chapter 9 particularly interesting, where the author compares the computer and the brain as information-processing devices which are too perplexing to understand. Chapter 11 also deserves special mention. Here the author

considers the importance of research, which, he claims, stands at the heart of almost every major scientific discovery known to man. This type of research is not glamorous and in most cases its discoveries do not appear on the front page of the *New York Times*. However, it is these kind of discoveries that ultimately provide insight and vision for future headlines.

The opportunities offered by science today are unparalleled and the prospects for breakthroughs are greater than ever. There is a tremendous pool of talent around the world, producing a steady stream of accomplishments that have benefited all of humanity. However, not all scientists are duly recognized for their remarkable achievements, which is what befell the English mathematician Alan Turing. Although Turing was credited for cracking the Enigma code in WWII and conceiving of the modern computer, he was stigmatized for his sexual orientation, which allegedly led to his suicide.

This book is more than a mathematical grab bag. Each chapter examines an important mathematical idea and the minds behind it. What is also interesting is that Ruelle explores philosophical issues; by offering insights into the uniquely creative ways mathematicians think, he demonstrates how mathematics sets the stage for asking philosophical questions about meaning, beauty and the nature of reality.

NATAŠA BAKIĆ-MIRIĆ  
University of Niš, Serbia  
© 2009 Nataša Bakić-Mirić

**Rhetoric: The New Critical Idiom.** By Jennifer Richards (London: Routledge, 2008), x + 198 pp. £11.99 paper.

Jennifer Richards' book constitutes an excellent, slender introduction to anyone interested in understanding and appreciating the role played by rhetoric in the history of Western culture. Well-written, perceptive, informed yet never pedantic, her short volume embraces the origins of this discipline in ancient Greece, its practical codification in classical Rome, its renewal and eventual decline in the period between the Italian Renaissance and the British Enlightenment, and its twentieth-century

rebirth qua study of the rhetorical nature of language, i.e. rhetoricality.

Whilst providing a historical outline of rhetoric, Richards also sketches an interesting political analysis of the socio-institutional conditions for its flourishing, whereby the presence/absence of an actual public sphere for free discussion and deliberation determines the success/decline of rhetoric as the art of speaking well, therefore preventing/causing its reduction from persuasive argumentation to mere stylistic guidance, i.e. the art of writing well.

Intriguing is also Richards' attempt to recover Cicero's studies, and particularly his *De oratore*, as philosophically and methodologically exemplary. Roman works on rhetoric have been commonly sidelined by modern scholars as overly oriented towards persuasive praxis, hence shallower than their Greek counterparts. Quintilian's and Cicero's extensive reflections, in other words, would not stand comparison with Plato's dialectical dismissal of rhetoric qua sophistry and Aristotle's multifaceted defence of rhetoric qua plausible form of rational argumentation over controversial topics. Typically, modern scholars have taken the earlier Greeks to be far deeper and more complex than the later Romans, whose main aim was not to attain some abstract knowledge, but rather to educate the flower of Capitoline youth to performing well as lawyers in the Forum and orators in the Senate.

Undoubtedly, there is some truth to this widespread scholarly attitude vis-à-vis Roman rhetoric; yet, in Richards' view, at least Cicero's *De oratore* is uniquely articulate and insightful, despite it being less theoretical than Plato's *Gorgias* or *Phaedrus* and much more prone to first-person hands-on advice than Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Cicero's *De oratore* is not the average Roman manual; rather, it is an ingenious philosophical dialogue which never determines once and for all a certain intellectual position about rhetoric as correct and another as mistaken, thus showing the features of its own discussion topic while discussing it—the medium is the message. Cicero's dialogue moves in circles, re-assesses the premises of the stances being debated, enriches the understanding of each, explores the non-rational motives lurking behind the same, leaves ample room to realistic self-correction, and allows for a better grasp of how well- and intelligently-presented intellectual disagreements operate

in their fascinating yet perplexing intricacy and indefiniteness. The great man of law Cicero finds in Richards an excellent defence lawyer.

Less convincing is Richards' take on rhetoric *qua* new critical idiom. She is most competent in her presentation of many Nietzsche-inspired twentieth-century studies in linguistics and philosophy of language that, in her opinion, have revealed the intrinsic and inevitable rhetorical character of human communication, which is quintessentially metaphorical and devoted to persuasion (e.g. Barthes, de Man, Burke). However, it is not easy to infer from the same presentation how rhetoric may become, as the subtitle of her book announces, "the new critical idiom." Such a notion would lead to a careful reappraisal of "Aristotle's defence of rhetoric as pragmatic discourse" (176). Yet, the attempt made by Richards in this direction is tentative, to say the least, even if a well-established tradition dealing exactly with this notion has existed in the theory of argumentation since the 1950s, thanks to Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's seminal *New Rhetoric*. Richards seems unaware of this fairly well-known academic reality and does not refer to it in the book's bibliography. Some members of this tradition do appear in the bibliography (e.g. Leff, Gross) and in the main text (i.e. Vickers), but they are not treated as such. Although it would be unfair to diminish the value of her book because of this surprising gap, the reader must be warned about it, for there is indeed an articulate contemporary form of rhetoric as "new critical idiom," which Richards does not acknowledge.

GIORGIO BARUCHELLO

*University of Akureyri, Iceland*

© 2009 Giorgio Baruchello

**The World of the Anthropologist.** By Marc Augé and Jean-Paul Colleyn. Translated by John Howe (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2006), vi + 134 pp. £9.99 paper.

Marc Augé and Jean-Paul Colleyn deserve utmost praise for attempting to sketch candidly and succinctly the main aims and the scientific status of contemporary cultural

(or "social") anthropology (hereafter "anthropology" *tout-court*).

Anthropology is faced by a fast-changing world, where seemingly solid and well-established cultural distinctions and praxes have become extremely fluid and difficult to chart. The Stoic dream of a *cosmos-polis* has become reality: "The present age is characterized for every individual by an oscillation between the local level and the global one" (19). Within this fluid context, "whose structuring authority is world capitalism" (118), anthropology has been forced to reinvent itself and progress beyond the static categories of traditional ethnography and ethnology, which the authors regard as anthropology's first steps.

At the same time, anthropology is indebted to both older disciplines for those very categories. Certainly, their venerable age calls for their substantial reinvention into dynamic instruments of analysis, yet this reinvention is desirable exactly because they can serve the end of tackling intelligently people's lives and activities—with an added grain of salt. After all, hardly any human being seems to do without social interaction, linguistic and bodily communication, structured kinship, codified forms of material exchange, religious beliefs, and ritualised aesthetic performances. In other words, the grain of salt at issue is the increased methodological self-awareness or "reflexivity" (87) that the anthropologist ought to display today, thus avoiding "rigid ethnic typologies" (51) and other unrealistic reifications, paternalistic "romanticism" (43) *vis-à-vis* non-Western cultures, blindness to the "diachronic dimension" (80), "oversimplified bipolar contrasts" (109), excessive scepticism and naïve claims of objectivity.

Also, the categories of anachronistic ethnography and ethnology reveal the deepest common thread uniting them all, hence shedding light on the fundamental drive of all cultures, i.e. "to define selfhood and otherness" (11). Analogously, these categories reveal the fundamental character of human thought as such—its being "social"—which extends to its manifestation *qua* anthropological reflection. "All anthropology," the authors of the book state, "is therefore also sociology" (10).

Indeed, as concerns anthropology's debts, Augé and Colleyn's book appears to borrow much from the mother of all human and

social sciences—philosophy. References to philosophers, including, among others, Aristotle (62), Diderot (63), Marx (40, 49, 56, 100, 115, 125), Bachelard (5), Foucault (26, 49, 55), and to philosophical ideas such as “the relation between thought and language” (28), “the study of discourse as a form of power” (50), “performative” language (65), “other and same” (92)—lurk ceaselessly behind the lines. “Anthropology and philosophy,” as they conclude, “cannot avoid confronting and using each other” (97).

What seems peculiar to anthropology is its practitioners’ willingness to dive into “the field” (81) where their constructed object of study is located, whether “Bororo Fulanis in Niger or new-rich Silicon Valley computer nerds” (70). This allows anthropologists to add to the distance of the scientific observer the proximity of the empathetic interpreter. Equally peculiar is its practitioners’ openness to continuous self-revision: “anthropologists have to keep listening” (85). This means that anthropologists may not be able to produce one homogenous and invariable technical language describing the complex universe of cultural differences and similarities—no “pure” . . . collection of information” (44)—yet at the same time it guarantees a remarkable degree of honesty and originality to their enterprise. Rather than abstract truths, the anthropologist aims at concrete ones, which can be experienced and understood only through “familiarization or ‘osmosis’” or the “‘art’ (as it is sometimes called) of fieldwork” (82).

Somebody looking for a comprehensive history of anthropology should simply avoid reading this book: there are much broader and richer accounts elsewhere. Rather, the curious reader and the professional anthropologist may benefit enormously from this slender book, for it is the result of many years of direct experience, remarkable erudition, and honest self-analysis. The former will enjoy an overview of the articulate and fascinating activity called “anthropology”; the latter, an opportunity to ponder upon her profession, its paradoxes and the reasons for its tantalizing beauty.

GIORGIO BARCHELLO  
*University of Akureyri, Iceland*  
 © 2009 Giorgio Barchello

**The Other Bishop Berkeley: An Exercise in Re-enchantment.** By Costica Bradatan (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), x + 227 pp. 55.00 cloth.

Costica Bradatan’s book on the Irish philosopher George Berkeley (1685–1753), who is generally recognized together with David Hume and John Locke as a prominent British empiricist, surprises the reader by its uncompromisingly genealogical, comparative, and interdisciplinary approach. Bradatan’s study is one hundred percent “continental,” explicitly dealing with “non-empiricist” topics like alchemy, utopias, and the Christian Cathar religion (which teaches that the material world should be attributed to evil). Interestingly, Berkeley’s philosophy of the “visual language” is presented as a counterpoint to Lockean empiricism which, like the philosophies of Descartes and Gassendi, “became increasingly fascinated with a vision of the world as a precise and wonderful machine, as a mechanism that the philosophers have a duty to deconstruct and to explain away” (79).

There are numerous works on Berkeley that approach the philosopher from the perspective of his descendants; studies analyzing Berkeley’s relationship with the past, however, are rare. In Bradatan’s book, the historical figure Berkeley, who was trained as a theologian and served as a bishop of the Anglican Church, becomes a subject of research for the history of ideas. Berkeley is permitted to speak for himself, and his speech is not distorted by present day philosophical ideologies. While Bradatan leaves aside Berkeley’s contributions to the fields of philosophy of mathematics and philosophy of science, he does not fail to link the outcome of his research to Berkeley’s “official” philosophy, that is, the establishment of a “fundamental likeness and a similarity of function between the human mind and the divine mind.” Berkeley believed that in this process of “realization” of things, “the human mind and the divine mind perform in essence the same function” (24). Bradatan points out that in *Siris* (which was a bestseller in his lifetime), Berkeley admits fundamental agreements between Egyptian and Greek authors (a point that entered modern cultural studies with Martin Bernal’s *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* [New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987]). Further,

for Bradatan, alchemists are the first ecologists (109) and, ultimately, alchemy “may be seen as a discourse about the eternal human quest for a conciliation between many... forms of being in history” (111).

Every page makes clear that Berkeley’s philosophy is “philosophy as a way of life” (182) and “the whole alchemical cast of thought to which Berkeley’s proposals belong” can be used, for example, in critical discussions on genetic engineering. In this context one criticism arises. Bradatan produces numerous findings on utopias, alchemy, the *liber mundi* idea that the material world is a language spoken to us by God, the educational utopian project of “inexistent” Bermudas—and establishes relationships between these themes and Berkeley’s “Immaterialism.” All this could also have been discussed in the context of other contemporary philosophies that employ Berkeley’s philosophy for “real life” matters. For Berkeley, objects are real because the human mind confers upon them existence and intelligibility, which has much to do with the subject of virtual reality (see, for example, Tim Mawson, “Morpheus and Berkeley on Reality,” in *Philosophers Explore ‘The Matrix,’* ed. Christopher Grau [New York: Oxford University Press, 2005]). Today, as in Berkeley’s own time—though for other reasons—we are able to doubt that the world around us necessarily has a physical basis. And, as suggested by Bradatan’s findings, it is the virtuality of the everyday world that stands at the centre of Berkeley’s philosophy.

THORSTEN BOTZ-BORNSTEIN  
*EHESS Paris, France*

© 2009 Thorsten Botz-Bornstein

**The Notables and the Nation: The Political Schooling of the French, 1787–1788.** By Vivian R. Gruder (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), x + 495 pp. \$59.95/£44.95/€54.00 cloth.

This is an important study that provides a detailed account of the “Pre-Revolution” in France, and how wide portions of the population came to be politically aware and involved. The pivotal events were the meeting of the first Assembly of Notables

in February 1787, the May Edicts of 1788, the decision of the Parlement of Paris of 25 September of that year that determined that the Estates General would meet according to the guidelines of the Estates of 1614, and the second Assembly of Notables the following November. By ending her book at this point Vivian R. Gruder avoids the need to deal with the *cahiers de doléances*, a subject of great importance for the origins of the Revolution, but which properly falls outside the limits of this study.

Gruder divides her book into three sections. The first (chapters 1 to 3) treats the politics of the Notables, who initially gained wide support for their opposition to government projects of tax reform, then, in their second meeting, lost it for supporting vote by order. The interest in and the debates around the meetings of the Notables did much, Gruder shows, to awaken and broaden political awareness in France. The second section (chapters 4 to 10) is devoted to the dissemination of news, primarily through printed materials, such as newspapers, provincial, national and foreign, and pamphlets, but also manuscript newsletters, and innovatively, songs, prints and festive and riotous behavior, which contained elements of popular culture. The third section of the book (chapters 11 to 13) considers whether the voices of ordinary people can be heard in the political controversies and propaganda of the pre-Revolution. Gruder finds that pamphlets supposedly written by peasants or workers were in every case produced by writers or members of the elite who thought it worthwhile to appeal to a popular audience. This is not to say, however, that the working population was ignored during the heated debates preceding the Revolution. The fact that workers and peasants were taken as a target audience and that these levels of the population often participated in deliberative assemblies during the second half of 1788 suggests that ordinary people were indeed beginning to be politicized.

Gruder consistently prefers political to social interpretation of the events that she examines, and she gives pride of place to “public opinion” as a major force in the politics of the period. Unlike certain historians who find in public opinion a key category for interpreting the Revolution, Gruder does not ignore social and economic conditions in order

to focus on discourse. One of the strengths of this study is the way broader contexts are taken into account to throw light on the content of political writings, as in the analysis of two pamphlets expressing the needs and interests of the common people, but written by men who identified with, but did not themselves belong to, the popular classes (306–20). Gruder accords public opinion considerable autonomy and sees it as a major force in shaping politics, but she remains aware that people did not live and engage in political activity on the basis of words alone.

Some historians have treated public opinion as an abstract meta-category that could conveniently be used against the more commonsense and concrete categories of social interpretation. Gruder avoids this danger by focusing on key political events and responses to them during 1787 and 1788 and on the content of the arguments she is following. None of the key political events treated here will be new to students of the French Revolution, but the responses to them—in the range of media examined and public meetings—are. Gruder further gives her analysis solidity by focusing on the subjects that most exercised French political writers during 1787 and 1788, namely taxation, representation, the doubling of the Third and vote by head. These were real and immediate issues that meant much to most French men and women, and discussion of them effectively introduced much of the population to meaningful politics.

Gruder's identification of the composition of the public is more problematic. She examines prices of pamphlets and newspapers to see who could have afforded them, considers the role of patois and geographical factors in impeding communication, finding them minimal, and observes that local meetings were attended by artisans and peasants as well as the better-off. Yet when she has documentation on subscribers to papers or lists of those who attended reading rooms, they are inevitably the usual suspects: members of the liberal professions, the odd merchant, noble or comfortable bourgeois. In other words, the "public" which is the bearer of opinion is not equivalent with society as a whole but tends to be restricted to the elites who shared in Enlightenment culture at some level. Gruder's key category of public opinion, then, is more concrete than that found in the works of

revisionists such as Furet and Baker, but still rather abstract with respect to its social basis.

Gruder did not find much in the way of political pornography in the pamphlets and journals she examined, a subject that has interested scholars such as Robert Darnton and Antoine de Baeque, and she does not hesitate to say so (227, 288). She also observes that the harsh and intolerant political culture of the later Revolution that treated opposition as treason is rooted in the assumptions and practices of the Old Regime (181, 368). This differs from the brand of revisionism that sees the politics of the Terror as following from its discourse. Gruder's study is an admirable example of a historiographical school that prefers political to social interpretation, but that grounds political analysis in specific, concrete issues that concerned contemporaries rather than in theories of symbolic representation or linguistic usage.

Production of this volume is of high quality. There are only rare typographical slips (e.g., "gaity" [235], "does seems" [308]). Scholars will regret the decision of Harvard University Press to reduce costs by omitting a bibliography, and the choice of endnotes rather than footnotes is awkward and time consuming.

HARVEY CHISICK  
*University of Haifa, Israel*  
© 2009 Harvey Chisick

**When Ways of Life Collide: multiculturalism and Its Discontents in the Netherlands.** By Paul M. Sniderman and Louk Hagendoorn (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), xii + 155 pp. \$24.95/£15.95.

In November 2004, Dutch filmmaker and provocateur Theo van Gogh was gunned down on his way home by a young Dutch-Moroccan who was angry over a film van Gogh had made together with the Somali émigré and critic of Islam, Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Two years earlier, the populist politician Pim Fortuyn was similarly murdered—not by a Muslim or immigrant, but nonetheless as a result of his strong anti-immigration rhetoric which had begun to polarize Dutch society.



By 2005 the so-called “clash of civilizations,” which Samuel H. Huntington had hypothesized a decade earlier, seemed to be playing out in a society noted for and proud of its tolerance and multicultural traditions and policies. Paul Sniderman and Louk Hagendoorn’s empirical study of this “collision between Western European values and Muslim values” sets out to explore how the politics of multiculturalism and group identity contribute to this collision as well as to examine public perceptions of the dominant and non-dominant cultures in Holland. Interestingly, their extensive study, based on public opinion polls and data from both Holland and other European countries with a strong Muslim presence, was conducted before 9/11, demonstrating that the tensions in Dutch society, which became so exacerbated by Fortuyn and van Gogh, had existed before the attacks on Manhattan and the resulting mistrust of immigrants and Muslims.

At the center of this study, as the subtitle suggests, is the notion of multiculturalism and the question whether the policies of the Dutch government to protect the cultures of immigrant populations helped or hurt relations between the Europeans and the Muslims. Sniderman and Hagendoorn assert that Dutch policies have underestimated the power of identity politics and the loyalty that immigrant groups feel toward their native cultures and values: “Tolerance, not identity,” they write, “provides the foundation for diversity” (16). They arrive at this conclusion by looking at particular value conflicts (namely, prejudices and perceptions regarding women and children) and at how some European Dutch may have an overall positive impression of Muslims, yet still disagree strongly about Muslim treatment of women and children.

With chapters on prejudice, identity, top-down politics and tolerance, their study examines both the perceptions of Muslims by the non-Muslim Dutch, and the perceptions of Holland’s liberal European values by its Muslim immigrants. The authors also consider the policies of the Dutch government that foster multiculturalism (separate state-funded school systems, housing projects, etc.), yet neglect both the divided-loyalties of most immigrants and their failure to focus on tolerance. In their final summary they write: “The aim of multiculturalism is conciliation. But so far as it brings issues of cultural identity

to the fore, it increases the hostility of the majority to Muslim minorities” (138). “Mere tolerance,” dismissed by so many as insufficient in overcoming this problem, is an “underrated virtue” which, they argue, would go a long way toward addressing some of these conflicts.

*When Ways of Life Collide* is a well-documented and well-researched case study of cultural conflict. One can, of course, quibble with their understandings and definition of multiculturalism and/or the limits of tolerance itself, but this volume provides a strong empirical analysis of divergent belief systems and their interaction with public policy. But Sniderman and Hagendoorn’s study also serves as a companion to Ian Buruma’s 2006 study, *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo Van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance*. Buruma’s argument, as the subtitle of his book clearly articulates, does not posit tolerance as the foundation of diversity but as part of the problem. Buruma explores the consequences of unlimited tolerance for both sides of the political spectrum: tolerance that allowed the likes of Van Gogh and Fortuyn to gain prominence as well as the tolerance of a multicultural society that through its failure to ensure the integration of its immigrant populations unknowingly fostered pockets of radical Islam.

In the end, neither book offers a definitive solution to the tolerance question nor specific policies that would address differences and conflicts in cultural values. What these books do offer are two distinct approaches to the issue: one through social science and the other through the lens of cultural history. Sniderman and Hagendoorn in particular provide an essential study of the pitfalls of multiculturalism and make a strong argument for the need for tolerance and cultural understanding.

DAVID COURY  
*University of Wisconsin, USA*  
 © 2009 David Coury

**Narratives of the European Border: A History of Nowhere.** By Richard Robinson (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), vi + 200 pp. £45.00/\$69.95 cloth.

*Narratives of the European Border: A History of Nowhere* explores the experience of identity in a variety of fictions about regions that have

undergone cataclysmic changes in their political borders. Somewhat paradoxically, whilst recent literary debate about this issue was given a fresh impetus by the emergence in 1991 of the independent nations that previously belonged to the Soviet Union, the debate itself has focussed largely on the dilemmas thrown up by earlier upheavals, especially those that unfolded either between the two world wars or in the wake of the second. This study is no exception. It looks at four works influenced directly or indirectly by the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and a more recent novel largely triggered by the events of the 1990s. A useful introduction is followed by a chapter on recent theories of the border experience, and then five chapters devoted to the Trieste depicted in Italo Svevo's *La coscienza di Zeno*, the experience of 'nowhere' in the later fiction of Joseph Roth, Rebecca West's epic novel-cum-commentary on Yugoslavia, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, the Buckley section in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, and Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Unconsoled*.

The strength of the study is its author's encyclopaedic grasp of the critical literature related to this debate. Richard Robinson is constantly and always pertinently engaged with the ideas of those who have travelled this road before him, from Heidegger and Foucault, through Bhabha and Garton Ash, to Moretti, Bettiza, Appadurai and an impressive list of the scholars who have wrestled with each of his texts from a variety of perspectives. The argument is predominantly theoretical. Its purpose is to look at the various ways in which the interstitial spaces peculiar to the specific regions examined have impacted upon fictional narratives. In Svevo, the emphasis falls on the language of mistrust; in Roth, on the peculiar nature of a dream-space not of the city, but of the border; in West, on the awful reminder that "The earth is what is not us" and that "we are alone and terrified" (122); in Joyce, the reminder that too much change will transform words into "weightless, depthless signifiers" (151); and in Ishiguro, written later than the other chapters and in some sense serving to bring them together, that "nowhere" is a political territory that has become an insistent aesthetic form.

This over-arching claim, unproblematic in itself, nonetheless leaves quite a few questions begging. For example, are Svevo, Roth,

West, Joyce, and Ishiguro *equally* political writers? In exactly what way do border narratives differ from dystopian literature? And if "nowhere" has the qualities of a dreamscape, why should one insist that it be read in political terms? This study has a finely controlled argument; it is well-written and can be warmly recommended to anyone interested in the literature of identity and displacement. The only worry is that its argument rests a little too heavily on reiteration of the views of others. It is not entirely clear how the author's own insights represent radically new readings of the texts examined or, perhaps more pointedly, of the theoretical debate of which it is a part.

TERENCE DAWSON

*Nanyang Technological University, Singapore*

© 2009 Terence Dawson

**Secularism and Its Opponents: From Augustine to Solzhenitsyn.** By Emmet Kennedy (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), x + 278pp. \$42.50 cloth.

In a probing analysis of twelve giants of Western thought, Emmet Kennedy traces the emergence of secularism in the Eurocentric world. This book is designed to highlight the benefits as well as the cost of secularism. In fact, Kennedy concludes that secularism by the twenty-first century is really something of a problem rather than a solution. He is more concerned with the secular cultural milieu than with the constitutional dynamics that arise from the separation of church and state.

Kennedy divides his intellectual representatives into three categories. Augustine and Aquinas established the parameters of the conversation between Christian and non-Christian cultures, even though neither could be labeled a secularist. They were both concerned with the issues swirling around the reason/faith and state/church dichotomies. Dante, Machiavelli, Locke, Rousseau, and Marx criticized papal power along with the general role of religion in politics and thereby added to the force of secularism as an ideology. The French Revolution of 1789 was based on secular ideologies and, of course, helped shape the political debates of the last two centuries. Kennedy ends his narrative on secularism by examining the thoughts of Dostoyevsky and

Solzhenitsyn, both of whom confronted the outcomes of centuries of secular and anti-religious criticism. Both writers linked secularism to the scourge of communism by speculation and by experience and concluded that religion should be invited to re-enter the public arena.

Kennedy does not approach secularism as merely a disembodied idea floating through the cultural atmosphere, but rather concretizes it in the socio-political lives of the writers who spoke for their eras. He admits that his selection is arbitrary, but suggests that this in itself indicates the ubiquity of the secular waves coursing through Western history. The historical contexts are vital in nurturing these thinkers, as some examples may suggest. Augustine may not have thought of his theology of the city of God had not Rome been sacked, which compelled him to defend Christianity from pagan attacks. Solzhenitsyn would never have written such heart-rending diatribes against totalitarianism had he not experienced Stalinism and its gulags.

Kennedy concludes that the roots of genocide and totalitarianism lie in the secular privatization of religion, and he suggests that a cure for these may be found in re-discovering the West's spiritual values that can synthesize the spiritual and the temporal worlds. This book can be criticized for its nearly obsessive focus on great thinkers and for its consequent elimination of everyday or popular history. After all, secularism succeeded not just because it was embodied in the works of some of the most outstanding minds of Western culture, but because its values resonated in the socio-political lives of normal people, who, since at least the seventeenth century, have found religion increasingly irrelevant. But this criticism is only meant to suggest other avenues that could be followed on the topic so adroitly explicated by Kennedy.

DONALD J. DIETRICH

*Boston College, USA*

© 2009 Donald J. Dietrich

**Democratic Breakdown and the Decline of the Russian Military.** By Zoltan Barany (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), xi + 247 pp. \$ 22.95/£13.50 cloth.

A resurrected Soviet Union—with no operative ideology, reduced in area to the pre-World

War I boundaries of Russia, its military focused on preserving privileges and not on reforms of the armed forces, but ruled by a “super-presidency”—this is the image of the new Russia that emerges from Zoltan Barany's detailed study of the development of civil-military relations under the successive reigns of Mikhail Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin, and Vladimir Putin.

Barany's theoretical framework is based upon the concepts of path dependence and institutional decay. The first concept, which is often used by economists and political scientists but seldom by historians, is determinist: collective actors, such as states, are locked into a certain path of development because of the inbuilt inertia of the operation of institutions. It takes a revolution to change institutions and subsequent political behaviour. Barany defines the second concept as “protracted negative institutional change” (6). The path ends in a blind alley. This is a normative statement, but Barany's work starts from the assumption that in the early 1990s, both scholars and politicians in the democratic world expected Russia to join their camp. However, the country's movement during the last two decades has been towards autocracy, not democracy. Barany ends his book admonishing “Western governments to...adjust their policies appropriately” (192).

The “decline of the Russian military” in the title of the book refers to the fact that the Russian military machinery has not been reformed. However, Barany shows that the military as an interest group has succeeded well in preserving material privileges for the officers and enhancing a Russian cold war attitude towards the West. The author argues that the result of crises that affected the military, such as the second Chechen war from 1999 on and the Kursk submarine catastrophe in August 2000, was that the presidency in collusion with the military could clamp down on the comparatively free mass media and, as an effect, diminish the authorities' accountability and strangle political life in an increasingly opaque society.

It is not only Barany's analysis of how the military has managed to keep their realm outside civilian control in terms of both public surveillance and civil experts on military matters—both have remained very

weak—that recalls Soviet reality (with the “superpresidency” replacing the Communist Party). Also his research project as such was influenced by a factor that must be labelled “Soviet.” In his foreword, giving the usual thanks to benefactors, Barany informs us that in 2005 he declined a grant from the U.S. International Research and Exchange Board, “because by this time doing field work on ‘sensitive subjects’ in Russia had become dangerous both for researchers—who, like me, refuse to mislead the Russian authorities about what they are interested in studying—and, even more so, for those willing to talk to them” (x).

KRISTIAN GERNER  
Lund University, Sweden  
© 2009 Kristian Gerner

**Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine.** By Omer Bartov (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press: 2007), xvii + 232 pp. \$26.95, cloth.

The aftermath of the Holocaust in the Yiddish heartland meant its ultimate success. Upon the murder of the Jewish people followed the extinction of most of the material remnants and traces of their history in the region. The renowned Holocaust scholar Omer Bartov had to turn archaeologist when he set out to reconstruct the historical milieu of Polish-Ukrainian Jewry, starting from his mother’s hometown of Buchach. This is the proper current rendering of the name in English, but I, for one, have difficulties not to think in terms of the Polish transcription of Buczacz, although I accept Bartov’s choice. The erosion of the past is visible even in the spelling of place names(!).

Roman Vishniac had a foreboding of horrors to come when he, on the eve of World War II, took the photos for what was to become the classic *A Vanished World* (1983). He recorded misery rather than glory but he recorded a vibrant life. When Bartov traveled in Eastern Galicia three-quarters of a century later, only misery was there to be recorded. It was not the misery of people, because

there were few Jewish people to meet, but the misery of dilapidated synagogues and neglected cemeteries amidst fresh monuments to the glory of—monocultural—Ukrainian history.

Bartov traveled through Eastern Galicia from L’viv (Lwów) counterclockwise with two purposes in mind: the one to peruse local archives in order to call to life the multiethnic history of the region, and to get acquainted with the landscape and built environments of his own ancestors. The result is a small book which is a great accomplishment.

The historical dimension of *Erased* gives detailed accounts of how the Holocaust was carried out on the ground, with active support from individuals of the local non-Jewish population. It also describes how the memory of its Jewish history has been actively suppressed. The travelogue describes the contemporary cityscapes of the erstwhile *shtetlach*. Sixty plain photographs of (mostly ruined) synagogues and neglected Jewish cemeteries and of modern Ukrainian monuments to the memory of Ukrainian “victims of Nazi and Communist Terror, 1939–1950” serve as an eloquent antidote to Vishniac’s artful photographs. The caption in the quotation is important. It reveals how contemporary Ukrainian historical culture and folklore sometimes portray “the Jews” as “communists.” Jews are thus collectively identified as perpetrators rather than victims in Eastern Galicia’s dark history during the Nazi and Soviet occupations.

One encounters in Bartov’s text a sense of bitterness directed at the present Ukrainian neglect of its Jewish history. This may disturb some people in the same way that Jan T. Gross’s two latest books on Polish compliance with the Holocaust and on Polish pogroms after the war have disturbed some Polish colleagues. However, whatever one thinks of referring to nations as such in historiography, Omer Bartov’s new book is a worthy, very personal sequel to his earlier work as a prominent historian of the Holocaust.

KRISTIAN GERNER  
Lund University, Sweden  
© 2009 Kristian Gerner

**Romanticism, Medicine, and the Poet's Body.** By James Robert Allard (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2007), viii + 174 pp. £50.00 cloth.

In *Romanticism, Medicine, and the Poet's Body*, James Robert Allard reminds us that even casual-seeming Romantic references to “flesh and blood” (to use one of his examples, from William Wordsworth) could be implicated in contemporary debates about the nature of life and, more particularly, about the study of human anatomy. Poets and physicians were equally aware of “growing cultural anxieties about the body,” Allard argues, and to the extent that they addressed this anxiety in “intersect[ing]” ways, we can trace how the body was theorized by Romantic-era writers and physicians and how both groups tried to think through the relationship between the body and the mind (12).

The book begins by exploring the status of anatomical study in Romantic-era Great Britain. As Allard explains, pioneers such as William and John Hunter emphasized the importance of anatomy to medical practice, an emphasis that gained credibility with the growing prestige of surgery (22–23). However, particularly in debates about “vitality,” the sense persisted that understanding the separate parts of the body was different from, and less urgent than, identifying the general principles of health, disease, and “life” itself. Further, anatomists worked in the shadow of formal and informal strictures regarding the treatment of the dead. Only criminals could legally be dissected, with the implication that dissection was inherently a criminal matter (25–27). Ultimately, as Allard shows, the anatomist’s “body consciousness” had to work in two directions. To legitimize anatomical pursuits, the practitioner who studied the body also had to be in control of his or her bodily responses. To study the body was, finally, to “embod[y] power and authority” (42). Allard’s thorough canvassing of these debates sets up his chapter on Wordsworth’s preface to *Lyrical Ballads* and Joanna Baillie’s “Introductory Discourse” to her *Series of Plays*. Both writers tried to establish authority over the body, and in both cases, literary presumption entailed anxiety. It had become desirable to associate authority with “body consciousness,” but the poet, who is not in actual physical contact with the bodies

of other people, always winds up “protest[ing] too much” about his or her own powers (52).

The second section of the book examines three famous authors who received medical training and who mediated medical and literary authority in their work. John Thelwall made new use of the metaphor of the “body politic” (64), emphasizing the primacy of rhetorical over empirical strategies of managing his society’s “vital principles” (69). John Keats, similarly, attempted to maintain both literary and medical forms of authority in his figure of the “Poet-Physician” (105). Thomas Lovell Beddoes’ *Death’s Jest-Book* is an appropriate subject for Allard’s final chapter. Beddoes, an internationally known anatomist whose verse writing was published posthumously, is the single figure in the study who, Allard finds, confronts the incompatibility of material and immaterial conceptions of the soul. “No amount of will or textual mastery can re-write the body’s laws,” Beddoes discovers, and while this is a personal failure Allard rightly accounts it an artistic success: “*Death’s Jest-Book* succeeds in walking the space between” scientific and poetic accounts of authority precisely because it recognizes that they must remain separate (137). Thus Allard’s carefully researched and closely reasoned book ends on a wise, pragmatic note. It joins a number of recent, important works in giving us a Romanticism that is fully informed by the best medical and scientific thinking of its time, and which thus expresses, rather than simply transcending, the conflicts and contradictions of embodied experience.

BRIAN GOLDBERG  
University of Minnesota, USA  
© 2009 Brian Goldberg

**Shakespeare and the Nobility: The Negotiation of Lineage.** By Catherine Grace Canino (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), x + 266 pp. £50.00/ \$95.00 cloth.

Very early in his career in the theatre, Shakespeare wrote a sequence of four plays dramatising the history of England in the fifteenth century through the reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV and Richard III.

Catherine Grace Canino argues that in his characterisation of the noblemen who fought through the French wars in this period and the dynastic Wars of the Roses that followed, Shakespeare was influenced by the fortunes and reputation of the Elizabethan descendants of those noblemen. In making such an argument, she posits the importance of what she terms “narrative environment” in conditioning the production of histories or fictions. Shakespeare’s changes to his chronicle sources are placed as significant responses to that narrative environment, enhancing or denigrating his aristocratic character to reflect the standing of their sixteenth-century namesakes.

The research that has gone into this book is painstakingly thorough. The genealogies of the principal nobles involved, the Dukes of Buckingham and Suffolk, the Earls of Shrewsbury, Warwick, Cumberland, and Derby, are carefully untangled, and illustrated by family trees. We are shown how the historical actions of the fifteenth-century aristocrats were variously represented through successive generations of chroniclers. And the lives of their Elizabethan counterparts are even more assiduously documented with materials from state papers and archives, marking out their often shifting position in the snakepit of Elizabeth’s court.

Canino is candid in admitting that “this study is an examination of possibilities rather than an argument of fact” (221). It rests, like so many attempts at historical explications of Shakespeare’s work, on unprovable hypotheses. Three assumptions, in particular, however, leave the argument of *Shakespeare and the Nobility* especially open to doubt. First of all, there is the difficult textual history of these plays. For the purposes of her thesis—and this book does read like a converted PhD thesis—Canino treats the 1590s quartos, *The First Part of the Contention* and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, as early versions of plays revised in the reign of James to yield the Folio 2 and 3 *Henry VI*. The precise chronology of her argument, whether a named aristocrat was in or out of favour in a given year, depends on this still quite speculative textual theory. Secondly, we have to assume that Shakespeare was aware of matters at court that would have been top secret at the time. So, for example, Canino has ferreted out fascinating information about the activities of a Sir Edward Stafford as double

agent of Spain in the 1580s. But how likely is it that Shakespeare would also have had access to such information and that it would have influenced his characterisation of the Stafford family in his plays?

Finally there is the crucial question of the ways in which plays of the time may have reflected contemporary political realities. In arguing that Shakespeare developed a romantic intrigue between Queen Margaret and the Duke of Suffolk because of a parallel case in his own time, she asserts: “To a dramatic historian, the opportunity to construct a historical romance that reflected and commented upon a contemporary situation would be irresistible” (94). However, that is exactly what all playwrights of the period knew was intensely dangerous, and in this respect Shakespeare seems to have been even more cautious than others. The one known instance, the example with which Canino begins her book, works against her argument. In the first version of 1 *Henry IV*, as in Shakespeare’s source, the misleader of Prince Henry’s use was called Sir John Oldcastle. A protest from a powerful descendant of Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, led to his name being changed to Falstaff. The inadvertent offense caused, with the immediate deferential response, does not sit well with the idea of Shakespeare deliberately, even provocatively, fashioning his historical characters with their contemporary name bearers consciously in mind. The case, attractive as it may seem, and carefully documented as it is, must be taken as at best not proven.

NICHOLAS GRENE  
Trinity College, Ireland  
© 2009 Nicholas Grene

**Learning to Live Finally: The Last Interview. An Interview with Jean Birnbaum.** By Jacques Derrida. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 96 pp. 9.99 paper.

Jean Birnbaum was the last newsman who interviewed Jacques Derrida just a few weeks before he passed away in October 2004 after a long struggle with an incurable disease. This interview of a thinker, who greatly

contributed to the formation of post-structuralism and post-modern stance of philosophizing, was published in *Le Monde* on August 19 and became an important “trace” of Derrida’s personal approach to his life story and professional achievements.

The very title of Derrida’s last interview sounds like an invitation to find a key to the problem of learning how to live. Despite the widespread focus on the deconstructive procedure of text analysis in approaching his legacy, the French thinker clearly reveals here the existential facet of his philosophy that persistently reflects or reproduces itself especially in the works written in the last period of his professional career. The pulse of existential time was for Derrida an undeniable basis and premise for any kind of genealogical deconstruction and negotiation with the tradition. If so, learning to live finally should be regarded as an effort of self-interpretation within the flux of time. Derrida denies the possibility of learning how to live through education due to the threat contained in the demand to follow another person’s pattern of experience as universally valid. One’s life experience, he believes, always contains a personal feeling of one’s own mortality, which is difficult to accept. All human beings, in this perspective, are “survivors who have been granted a temporary reprieve” (24). This kind of survival is nothing other than living on, and, at the same time, it contains in itself a hope of “living” after death.

Human existence is inconceivable for Derrida without belonging to a certain generation. He understands himself as a child of the sixties of the twentieth century, which is thus the background of his outlook on the variety of cotemporary global world problems. Derrida refers to the ideas of Barthes, Blanchot, Bourdieu, Deleuze, Foucault, Levinas, Lyotard, and others as constituting a permanent source of inspiration of his own thought. He also expresses his indebtedness to a broader tradition of the past “from the Bible to Plato, Kant, Marx, Freud, Heidegger, and so on” (29). This rootedness in the cultural milieu and the desire to find an original self-identity, in Derrida’s description, reveal the essential contradiction of any final individual human existence.

On the personal level, Derrida gives, first and foremost, an account of his own

complicated self-identity, of his being at once Jewish, French, and European. Despite his criticism of the politics of Israel, of “a certain Zionism,” and many other problems with his “Jewishness,” he confesses that he will never deny it (39). Understanding himself as part of “an extraordinary transformation” of French Judaism in Algeria, Derrida calls himself ironically “the last of the Jews.” While his grandparents were still close to Arab culture, in language and customs, and his parents were raised in a bourgeois Parisian fashion, Derrida’s own generation made its choice in favor of liberal professions, teaching, medicine, and law, and entered into the era of “mixed” marriages. The singularity of his cultural milieu explains, in his own words, his particular passion for the French language: “And just as I love life, and my life, I love what made me what I am, the very element of which is language, this French language that is the only language I was ever taught to cultivate, the only one also for which I can say I am more or less responsible. That is why there is in my writing a certain, I wouldn’t say perverse but somewhat violent, way of treating this language. Out of love” (36). This love of language, Derrida believes, should not be considered as something nationalistic or conservative. Language pre-exists and survives us thus giving a chance for survival to any individual who leaves a trace in his or her milieu. While the Jewish and the French elements of Derrida’s self-identity appear mutually complementary, his “Europeanness,” in his own eyes, appears to be far more complicated.

Derrida is highly critical with regard to Europeanism and Eurocentrism and engages in the debate with some of its major interpreters, such as Valery, Husserl, and Heidegger. Deconstruction as a kind of genealogical analysis, he confirms, should be considered as a “gesture of suspicion” with regard to Eurocentrism. It is based on the controversial heritage of the European Enlightenment and should be considered as providing a perspective for its self-criticism and radical alterity. The understanding of the European cultural tradition in a critical-deconstructive way, Derrida believes, may give a chance for finding the roots of all its negative historical phenomena (totalitarianism, Nazism, fascism, genocides, Shoah, colonialism etc.), which nourish our feeling of guilt. This kind of the permanent

reassessment and self-critique of the European tradition creates an opportunity for change (45). Derrida is willing to call himself the representative of this alternative Europe to come, which should stand in radical opposition to both American hegemony and Arab-Islamic theocratism, “without Enlightenment and without political future.”

On the theoretical level, Derrida proposes the analysis of the ties of human existence to the cultural milieu in terms of his notion of grammatology. Understanding survival as an originary concept which describes the structure of existence (*Dasein*), he comes to the conclusion: “We are structurally survivors, marked by this structure of the trace and of the testament” (51). However, this existential reading of the basic role of survival for the act of writing should not situate it “on the side of death and the past rather than life and the future” (51). In his *Negotiations*, Derrida interpreted deconstruction as a never-ending process of the interpretation of the past tradition which is at once affirmative and negative. If so, this kind of a genealogical procedure looks very similar to a broadly understood hermeneutical approach. Derrida repeatedly emphasized his sympathy with the transcendental historicism of Husserl and Heidegger. In his last interview, he continues this line of argument saying that “deconstruction is always on the side of the *yes*, on the side of the affirmation of life” (51). This affirmative moment of deconstruction should be regarded as a response to the accusations of nihilism often addressed to Derrida.

As a negative and affirmative negotiation strategy, deconstruction is a form of resistance to the machinery of power. Like many other aspects of his doctrine, Derrida’s political views were profoundly influenced by Levinas. Despite their disagreement on metaphysics, Derrida highly valued not only Levinas’s appeal to existential phenomenology, his linguistic methodology and criticism of European ontology, but also his emphasis on the primacy of ethics in the Jewish tradition and his interpretation of the role of the prophetic element in politics. Derrida never hesitated to acknowledge the part played by the secular messianic element in his militant criticism of the globalist world order. Together with Kantian ethics it contributed also to the formation of his ideal of democracy to come. In his last interview, he speaks of a new

Europe that will be able to “sow the seeds of a new alter-globalist politics” (42). Intellectuals, in Derrida’s opinion, should be the major force of a global change leading to democracy to come. “In the originary concept of the university there is this absolute claim to an unconditional freedom to think, speak, and critique” (48). The university without condition is thus the imaginary place that would unite intellectuals who can perform this secular messianic mission and bring about a non-oppressive world order.

Derrida’s last interview is the “affirmation of a living being who prefers living and thus surviving to death” (52). He is persuaded that the ability to leave traces should be taken as a sign of this survival: “To leave traces in the history of the French language—that is what interests me,” he confessed (37). The sustained and growing interest in Derrida’s theoretical heritage symbolically attests to the fact that the “traces” he has left in twentieth- and twenty-first-century philosophical thought are unerasable.

BORIS GUBMAN  
Tver State University, Russia  
© 2009 Boris Gubman

### **German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past.**

By A. Dirk Moses (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), ix + 293 pp. £45.00/\$80.00 cloth.

Much of what is subsumed in Germany under the term of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (to cope with the past) refers to guilt, shame, suppression and deception, and the four are not that easy to separate in any specific case because we find them intertwined in reflections, analyses or vitae. The personal coping of Germans has led the descendants of perpetrators onto various paths, as Dan Bar-On and others have documented. First-generation Nazis may have pursued similar options for opportunistic reasons or out of a new conviction that the past deed was wrong. Many Germans, perhaps most, had other things to do than to engage in self-reflective activities, but for many intellectuals and academics, the Nazi past remains an ongoing—and painful, agonizing—issue.



In his *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* A. Dirk Moses recounts debates regarding *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, spanning the postwar decades up to the present. He relates debates in great, perhaps even excessive detail, covering twelve chapters. The uninitiated reader will find much interesting information on an ongoing discourse; nevertheless, he is bound to miss a perspective. Moses structures this discourse according to the generation and the position of discussants. Regarding generations, he sets his focus on what we call the *weisse Generation*, and Moses calls the “forty-fivers” cohort (born early enough to be conscious of the Nazi period, but not old enough to have become implicated); indeed, “the expectation was that [he] would be their generational biographer.” He focuses mainly on two populations with occasionally oscillating membership, the “redemptive,” non-patriotic Germans (Joschka Fischer or Jürgen Habermas), and the “integrative,” patriotic Germans (like Wilhelm Hennis or Martin Walser), but it is doubtful that such a categorization could cover the whole spectrum of issues of this German dilemma.

Moses’s book focuses on Germany as such, seen through the eyes of the intellectuals he refers to: “historians, philosophers, sociologists, political scientists, and educationalists,” or writers who appeal to an educated public and whose positions are presented or discussed in the feature pages of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* or other leading German newspapers or magazines. He critically recounts the discussion leading up to the controversial lecture of Martin Walser in the *Frankfurter Paulskirche* (1998), the implementation of the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin (2005), and the soccer World Championship in Germany (2006), with its opportunity to indulge in harmless patriotism by innocent fourth-generation Germans.

While Moses retraces this German discourse, he does not appear to follow through on his own intentions. In the first chapter of his book, he claims to address the issue of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the aftermath of Daniel Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* (1996) not with the vocabulary of guilt and shame, but with the concept of pollution: “There is no doubt,” Moses states, “that German children felt polluted, and even saw themselves as victims of their parents.” To “feel polluted” is a strong-worded sentiment which

may have nourished the German post-1945 debate which Moses addresses, at least partially. But the concept of pollution offers other forms of analysis. To ask to what extent post-1945 German thinking was “polluted” or, to use more neutral terms, influenced or affected by the Nazi era, is certainly a valid research question.

One of the basic tenets of a sociology of knowledge posits that knowledge is at least partially determined by the environment, by the locus of debate, theory formation and conceptualization. Hence, it ought to be natural to ask to what extent post-1945 science has been influenced or even shaped by 1933–1945 science. Or, more generally, we may ask to what extent Nazi science was influenced by thoughts, concepts and institutional arrangements which still affect today’s academic world. In this way, we can apply an epidemiological approach and ask: ‘how contagious were these thoughts or concepts?’ ‘how influential were the various “disease carriers” or how resistant the disciplines or academics?’ ‘and how prevalent was the infection among post-1945 academics and intellectuals?’ 1959, according to Theodor W. Adorno, demanded a kind of “vaccination” against such diseases.

Moses addresses this question, but he is so driven to document an inner-German debate, extending over decades, that he appears to lose sight of his original question. *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* does not focus on the epidemiology of ideas or on the concept of “pollution.” Institutional aspects as they relate to the role of professional organizations or the reform of higher education are touched on, to be sure, but they do not form a central focus of Moses’s analysis. “German” disciplines with a clear Nazi past still practiced today—e.g. *Raumordnung* (a form of regional planning) or *Volkskunde* (a kind of folklore studies or ethnology)—are not mentioned in spite of existing literature, and disciplines, like sociology, which are heavily contaminated by the Nazi heritage, are not critically reviewed. Other fields playing a central role in Nazi Germany—such as anthropology, geography, medicine, engineering, German philology, and law—are not critically assessed either. A look at Ernst Klee’s lexicon on people of the *Drittes Reich* (Third Empire) will show the many Nazi academics who survived de-nazification procedures and served to educate future generations

of students, many of whom lacked the stature and the intellectual abilities to acknowledge that influence.

While there is a range of excellent publications focusing on the Nazi past of institutions or companies, there are not that many analyses of a possible Nazi legacy in today's world. We normally assume that this has finally come to an end. But this might not be so. "Contaminated" concepts or language will be used by almost anyone now, regardless of the political orientation of the person using these words, and naively. The same problem arises with the legacy of the German Democratic Republic (and other dictatorship regimes). Pertinent research questions are raised in this regard in Wilfried Loth and Bernd A. Rusinek's edited book, *Verwandlungspolitik* (1998), which Moses cites. If we want to continue the "vaccination" process Adorno speaks of, we have to become conscious not only of the Nazi past but of its legacy today. And if we want to better understand the Nazi phenomenon, we might have to identify those aspects which fostered the development of Nazism and which are still part of today's culture.

A comparative perspective that the author—raised in Australia, pursuing his doctoral studies at Berkeley, and spending many years of study in Germany itself—is predisposed to but fails to give, would have provided insight that is lacking. To discuss the demands of the German students in 1968 regarding representation in matters of running the university without a comparative analysis is shortsighted, if not misleading: the European '68-movement did not have that much in common with the student movement of the United States that preceded it, and the demands of the German students were different from those elsewhere. The Free Speech Movement at Berkeley and the anti-Vietnam War teach-ins initiated by faculty at the University of Michigan both started in the fall of 1964, events which could be taken to stand at the beginning of a cascade of protest movements that sprung up in many Western nations. These protest movements had a culture of protest—and an anti-Vietnam War vision—in common, but apart from that, the focus of protest was locally determined.

The demands of the German students regarding the role and governance of universities was in line with a labor union vision, so to speak, and the irony is that they helped

to cement a highly stratified, authoritarian academic system that is, in Joseph Ben-David's words, "dysfunctional." German assistants are not Assistant Professors, as Moses suggests, in spite of the fact that both have similar credentials: the difference is that the former are in a dependency position, serving Professors, whereas the latter are part of a collegial culture and academic departments, enjoying the academic freedom that allows them to act as faculty members and principal investigators. The German university is enchanted by titles (and positions) more than by talent, as Rainer C. Schwinges et al. have documented (2007), and this has affected the entire research enterprise and intellectual life of the region. It is very likely that 1968 was, for the time being, the last chance to reform the German university and German intellectual life in general, and the current official "excellence initiatives," another top-down policy, will do little to change them.

The problem of Germany today is not a revival of Nazism by right-wing intellectuals; the problem is to be found in the still insular German culture, too remote from an international discourse, which affects, in particular, the social sciences and the humanities. This culture, local and hierarchic as it is, is bound to be affected by a brownish shaded science. Luckily, some German scholars of the older and newer generation have been able to free themselves from this heritage. In a recent article, "Zumeist nüchterne Leute" (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 22–23 March, 2008), Hermann Lübke, one of the figures of the post-1945 debate, whom Moses repeatedly cites, relates the story on Husserl interrupting a student who failed to come to the point, with the remark: instead of saying what he, the student, had *read*, he should say what he had *seen*. I am tempted to make the same remark.

MARCEL HERBST

*Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Switzerland*

© 2009 Marcel Herbst

**The Chomsky Effect: A Radical Works beyond the Ivory Tower.** By Robert F. Barsky (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), xviii + 381 pp. \$29.95 cloth.

Although Noam Chomsky is one of the most widely discussed radical thinkers of our time,

Robert F. Barsky examines his case once again. Putting aside his theory of syntax and transformative generative grammar, Barsky discusses the issues which have made Chomsky a thinker, or more broadly, a social philosopher. More specifically, Barsky examines the impact Chomsky has had and still has on several generations of politicians, musicians, artists and other radical open-minded rebels, starting from his critique of the Vietnam war to his proposition of redefining capitalism, including his critical view of American imperial attempts.

Such an effect goes precisely beyond the academic Ivory Tower. Drawing on the public debates (not only in an university circuit), interviews, recordings and performances with rock musicians, not to mention the publications (books and articles), Barsky concludes that Chomsky achieved popularity as a kind of pop-star, being criticized by other pop-media stars (conservative talk-show hosts, satirists and humorists), while remaining widely respected as a radical thinker. Referring to Eddie Vedder of *Pearl Jam*, Tim Morello of *Rage Against the Machine*, Michael Stipe of *R.E.M.* on the one hand, and to David Letterman on the other, his readers witness the Chomsky Effect. The success Chomsky achieved in the public sphere (by lecturing, teaching, advocating, and so on) can thus be related to mass culture. There are really very few academic intellectuals who enjoy such a wide audience or have had such a cultural impact.

The main merit of the book is its multi-vocal approach to Chomsky, with Barsky “surfing” over several of Chomsky’s many intellectual trademarks. In trying to highlight these trademarks Barsky must balance the processes of mythologization of his subject and those of his demythologization. *The Chomsky Effect* seems to gravitate towards the first category, although Barsky’s technique is to highlight problems rather than putting the “ultimate truth” into the readers’ minds.

The author presents Chomsky’s pop-star status as a natural effect of his public activities. His book clearly belongs to the leftist intellectual atmosphere of the early twenty-first century. For Barsky being debated, noticed, and criticised (not only by intellectuals) means *being alive* in the broadest sense: to be continually discussed maintains the subject in the public eye. Is this then our contemporary way to achieve immortality? Maybe. It seems,

however, that for Chomsky this is not the point at all. While his ideas continue to pour out in the mass media, he continues to influence new generations, especially of young rebels. This, we may assume, is the effect that almost every intellectual can only dream of having.

MAREK JEZIŃSKI

*Nicolas Copernicus University, Poland*

© 2009 Marek Jeziński

**Marxism and Social Theory.** By Jonathan Joseph (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), vi + 171 pp. £18.99 paper.

This contribution to the series Traditions in Social Theory is a concise and clear introduction to Marxism’s debates about social theorising. Jonathan Joseph brings an explicitly Marxist approach to his task, declaring that “Marxism continues to provide the best possible framework for understanding the social world” (2). The bulk of the book is a historical survey of debates within Marxism, and the final two chapters are systematically critical of the various strands of Marxism and “post-Marxism.”

The first substantive chapter is a summary of the development of the social ideas of Marx and Engels, though it is difficult to disentangle these from their development out of Hegelianism and their transformation into political economy. The standard discussions of alienation, class, the state and revolution are here. The chapter disappoints in not examining the relationship between Marx and Engels, treating their ideas—except for a critique of Engels’ banal and mechanical use of dialectics—as if they were consonant. The historical account continues with Marx’s heirs, who divided into the “mechanical determinists” of the Second International and the voluntarist Leninists. Lenin’s analysis of imperialism, and Trotsky’s “permanent revolution” get some attention here.

The increasingly complex views of social life and action developed by later theorists were attempts to keep Marx relevant. Gramsci’s notion of hegemony is explored, linked with his emphasis on human will. Lukács revived the Hegelian interpretation of Marx, also emphasising the role of the subjective factor in history,

and leading eventually to a humanist Marxism. Joseph believes that Gramsci offers the “best prospects of developing a substantial Marxist social theory” (67). While most of the usual Marxists are given space, there are some notable exceptions, once thought to be prominent contributors to the tradition; the ideas of Stalin on language, economics and science, for example, are not evaluated, and Mao’s contributions are not so much as mentioned.

The historical chapters of this book treat familiar themes in familiar, albeit readable, ways. Those chapters which cover thinkers labelled “structural Marxists” (including Althusser and Poulantzas) and the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School are the more interesting. Joseph acknowledges that such theoretical developments give rise to doubt “whether late critical theory can really be considered to be Marxism at all” (95). But the most challenging parts of the book are those that look at some key contemporary debates within Marxism: the relationship between class analysis, on the one hand, and feminism and nationalism on the other; and the different approaches to the materialist conception of history and to particular historical events. These debates remain inconclusive, and Joseph disarmingly wonders that perhaps we are “no clearer as to what exactly Marxist social theory is” (128). He goes on to critique “post-Marxism” from his own “critical realist form of structural Marxism” (128).

Despite having produced a brief but informed introduction to debates within Marxism, it is arguable whether Joseph’s book has met the aims of the series within which it appears. Its title, for example, is misleading; a more accurate description would have been “Marxist social theory.” It tells us little about the purposes and objects of social theory, or about Marxism’s approaches (and debts) to rival social theories. It tells us virtually nothing about “capitalism” or about what “emancipation” might mean, despite using these terms frequently. It tells us nothing about how (or how well) Marxists have analysed the social and political forms created in Marxism’s name. Joseph’s critical approach to Marxism may be unsurprising, but his ultimate faith in Marxism as a guide to analysing and changing the world is surprising. Quite what the distinctive intellectual claims of Marxist social

theory might be, and why they have earned Joseph’s respect, remain mysterious.

DAVID W. LOVELL

*University of New South Wales, Australia*

© 2009 David W. Lovell

**Garibaldi, Citizen of the World: A Biography.** By Alfonso Scirocco. Translated by Allan Cameron (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), xii + 442 pp. \$35.00/£19.05 cloth.

The Garibaldi bicentenary celebrations were bound to generate a certain amount of opportunistic publishing, and this book is one welcome example. The original edition, however, was published by Laterza as long ago as 2001 with the title *Garibaldi: Battaglie, amori, ideali di un cittadino del mondo*. As the Italian title might suggest, this is a popular history, but one in the best tradition. There are no footnotes, although a shortish bibliography is provided, the writing is lively and interesting and the book is certainly recommended.

The cosmopolitan theme announced in the title is taken seriously, and Alfonso Scirocco gives the Great Man’s exotic adventures in South America full treatment. Their influence, he argues, was considerable. They turned Garibaldi from a sailor into an effective leader of irregular forces on land. As the leader of the Italian Legion in Uruguay, he learned the value of international fraternity. The myth of the “invincible gringo” and intrepid freedom-fighter was created.

Scirocco makes the excellent point that when Garibaldi eventually sailed for Italy in 1848, he had little understanding of the political situation on the peninsula. He had been away for 13 years and had no way of appreciating the real balance of forces or of gauging the true potential of Mazzinianism. Scirocco agrees with the conventional view that Garibaldi was a *naïf* in politics, but credits him with a few vague but unwavering convictions, including freedom, patriotism, international brotherhood and, later on, hostility to the Church. He was “an idealist without ideologies,” and therefore full of political contradictions. But perhaps the absence of any core of political doctrine made possible the

transformation of the wild Mazzinian republican into the loyal servant of the house of Savoy. Garibaldi was a soldier not a politician, and if Piedmont would send its army against Austria, he would support it.

Scirocco re-tells the familiar story of the defence of Rome, Garibaldi's escape and the death of his wife Anita in the marshes near Ravenna, with an eye for interesting detail. He similarly relates the Sicilian "epic" of the Thousand at a brisk pace. The structure is almost totally chronological, and about one quarter of the book is devoted to the less familiar years after 1861. Scirocco's story conforms to the heroic-romantic treatment of Garibaldi's Risorgimento. It presents the worldwide adulation he received, his sympathies for international causes like the abolition of slavery in America, and the ups and downs of his relationship with Mazzini.

There are obvious shortcomings in such an approach. The problem of whether the Sicilian peasantry derived any benefit from Garibaldi or the Risorgimento is not fully addressed. The reader must look elsewhere, to a different generation of historians, for closer scrutiny of the man and the myth (see Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* [Yale University Press, 2007]). Using the insights of the new cultural history, Riall adds a dimension that is largely absent from Scirocco's account, namely, the deconstruction of Garibaldi's image and the process of its manufacture. The promotion of a personality cult, in which Garibaldi himself was complicit, presented the world with an inspiring picture of the hero. He appeared a charismatic and selfless patriot who loved the simple, patriarchal life while remaining remarkably sexually irresistible. Without deconstructing the image, Scirocco nevertheless provides a good account of much of the material on which it was based.

MARTYN LYONS

*University of New South Wales, Australia*

© 2009 Martyn Lyons

**Ricoeur: A Guide for the Perplexed.** By David Pellauer (London: Continuum, 2007), viii + 155 pp. £12.99 paper.

This 'guide' belongs to the Continuum series of Guides for the Perplexed, which present the

thought of major figures throughout the history of western philosophy. David Pellauer, a well known translator of Paul Ricoeur's work, is especially well qualified to offer this one. He has written a clear, concise and accurate introduction to Ricoeur's philosophy that "proceeds in a basically chronological fashion to present an overview of his major writings in terms of a few central themes that run through them and tie them together" (2). After a three-page introduction to "Reading Ricoeur," Chapter 2 presents a discussion of *Freedom and Nature*, Ricoeur's PhD dissertation, proceeding from the identification of the "assumptions and influences operative in the way Ricoeur poses his initial philosophical question and project" (6)—e.g., Cartesian subjectivity and the subject-object model, and Gabriel Marcel, Martin Heidegger, and Karl Jaspers—to the examination of Ricoeur's subsequent treatment of freedom, the will, and the existence of evil, or "the fault," in *Fallible Man* and *The Symbolism of Evil*, the first two volumes of a planned three-volume study.

In Chapter 3 Pellauer examines "Ricoeur's Turn to Hermeneutics," attempting to account for the "shift in his thinking" that led Ricoeur to abandon his plan to complete the third projected volume of his treatment of freedom and the will. Pellauer offers a lucid account of the manner in which the new themes of Freud and psychoanalysis, structuralism, and problems of interpretation came increasingly to occupy Ricoeur's attention at this time and to redirect his thought on freedom and the will. Pellauer opens his next chapter, "The Fullness of Language and Figurative Discourse," with a concise statement of a development that was to exercise a profound influence on twentieth-century continental thought: "During the same period that Ricoeur was coming to terms with structuralism and beginning to work out the contours of a workable hermeneutic theory, he was also looking again at phenomenology, which had provided the framework for his earlier work. What he now saw was that phenomenology, too, had to be understood in terms of hermeneutics and, somewhat more surprisingly, hermeneutics could be shown to have a phenomenological dimension. This insight led him to what he would now call a hermeneutic phenomenology" (64).

This observation leads Pellauer to the discussion of two of the most central themes

of Ricoeur's mature philosophy—metaphor and narrative discourse—which provided him with a novel means of access to both theology and biblical studies and political criticism. *Time and Narrative* was the chief work of this period in Ricoeur's career, and themes drawn from that work continued to guide his thought over the following years. In his last two chapters, "Selfhood and Personal Identity" and "Memory, Recognition, Practical Wisdom," Pellauer demonstrates how Ricoeur developed the view of history as a form of narrative discourse into a unique account of the manner in which personal identity evolves as narrative identity, and how this account may be expanded into a more comprehensive philosophical anthropology with the notions of forgiveness and social justice as its cornerstones.

JEFF MITSCHERLING

*University of Guelph, Canada*

© 2009 Jeff Mitscherling

**Memory: The Key to Consciousness.**

By Richard E. Thompson and Stephen A. Madigan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), vii + 280 pp. \$18.95/£11.50 paper.

This work offers an accessible review of current memory research. Aimed at the non-specialist, the authors summarize in non-technical language the major trends in this research, focusing "on those aspects of memory [they] think are most important to you, the reader" (23). The book is divided into ten chapters, most of which concentrate on one of these aspects of memory. The first three chapters are largely introductory. In the first chapter, "What Is Memory?" the authors, Richard E. Thompson and Stephen A. Madigan briefly recount what they regard as "One of the major achievements of modern memory research"—namely, "the discovery that there are several different kinds of memory systems with different properties and different brain mechanisms" (7). After discussing some of the models of memory currently employed in the explanation of short-term and long-term memory in Chapters 2 and 3, "Memories of the Here and Now" and "The Early Development of Memory," the authors turn in the following three chapters to the examination of research

into the loss of memory. Chapter 4 discusses cases of "Ordinary Forgetting," Chapter 5 examines "Amnesia," and Chapter 6 is devoted to the related issue of "False Memory." Chapters 7 through 10 are titled, respectively: "Emotional Learning and Memory," "Language," "Mechanisms of Memory," and "The Future of Memory."

As an introduction to memory research the book certainly succeeds. It identifies some of the major topics of investigation pursued in current mainstream research in this area of cognitive science, and it clearly describes the general methodology employed. The language of the authors also indicates both the materialist metaphysical assumptions of the "current scientific understanding of memory" (2)—that is, of how "the brain acquires and stores memories" (vi)—and some of the fundamental problems to which these assumptions invariably lead. For example, the authors write that "Every person has perhaps billions of bytes of information stored in long-term memory," and "without memory there can be no mind" (1). Such statements seem common in the literature of current memory research, but that renders them dangerous on top of merely problematic. The authors acknowledge, for example, that current research is unable to tell us where, or how, such 'information' is stored, and it seems unable even to address the ontological question of the nature of information and its 'storage.' And nowhere do we find a definition of 'mind.'

The descriptions of consciousness are similarly unrevealing and circular, as is the authors' statement that "Working memory includes new information but also retrieval of knowledge from long-term memory and awareness of one's surroundings, which is commonly referred to as consciousness or awareness" (24). That the authors appear not to notice just how philosophically suspicious such statements really are is perhaps troubling. Still more troubling, however, is the fact that statements such as these seem to abound in the literature of current memory research. The present book succeeds, perhaps despite itself, in presenting us with a revealing picture of this character of current mainstream cognitive science.

JEFF MITSCHERLING

*University of Guelph, Canada*

© 2009 Jeff Mitscherling

**Women in the Middle East: Past and Present.** By Nikki R. Keddie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), xviii + 389 pp. \$60.00/£38.95 cloth; \$24.95/£15.95 paper.

Nikki Keddie begins this book with the observation that academic study of the lives, problems, and accomplishments of women in the Middle East is relatively new, having developed only in the last thirty years or so. During that time Middle Eastern women have been studied from a wide variety of specialist perspectives, including economic, political, religious, and cultural. Keddie believes that the time has come for a more synthetic account of Middle Eastern women, an account which weaves together the results of specialist studies and presents them in a form suitable for a non-specialist audience. The result of this belief is the present book, which is divided into three sections, each with a particular subject and intention. Unfortunately the title of the book identifies only one third of its subject, namely the history and present condition of women in the Middle East which is the subject of only Book 1. Book 2 provides the author's survey of contemporary scholarship concerned with women in the Middle East, and discussion of the academic methods by which such history and conditions might best be studied in the future. Book 3 provides an essay and the transcript of an interview in which the author provides an autobiographical account of her scholarly life, and especially her role in founding the new, largely American academic specialty of the history of women in the Middle East. Each of the three main sections of the book is supplemented by extensive explanatory notes, references, and a bibliography of sources in English.

Keddie defines the Middle East geographically and linguistically: geographically as those lands between Morocco and Afghanistan, and linguistically as those lands in which Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and Pashtu are spoken (1–2). There is, of course, something of an ambiguity in defining the Middle East in such terms, namely that while Israel falls within the geographical parameters, it does not fall within the linguistic parameters. This ambiguity would be of little significance if it was merely a matter of classification, but it seems to be more than this: the author seems

reticent to tell the reader unambiguously that the primary subject-matter of book is *Islamic* women in the Middle East, and that their conditions and aspirations must be understood at least partly in relation to Islam. In the context of both contemporary political conflicts and academic sensibilities about “multiculturalism” such reticence and ambiguity might be understandable, but they also introduce interpretive problems into the historical and methodological arguments this books offers.

After a clear and well structured “Introduction” outlining the intentions of the book as a whole, the argument of the book begins with Book 1, “Women in the Middle East: A History.” For readers who are not specialists in Middle East studies, including students and general readers, a survey of women's history in the Middle East could hardly be done better. Keddie's discussion is very broad both historically and in terms of the range of factors affecting women's lives she includes. She provides accounts of theological and state laws in various states, formal women's organizations, informal women's organizations, traditional practices, and notable individual women. The six chapters of Book 1 provide a concise survey of Middle Eastern women's history. The first four chapters describe women's lives from the beginnings of Islam, through the early caliphates, the Turkish and Mongol invasions, and the period of European colonialism. The final two chapters of Book 1 provide a history of Middle Eastern women over the past century, helpfully divided into separate discussions of three regions and twenty countries. Keddie provides a detailed survey of the status of Arab (including Palestinian), Iranian, and Turkish women living in the Arab states, North Africa, Iran, and Turkey. This division is helpful in part because, as Keddie points out, some Western scholarship and media persist in presenting Middle Eastern women as a more or less homogenous group—typically, the *hijab*-wearing subject of theocratic patriarchy—a presentation which fails to represent the many differences between, for example, women in Saudi Arabia and Turkey, or between a wealthy and a poor Egyptian woman. Keddie's discussion captures the very wide diversity of aspirations and experience among Middle Eastern women. The collection of photographs taken by the author and

included in the book illustrates this diversity wonderfully.

One particularly valuable feature of Keddie's discussion is her account of the sources and the historical evolution of Islamic prescriptions concerning women's dress and behavior, which are an excellently chosen illustration of the problem of the equality of women generally. Specifically, she very clearly distinguishes between prescriptions which derive from three distinct sources, the *Qur'an*, the *Hadith* (traditional sayings attributed to Muhammad, and descriptions of his way of living), and local or tribal customs, as well as from interactions of all three. Keddie clearly explains how and why the traditional theological sources prescribing women's behavior have been and still are subject to very diverse interpretations, some of which support an egalitarian view of women and others of which support a much more egalitarian view. Islamic women who understand this have thoughtfully used both traditional Islamic sources and authoritative historical descriptions of exemplary Islamic women to argue that women can aspire to sexual, economic, and cultural equality within Islamic law and custom, and that men are obliged to recognize those equalities. Book 1 soberly concludes with the observation that these women, and Keddie with them, are aware that excellent argument is not always sufficient for practical change in the context of opposing powers deeply rooted in centuries-old prejudice and custom. Only the future will tell us when and how Islamic women might be able to achieve any greater degree of equality in the context of Islamic traditions, sectarian conflict within Islam, and reactionary conservatism exacerbated by the conflicts between radical Islamicists and the Western powers.

The future is the subject of Book 2, "Approaches to the Study of Middle Eastern Women," which is divided into five parts. This section of the book will certainly be valued by academic students and scholars, though it might be less interesting to the general reader, because it is about scholarly sources and methods that might be best for future study of Middle Eastern women. The first part of Book 2, "Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender," raises now familiar conceptual and definitional questions about just what it is we mean by "women." The last

three sections are concerned with recent writing, especially by women, written since 1800, and concerned with the history of women in the Middle East, and with particular problems in the study of such history.

It is Part 2, "Scholarship, Relativism, and Universalism," which raises what must be some of the most difficult and important questions. On the one hand, popular Western media provide chauvinistic and sometimes denigrating accounts of Middle Eastern Islam which present lurid accounts of women's inequality and tribal violence as if they were not merely typical but definitive of the whole of Islam. At the other extreme are academic Marxists, multiculturalists, and postmodernists who remain all but silent about real oppression and violence against women in the Middle East, especially in the working classes, because they do not wish to seem "classicist" or "Eurocentric"; the need to make a display of doctrinal purity and methodological trendiness on campus trumps the obligation to tell the truth about the reality of the Other. As Keddie rightly observes in the "Autobiographical Interview" nearer the end of the book,

so many of the people going into [deconstruction] get carried away until that is all they talk about and they seem not to believe in reality anymore. . . . Even though a lot of people who do it are on the left, I think it is essentially reactionary, noncommunicative, and elitist. . . . It gets them away from thinking that the world and its problems are real. (340)

Although deconstruction and allied abstract theories have reached the end of their natural lives, and are now animated only by the artificial life support of unfinished dissertations, this sort of honesty is still much needed in the academy. So too are Keddie's excellent recommendations to new students and scholars considering specializing in the Middle East: learn Middle Eastern and European languages (Arabic, Turkish, Pashtun, and Persian as a start); place less emphasis on abstract theoretical perspectives, and more on learning the sources and history of the theology, political thought, jurisprudence. Put another way, Keddie intimates that young scholars should learn their subject in detail before they theorize it, and not theorize as a substitute for detailed expertise.

One of the most useful lessons Western academics could learn from Keddie's discussion



of Islamic women's conceptions of the rights to equality concerns the incompatibility of feminism and multiculturalism, and the nature of real intellectual diversity. Keddie clearly argues that debates about greater women's equality can take place within the framework of Islam, and that some Islamic women do not need (and do not want) to import the feminism of Western activists and academics: women's equality and feminism are not at all the same thing. Indeed, Western academics still seem unaware that imposing feminism onto Islamic countries could be interpreted by Middle Eastern Muslims as merely the latest mode of Western colonialism or imperialism. Some Muslim women have argued for decades now that there are conceptions of women's equality which are not feminist, and that non-feminist conceptions of women's equality are integral to Islamic culture. In the context of the ever-present rhetoric about the importance of "cultural diversity" in academic life, one would expect that Western academics would be eager to include Islamic non-feminist arguments for women's equality, but clearly they are not. Keddie's book indirectly raises the possibility that some of the egalitarian arguments made by Muslim women receive little or no hearing in Western universities because feminism remains the only practically permitted conception of women's equality. Given the choice between doctrinal feminism and genuine cultural diversity, diversity has been abandoned. In Western universities there will be no real "cultural" diversity concerning women's equality until both feminist and non-feminist arguments are included.

The book concludes with Book 3, "Autobiographical Recollections." The interview and the essay that make up this section of the book provide an account, both personal and professional, of Keddie's life and career. Beginning with her almost accidental first forays into Middle East history, and proceeding through her central role in establishing the history of Middle Eastern women as a distinct and respected scholarly specialty, these two pieces are both a delight to read and most instructive about the nature and duties of scholarly life in any specialty.

JAMES MUIR  
*University of Winnipeg, Canada*  
 © 2009 James Muir

**Ireland: Social, Political, and Religious.**

By Gustave de Beaumont. Edited and translated by W. C. Taylor (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), xxi + 419 pp. \$19.95 paper.

Gustave de Beaumont paid two visits to Ireland, accompanied by his friend Alexis de Tocqueville in 1835, and by his wife in 1837. In 1839 he published an account of Irish misery and its causes, *L'Irlande sociale, politique et religieuse*, which was an immediate success in France and went through many editions. An English translation, by W. C. Taylor, was published in London in the same year, but the success of a work that was severely critical of British rule in Ireland, of the legal position of the Anglican Church and of the role of the aristocracy was predictably more limited with the British public, and Taylor's work was never subsequently reprinted. Tom Garvin and Andreas Hess, of University College Dublin, have now rescued Beaumont's study from the neglect that has enshrouded it in both languages by issuing a handsome new edition of Taylor's translation, with a clear and pertinent introduction and an important bonus in the form of the preface Beaumont added for the 1863 edition to take account of the Great Famine of the 1840s and its consequences (translated by Tom Garvin).

It is astonishing to learn from the editors' notes that no substantial scholarly study of Beaumont has ever been undertaken, despite his close intellectual companionship with Tocqueville and the significance, at least in their own time, of his writings. In addition to *L'Irlande*, he is the author of a novel, *Marie*, on the race question in the United States, while in political life his career closely parallels that of Tocqueville. Here we have the increasingly rare sight of a major contribution to scholarship waiting to be made. Who will take up the challenge? The editors slip up on a detail by making Beaumont the grandchild of Lafayette, whereas in fact it was his wife who had that honour.

As for Taylor's translation, it has the great merit of existing and is perfectly readable. However, in the style of the times, it takes considerable liberties with the original, and Beaumont was dissatisfied with it. Thus, Taylor replaces Beaumont's eloquent first preface with

a brief translator's introduction and adds personal asides in the form of footnotes, while neglecting to include many of Beaumont's own notes documenting his considerable researches in parliamentary papers and other official records. This new edition contains an excellent index and a chronology. The editors and publishers are to be congratulated on their initiative, which may well provide the missing stimulus for new research on a significant figure.

MICHAEL O'DEA  
*Université Lumière Lyon 2, France*  
 © 2009 Michael O'Dea

**Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society.** By David L. D'Avray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), xii + 322 pp. \$166.00/£69.00 cloth; \$45.00/£21.99 paper.

David D'Avray has long been associated with correction of earlier generations' understanding of medieval marriage, especially with the correction of the views of social historians such as Lawrence Stone, and is a sure-footed student of medieval marriage. In this book, which covers the entire middle ages, though centering on the years around 1200, he takes up the symbolism of marriage, showing its influence in society and on ordinary people, especially in the creation of marriage law, monogamy and indissolubility. D'Avray has long specialized in medieval marriage sermons, and here develops his view of sermons as mass media. He builds his analysis on many types of material, and gives an extensive, thematically organized, collection of documents at the end of the book.

A lucid Introduction lays out the special goal of this book, the laying to rest of the idea that it was especially "the landed ambitions of families" (2) that drove medieval marriage. D'Avray accepts the general correctness of George Duby's argument that the two principal models of marriage in the twelfth century—an aristocratic model, which allowed easy divorce and tolerated the marriage of near relatives, and a clerical model, emphasizing monogamous indissoluble marriage—came closer in the thirteenth century as the clerical model increased its influence on the social history of marriage. His goal in this book is to show how marriage symbolism tied into this

story. Marriage was a symbol of the union of the divine and human, and as such was a "generative metaphor" with a strong influence on thought and reality. Chapter 1 argues that from the thirteenth century onward preaching was the form of "mass communication" by which an understanding of marriage as good and holy was communicated. Effectively, marriage sermons were propaganda on behalf of the sacralization of marriage.

The remaining chapters examine how marriage symbolism worked via the law to form social practice. Chapter 2 treats indissolubility from the Roman Empire to the end of the middle ages, but again centers on the period from 1200, when indissolubility became a real social constraint. Chapter 3 treats "bigamy" (marriage to a widow or after a wife's death), and chapter 4, consummation.

I slightly hesitate before the main thesis of the book, that "symbolism eventually brought about a transformation of marriage practice" (116). This seems too precise about causation. Since the symbolism was "always there," why can't we rather say that what made the difference was the coming together in the twelfth century of especially the work of the canonists with a host of other factors, symbolism, theology, the exertions of the papacy, etc., to transform marriage practice? In general it seems to me that D'Avray does not sufficiently credit twelfth-century developments: see Teresa Pierre's, "Marriage, Body, and Sacrament in the Age of Hugh of St. Victor," in *Christian Marriage: A Historical Study*, ed. Glenn W. Olsen (New York: Herder and Herder, 2001), 211–68, a work which may have appeared too recently for D'Avray to use.

GLENN W. OLSEN  
*University of Utah, USA*  
 © 2009 Glenn W. Olsen

**Reasonable People: A Memoir of Autism and Adoption.** By Ralph James Savarese (New York: Other Press, 2007), xxxi + 463 pp. \$25.95 cloth.

In *Reasonable People*, Ralph Savarese shares with the reader the difficult yet rewarding process

of adopting his autistic son, DJ. He does so by exposing the intricate journey of the adoption with a captivating narrative. At the time Mr. Savarese meets his son, DJ has been labeled by the institutionalized discourse on autism as a non-linguistic, and unable-to-communicate individual. Abandoned in foster homes and neglected by a system that considers him mentally retarded, DJ has been traumatized by years of abuse until Ralph and Emily Savarese decide to reverse that fate and adopt him. In his personal account of the arduous process of adopting DJ, Mr. Savarese discloses his initial desire not to have children—which drastically changes when he meets DJ—the frustrating relationship he had with his own father, the illness and death of his infant nephew, and the strain sometimes felt in his marriage by the difficulty of balancing a demanding job with a complex family situation, among other things.

The narration of DJ's emergence to language and communication is told from the perspective of a parent who candidly shares with the reader the marvels of the developmental progress of his child, as well as the extremely difficult moments also involved in this process. As DJ becomes more able to communicate, the early abuse he experienced in foster care comes to light, and with it rage and, some times, aggression, which is overcome by the unconditional love that Emily and Ralph offer him. The final chapter of the book is written by DJ Savarese himself, who in a compelling sentence expresses: "I live in constant fear that respect will be taken away, and I will have to return to easy years of doing nothing." A poignant way of summarizing his long struggle to be socially accepted and loved for what he is, while at the same time showing the vulnerability he shares with those who are forced to exist on the margins of society due to narrow definitions of what is "normal."

In his text, Mr. Savarese is not content simply to follow the epic narrative characteristic of a memoir. A Professor of American Literature and Creative Writing at Grinnell College, Ralph Savarese exerts his creative talent writing with an engaging and captivating prose. However, some of the most lyrical moments in the text come from DJ himself, whose original poetry and authored final chapter demonstrate his deep love for language and his acute political sensibility.

Finally, the subtitle of this book, "On the Meaning of Family and the Politics of Neurological Difference," adds to its intention. If one approaches *Reasonable People* exclusively as a book on autism, the reader will be pleasantly surprised to discover a text which addresses this subject, but also works at many other levels. Although this extraordinary memoir certainly includes an analysis of current theories of cognitive psychology on the subject, a discussion and illustration of the benefits of "facilitated communication," and a presentation and understanding of autism that includes its social, political and human ramifications, it can also be read as a remarkable tribute to the power of language to move people towards freedom, to unlock emotional gridlocks, and to the use language can have to expand our understanding of who we are and what others mean to us.

In *Reasonable People* Ralph Savarese offers a powerful testimony about understanding family not only as private life, but rather as inseparable from public life and civic commitment to others.

CRISTINA ORTIZ

University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, USA

© 2009 Cristina Ortiz

**In the Beginning Was the Deed: Realism and Moralism in Political Argument.** By Bernard Williams (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005 [2007]), xx + 174 pp. \$29.95 cloth; \$17.95 paper.

In this collection of thirteen essays, all written (with one exception) in the latter part of his distinguished career, with the majority of them previously unpublished, the highly honored philosopher Bernard Williams, who died in 2003, argues that the political takes precedence over the moral, that is, over moral theory of the kind said by him to be found in Kant (and in John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*). In the beginning was the deed of realism, as Goethe's Faust learned, not the moral word of philosophical theory. (The title of the book encapsulates the titles of its first two essays.) Yet, Williams is careful to add that "there can be an important question of whose deed *should* be in the beginning" (emphasis added). Indeed, he points out that our claim to view a particular

practice as a violation of human rights has to be understood as both philosophical and political, since “the basic truth” in Goethe’s apothem is that “no political theory, liberal or other, can determine by itself its own application” (27–28). While I find this assertion obscure (as I do many of the assertions in this book), I take it that Williams means that, just as moral philosophy without politics (practice) is empty, so politics (the deed) without moral philosophy (theory) is blind.

It is important to note carefully that, when Williams adds, as we saw above, that what counts is *whose* deed—politics or practice—*should* constitute our beginning (principle, priority), he uses the imperative (consistent with Hegel’s observation that, just as the rational is, because it must be made, the actual, so the actual is, because it must be made, the rational). The fact is that in his book Williams clearly and intelligently eschews relativism, utilitarianism, pragmatism (including the version of Richard Rorty: we are liberals we know not why), and positivism (together with foundationalism, communitarianism, and what is generally called historicism). He explicitly espouses (embraces) “liberalism” (democracy) and “modernity” as based on “historical self-consciousness” and thus as involving critique (a sense of critical differences or alternatives) and what he calls “the basic legitimation demand” of universal justification. In other words, what he shows us in his essays, in direct contradiction of his stated claim (or aim), is that there is no political realism that is not profoundly moral, that the founding deed of our political life *should* be laden with moral values, with those values that are central to modern, liberal, democratic practice (and so involving human rights, toleration, equality of persons, freedom of expression . . .).

Consistent with his aim to show that the political takes precedence over the moral, Williams invokes Hobbes and dismisses Kant. Yet, what he shows us, once again, is just the opposite. Several times in his essays he declares that “the ‘first’ political question” is the Hobbesian one of “the securing of order, protection, safety, trust, and the conditions of cooperation” (3; see also 62 and 145). It is “first” because it is the basis of all others. (Williams points out, however, that being “first” does not mean that it will not have to be continually solved.) While the terms

order, protection, and safety can *appear* to be neutral (and so not only modern but also pre-modern), trust and cooperation are concepts that are at once modern and moral. Indeed, Williams observes: “Everywhere, universally, at least this much is true, that might [i.e. what he calls “unmediated coercion”] is not per se right: the mere power to coerce does not in itself produce a legitimation [of power]” (69, 72; see also 95–96). But Williams thus fails to make clear that Hobbes is a modern (ultimately liberal) philosopher precisely because his conception of order, protection, and safety, in presupposing, in being legitimated (justified) by, the trust and cooperation of all subjects, does not rest on coercive (hierarchical) power. (While the apparent aim of Hobbes was not democratic, such was the result of the philosophical or moral principles that he presupposed in being a modern, as Spinoza, the first systematic theorist of modern democracy, whom Williams does not mention, demonstrates.)

A couple of historical references are instructive here. The first is the modern one of Abraham Lincoln who, as presidential aspirant in his Cooper Union speech of 27 February 1860, urged his fellow Republicans, in their opposition to slavery as immoral and now faced with the destruction of the Union by southern Democrats: “Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.” The second historical reference is ancient (pre-modern). The Melian dialogue—between the all-powerful Athenians (the victors) and the powerless Melians (the victims)—that Thucydides stages in his history remains so poignant (tragic) for us today because the only argument that the victims of Melos (know how to) use in begging the Athenian victors to spare them from destruction is that used by their conquerors: might makes right. The Melians point out to the Athenians that they, too, will one day be destroyed by a power mightier than themselves. The Athenians agree with their victims—that the only basis of (contradictory) right in their world is the might of the victor (the ruler) over the victim (the ruled). Indeed, this is the principle that Aeschylus has Athena use (the Greeks know no other) in *The Eumenides* (the final play in the trilogy *The Oresteia*) in cutting the Gordian knot of the interminable impasse between the

opposing claims of Apollo (by whose divine order Orestes killed his mother Clytemnestra for killing his father and her husband Agamemnon for killing his sister and their daughter Iphigenia), and of the divine Furies (who demand the death of Orestes for killing his mother). Athena, in representing the interests of Athens (and consistent with the Heraclitean fragment according to which the violence of Zeus her father is right), uses her unmediated or coercive (hierarchical) power of divinity to impose the divine right of the murdered/murderous father/husband (as superior to the divine right of the murderous/murdered mother/wife) on those over whom she rules. It is worth noting that Williams, in holding to his staunchly anti-Kantian and anti-metaphysical stance in his 1993 book *Shame and Necessity* and, while acknowledging the fundamental differences between ancient and modern values, does not make clear that ancient tragedy was based on the right of might.

Just as Hobbes is a modern philosopher in understanding that it is only on the basis of trust and cooperation, of right (“moralism”!), that power (might) is legitimated (justified) or made politically effectual or practical, so the claim of Williams that Kant’s moral theory transcends what he calls the realm of politics is inconsistent with Kant’s concept of reason as fundamentally practice, as willing the good, universally true for all human beings in the kingdom of ends. Williams writes: “Can we really suppose, as Kant supposed, that reason itself is liberal reason, and that an ethical practice other than the morality of autonomy involves the refusal to listen to reason at all, the equivalent of covering one’s ears. Surely not.” For, he continues, injustice and unreason are universal; some people do use others against those others’ wills. “This is a paradigm of injustice because institutions of justice . . . are intended to stand against this. ‘Might is not, in itself right’ is the first necessary truth, one of few, about the nature of right” (22–23). I find Williams’ dismissal of Kant here acutely misleading. For surely Kant’s simple point is that reason is/must be liberal, that is, liberating or moral. To practice autonomy, to view all human beings as ends in themselves, as persons, and not as means (instruments) or things, is to hold with Williams, Lincoln, and Hobbes, against the ancients, that right is might.

Precisely because for Kant reason is fundamentally the practice of moral autonomy, he recognizes that the world is full of injustice and unreason, of inhumanity. As he writes in *The Critique of Practical Reason*, while human beings are unholy enough, their humanity is holy. In other words, it is humanity (human autonomy) that provides the universal standard of legitimacy for criticizing all inhumane practices whose basis is that might is right.

I suspect that the reason that Williams, while deeply committed to modern, liberal, humane values as universal, draws a false and falsifying distinction between practice and morality is that he fails to see that Faust’s claim that “in the beginning was the deed” is a reprise of biblical justice. In the beginning is the word, the command, the principled word of the covenant, of freedom, of responsibility, of our duty to uphold the autonomy of every human being. Practice, or politics, is deeply moral because it embodies our relationships with each other in the infinite variety of our lives, both personal and public.

BRAYTON POLKA  
 York University, Canada  
 © 2009 Brayton Polka

**Freud: A Guide for the Perplexed.** By Céline Surprenant (London: Continuum, 2008), viii + 184 pp. £12.99 paper.

To include Freud within this series of guides for the perplexed, now numbering some twenty-five or so, is doubly ironic. In the first place, it is by no means clear who the perplexed are. Assuming that the model for this series is *The Guide for the Perplexed* of Maimonides, it is salutary to remember that this great philosopher, theologian, and legal scholar wrote his famous work in the thirteenth century for those of his Jewish coreligionists who were perplexed that the truths of Aristotle were not compatible with the doctrinal basis of Jewish law. For example, the eternity of the world (of nature) contradicted the doctrine of creation (from nothing). In terms current today we could say that the scientifically true principles of reality, as grasped by the intellectual elite, contradicted the religious (i.e. the superstitious or illusory) beliefs that the masses accepted in obeying the

pleasure principle. Maimonides, in other words, wrote for those who were perplexed by what they knew: the truths of Aristotelian science were incompatible with or contradicted Jewish law.

For whom, then, does Céline Surprenant write? Who are the perplexed for whom she provides a guide to basic principles of Freudian science? Does she write a guide for those who, in being knowledgeable about both Freud (as holy writ) and, say, Spinoza, who separated philosophy from theology in order to show that each, when carefully distinguished from superstition, was the truth of the other, are perplexed by how today they may save the truth of the Freudian text from its contradictions? In other words, is it Freud who, in claiming on the basis of scientific truth to identify religion with illusion, perplexes his readers? Or is it the readers of Freud who, in resisting his claim that religion, as distinct from superstition, can, on the basis of scientific truth, be identified with illusion, perplex him?

The second reason that it is ironic that Freud is included in this series of guides for the perplexed is that he is the sole thinker, of all those treated, who is not conventionally considered a philosopher. (Additional exceptions might include Rousseau, who was also the brilliant author of a novel and a book of confessions, and Kierkegaard, whose main aim was to distinguish the truth of Christianity from the illusion of Christendom. It is also worth noting that, while Plato is included in the series, St. Augustine, surely the greatest of all ancient thinkers, is not.) Indeed, Surprenant, in acknowledging that the principal idea underlying psychoanalysis is that of the unconscious, indicates that Freud is highly critical of conventional (popular) philosophy in identifying the psyche or thinking (including what Spinoza calls the affects) with consciousness. She makes it no less clear that Freud is equally critical of any attempt to identify the analysis of the “soul” with the neurosciences. The “talking cure” (psycho-analysis) is not natural science.

Still, Freud, in his deeply insightful probings of the unconscious, from his first major work, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900, frequently revised thereafter), to his last, *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), remains deeply conflicted, as Surprenant shows in her guide,

on the relationship between the quantitative and the qualitative, between natural science and ethics (and also aesthetics), between the somatic and the psychical, between metapsychology (pseudo-science, actually) and therapy, or between the id and the ego (both of which the mature Freud comes to identify with the unconscious). But what Freud fails to account for, and on what Surprenant remains silent, is the fact that the unconscious (together with the concepts richly associated with it such as repression, the defense mechanisms, transference, and free association) is the creation of biblical theology. The paradox of biblical theology is that human beings, in being sinners—that is, in knowing good and evil, in being responsible for both good and evil in their lives—constantly repress what they know and so in bad faith hide the truth of themselves behind idols, or illusions. They make “unconscious” what they have the responsibility of knowing—whence the close relationship between psychotherapy and confession, or between neurosis and sin (guilt), which Freud, like Jung, did not fail to acknowledge. Yet, neither of these two great founders of depth psychology could account for the unconscious as at once historical and universal. They did not grasp, to paraphrase Kierkegaard, that the unconscious comes historically into existence or that, to continue my paraphrase, if the unconscious has always existed, then it has never existed. (It is worth noting, however, that Jung, who is also not included in this series of guides for the perplexed, came to recognize, in works like *Answer to Job*, that God as the other of human beings, as the neighbor whom human beings are commanded to love as themselves, constitutes their unconscious.)

While Surprenant provides, then, a serviceable introduction to central ideas of Freud in her guide and identifies key areas of tension in his thought, for example, between science and religion and between quantitative description and qualitative interpretation, she articulates no larger framework by which to comprehend these tensions. She seems to want to argue, against critics of Freud, that his idea of quantity (regarding, for example, the principle of the drive) remains fruitful. Yet, in concluding her work with a brief (and inadequate) appraisal of his highly controversial *The Future of an Illusion*

(while ignoring its relationship to works like *Civilization and its Discontents* or *Moses and Monotheism*), it is by no means clear how the idea of quantity that she claims to find in it can serve as a guide for the perplexed. Surprenant writes on the last page of her guide that it “would be easy to retain from that work only the hackneyed theory of the instinctual renunciation that culture imposes,” together with Freud’s identification of religion with illusion in favor of the future of science. Nevertheless, she continues, “Freud here provides another example of the extension of the idea of quantity.” Two comments are in order at this point. First, if the idea of the renunciation of the pleasure principle by the reality principle on the part of self-denying (ascetic) scientists is trite (or dispensable), then a central component of Freud’s quantitative or “scientific” metapsychology has been discarded. Second, when Surprenant goes on to state that Freud extended his idea of quantity by assimilating “individual neurosis to religion by conceiving of religion as a collective neurosis,” what she understands by quantity here is deeply perplexing. She tells us that he objected to religion, not because it was “irrational” but because it was collective or “shared,” that is, because the “human masses extend the phenomena of the wish-fulfillment [the pleasure principle], helplessness [infantilism], and narcissism” to include the illusion of religion.

Are, then, readers to believe that Surprenant does not consider psychoanalysis, when based on the reality principle of science, to be compatible with, let alone fundamental to, the shared values of democratic practice? Does she hold with Freud that the distinction between truth and illusion, or idolatry, does not constitute the very principle of the demos, of the relationship of self and other, both ethically and politically? In concluding her guide with an altogether perplexing opposition between quantity, as reposing in the shared religious and therefore illusory values of the masses, and quality, as found in the unshared values of the scientific elite, Surprenant leaves her readers deeply perplexed about Freud.

BRAYTON POLKA  
 York University, Canada  
 © 2009 Brayton Polka

**Images of Empiricism: Essays on Science and Stances, with a Reply from Bas van Fraassen.** Edited by Bradley Monton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), vi + 390 pp. £55.00 cloth.

Bas van Fraassen must be one of the best-known contemporary philosophers of science. His 1980 book *The Scientific Image* bucked the trend of the time by not opting for the dominant “scientific realist” approach, but arguing instead in favour of “constructive empiricism.” Where scientific realists insist that science aims to give us theories that are literally true (in what they say about unobservable, as well as about observable reality), van Fraassen’s constructive empiricism portrayed science as aiming only to save the phenomena, to yield theories that are empirically adequate. His robust defence of this form of anti-realism kept anti-realism on the agenda in philosophy of science at a time when it might otherwise have been represented only by versions of “social constructivism,” with which analytical philosophers have not generally been impressed.

Subsequently, in his 2002 *The Empirical Stance* van Fraassen took on the question of what empiricism can now be, or what it could be to be an empiricist in philosophy today. He pitched empiricism against what he called “analytic metaphysics” and argued that empiricism must be construed as a “stance” rather than a belief, if it is not to refute itself. He also took on a certain amount of apparatus familiar from Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, mobilising it to argue that scientific revolutions are not purely cognitive, but must feature also a role for emotion. In that book’s final lecture, he drew on the work of existentialist theologians to suggest that empiricists do not necessarily have to be secularists, and that they might allow space for the idea of an encounter with the divine.

Bradley Monton’s edited collection includes an introduction by the editor, seven articles on *The Scientific Image*, six on *The Empirical Stance*, and a forty-six page reply by van Fraassen. The contributors include some figures already well-known in the philosophy of science (Nancy Cartwright, Ernan McMullin, Peter Lipton, Stathis Psillos, Alexander Bird, James Ladyman), and others not yet so well-known.

While I have a lot of time for van Fraassen's work, especially *The Scientific Image*, I have to confess that I find *The Empirical Stance* vague and disappointing. There is already a considerable literature on it, including a symposium in the journal *Philosophical Studies* for 2004, featuring papers by Lipton, Ladyman, and Paul Teller, as well as a reply by van Fraassen. In general, the published critiques of *The Empirical Stance* seem compelling, and van Fraassen's responses (here and elsewhere) rather weak. So, for example, Ernan McMullin argues here that van Fraassen greatly overplays the role of emotion in scientific revolutions, and that he also (following Kuhn) greatly overestimates the "unintelligibility" of new candidate paradigms. Scientific revolutions, McMullin suggests, are incremental, quite unlike gestalt-switches. (McMullin also quite rightly finds van Fraassen's suggestions about how an empiricist might allow for anything other than a secular orientation, gestural and obscure).

Michel Bitbol argues that van Fraassen is too soft on materialism when he construes it as a stance, rather than a view. But Bitbol's alternative, neo-Kantian critique of materialism, takes on elements of idealism which van Fraassen would do well to refuse. It is one thing to hold that our "notions" of micro-physical objects are constituted by us (241), but quite another to suggest that we somehow constitute those objects *themselves* (240, 247, 267). The former is innocuous, the latter preposterous.

The subtitle of Anja Jauernig's article, "How to be an Empiricist and a Philosopher at the Same Time," raises an important issue about *The Empirical Stance*. Van Fraassen says there (63) that empiricist philosophers should do philosophy in something like the way that empirical science is done, taking their cue from the "forms and practices" of empirical-scientific inquiry. But we are never really told *how* to do this (I'm not sure it even makes much sense), and I don't think one can represent what van Fraassen himself is doing in that book as being philosophy done in such a way. (His inspirations there are empiricism, pragmatism, existentialism, etc., not science *per se*). So I can't help feeling that van Fraassen's empiricist appeal to taking one's cue from science in philosophy looks like bluster. What, in any case, could empirical knowledge in philosophy be?

Empirical knowledge is knowledge of what is contingently the case. This isn't what philosophers, *qua* philosophers, have sought. Wouldn't it be better to declare the death of philosophy? Jauernig doesn't mention these problems, but she not only defends both "naïve empiricism" and metaphysics against van Fraassen's critiques, but also raises some problems for his alternative "stance empiricism."

Along similar lines, Chad Mohler takes van Fraassen to task by arguing that the dilemma he poses for "naïve" empiricism applies also to his own stance empiricism. He opts for a naturalized form of empiricism (which is among those that van Fraassen rejected in his book). And Anjan Chakravarty plausibly argues that empiricists ought to oppose certain *degrees* of metaphysical speculation, rather than all metaphysics, since their own view relies on metaphysical speculations of certain kinds.

I don't find it surprising that, although there is already a collection of articles on *The Scientific Image* (Paul Churchland and Cliff Hooker, *Images of Science: Essays on Realism and Empiricism, with a Reply from Bas C. van Fraassen* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986]), it is *The Scientific Image* to which the attention of most of the "bigger names" is devoted here. Among the most interesting essays here on this earlier book are those by Nancy Cartwright, James Ladyman, Alexander Bird, and Stathis Psillos.

Cartwright defends van Fraassen against scientific realist critics (such as Paul Churchland) by seeking to reinstate the distinction between observable and unobservable phenomena, and its significance. What makes the observable particularly significant, she argues, is not some epistemic virtue, but rather that "we have a special primitive justification of *self-defence* for forming beliefs about what is observable: these beliefs help us control the experiences and perceptions that are thrust upon us" (43, emphasis added). I wonder though whether such recourse to the prudential notion of self-defence can resist realist responses (which might, for example, take advantage of the Popperian idea that we humans have developed into creatures who let our theories die in our place).

In "The Epistemology of Constructive Empiricism" James Ladyman raises legitimate worries about whether van Fraassen can really



justify his “constructive” empiricism (which invites us to concern ourselves with whether our theories account for what is *observable*) over a more restricted “actualist” empiricism (according to which we need only concern ourselves with whether our theories account for *actually observed* phenomena). Aside from the fact that observability is a *modal* notion, and van Fraassen is known for frowning on such things, Ladyman worries that any inference that would legitimately extend the focus of scientific theories from the actually observed to the observable will also serve to extend it further, from the observable to the unobservable, as scientific realists hope.

Ladyman’s colleague Alexander Bird provides an important and trenchant critique of sceptical arguments to the effect that theory is underdetermined by evidence. While recognising that no such argument underlies *The Scientific Image* (this is argued in detail in Maarten van Dyck’s article here), Bird argues that van Fraassen *should* endorse this kind of scepticism. It is notable that van Fraassen’s reply to Bird, which is not very detailed, leans heavily on Keith DeRose’s epistemological “contextualism.” Van Fraassen thinks of this as implying that “the question of whether a knowledge claim is ‘really true’ is not in order” (349). But DeRose’s contextualism is precisely a view about the *truth*-conditions of knowledge claims, to the effect that those truth-conditions vary with context. To say that truth-conditions vary with context is only misleadingly represented by the idea that knowledge-claims are not “really true” at all. In any case, I suspect that contextualism, which is specifically designed to mollify sceptical arguments, might prove to be more of a liability than an asset to van Fraassen in the long term.

Sthatis Psillos takes on a large target: van Fraassen’s ideas about rationality. These are expressed not merely in the books I have mentioned, but also in other books and articles by van Fraassen. Psillos is very even-handed and fair in his critique of these ideas, but plausibly deems van Fraassen to have too thin and formal a conception of rationality.

All in all, taken together with *The Empirical Stance* and the other critical literature on it, I can’t escape the feeling that, while van Fraassen’s anti-realist philosophy of science

still deserves attention, his general take on what it means to be an empiricist is in some trouble.

JOHN PRESTON

*The University of Reading, UK*

© 2009 John Preston

**The Dictatorship of Sex: Lifestyle Advised for Soviet Masses.** By Frances Bernstein (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007), xvii + 246 pp. \$42.00 cloth.

Because the 1920s were a unique period in Russian history and culture, any study of this decade is bound to hold a certain fascination for us. During this period scholars who had received their education in pre-revolutionary Russia or abroad and were well versed in European—mainly German and French—science, were working in a spirit of revolutionary idealism. This spirit influenced their approaches and provoked daring breakthroughs in different fields of science, as well as bringing constructivism and formalism to the arts and art studies. This period is all the more fascinating because it was also very short. All its progressive aspirations and achievements came to an abrupt stop in the early 1930s when Stalin assumed full control over trends, ideas, methods, and even the results of scientific activities, in line with his new concept of society.

*The Dictatorship of Sex* does not deal with specific sciences but with the attempt to apply medical knowledge related to sexology and sexual hygiene to Soviet society at large, a society still recovering from the monstrous upheavals of WWI, the Revolution and Civil War. It was during the decade of 1914 to 1923 that healthy reproduction and the institution of the family were jeopardized in this worn out, hungry, ill and depressed nation. Given the civil responsibilities of the Soviet doctors, the project of sexual enlightenment received state support. Since the project was sparked off by the immediate necessity of stopping the spread of syphilis, it sought to re-direct sexual activity from prostitution to the family. But because the institution of the family was threatened by the general social disarray, the experimental “free union” of the sexes was proposed, though with disappointing results. Although this movement has been well documented in scientific periodicals, in popular literature and in official

statements, Frances Bernstein bases her study on hitherto neglected materials and reconstructs a massive panorama of the sexual enlighteners' collective efforts.

These efforts were of a very specific nature. Constrained by the basic hypocrisy of Soviet ideology (in many ways following the ascetic, pre-revolutionary Christian Russian tradition), the aim of the "Enlighteners" was to teach sexual literacy without explaining what sex is, while, of course, prohibiting any sex-educational literature. For many people the recommended sexless literature on sex was the only source of information. It was the exact counterpart of Soviet atheistic literature, the only source from which the general public could learn about world religions.

This highly informative and consistently conceptualized study, focusing on the sexless model of official Soviet sexual enlightenment, goes far beyond the movement itself, setting it in a broad context of policy and culture. We learn, among other things, about the decriminalization of homosexuality in the early 1920s and its recriminalization in the early 1930s; about the concept of femininity widely discussed at the time; about the sexless model of the Soviet family whose principal aim was to reproduce and to build the new society; about the nervous young generation and the "designation of pleasure as a telltale mark of capitalist perversion" (162); and we learn about all kinds of restrictions on birth control, the unavailability of contraceptives, prohibition of abortions, the difficulties besetting those seeking a divorce.

*The Dictatorship of Sex* uncovers one of the ugliest sides of Soviet reality that traumatized society for generations. Bernstein traces this sociohistorical phenomenon from its enthusiastic and optimistic inception to its tragic end. Then, amazingly, it was the doctors themselves, threatened by severe pre-terror ideological pressure, who deviated from the movement's initial idea, which explains why "discussion of sexuality (medical or otherwise) disappeared from public discourse" (xvi). It is a dramatically sad and depressing study of a society that was twisted and distorted in every one of its human relations, including the last intimate refuge of the individual—sex.

MARINA RITZAREV  
Bar-Ilan University, Israel  
© 2009 Marina Ritzarev

**Mesopotamia.** By Enrico Ascalone. Translated by Rosanna M. Giammanco Frongia (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 368 pp. \$24.95/15.95 paper.

This wonderfully illustrated book is part of the Dictionaries of Civilization series, edited by Ada Abaci. It discusses in detail the Assyrian, Sumerian, and Babylonian civilizations, their various kings, kingdoms and deities, which made up this multi-faceted and complex historical age spanning 5000 years.

Although most probably produced for the university student studying the period, it gives those of us who have an interest in the history of Mesopotamia a unique glimpse without the need of attending university lectures. The book is so clearly divided into sections and chapters that even the novice in the subject might gain a useful insight into the period. The sculptures and illustrations are well chosen, and the maps are detailed and easily comprehensible. Archaeological sites are shown and examined, their results explained. All the pictures are in colour and each section is explained separately.

Altogether it is a fascinating collection of artefacts brought to life by Enrico Ascalone. There is only one small quibble: it would have been even nicer to have had the book produced in a larger format. All you have ever wanted to know about ancient Mesopotamian civilization is here and so well done! It can only profit those who read it.

MIA ROTH  
Perth, Australia  
© 2009 Mia Roth

**The Day of Islam: The Annihilation of America and the Western World.** By Paul L. Williams (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007), 212 pp. \$25.00 cloth.

Readers in search of a chilling account of what radical mullahs allegedly intend to do with nuclear weapons need search no farther. If, on the other hand, you prefer a balanced account, one that acknowledges many weaknesses in the "army" of radical mullahs, you will want to look elsewhere.

Ironically, much of the book's value is in a secondary theme, the astonishing ineptitude of the self-identified Good Guys... the CIA, the FBI, Interpol, and their ilk. They miss

opportunities to capture key al Qaeda operatives, underestimate serious threats, and in 101 other bureaucrathological ways, grievously underachieve, and thereby exacerbate the problem.

Paul L. Williams, an investigatory journalist and author, lambastes the Good Guys, especially the 9/11 Commission, which he condemns for “mind-boggling omissions”—“despite the fact that members of the commission had reviewed 2,500,000 pages of documents and interviewed more than 1,200 individuals in 10 countries” (30). I mention this to indicate a debate that courses throughout the book: Williams versus mainstream researchers into the same matters.

Special attention is paid to the ongoing, well-financed efforts of Osama bin Laden to become a nuclear terrorist, a status Williams implies is either already true or about to become so. Williams warns American readers that lax border controls in the north (Canada) and south (Mexico) make plausible the secret-*ing* of suitcase-sized nuclear bombs in the United States, a situation he implies is either already true or about to become so. Quite disturbing are accounts of alleged terrorist training camps in Central America, Brazil, Venezuela, and other sites much closer to the United States than Afghanistan and Iran.

Only three things are certain: “a small conspiratorial group of Afghan Arabs [has ‘transmogrified’] into a worldwide political movement with millions of adherents,” and, “U.S. authorities who should know better vastly undervalue this threat” (206). Indeed, “even members of America’s premier intelligence agency [the FBI] remain aware that proof of the existence of al Qaeda’s nuclear arsenal already has been provided” (74). Williams notes a former KBG staffer believes secret stockpiles of suitcase nuclear devices have been buried in upstate New York, California, Texas, and Minnesota (88).

The book has many strong indictments (e.g., Canada is identified as the most dangerous country for the U.S.) (172). It has many provocative speculations (e.g., Hezbollah, from its bases in South America, poses an immediate threat to the U.S.; the Sunni Abbasids and Shiite Fatimas may yet reconcile; etc.) (136). And it has many dark contentions (the U.S. Embassy in Brazil was allegedly warned by letter of the forthcoming 9/11 attack a week

beforehand) (143). Not surprisingly, Williams has no illusions about his public reception, as “the practice of shooting the messenger remains very much in practice. Perhaps the reality is too hard to accept” (85).

In closing, Williams rapidly lists several reasons to doubt the threat, only to blithely dismiss them and conclude instead that Islamic extremists “appear to be prevailing, thriving, and, yes, winning” (206). In this he undervalues anticlerical opposition inside the Islamic world from modernists, and from those who abhor violence. He ignores the fact that the faith is not growing by conversion, but by fecundity, and that is likely to level off. And he could not foresee when he wrote in 2007 the consequential revolt in 2008 of Sunni leaders in Iraq who turned against Arab extremists.

Clearly written, informative, and quite chilling (if believed), the book is weakened by having 80 percent of its footnotes predate 2005. As well, it requires that a reader agree that those on guard (the CIA, FBI, etc.) are in fact utterly unequal to the job. As if this wasn’t hard enough to completely accept, Williams chooses to end without specifying a thorough-going reform program (although bits and pieces are scattered about). The book, in short, is almost as vexing as is its subject matter.

ARTHUR B. SHOSTAK  
*Drexel University (retired), USA*  
© 2009 Arthur B. Shostak

**Beyond Anne Frank: Hidden Children and Postwar Families in Holland.** By Diane L. Wolf (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), xiii + 391 pp. £13.95 paper.

Three stories vie with one another for the reader’s attention in this engrossing, disturbing, and informative book. The prime tale recounts in detail the prewar, wartime, and especially the postwar lives of almost 70 Jewish adults who as children were hidden from the occupying German Army by Dutch gentiles. A second narrative recounts the many trials the author experienced in accomplishing a most difficult research endeavor. And the third story indicts Dutch culture and society for failing to do all that was possible in regard to its endangered

Jewish countrymen—and, worse yet, for failing to come to terms with this. In combination the three narratives support many distinctive and valuable sociological insights, prime among which is the need to redefine the scope of Holocaust studies to fully include types outside of the conventional focus (concentration camps and ghettos) and outside a time frame that inappropriately ends in 1945.

The respondents lived lives that were remarkably complex, as they “took on and confronted multiple parents, multiple families, and multiple identities” (5). For many, the end of the war marked what they saw as “the beginning of their problems rather than their liberation” (6). For then they confronted opposing claims on them from their rescuers, their biological parents, and sometimes even from state-appointed “guardians,” on top of the dilemma of resolving for themselves the question of a Jewish identity.

While surviving the war was in and of itself a tremendous achievement, “creating and re-creating a post-Shoah context often incurred extraordinary emotional costs... Liberation and family reunification were far from a panacea for many of these Jewish children” (9, 12). Wolf rehumanizes the victims without idealizing them: “Parents were victims, without a doubt, but they were also actors, and often they used the wrong script” (341). For the majority of the hidden children, “their memories became their secrets, which had difficult and sometimes destructive repercussions” (331). Their memories of the Shoah “differ considerably from our understanding of the Holocaust and from what usually constitutes Holocaust memory” (28).

Among the many contributions the book aids our understanding of the contentious matter of the state’s highly fluid concept of the “best interests of the child.” Wolf helps a reader “think comparatively about the effects of state, regional, and global politics on those who are vulnerable, marginal, and invisible, and whose haunting presence—and absence—deserves more attention” (53).

Where Dutch society is concerned, Wolf asks why so many Dutch citizens “were witnesses and bystanders rather than actors” (34). She contends that postwar attitudes and policies “were neither welcoming nor benevolent toward the surviving remnant

[25 percent of the original group]” (334). She especially criticizes the state commission that decided disputes over a child’s placement between foster parents and biological parents: “commission members and their deliberations reflect not only insensitivity and ignorance, but also smugness, arrogance, and chauvinism, all under- and over-scored with anti-Semitism” (334).

To her credit, Wolf advocates making connections between the Holocaust and other genocides, like the one now occurring in Darfur: “The task at hand is to acknowledge the humanity of all groups on an equal basis, and to attend to the tragedy of all genocides equally” (346). She highlights pressing public and personnel issues not commonly associated with Holocaust studies, and in this way makes a signal contribution to creating a sociology of the Holocaust and of post-Holocaust life. Just as importantly, Wolf asks how “the patterns, practices, and effects of the Holocaust can enrich the sociological endeavor” (52). Albeit overwritten, sometimes repetitious, and weighted by jargon, the book remains an engrossing read, an original contribution, and a very worthy addition to the growing shelf of innovative Holocaust studies.

ARTHUR B. SHOSTAK  
Drexel University (retired), USA  
© 2009 Arthur B. Shostak

**Fiction and the Weave of Life.** By John Gibson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 201 pp. £30.00 cloth.

John Gibson’s *Fiction and the Weave of Life* is a blanket condemnation of contemporary literary criticism. Gibson employs cunningly constructed straw men—sceptics, truth-seeking humanists, etc.—to set his warp and anonymous Anglo-American philosophers and continental literary theorists (terrorists?) to spin his weft. The reader is presented with a fragile fabric full of holes.

Gibson fabricates his literary ‘sceptics’ (poststructuralist, deconstructionist, etc.) in Chapter 1. Their “arguments... [are supposed to] pose a genuine threat to the humanist intuition... [and] reveal something deeply

puzzling about the idea that literature can or ever wishes to be revelatory of reality. The remainder of the book is an attempt to dispel this puzzlement” (16).

Gibson proposes, in Chapter 2, to “cast literature as engaged in an exploration of the very thing it turns its back on: reality” (53). He invites the reader to “consider our archives... the actual places in which we store our instruments of representation” (64) and make possible “our ability to have a criterial, and so normative, way of rendering our world” (66). Gibson then jumps from “‘things’ or ‘objects’... [to] elaborate visions of human life” (71) and posits that literature “plays a role in archiving... instruments of cultural representation [suffering, jealousy, anger, alienation, etc.]” (71).

Chapter 3 argues that “literature exposes reality not by way of extra-textual representation... [but] by bringing to light our criterial relation with reality, our standards of representation” (81). Literature “can... be described as a form of cognitive presentation” (82) if it discards the critiques of simpletons and sadists.

The critic and crude or solitary reader conjured up in Chapter 4 perform “linguistic interpretation... disambiguation in the presence of semantic infelicities such as vague descriptions, unintelligible sentences, misused or misprinted words, and the like” (123). Gibson would have the critic do “something more interesting” (124): “critical interpretation... an engagement with extra-textual reality” (137). The reader might see “how literary works act as communal storehouses” (145).

In Chapter 5, Gibson accuses the framers of “poststructuralist anti-realism or ‘textualism’ [aka panfictionalism] and of ‘mimesis as make-believe’ theory... [aka] analytical aesthetics” (146) of posing “a threat to a great number of core philosophical ideas” (151). Under their influence, Gibson imagines contemporary literary criticism would return “to the picture of fiction as fodder for fantasy” (172).

Gibson’s proffered alternative to such a debacle is “humanistic intuition”: the “humanist claim... that literature’s manner of worldly presentation is a matter of bringing to view our criteria for the way our world is” (118). Regrettably, Gibson does not explicate his notion, even in his Conclusion, ending instead with an acknowledgment of his failure and an apology: “Even if one is not sold on the

precise shape in which I am selling humanism, I would be content if I have given the reader a sense of how interesting and important it is” (187). This reader is not content.

STANLEY SHOSTAK

University of Pittsburgh, USA

© 2009 Stanley Shostak

**Consciousness and Mental Life.** By Daniel N. Robinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), ix + 243 pp. \$29.50/£17.50 cloth.

René Descartes is on trial in *Consciousness and Mental Life*, charged with the “disembodiment of reason” (158). No jury in the world would convict him, however, after hearing Daniel Robinson’s testimony on the “eschatology of the Christian religion” (114) at the very bottom of Cartesianism.

Robinson begins by placing Aristotle and Plato in the contemporary landscape where “‘Consciousness’ is a problem... to the extent that... reality is exhaustively constituted by physicality” (15). Robinson then “addresses the phenomenology of consciousness” (18) (a tautology coming through?). Moving through Hobbes’ “social sense of shared knowledge” (20) and Locke’s “a private domain” (20), Robinson ponders “version[s] of *emergentism*, of *epiphenomenalism*, and of *supervenience*” (28), none of which “are scientific hypotheses, though they are phrased as if they were” (35), and Daniel Dennett’s reductionist functionalism manifest by “‘stupid homunculi’... [and] metaphorical metaphysics” (40). Robinson concludes that “the standard reductionistic accounts of the mental [states]... are fatally incomplete” (44), and their solutions to the consciousness problem are not “successful at the level of explanation” (50).

Robinson complains that “it is unfair to pick on Descartes... [or] credit him with originality” (52), given the long history of mind-body problems and theories of consciousness. ‘Cartesianism’ is the target of Platonists for having “reduced reality to *mechanism*” (53), but “the rise of Christianity... marks the appearance of ‘consciousness’ as a subject of now surpassing importance” (57). Christianity separated consciousness or soul from body. Following Augustine, Descartes merely

epitomized the schism. For him, “Only an entity that is a *thinking thing* . . . can fashion an essentially scientific, systematic account and . . . determine whether the claims reach the level of what is clear and distinct” (66).

Robinson suggests that current theories of higher-order thought [HOT] “are Cartesian . . . at the level of establishing differences between perceptual and cognitive processes” (84). He then traces self-consciousness from Hume and the disintegration of personal identity to Alfred Binet and Theodule Ribot and multiple-personality disorders, leading to Kant and the ‘I’ without which “there cannot be a moral being” (144). The discussion of emotion begins with Daniel Bernoulli’s notion of ‘*interests*’ (148), runs through Charles Darwin’s foundational work on evolution and Paul Ekman’s refinements, and arrives at “William James’s venerable theory . . . [of] a strictly corporeal affair . . . [and Antonio] Damasio[s] distinction between emotional states and the awareness of such states” (156) without finding “justification for the sorts of procedures inflicted on animals” (157) while testing clinically based neurophysiologic hypotheses.

Ultimately, “the conventional wisdom of folk psychology” (168) as opposed to “the reigning ‘causal’ model of explanation in physics” (189) and “philosophers’ zombies . . . [haunting] the literature on consciousness” (203) informs Robinson’s assessment of “virtue ethics,” Aristotelian rhetoric, motives, causes of behavior, desires, and fulfillment. Thus, continuing Descartes’s quest to build philosophy as a deductive science, Robinson recommends “‘mental causation’ . . . [as] a general and enduring [problem]” (198) for a philosophy of psychology and “a ‘science’ of mental life” (209).

STANLEY SHOSTAK  
University of Pittsburgh, USA  
© 2009 Stanley Shostak

**Women and the Medieval Epic: Gender, Genre, and the Limits of Epic Masculinity.** Edited by Sara S. Poor and Jana K. Schulman (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), ix + 299 pp. £45.00/\$96.00 cloth.

In their book jacket blurb, Sara Poor and Jane Schulman state that “This collection of essays

explores the place, function, and meaning of women . . . in a variety of epics . . . [which are] traditionally believed to narrate the deeds of men at war.” Their intent is to demonstrate that women played a much more profound role in those epics than heretofore acknowledged, in particular by facilitating the heroism of the male protagonists (is this not always the role of women?). As with all anthologies, some of the contributions are right on the mark, others rather miss the stated target, but overall this is a well-chosen assortment of varying views.

One of the more successful is the very first essay by Christine Chism discussing two Alexander epic poems from the Middle English period. She convincingly demonstrates that both Olympias (Olympadas), the canny mother of Alexander and Candace, who becomes his equally canny lover, hold their own against a formidable figure of not only history but legend. Chism asserts that the romanticized and heroic Alexander could not exist without these women, and much of what he is, is shaped by his dealings with them. Even though frequently unwilling, he is forced to abide by their desires—literally, in the case of Candace—for him.

Sarah-Grace Heller’s treatise on “Women in the French Crusade Cycle” is somewhat uneven. The best part of her discussion is of the Saracen women present in these First Crusade epics, particularly Calabre, the mother of Corboran of Mosul (a known historic personage), who is a sorceress. Calabre also appears to have had historical reality, although in the poems she is transformed and deformed into something out of nightmare. Described as 140–200 years old, with grey hair to her feet, as well as long, hanging eyebrows, wrinkled ears and pendulous nose, she becomes the very stereotype of a witch in order for the poems to rationalize their hatred. Although Heller does not say this, it would seem Calabre is demonized as much for her wisdom and knowledge—a male prerogative—as for her status as a “pagan” enemy.

Attention is also given to the other side of the coin with Dick Davis’s essay on the *Shahnameh*. Extraordinarily long (45,000 lines, which gives new meaning to the word *epic*), the *Shahnameh* is actually more a fantasy record of the rulers of Persia back to the days of creation than strictly an epic. Ironically, the women of

the older, ahistorical sections of the *Shahnameh* are more independent, active, and forthcoming, than those of the later, more historical portions.

“Women and the Limits of Patriarchy,” Thomas Caldin’s contribution, falls a little short of the mark in attempting to demonstrate that the female characters in two epics surrounding the exploits of El Cid, are more than submissive plot devices. He succeeds a little better in the case of the *Mocedades de Rodrigo*, but less so with the *Poema de Mio Cid*, where the women strike us as peripheral in spite of Caldin’s efforts.

On the other hand, Kate Olsen serves Hrotsvit of Gandersheim well, by providing a detailed historical context in which Hrotsvit lived, worked and wrote. Employing the most obvious of feminine tropes—poor, weak, little me—Hrotsvit turned “machocentric” epics on their heads by placing women as the primary operators in her classically inspired *oeuvre*. Prolific as well as clever, Hrotsvit churned out “eight legends, six plays, a short poem . . . and three epics” (116), using the style of Terence, as well as that of Virgil.

Elizabeth Buchelt suggests that the authors of the epic *Genesis* poem *Junius 11* may have been trying to rehabilitate Eve by emphasizing her practical and maternal concerns, rather than her vanity and self-absorption; William Burgwinkle lauds the heroism of Berthe, the main female character in *Girart de Roussillon*; and William Layher, Jana Schulman, Karen Grimstad, Ray Wakefield, and Kathryn Starkey attack various aspects of Scandinavian epic with varying degrees of success.

Of those concentrating on Scandinavia, one of the more intriguing is “Caught Between Two Worlds,” the essay by William Layher, which explores the application of the terms *sex* and *gender* in the *Hervarar saga* and *Hrólfs saga Gautrekssonar*. Layher demonstrates both that these terms could be understood in the modern sense and that they did not represent absolute, but rather, variable states. As he points out, the variability is shown by the way in which the narrative switches from “she” and “her” to “he” and “him” depending on the actions of the heroines at the moment—generally reverting to feminine pronouns when the women interact with fathers or other kinsmen (a telling point).

Despite occasional lapses—the volume contains a number of places where bits of text

seem to have been dropped out—this is a collection I can recommend wholeheartedly. All contributions are of interest to Medievalists, pursuers of Women’s Studies, or those who simply savor writings about literature, whether professionals or not.

LORA SIGLER

*California State University, Long Beach, USA*

© 2009 Lora Sigler

**When Asia was the World.** By Stewart Gordon (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), v + 228 pp. £16.00 cloth.

This is an interesting, cleverly-conceived book that offers rich rewards for a student of world history and the post-classical period, and some gems even for specialists. The premise, in some ways more modest than the title suggests, is that exploration of several individual travelers and trade experiences highlights how different parts of Asia were interconnected, at a time when Asian trade and innovations predominated in the world as a whole.

Individual chapters, though usually focused on the experience of a cosmopolitan individual, provide opportunities for summaries of broader developments, such as the spread of Buddhism or the expansion of Arab Islam. These are the contexts, obviously, for particular commercial ventures or pilgrimages. Chapters do less, on the whole, in discussing the consequences of individual ventures, and indeed often these are mainly illustrative, not in themselves terribly historically consequential. A final chapter summarizes conclusions about the interlocking connections that describe Asia during the millennium after 500 CE. Several chapters also discuss some implications for Europe (and one of the later chapters actually deals with a Portuguese trader in China); there is, unfortunately, less awareness of Africa. The Mongol period is curiously underplayed.

Some of the chapters detail fairly familiar episodes, like the travels of Ibn Battuta and Ibn Sina (Avicenna) or the conquests of Babur. There is material as well on Chinese Buddhist pilgrims and, later, the great sea voyages that retell stories available elsewhere. Even these sections, however, offer nuggets of information and an easy writing style that

prove valuable, and their juxtaposition helps drive home the larger themes of Asian vitality and interconnectedness.

Several chapters stake out newer territory, for example of trade patterns involving present-day Indonesia based on information from the Intan shipwreck, or the ventures of a Jewish merchant, Abraham bin Yiju, in the twelfth century. The excursion of Ibn Fadlan, as the caliph's emissary to central Asia, also proves exceptionally interesting. Obviously, with a few exceptions, each chapter relies on an insightful personal memoir, and while the character of the writer is not always clearly established, the vigor of first-hand observation complements Professor Stewart Gordon's own accessible style.

This is a good read, with chapters neatly sequenced over a 900-year span, very useful for teaching purposes either directly as student fare or as fodder for instructors themselves.

PETER N. STEARNS

*George Mason University, USA*

© 2009 Peter N. Stearns

### **Who Are You? Identification, Deception, and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe.**

By Valentin Groebner. (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 349 pp. \$30.00 cloth.

Valentin Groebner, a professor of medieval and Renaissance history at the University of Lucerne, has written a fascinating work, filled with compelling stories, in which he traces the history of identification during the premodern period between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. In light of the present heightened concern for security and worry about identity theft, the present volume is very relevant. In the nineteenth century there was the fingerprint. The twentieth century witnessed the discovery and use of DNA for identification. In this century there are plans for massive databases containing fingerprints, DNA, eye scans, and other biometrics. Groebner's book is about how people were identified before modern techniques. Identity papers such as we carry around with us today, however, are thoroughly medieval.

The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 (chapters 1–5) deals with natures, that is, the

categories that were used to describe a person. The focal point for Chapter 1 is a tale of a woodcutter set in Florence in 1409 and concerns resemblance. Are we who we appear to be? Chapter 2 looks at the images and signs used to identify people: seals, coats of arms, and other insignia that were thought to represent a person, as well as portraits, since Renaissance portraits were not necessarily painted from life. Chapter 3 examines how names were recorded, where the names were filed, with a special focus on the substance used to record the names—paper. Detailed descriptions began to appear slowly in the late fourteenth century. These personal descriptions “captured individuality precisely on the basis of dress” (76). Chapter 4 looks beneath the clothes to marks on the skin. Chapter 5 considers skin and body colors; however, references to “white,” “red,” and “black” are not easy to understand. They were not skin colors in our modern sense, but “body colors that referred to other personal traits and to a person's complexion” (131). The term ‘complexion’ had various meanings, but by the fourteenth century it definitely signified skin color and pigmentation.

Part 2 (chapters 6, 7, and 8) focuses on objects. Chapter 6 looks at identity papers such as letters of conduct. A letter of conduct was valid only for a limited period of time and for which the bearer paid a fee to the local ruler in return for safe conduct. The most important feature of such a letter was the name and insignia of the one who issued it. Merchants especially needed these letters as did pilgrims. With chapter 7 we come to passports, which began in the second half of the fifteenth century in Italy, France, and the Swiss Confederation. In contrast to letters of conduct that were considered a privilege, passports were an obligation. Groebner points out that what validated identification documents in the early modern period had little to do with the bearer's person. “Rather, what made such documents genuine was the mark of the sovereign or authority issuing them—the seal” (183). The documents were thus a government monopoly. Such documents were susceptible to counterfeit reproductions just as they are today. In addition, passports were not always accurately checked. This period also witnessed the birth of the imposter, and included in this category would be one who assumed the



identity of a real person falsely presumed dead, such as Arnaud du Tilh, who attempted to pass himself off as Martin Guerre. Other imposters completely invented life histories. Chapter 8 considers the various means of identification that shape our world today, beginning with passports, “medieval echoes,” which the author refers to as “remarkable documents” that contain very little information about us as persons. Passports are validated, not by personal details, “but by the registration number they bear, by the special paper on which they are printed, and by official watermarking and counterfeit-proof features of authenticity” (224). Groebner concludes that identity constitutes the attempt to control how others define us, “as anyone who has ever lost their papers in an unfriendly environment knows all too well” (257). One who is *sans papiers* thus becomes an illegal immigrant, without an identity.

JOHN E. WEAKLAND  
Ball State University, USA  
© 2009 John E. Weakland

**What They Think of Us: International Perceptions of the United States since 9/11.** Edited by David Farber (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), xv + 187 pp. \$24.95/£14.95 cloth.

This edited collection provides various national perspectives on the United States and its recent foreign policy. Rather than relying on survey data, the chapters of this book explain why various national groups hold hostile images of the United States. The chapters include analysis of Iraqi, Indonesian, Turkish, Chinese, Russian, Mexican, and European attitudes toward the United States. While many of the critiques provided in these chapters have been identified before, the authors of the various chapters do an excellent job of historicizing contemporary anti-American attitudes in their countries. For example, anti-Americanism in Iraq is linked to the rise of the Ba’ath Party in the late 1960s. After the decline of British influence in Iraq, many came to view the United States as the new imperialist power. Iraqis believed the United States was intent on

protecting its satellite in the region, Israel, as well as protecting its oil interests. In the wake of the U.S. occupation after the defeat of Saddam, many Iraqis thus feared rather than welcomed an American presence in their country.

The Bush administration’s “war on terror” alienated many who were initially sympathetic to the victims of the 9/11 tragedy. Especially in Muslim societies, U.S. support for Israel and perceived lack of sympathy for the Palestinians is a major contributing factor to anti-American sentiment. The U.S. decision to invade Iraq without the support of the United Nations proved to be the critical event in deteriorating support for the United States, particularly among Turks. This unilateralism was seen as a cause of Chinese mistrust of Americans. The Chinese also sense that Americans perceive them as a source of economic competition, and this causes concerns about their own desire for economic growth and prosperity. A similar sense of competition and frustration with the United States in the wake of the Cold War led Russians to be less sympathetic to U.S. actions after 9/11. Many in Mexico and the Spanish speaking world believe 9/11 was a result of American foreign policy, placing this event in the context of historic anti-Americanism. Despite the growing acceptance of a Wilsonian idealism in Europe in the late 1990s, the Europeans failed to agree with Bush’s invasion of Iraq. U.S.–European relations deteriorated rapidly after perceived American unilateral military action in the Iraq War.

One of the themes that emerges from this book is that attitudes toward the United States are not fixed. Just as recent American policy may have led to deteriorating relations with many states, new policies associated with the new American administration provide an opportunity for the United States to redress issues and improve relations around the world. This will require the United States to listen and try to understand others. This, in turn, may lead to improved relations if others reciprocate American efforts at rapprochement.

TIMOTHY J. WHITE  
Xavier University, USA  
© 2009 Timothy J. White

**The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts.**

By Owen Davies (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), viii + 299 pp. \$33.95/£19.99 cloth.

In Owen Davies' absorbing work *The Haunted*, England's crossroads, parish boundaries and urban churchyards, that is, its liminal spaces, are populated with ghosts. The shroud-wearing wraiths and noisy ghosts that frequent these places are part of the shifting cast of specters that have frightened and intrigued the English from medieval times through to the present day. The changing role and perception of these apparitions in English life and culture is the focus of *The Haunted*, which skillfully demonstrates how the historical study of England's ghosts—whether the vengeful specter of the seventeenth century or the ostensibly purposeless shade of the nineteenth century—can be read as a palimpsest of the country's unique religious, scientific and social development.

In order to illustrate the pervasive and enduring significance of ghosts in English social history, Davies adopts a thematic approach. Dividing his book into sections on experience, explanation and representation, he is able to track the way in which ideas about ghosts have altered over time, reflecting broader religious and social change. In the first section on experience, for example, Davies notes that the child ghosts and black-clad specters of the medieval period disappeared following the Reformation as the concepts of limbo and purgatory lost their relevance. He also points to the way in which urbanization and industrialization altered both the geography of haunting and English people's interactions with ghosts. Focusing on the practice of urban ghost hunts during the nineteenth century, for instance,

Davies is able to reflect upon the dynamics of Victorian mass entertainment, class, and social order.

In the book's second section, Davies considers the myriad ways ghosts have been explained since the Reformation. He shows that, while many theorists sought the basis of ghost belief in deception, delusion, hallucination and dreams, others argued for the external reality of the spirits using both theology and contemporary science to support their claims. Part 3 of *The Haunted* looks at the history of ghost representation. Here Davies explores not only the history of the ghost on stage, screen and page, but the practice of ghost imitation, noting that gender often decided the kind of haunting perpetrated. Young working-class men, for example, tended to imitate ghosts in public places while women more often mimicked ghosts in the domestic sphere favoring the noisy ghost or poltergeist.

In the concluding section of this well-researched and accessible book, Davies puts forward a range of explanations for the surprising increase in ghost belief in England since the Second World War. In this context, he suggests, that people have become less embarrassed about expressing belief in ghosts as it has become more socially acceptable. Given the persistence of ghost belief in the modern age and the possibilities offered by new technologies and liminal spaces for ghost manifestation (computers, cyberspace and road-side memorials), Davies predicts that ghosts will remain a part of England's social and cultural landscape well into the future.

HEATHER WOLFFRAM

*National University of Singapore, Singapore*

© 2009 Heather Wolfram