Book Reviews


There is an anecdotal consensus in the Middle East that western democracy is neither for Arab nationals, nor for Muslim communities. However, authentic patriarchy is. Hence the issue of father-son authority comes to the fore, which is the engaging theme of Syrian Episodes.

History is relentless in the Middle East. The post-World War I scenario divided the Ottoman Empire into zones of western influence. Then, many promises were made by the Allied forces—to Arabs, Armenians, and Kurds to establish homelands on their historic sites—and these are still pending. The founding of the State of Israel further complicated the post-World War II setting in the region. With the dispersing of Palestinians in neighboring lands, strategic-tactical shifts were inevitable in the Arab leadership, questioning their collective will—and role—in the larger geo-political scheme.

This book, written in a narrative mode, attempts to provoke debate on the future of the Middle East. Driven by an ethnographic intention, John Borneman chooses secular Syria as the site for the fieldwork, and conservative Aleppo as his anchor, to engage in an anthropological dialogue with Arab sons and fathers on the succession of leadership. He articulates the tension between American secularism and religious dogmatism in the United States in formulating a foreign policy and suggests a possible parallel in Syria between Damascene political nationalism and Aleppian religious orthodoxy. Up until 9/11, Arab fathers have sailed through, as best as they could, under formative circumstances. Now, with the plight of the Iraqi debacle, the sons must deal with the emerging challenges.

Borneman speculates that the issue in contemporary Syria is not the doctrine of pan-Arabism per se, but the Alawite Dynasty advancing the pan-Arab DICTUM to claim legitimacy for its existence. He questions whether the present regime can survive under the pretext of U.S. imposed socio-economic constraints.

Any DICTUM in the socio-political realm, albeit within the domain of religiosity, embodies systemic manifestations. This articulates built-in behavioral assumptions: that a self-organizing purposeful community may survive, regardless of its loosely defined constitutionality, if its membership is sincerely committed to its functionality (Islam?); conversely, a community may not survive, regardless of its rigidly articulated systemic structuralism, if its membership is corrupted by what they can or cannot do within the organization (the Soviet Union?).

The Alawites comprise an intertwined community, situated in the mountainous region of Syria along the Mediterranean Sea. According to a twelfth-century edict by Patriarch St. Nerses Shnorhali, the Alawites were originally Alawites/ARevites pagan Armenians who worshipped the Sun-God (al-Rah=al-Lah?) until they converted to Islam as a camouflage, but kept their internal traditional beliefs. (The L-R or R-L transliteration of consonants exercised in the exchange of Indo-European and Middle Eastern languages pertaining to naming of historic sites and people, may confirm The Alawites’ historic background.) They are fiercely independent and can be unpredictable: if they signal left, they might turn right, or steer straight, depending on gut feeling. However, they are shrewd politicians, too. As followers of the Umayyad philosophy, they maintain their communication channels open—neither too strict nor too flaky—but keep their intentions unknowable to the
Crossing colonial boundaries with ease, *Performing America* by Susan Castillo blends elements of realism and magic, love and adventure, rural tranquility and global chaos. This is a great selection of extraordinary polyphonic texts in the three centuries following the first contact between Europeans and indigenous peoples of the Americas. The knowledge, awareness and sensitivity with which Castillo approaches the interaction of cultures as well as the information acquired through it, result in a synergy that overcomes the clash between civilizations. Paying particular attention to performance and performativity in the texts of the early colonial world, the author tries to overcome the intercultural and cross-cultural problems of the Europeans and indigenous groups.

Following the introduction, the book is divided into four parts, each dealing with performances of a different kind. Chapter 2, “God and Mammon,” analyses the use of performance as a means to disseminate religious ideology, offering case studies of French missionary plays, flower wars in seventeenth-century Spain, and printed dialogues between missionaries and indigenous leaders. Protestant attitudes towards performance are of vital importance for understanding performance genres such as printed dialogues and lexicographic studies in seventeenth-century Brazil and New England. Colonialism deconstructed is best perceived through the discursive formation of history, which is precisely why the author examines it in Chapter 3, “Performing History,” through paradigmatic historical events relating to the conquest of the Americas (especially Columbus’s discovery of America, the first obvious example of colonial disease and of what followed it, the conquests of Peru and Chile), staged by both indigenous writers and European playwrights.

The issues of individual and collective identity, the focus of the last two chapters, disclose the early attempts of the people to grasp the meaning of nationality and identity. Chapter 4, “Performing the Noble Savage,” deals with the various representations of the Noble Savage—a popular term that came into being with Jean Jacques Rousseau and was brought back into the limelight by A. L. Huxley in his eerie modern masterpiece *Brave New World*. Finally, the book concludes with “Performing Creole”—offering a substantial analysis of the performance of Creole perspectives and identity formation, and the alleged inferiority of the indigenous peoples of the New World as seen through the eyes of both European and Creole writers.

The book addresses the question why dialogic performance and the vast number of performative texts emerged in the early Americas and how these enabled explorers, settlers and indigenous groups to come to terms with their huge differences in language, behavior and culture; how these texts were used either to impose or resist ideologies and cultural norms; and, finally, how performance allowed the two civilizations to pose the debate about the other’s culture—bearing in mind Alexander the Great’s words that it is shameful not to respect cultures that are much older than our own.


*Feedback* studies conspicuous events in the history of TV-related art and TV broadcasting in the United States of America between the 1950s, when television started its airwave diffusion in the affluent post-WWII stars-and-stripes society, and the late 1970s, when cable television began its even wider affirmation.

There is a critical side to David Joselit’s book in that he highlights the essentially
The undemocratic character of the successful economic and cultural campaign of corporate television. Television is privately owned and therefore serves the interests of corporate management and shareholders, not those of the public at large, whom it targets and submerges in its endless flood of consumerist imperatives; it allows for no clear feedback mechanism whereby the public may express dissent or actively interact with the medium. The viewer, rather than being an interlocutor, is conceived of, and treated as, a potential purchaser of commodities and, eventually, as a commodity himself, traded amongst broadcasters, marketing agents, hired social scientists and a plethora of other specialists orbiting around television and its flow of revenue.

The undemocratic character of American and, by analogy, of much non-American television, is particularly worrying when one considers, as the author does, the increasingly central role it plays in determining the formation of political consensus in the public arena, the topics around which this consensus coalesces, and the (lack of) depth of the same. Joselit’s account of the growing importance of television in the American presidential elections from Eisenhower to Nixon (139–46) is as illuminating as it is disheartening for anyone who believes in the actual existence of Aristotle’s “rational animal.”

The author’s specialisation as an art historian and his ability to dissect, analyse and assess the processes of creation, projection and retention of images in the complex reality of broadcasting for mass audiences, lead him to take part in the current academic debates about the political dimensions of television in a refreshingly alternative and insightful way. This fact testifies to the plausibility of his claim that “art history has the capacity to become a political science” (xiii). Thus, Joselit’s work adds to the long-standing tradition of social, political, and philosophical studies of the semiotic dimensions of political life, from Georges Sorel’s “system of signs” to Umberto Eco’s investigation of the reassuring mediocrity of TV stars.

There is also a “hopeful” side to Joselit’s book. Selecting relevant experiences of opposition to the economic and cultural campaign of corporate broadcasters in the 1960s and 1970s, Joselit identifies three strategies for resistance: virus, feedback, and avatar.

“Virus” or “viral aesthetics” (48) means to create new images that alter unexpectedly customary ones, thus disrupting and countering them, whilst reminding the viewer of the latter’s origin and function, analogously to Duchamp’s reconfiguration of canonical Western art (e.g. the Diggers’ “Death of Hippie, Son of Mass Media”).

“Feedback” means to challenge customary images by standard media language, while avoiding standard subservience to the dominant interests and/or “hijacking” these interests by means of stunts and “pseudo-events” (109; e.g. Michael Shamberg’s non-conformist Top Value Television and Abbie Hoffman’s widely-reported “dropping money onto the trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange from the visitor’s balcony...the traders...snatched up dollar bills hungrily,” 111).

“Avatar” means to create new images that elicit empathy or identification but cannot be reduced to existing categories or be easily controlled by dominant interests (e.g. Melvin Van Peeble’s Afro-American hero Sweet Sweetback, placed outside both white stereotypes and black commonplaces, and eventually appealing to a very large audience).

Joselit’s “hopeful” side of the book is interesting and, at times, intelligently amusing. However, the regular failure of the strategies identified in the historical period studied and their later confinement to journalistic anecdote, academic nostalgia, art dealership and harmless bourgeois leftist posture should resound as a warning much more loudly than they actually do in Feedback. Perhaps, the nitty-gritty drudgery of party life and trade unionism, which seems to have vanished from the American horizon, should be reconsidered as a much more likely avenue for progressive change.

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Albert Einstein is probably the most famous scientist of the twentieth century and certainly a giant of modern physics, whose name will be remembered in the centuries to come along those of Galileo and Newton. In contrast, the memory of his parallel, lifelong work of advocacy for an array of left-wing and Zionist political goals is already fading away, whether under the guise of Einstein-the-naïve-idealist, which the editors of the volume claim to be predominant, or the guise of Einstein-the-shrewd-activist, which the editors painstakingly endeavour to substantiate by means of careful and comprehensive juxtaposition of public and private writings by Einstein himself.

According to David E. Rowe and Robert Schulmann, Einstein’s choice of venues, the timing of his pleas, his willingness to reconsider his views, and his strategic acceptance of the ominous title as “grandfather of the bomb,” display, among other elements, the little naivety and the remarkable pragmatism of Einstein qua public figure. The editors’ efforts make the latter guise look plausible, but were one to consider the fate of the political and social causes dear to Einstein, the former guise would appear if not exact at least plausible, too.

Socialism (esp. chap. 9), understood as Thorstein Veblen’s overcoming of the “predatory phase” of human history, is far from accomplished, most notably in the United States of America, where Einstein sought refuge from Continental fascism. Today, the term itself has become a political swearword, comparable in impropriety to “anarchism,” “feminism,” and “communism” (particularly in their adjectival form). In the last thirty years, Adam Smith’s liberal ideology of profit, individualism and competition, which Einstein dreaded, has returned forcefully to the forefront of U.S. affairs and typically meets the opposition of farther right-wing ideologies, rather than of left-wing ones. Not to mention the Soviet experiment, which Einstein himself observed with growing disillusionment during his life: its failure is now a datum of twentieth-century history.

Internationalism via world government (esp. chaps. 1, 5, and 8), which Einstein supported as a valid response to the intertwined threats of nationalism, imperialism and militarism, is not faring well either. The United Nations and the peaceful development of international law have suffered greatly from the recent divisive invasion of independent Iraq by armies and private contractors of some Western liberal countries. As a result, knee-jerk nationalistic and militaristic stances by Russia, China and other countries have increased, given also the overall unilateral approach to international affairs of the sole military superpower left after the demise of the Soviet Union. This approach, theorised under the fin-de-siècle Roman-Empire-inspired notion of pax Americana, had already been anticipated in the previous two decades by the refusal to sign, ratify or respect scores of international treaties. Wilson’s and Roosevelt’s America, of which Einstein became a citizen, was very different from Reagan’s and Bush’s.

Zionism (esp. chaps. 3, 6, and 7), which Einstein cherished as the opportunity for the European Jews to gain self-respect qua nation amongst nations, affirmed itself through the establishment of the state of Israel. In this perspective, one would be tempted to conclude that at least this dream of his was accomplished. However, the actual history of the state of Israel has implied dramatic costs for the Palestinian population, to whom Einstein believed a state should be secured too, in order to guarantee peace and prosperity to both communities, and analogous self-respect to the Palestinians qua nation. Contrary to Einstein’s hopes, there has been little “Jewish-Arab amity” (297), which he thought due to the policy of divide et impera endorsed by the former British colonial power. Had the British gone home, friendliness should have ensued; yet Einstein was wrong.

This rather gloomy reality-check could continue, considering the recent fate of other hopes of Einstein’s, such as international disarmament, reduction and regulation of nuclear weapons, rejection of torture and unchecked imprisonment, public control and steering over currency and financial capital, smashing of corporate oligopolies and multinational cartels, decrease of working hours, moral and existential fulfilment of individuals within egalitarian communities. However, for the sake of brevity, the three examples above must suffice.

Einstein-the-shrewd-activist is likely to be an exaggeration or a partial truth; nevertheless, Einstein on Politics is an excellent and thought-provoking volume, which can be of interest to

The rise of the extreme right in Europe has been the political phenomenon of the late twentieth century. There were heralds of this (low tax parties, mainly) in the 1950s and 1960s but the 1980s and 1990s saw these parties become a fixture of the European political scene. France is, of course, the main case study of this pathology.

This book is in two parts and the first looks at the development of the French extreme right since the fall of the Vichy regime and traces the intricacies of the various movements that have issued into the Front national. This is a tangled story and not easy to analyse, but the background of the minuscule and squabbling Collaborationist groups, the Poujadist surge in the mid-1950s and the Algerian War are expertly reviewed. The section on the “Nouvelle droite” and on its importance are thorough, and the way in which Le Pen was able to catch the novelty of the rising right is captured succinctly. It is easy to see, given this context, how Le Pen emerges as a relative “moderate” despite a well-earned reputation for thuggish behaviour and Music Hall language.

The second part of the book looks at the Front national itself, both at its development and at its anatomy. This section depends on research insights that are woven into the discussion (making it a useful undergraduate teaching vehicle), and on a synthesis of the massive amount of material now available on the French extreme right (it is doubtful if anybody who has not followed the Front national over many years could now undertake this remit). The main argument that the Front national, although offering a modern face to the extreme right, is no recent arrival and has deep cultural and political roots is convincing as is the depiction of the way the party has dragged its issues onto the political agenda and distorted political debate in France.

The irony is, of course, that the Front national can be seen as a failure in its inability to capture any but insignificant elected positions, but as a success in the way that it has—through Le Pen in particular—dominated the debate and shaped the terms in which many crucial topics are debated. This book is a very successful blend of research and analysis and is going to become essential reading for students of the extreme right in both France and Europe as a whole.

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A Critical Introduction to Law and Literature. By Kieran Dolin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), viii + 263 pp. $85.00/£45.00 cloth.

Much of the work on the intersections of law and literature has concerned itself with an analysis of these intersections rather than with the research that this interdisciplinary lens produces. Scholars have repeatedly debated whether and to what extent law is like or unlike literature; how the two fields influence each other; the ways in which law and literature can compensate for each other’s perceived weaknesses and failures; and whether the institutions are allied with each other or in competition. All this meta-commentary and interdisciplinary anxiety often came at the expense of the attention due to the actual ways in which law and literature work together in the production of cultural ideals and values.

By focusing on historical events and cultural issues in which both law and literature played significant roles, Kieran Dolin’s A Critical Introduction to Law and Literature comes as an important corrective to this trend. Dolin brings together some of the most interesting findings in recent law and literature work that show how both are imbricated and implicated in specific historical moments, issues and debates, rather than how they relate to each
other as disciplines or practices. Moreover, he shows how treating law and literature as “shared discourses” illuminates hitherto unrecognized or overlooked aspects of these historical moments.

Dolin surveys recent law and literature scholarship on the cultural history of the common law and its offshoots in American and postcolonial contexts. The main part of the book proceeds historically; each chapter covers a period by focusing on a major debate, controversy, or ideology of the time, which has been the subject of extensive law and literature analysis. He examines humanism and the culture of contract in the Renaissance, crime and punishment in the eighteenth century, the “woman question” in Victorian England, the shock of the modern and its new forms in Modernism, and two more contemporary chapters, on law and literature in the post-colonial context and on race and representation in the United States, respectively. These chapters, and the scholarship he surveys, express his commitment to what Gillian Beer has called “the historical moment” and to the multiplicity of meanings that are generated through the intersections of diverse professional, cultural and social activities at a certain time and place (10).

In the first two chapters Dolin succinctly and intelligently maps out the diverse strands of recent law and literature scholarship along methodological and disciplinary lines. In so doing he realigns hitherto distinct approaches and identifies new analytical categories that have emerged in the field over the years. However, the importance of the volume lies not in this analysis but in the historical chapters that follow, in the histories that he tells—interweaving and often pointing out the dialectics of their legal and literary aspects. His commitment to displaying the intersections of law and literature at specific historical times and places, rather than as abstract universals, thus provides his greatest contribution to the field. This approach is key to ensuring the future productivity of this interdiscipline.

As Dolin explicitly states, it does not follow that because law and literature have become increasingly specialized fields they are also secluded or insular. The research presented in the volume repeatedly shows that law and literature, rhetoric and poetry, aesthetics and pragmatics are not separate or opposing realms (be they “similar” or “different”), but rather more connected or mutually implicated than one might initially have thought. For example, in his chapter summarizing research on Renaissance humanism, he shows how the inseparability of law and literature in the Inns of Court and in figures such as Samuel Johnson and Edward Coke created a “rhetorical culture” and in some cases a “species of nation-building” (80). Indeed, one of the most interesting facets of Dolin’s presentation is his focus on the ways in which “legal values and concepts are embedded in a broader and more diverse web of meanings” and how they “can work together in the production of cultural ideas and values” (2).

The book seems geared to the non-expert in each and both fields, and Dolin explains legal concepts as clearly as he does trends and developments in literary history. The book thus provides an overview of recent academic research for the lay reader, as well as an excellent guide to the field for the beginning scholar. For the latter, the narratives he puts together, as well as the various methodologies, problems and approaches by which they are arrived at, point to the productive possibilities for further research. But the volume’s most significant appeal may be to (non-legal and non-literary) historians. While the story of the relationship of law and literature per se may only be of interest to specialists in the field, the stories this interdiscipline tells and the wide range of periods and subjects it covers can augment and shed new light on historical research more generally, opening new conversations and revisiting old ones.

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Originating as the Sather lectures given at Berkeley in spring 2004, this book is a delightfully elegant and wide-ranging exploration of classical efforts to formalise and master time. The word time, Denis Feeney assures us
in his preface, is the “most widely used noun in the English language,” one that is today measured with seeming naturalness in an automatically mathematical calendar. But it was not always so, as Feeney moves to demonstrate. With an ironical nod to Plutarch, he organises his lectures (and so his subsequent chapters) into three groups of two, successively exploring what he labels “Synchronizing Times,” “Transitions from Myth into History,” and “Years, Months and Days.”

In a brief two hundred pages, Feeney deftly undermines any assumption that time might not have a history and that dates might not be “synchronisms, relative not absolute” (12). After all, he comments: “We have been thinking in centuries for only three centuries, and in decades for only seven decades.” Given this novelty and its contemporary power, the dilemma, then, is how to “think societies” where “every city had its own calendar and its own way of calibrating past time” (9), and approaching this issue becomes the main purpose of Feeney’s book.

We learn, for example, that the Roman search for time was closely linked to the Greek, at first with evident political purpose—a columnar Roman history that could be viewed as matching a Greek one was a key assertion that Roman power should be acknowledged as equal or superior to the Greek. The Romans could thereby be hailed as “full players on the Mediterranean stage” (42). So, too, when, for example, Pompey conquered mightily in the east he brought in his triumphal train an array of “universal histories” and indeed geographies (the marrying of time was naturally accompanied by a desire to merge space). As Feeney notes wryly, when time hits space, “space becomes place: mere area becomes significant locality once it becomes a historical venue for agents moving in plotted time” (163).

But what of the borders of one sort of time and another, notably those defined and separated with seeming (but actually fragile) security as myth and history? In his second pairing of lectures, Feeney focuses on foundation myths and their own deployment in limning difference, including that between a golden age and an age of iron. What, too, about the seeming security of years, months and days and the comprehension of what might be and what should be an anniversary? Romans, we learn, celebrated birthdays and drew meaning from them, Greeks did not. What was the effect on these conundrums of the calendrical reforms associated with Julius Caesar that came into some sort of use from 1 January 45 BCE? Was there, then, an eventual Roman conquest of time?

For many, the answer is ‘Yes.’ As the sixteenth-century polymath Joseph Scaliger put it: “The Julian calendar...marked a victory in the realm of culture more lasting than any Roman victory on land or sea” (193). Feeney is not so sure. Here, too, his postmodernist message is that most is relative. Even at the height of the Empire, there was no “unitary Roman temporal world view” (3). Then, Feeney concludes (and perhaps now, too), in “any society individuals are liable to inhabit different frames of time, often simultaneously—cyclical or recurrent, linear, seasonal, social, historical.” Asking ‘what’s the time’, Feeney has reminded us, is more complicated and telling a demand than it might seem.

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Aristotle, by Christopher Shields, tutor of Ancient Philosophy at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, is part of the well-known Routledge Philosophers Series of introductions to the great Western philosophers. It is the aim of this series to place the thinker at issue in his historical context, to explain and assess his key arguments and to consider his legacy. To perform the Aristotle-job Shields is, without doubt, one of the best positioned philosophical students of Aristotle’s highly complicated and influential oeuvre. He not only wrote an introduction to the whole of classical philosophy (2001) and the Oxford Handbook on Aristotle (2007), but translated Aristotle’s De Anima (2007) and published an in-depth analysis of a methodological concept—used by Aristotle in his philosophical and scientific works—as homonymy (1999).
Notwithstanding this, it is an almost impossible task nowadays, with our developed specialization, to write an introduction to Aristotle’s entire oeuvre, which concerns alpha (from poetics and rhetorics to ethics), bêta (from meteorology to biology and physics), and gamma disciplines (from economics and psychology to politics). No other thinker provides us with such a differentiated oeuvre, triggers libraries of commentaries from medieval times onwards and remains even at present “hot” in several academic disciplines.

Today, no scholar is familiar with so many academic disciplines. This reviewer, for instance, has what Shields calls “a narrow interest in… [Aristotle’s] ethical or political theory” (3) and, therefore, no knowledge whatsoever of the bêta disciplines. Nearly all (early) modern philosophers can be summarized and introduced in one short volume by one person, except perhaps for Karl Marx, who for this reason, we may suppose, has not yet been included in this Series.

Aristotle, compared to other thinkers, presents special difficulties. Almost nothing of his work is uncontroversial. This is not surprising: for about two and a half millennia people have been struggling not only with his texts but with his authority. His biological and other scientific writings have gained some popularity recently, while Umberto Eco (himself an expert in medieval scholastic theology and semiotics) made Aristotle’s poetics the nucleus of The Name of the Rose. In the final pages of his book Shields gives other examples of Aristotle’s present popularity. It should be emphasized, however, that throughout the ages this popularity was largely based on Aristotle’s political, economic, and ethical writings, which provided models and legitimation for churches, monarchies, constitutions, and numerous scholarly theories until well into the twentieth century (neo-scholasticism for example).

Faced with this formidable tradition and authority Shields chose not to make a compendium of Aristotelian philosophy and not to articulate or defend specific Aristotelian doctrines, but “to motivate the principal features” of his philosophy so that new (“Greekless”) readers could approach his work “with facility and understanding… to determine for themselves what he means, what is of value… what should be accepted… what… rejected.” Regardless of what may be criticized in his explanations (was Aristotle a functionalist? etc.), one must acknowledge that Shields has achieved his aim for Anglo-Saxon students of philosophy.

Shields’ book comprises eleven chapters: the first describes Aristotle’s life, corpus, his place in the ancient biographical tradition, and the following five chapters consider the scientific works with their main categories and basic methodological concepts. Chapter 7 on “living beings” could be viewed as the bridge to the literary, political or economic works, which are discussed in the following three chapters. The eleventh chapter is devoted to Aristotle’s legacy up to the present. A useful and extensive glossary, a bibliography and an index complete this well organized and stimulating introduction.

Whether Shields has written an interesting introduction for Continental students of Aristotle as well, remains to be seen. Since these have been exposed to the influence of the Frankfurters, the French structuralists, and so forth, they generally demonstrate a more comprehensive, interdisciplinary, historicized and politicized way of thinking. Aristotle’s Politics and Nicomachean Ethics have usually been given a more prominent place than in Shields’ book.

A small demonstration of this point seems appropriate, triggered by Shields’ belief that not much of Aristotle’s substantive philosophizing can be understood without a prior mastery of “his four-causal account of explanatory adequacy” and “his conception of the tools and methods required for successful philosophizing” (2). I was surprised to be confronted here with that old image of philosophers as secular theologians, as the interpreters, constructors and judges in matters of thinking and thought. By definition this leads to patronizing people who do not belong to the elite as possessing only a “narrow interest,” in, for instance, Aristotle’s political writings. Apart from this, the implicit and untenable thesis that there should be one methodology in Aristotle’s whole oeuvre seems to be a consequence of this position. So, let’s take a quick look at Aristotelian political thought.

In my view, this theory is largely not a practical approach, as Shields insists time and again, although it uses words and concepts that refer to practice. More important, however, is
that Shields has overlooked the three main concepts of Aristotle’s theory: polis, oikos, and autarkeia. The common translations of polis are “city,” “state,” or “city-state.” Shields uses “city” once and mostly he uses “state” as if the two were similar. In modern historical scholarship, however, all three translations are somewhat ridiculous for describing the ancient Greek context: of the ca. 2000 poleis in Greek and Aristotelian antiquity, the majority were no more than villages of about 500 inhabitants; there are only very few real cities—including Athens, Corinth, Thebes, but not even Sparta which consisted of four larger villages. Thus a polis can never be a city, a city-state or a state, whatever definition one constructs after internalizing these facts (351–52).

Furthermore, polis is closely related to oikos, as Aristotle knew and wrote in the principle part of Politics: “The polis is also prior in nature to the household and to each of us individually” (Pol. 1253A20 in Shields’ translation; other translations differ considerably). Literally oikos concerns the house, the household and (extended) family. Polis-oikos is nothing but the relationship between the public and the private community. A single private community is conceivable only if one accepts an Adam-Eve constellation, which Aristotle rightly did not. It is at least logical to suppose that there was originally some kind of undifferentiated “entity” that differentiated into private households much later, and that these in turn entailed something like private property and a complicated socio-economic practice.

Aristotle’s famous continuation of the above quotation—“since a whole is necessarily prior to its parts”—leads to unnecessary confusion. In the context sketched herein its meaning seems obvious, but it seems nevertheless logically false. For, only if there are “parts” can one speak of a whole, except when a whole is a single unit, in which case it is not obvious to talk about parts. However, here it is better to consider that a relationship must exist or develop, so that there can be no talk of a priority of either polis or of oikos. This quotation is constantly misused politically by lifting it out of its specific Greek context, promoting it into a highly contested holistic methodological principle that “the whole is always more important than the parts,” and thus legitimating every kind of repression of the state against its citizens.

The Christian interpretation and translation of the Greek “pagan” Aristotle, to which Shields is still tributary, is the very source of these distortions that have lent Aristotle a negative image. This can also be demonstrated with the third concept, autarkeia. This term is traditionally rendered as inward-looking, externally hostile, “self-sufficiency” (Shields, 355). But in the ancient Greek context, as well as in Aristotle’s properly translated writings, this concerns the reverse, as was shown long ago (see The European Legacy 6 [1996]: 1915–33).

What this misconception may imply for the interpretation of Aristotle’s Politics or for the “whole Aristotle” cannot be further discussed here; and thus, before this is dissected by academic philosophers with their “narrow interests,” Shields’ introduction to Aristotle remains the best for them to consult.

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F. E. Peters, Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University, has written a lucid analysis comparing the scriptural traditions that structure Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all of which are connected to the faith of Abraham. Unfortunately, this scholarly study lacks an apparatus of notes and bibliography, probably because it was done in conjunction with an exhibition at the British Library. To help compensate for this lack of sources, however, Peters has included a stellar array of illustrations of many of the rare editions displayed in the exhibition.

The book itself is an exciting study of how these religions of the “book” were constructed with their theological identities from oral formulations into written texts. All three religions are contentious, since each insists that the Creator God has spoken the “truth” through its own tradition. The faithful in each tradition sometimes still look
reproachfully at one another, even though they all contend that God’s message was basically intended for all mankind, albeit being originally delivered to a privileged audience. Peters provides narrative summations of the originating events that launched these faiths and then outlines how these narratives were developed into the orthodox text that controls them.

Given the strife nurtured by all three faiths, it is important to locate some of the deeper substructures that give meaning to their texts, since there is now a compelling need to engage their believers in conversations that might explore the issues swirling around the establishment of a consensus on human rights. All three traditions have had to respond to God’s word issued in an event-driven world. Such a tension means that all three faiths have somehow had to nurture exclusivity as well as an openness to contingency, which has led and may continue to lead to both internal and external strife.

Peters very aptly recognizes that texts become comprehensible when we examine how and why they came into existence, but protective dogmatic fortresses have also obstructed research efforts. He correctly insists that at the deepest levels of these texts questions and answers become very complex, in part because scriptural authors have their own biases shaped by the contexts of their communities and literary traditions.

Theologically, each of the three scriptures represents a unique communication from God. The Quran, however, is more pronouncement than the Jewish and the Christian scriptures. One crucial difference between them is that the Quran, attributed directly to God, “enjoys self-conferred canonicity” (276). The other two testaments underwent long and usually invisible processes of formation, which were grounded in historical communities. For Muslims the Quran is both Revelation and Scripture, which makes interreligious dialogue with them more problematic than some might suppose, though not impossible for those who are sensitized to the myriad similarities and differences among the three scriptures, which Peters exposes.

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The purpose of this scholarly and provocative book is to use the lessons and wisdom of history to assist the reader in defining the proper role of religion in American public life. What drives men and women to practice religion and to engage in democracy can be contentious. Religion, which argues ethical precepts, seems to demand that the faithful be steadfast and opt for immutable precepts. Democracy, however, requires compromise to function and, as part of the process, must protect religious freedom.

Chapters 1 and 2 structure the argument that most Americans in the “hollow middle” do not want religion to be used to guide the country, and they do not want religion to be omitted from the public square. Joseph P. Viteritti highlights the intimate connections of politics, morality, and religion. He includes an abundance of polling data as a means to understand public attitudes to key issues. These public attitudes are not consistent, which is the reason, he contends, for the tension between democracy and religion.

Chapter 3 offers two case studies: the Scopes Trial, which dealt with a teacher using evolutionary theories, and the Mozert Case (1986), which featured a group of parents who refused to allow their children to read a textbook they thought would adversely affect their religious sensibilities. By highlighting the complex motivations and actions of the winners and losers, these cases illustrate that there are more than abstract principles at stake. Chapter 4 explicates the theme that schools reflect the biases of the larger society. Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the interaction between law and politics. In particular, Viteritti points out how the Establishment clause of the First Amendment was used to supersede the Free Exercise clause. This act of jurisprudence enforced freedom from religion rather than freedom of religion. Chapters 7 and 8 present the viewpoints of the Founders who crafted the Constitution, and offer perspectives on the present religious landscape along with insights on the process of diversification of religious traditions.

After an exhaustive analysis, Viteritti concludes with a workable, even if not
intellectually elegant, common sense solution to the issue of religion in the public domain. The premise of his argument is that most Americans want religion in the public square, but not in any governing capacity. The private religious institutions, he maintains, should retain the right to articulate values, but should not be allowed to discriminate in employee situations. Secular taxpayers may dislike the religious institutions selected by their neighbors, but should have no right to use government to indulge their dislikes. Religion should continue to be part of society’s life that exists beyond the reach of government and sustains the meaning of freedom. He may not have solved the problem that remains at the center of the religious issues he analyzes, but he has clarified these issues and has helped clear a path for future research and discernment.

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Leading economists should be studied not only as economists but for their way of thinking, their social attitudes and their motivations to create. One of these is Janos Kornai, the distinguished Hungarian economist, a former socialist thinker and fierce critic of Soviet style socialism and communism. His criticism of the latter did not come after the fall of the Berlin Wall but as early as 1956 when in his Overcentralization he attacked the very essence of the command economy. As a writer and journalist Kornai made economics readable and accessible to the wider public. But Kornai also criticized the mainstream analysis of markets in his Anti-Equilibrium (1971), his only book translated into Romanian.

If we think of Third Way theories, we may understand that living and working in Budapest and Harvard allowed Kornai to directly experience the strong and weak points of the two social systems, which is why his thinking and his work deserve to be more widely known and studied. It seems that nowadays there are only few who are dedicated to a life of research, so we should appreciate old style professors whose research and broad interests are a source of inspiration.

Janos Kornai’s By Force of Thought will enrich any reader and offer a model life to the younger generation of students. Kornai inspires optimism and realism. Now approaching his eightieth year, he closes the last chapter of his memoirs with these words: “It is time to stop. The rest of my work is waiting for me” (399). We indeed await his new books and new syntheses, which are at once useful for economists, political decision makers and social builders.

Liviu Drugus and Toader Gherasim
George Bacovia University, Romania
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This is a most welcome recent addition to the Cambridge Companion series. While a good general introduction to the work of Albert Camus, this relatively short collection of essays seeks to reread and rethink that work by recontextualizing it; and it seeks to keep Camus current and relevant to our world. The shift in context is away from the World War II and postwar years to the French Algerian War (referred to in the book as the Algerian War of Independence) and postcolonial criticism. The book thus continues in the tradition of Conor Cruise O’Brien and Edward Said, offering significant criticism of Camus but without being dismissive or demonizing. Collectively the authors recognize the different contexts in which Camus has been read and the richness of his work as “a writer of the human condition” (6) and artist in the world.

There is not space here to comment on each essay individually, but the first essay by Ieme Van Der Poel sets the tone for the volume as it moves from the young Camus, deeply concerned with the plight of the impoverished population of Kabylia, to the mature Camus, paralyzed by the war
and opposed to Algerian independence. The humanist Camus is reread in light of Camus the colon. But, the essay concludes, since France has not yet come to terms with its colonial heritage and the war, and in light of the Algeria of the past two decades, the reading of Camus has hardly come to closure. The other two essays in this first section look at influences on Camus’s thinking, notably Jean Grenier, and at autobiographical references in *L’Envers et l’endroit*.

David Carroll’s essay, opening the second, longest and most effective section, reflects the very best of the volume. He retrieves *The Mythe de Sisyphe* from its datedness, arguing for its relevance today as a text of resistance. This is followed by essays on Camus as playwright and as journalist and then two somewhat overlapping essays on Camus, ethics, justice and violence. The latter, while critical of both Camus’s arguments and his conduct during the French Algerian war, are nevertheless sympathetic to his advocacy of resistance and resistance to violence. They suggest Camus’s currency for us not because of his answers but because of his sense of the problem and his anticipation of our own indeterminate postmodern predicament. Then follows a reflection on the Sartre–Camus split that likewise situates the quarrel in the context of the French Algerian war but makes it speak to the world today in terms of the political issues it raises. The last essay in this section is a rich survey of Camus’s writings with an eye to his views of women and visions of Algeria. The four essays of the third section look at Camus’s novels, reinserting them into the context of colonial Algeria from which they came. Here we do not find significant new readings or interpretations but a solid overview of his fiction.

Collectively the pieces in this volume invite us to reread Camus with a sense of his relevance as anticipator of the debates about ethical values that mark postmodernity and as a writer who enables readers to recognize their own struggles with values, limits, everyday life, and death. These essays reinstate Camus as a worthy intellectual companion in dialogue.

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**Logos and Eros: Essays Honoring Stanley Rosen.** Edited by Nalin Ranasinghe (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2007), vi + 271 pp. $45.00 cloth.

I know very few philosophers who do not know about Stanley Rosen. He has been in academia for over 50 years, many of those years spent at Penn State University, and his reputation as a scholar is well deserved. *Logos and Eros* is a Festschrift celebrating Stanley Rosen, poet, philosopher and reformed Straussian. As expressed in the title, both *logos* (argument and analysis) and *eros* (a desire for wisdom) are prominent in this collection of eighteen essays and an introduction. While *eros* is a central theme in Rosen’s scholarship, either esoterically or exoterically, what I found to be the underlying disposition that imbued this collection of essays was a sense of friendship, or *philia*, that the authors felt for a teacher, scholar, friend and colleague.

There are many ways to extol the virtue of an influential thinker and to honor his career. Some of Rosen’s past students, whom he influenced and mentored, extol his teaching style and relate ideas that they developed in his classes. Other past students express their thanks by taking the ideas they learned in Rosen’s classes and developing them, while other past students and colleagues, such as Alasdair MacIntyre, offer critiques of Rosen’s ideas that still acknowledge their debt to him. So either through the continuance of Rosen’s work or through the critique of it, that sense of *philia* cannot be ignored. Every scholar and academician should be envious and desirous of this kind of affection and influence.

The wide spectrum of philosophy that Stanley Rosen studied and taught is evident in the content of this book. The essays are divided into three sections: “Works for or about Stanley Rosen,” “Works on Plato and Ancient Philosophy,” and “Works on Modern Philosophy.” Thus, Rosen’s scholarship touches on a wide spectrum of philosophy. The essays themselves discuss hermeneutics, common sense, ordinary experience, Platonic philosophy, Aristotelian philosophy, Herodotus, democracy, Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Nietzsche, and nihilism. I found each of the essays worth reading, and anyone who aspires to philosophy and political theory would benefit from reading this book.
If I may be allowed to take an idea from Rosen’s book on Plato’s *Symposium*, I would say that Rosen took Plato’s ladder of love seriously, and that he helped his students and colleagues climb that ladder. Further, Rosen recognized that we had to climb down the ladder again and deal with ordinary experience. Hence, in the best sense, these essays show what Plato really had to teach us. To paraphrase Alasdair MacIntyre’s praise, Rosen helps us to understand how past philosophers are as much contemporary thinkers as current philosophers are.

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Eli Maor has a knack for bringing sterile topics in mathematics to life. With histories of infinity, trigonometry, and the irrational number *e* already to his credit, Maor in his most recent effort tackles Euclid I.47, better known as the Pythagorean theorem (Pythagoras’ theorem). The result is an engaging and charming story of how this theorem has been presented, proven, and used for over four millennia. Although commonly attributed to Pythagoras, the theorem was known to the Babylonians, who lived more than one thousand years before him. Euclid eventually immortalized it as Proposition 47 in his *Elements*; and from there, it has been transmitted to generations of students. This, however, only scratches the surface of this theorem’s fascinating history. During the Middles Ages, every student pursuing a Master’s degree in mathematics was required to offer novel proof of the theorem. In fact, there are, at last count, more than 400 known proofs of the theorem, including ones prepared by the twelve-year-old Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci and the twentieth president of the United Stated, James A. Garfield, among others. It is central to almost every branch of science and has even been proposed as a means to communicate with, of all things, extraterrestrial beings. Far from being the austere formula that students are required to memorize in geometry class, the Pythagorean theorem is shown to be, unlike its subject matter, vividly three-dimensional.

Not everyone, though, will be able to navigate easily through the proofs contained in the text. Most of them, as Maor notes in the preface, require nothing more than a working understanding of high school algebra and geometry; others are a bit more complicated, requiring some knowledge of calculus. The numerically minded will devour these proofs with relish; the less mathematically inclined may find these parts of the book tedious, contributing little (if anything) to the overall narrative. Yet it should be noted that even the most technical proof, in the capable hands of Maor, is rendered elegant; and whenever possible he provides helpful and easy-to-follow diagrams to illustrate steps along the way. To be sure, Maor’s best efforts pay off, allowing him to lift his readers up, without dumbing the material down, so that they can appreciate the deep significance and rarefied beauty of this most famous of mathematical statements. All in all, this affordable book, as with Maor’s previous titles, is rollicking good fun and highly recommended to anyone with even the slightest interest in the history of mathematics.

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**The Civil War as a Theological Crisis.** By Mark A. Noll (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), x + 199 pp. $29.95 cloth.

In an age of secular anxiety over the alleged return of religious themes to the public square, this study is a welcome antidote to the fashionable panic of irreligious western intelligentsia. Professor Mark A. Noll, whose vast oeuvre already includes comprehensive studies of the historic relation between American politics and Christianity, has provided a short yet incisive history of the debates between churchmen over the injustice of slavery during
the Civil War era. This study should be required reading for secularist intellectuals who ignorantly conflate the complexity of Christian revelation with the anti-intellectualism of fundamentalists.

Noll takes his reader back to a time when evangelicals actually took the Bible seriously, and thoughtfully scrutinized its pages for moral guidance in the face of the growing crisis over slavery and secession in the antebellum period and beyond. While Noll contends that no evangelical preacher held a candle to the profundity and depth of Abraham Lincoln—who skillfully invoked biblical symbols and credos in justifying the war against the South—he nevertheless helps his reader appreciate just how important the biblical hermeneutic of evangelicals once was in America. I write “once,” since it is Noll’s view that the debate between evangelicals over what Scripture taught about slavery (a debate which, predictably, divided along the Mason-Dixon line) was the last great moment of political influence for evangelicals in America. Evangelicals, who had forged a “national culture” in America from the first Great Awakening to the Civil War, abruptly lost (and never regained) their influence in the postwar period. Since that time, despite paranoia over the “Religious Right,” America’s ruling class has been secular to the core. (Why evangelicals allowed this triumph of secularism to happen is the subject of Noll’s most famous book, The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind.)

The one major question which lingers for this appreciative reader is why the author so readily conflates orthodox Christianity with a literalist reading of the Bible. In amply documenting the worry of many evangelicals (not just in the South) that the abolitionist attempt to ignore numerous Scriptural defenses of slavery would lead to a massive revisionism of revelation altogether, Noll gives the impression that it is indeed orthodox to defend slavery (though not on racial terms). I believe that Noll gives far too much credibility to the pro-slavery camp’s justification of slavery on biblical grounds. Certainly his hero Lincoln had nothing but scorn for the cynical attempts of slave-owners to feign adherence to “orthodoxy” while dehumanizing their fellow human beings.

In appealing to the spirit rather than the letter of Scripture on the abomination of slavery, Lincoln called upon his people—North and South—to act upon not only the “better angels” of their nature but also upon the highest truth of the Bible: Christian love. No slave-owner ever succeeded in showing how the bondage of other human beings is an act of agape. Perhaps the religious folk of our own time would provoke less anxiety if they truly walked in the footsteps of Lincoln.

Grant Havers
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This study of America’s political religiosity joins a growing literature on the meaning of the republic’s civil faith for her citizens and for the world. Yet this author is particularly bold. David Gelernter, who is well-known as a neoconservative commentator, sees nothing blasphemous in dubbing Americanism—the universal creed of spreading liberal democracy all over the globe—the “fourth great western religion.” Indeed, there is nothing blasphemous about claiming, as he does, that Americans are (and have always been) God’s chosen people from Puritan times to the current neoconservative hegemony. As the chosen people, Americans have the mission of unleashing the hidden republican lurking in the heart of every person on the planet.

Gelernter would add nothing to the debate over the meaning of religion in American political thought if he were simply observing that Americans have always intertwined religion with politics. Yet this religious reader is shocked to discover Gelernter’s thesis that Americanists are not believers in any traditional sense, for they do not necessarily need an accurate knowledge of the Bible: “the important question is not what the Bible actually says about government; the important question is what conclusions Americans drew from the Bible” (97; his italics). Moreover, “anyone of any faith can celebrate those beautiful blossoms whether or not he believes in Puritanism or any other Judeo-Christian religion” (109; his italics). Most significantly, “You can believe in
Gelernter, who writes without a trace of irony, never worries about the lethal implications of his barely argued positions. His version of secularized theology does not just water down the biblical tradition upon which Americanism depends: it also joins the rogues’ gallery of other failed political religions whose devotees sought to replace God with a version of Man who idolatrously confuses heaven with earthly kingdoms. This confusion is not surprising, since Gelernter does not insist that Scripture be read with any deep understanding anyway.

Predictably, Gelernter looks to the example of Abraham Lincoln—“America’s last and greatest founding father”—as the true inspiration behind Americanism’s call for the “chosen people” to liberate the world. Gelernter’s knowledge of American political philosophy is just as defective as his knowledge of the Bible, since he ignores the subtlety of Lincoln’s famous appellation for his fellow Americans, “the almost chosen people.” Lincoln, who wisely recognized that anyone can claim to be “chosen” (both sides in the Civil War certainly did), was far more insistent that Americans submit to biblical charity, which eschews self-righteously driven imperialism and spurious claims to know God’s providence. Yet Gelernter cites charity only once in his tome.

Like most neoconservatives (and paleo-conservatives), Gelernter is quite willing to read into the ideas of both Scripture and Lincoln’s political philosophy whatever message serves the agenda of the day. The irony of this practice—apparently unknown to the author—is that the biblical tradition warns against both the shallow faith and self-serving politics which Gelernter trumpets as the essence of Americanism.

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Contentious Issues of Security and the Future of Turkey. Edited by Nursin Atesoglu Guney (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2007), xvii + 197 pp. £55.00 cloth.

The famous Turkish saying—‘What will happen to Turkey?’—suggests that it may be a truism to say that a lot is at stake for Turkey in the early twenty-first century due to its internal politics and to external factors related to its politics. Huntington (1997) in his famous and much debated book, The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order, wondered why Turkey was always passed over when it came to membership of the European Union and why it always seems to be at the end of the queue.

It is reasonable to argue—like Huntington and others—that the answer to the question has something to do with Turkey as a Muslim country—the religious “other,” a country in between Europe and Asia and the former Ottoman Empire asking for membership of the Christian club. The political development in Turkey during the spring and summer of 2007, culminating with a landslide victory for the moderate Islamic AK party in the July elections, highlighted contested issues including, among others, the Islamic-democratic problem, secularism, national identity, Islamophobia, and modernization. But to give a proper answer to the question ‘What will happen to Turkey?’ we also need to illuminate frequently debated issues related to its foreign and security policy: the United States, the European Union, Greece, Cyprus, Russia, and the Caucasus—not to mention the Middle East.

A good start for understanding security issues and Turkey’s future is to read Nursin Atesoglu Guney’s edited book. As Guney declares in the preface, due to its geographic proximity to converging major fault lines running through the Caucasus, the Mediterranean and the Middle East, Turkey is at the centre of the common security concerns of the two Wests (the EU and the US). In twelve empirical contributions, mostly consistent in quality, researchers discuss the various challenges Turkey has been facing since the turn of the century, dealing, among others, with issues—including those mentioned—like “the Iraq factor,” “the limits of change,” “energy security debates,” and “the new security environment.”

It is sometimes argued that Turkey has roughly five possible future options within the field of foreign and security policy: (1) an independent and strong key player outside alliances; (2) a leading country with a strategic
partnership in a Turkic front; (3) a strategic and economic leadership within a Muslim alliance of surrounding states; (4) a closer alliance with the US; and (5) a closer alliance with the EU. Without evaluating these options in detail, a reasonable conclusion is that the last two options are at the fore when it comes to the foreseeable future of Turkey—which does not mean that one can neglect at least part of the first option as rather realistic. As the author argues in chapter 6, “Turkey with its improving democracy and developing economics, aims to convert its role as America’s policeman in the eyes of the Arab world into a more active, independent key player in the region.”

Turkey, as Guney also observes in her article, has moved from the status of a flank country to a front-line one. But this new security setting has also brought constraints for Turkey, which has to pay attention not only to the two Wests but also to the three Easts (Moscow, Beijing, and New Delhi)—not to mention other key actors in the region. Nothing however seems to indicate that Turkey will not manage this challenge. As the different contributors argue, a lot of things in the current transformation of Turkey and Turkish politics—changing security perceptions, de-securitization and politicization of security problems, better state–society relations, and Turkey’s cultural uniqueness and membership negotiations with the EU, among others—are rather promising. If Turkey plays the cards well, she is in the position of, directly or indirectly, contributing to a positive and hopefully more peaceful development in this exposed region, or as President Gül said in his inaugural speech (August 2007), it can “bring comfort and stability to its region.”

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In *How the Body Shapes the Way We Think: A New View of Intelligence*, Rolf Pfeifer and Josh Bongard present a clear, extensive and complex argument about the relationship of body and brain in intelligent systems. But let me begin with a simple question: why did the authors write this book? Of all the possible range of intelligent behaviors available to them, from planting a garden to playing a piano sonata to drinking coffee with friends, Pfeifer and Bongard chose to inscribe these ideas and evidence, these and only these, on the written page. Why?

I suspect that if I asked the authors this question directly they would initially look puzzled, then respond to the effect that they felt these ideas are interesting and warrant attention, that they will be useful in advancing the field, that the book will bring them recognition and notoriety, that they take pleasure in engaging these thoughts, or a myriad of other possible answers in the same vein. And their answers would reveal the book’s central and common misconception: that rational, logical intelligence is somehow separable or independent from emotion. For example, the authors ask on page 13 how we can walk, talk, solve a problem, or play a piece of music. And while these are perfectly reasonable, interesting and relevant questions, we must not forget that a central part of explaining how we do these things lies in explaining why we do them. That is, these questions are not merely perfectly reasonable, but, obligatorily and emotionally, they are interesting and relevant. Without emotion, the cognition that allows us to choose, debate and answer these questions would not be possible.

To see what I mean, let us return to the central topic of the book: the relationship between intelligence and the body. If the body can shape the way we think, as I agree with the authors it can, this shaping would happen via the sensing of the body, or via perception. However, such sensations are not merely recorded in a value-neutral and objective way. All sensations are not of equal importance. Rather, especially as discussed by Antonio Damasio, sensations are assigned valence, starting with pleasure and pain and growing from there in complexity. Even the simple visual perception of objects or situations in the environment is understood in terms of its propensity to cause harm or good to the organism. In turn, the organism responds...
accordingly to maximize good and avoid harm, either in a basic survival sense or in a more evolutionarily evolved, sociocultural sense.

Taken together, these values and sensations lead to emotion, which supports and drives what we traditionally call cognition. Quite literally, and as the term emotion suggests, we are “moved by” the valences we assign to perceptions (or simulated perceptions). Any theory of embodiment that does not account for the processes of assigning subjective value to sensations of the body cannot logically account for complex organic behavior or, by extension, for intelligence, because it cannot explain why we do the things we do—for example, why the authors chose to write this book and not another. Although a purely cognitive theory may well describe the processes that govern artificial intelligence and embodiment (in the form of robot behavior), this from my perspective represents a fundamental rift between artificial and biological intelligence that the book leaves unexplained.

Overall, while this book is a fascinating foray into the design principles underlying “cold” cognition, when we study artificial intelligence, we must not forget that what we are actually studying are artificially intelligent systems designed and operated by emotional, biological beings. In artificial intelligence, we humans vicariously supply the evaluative processing that motivates the cognitive processing and makes the robot’s labors subjectively useful and innovative. To dismiss emotion as simply ancillary in this process is to dismiss the reason why cognition happens in the first place.

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The Cinema of France. Edited by Phil Powrie (London: Wallflower Press, 2006), xv + 283 pp. $25.00 paper; $75.00 cloth.

Released as part of Wallflower’s ‘24 Frames’ series, Phil Powrie’s edited volume The Cinema of France is an extremely useful, engaging resource for those studying and researching French cinema. The volume is structured around a selection of 24 key films drawn from across French cinema history beginning with Abel Gance’s Napoléon (1927) and ending with Sandrine Veysset’s Y’Aura-t-il de la neige à Noël (1997). Each film is presented in a clear and concise essay, accessible to specialists and non-specialists alike, with contributors drawn not only from French and Francophone Studies, but also from other related fields, thus providing a stimulating, transdisciplinary approach to the subject matter. As Michel Marie (xv) makes clear in his preface to the volume, Powrie’s openness to viewpoints from beyond the boundaries of French Studies means that the volume “modifies and enriches the usual cinephilic criteria based on auteurism, with its often rigid categories.” Indeed, what is particularly impressive here is, on the one hand, Powrie’s desire to see French cinema, not as an isolated, and predominantly auteurist, national production, but rather as an integral part of a network of global visual cultures, and, on the other hand, the editor’s confession of “unease” at the notion that there might be “a right way” (3) to recount a cinematic history. Alternative histories are clearly flagged up in Powrie’s introductory essay and the reader is encouraged to consider the 24 works presented here as representing only one possible interpretation of “the cinema of France.”

The 24 essays follow a similar pattern—introduction, synopsis, examination of critical and academic reception, and analysis of key sequences—which adds further to the volume’s accessibility and coherence, without detracting from a desire to offer new perspectives. Dayna Oscherwitz’s essay on La Haine (Kassovitz, 1995), for instance, engages with questions of centre/periphery, onscreen depictions of the urban, and the film as a portrayal of societal breakdown which have featured elsewhere in discussions of Kassovitz’s work, but it also brings into play questions of Jewish identity which, until recently, had been largely overlooked in the literature. Similarly, by including not one, but two, essays on films by Jean Renoir (Alan Williams on Le Crime de Monsieur Lange and Martin O’Shaughnessy on La Règle du jeu), Powrie offers the reader the possibility to contrast differing perspectives on the work of a key director, but also to understand the ways in which Renoir’s work reflects the rapidly changing political backdrop of 1930s France.

Clearly, questions can—and, indeed, should—always be asked of the editor’s decision
to include, or exclude, particular films. However, here, these choices form part of the volume’s subject matter and, as such, offer yet more scope for productive and interactive debate. This debate might have been enlivened further still by a more sustained attempt to point forwards in French cinematic history, encouraging the reader to consider which turns this history might take from the late 1990s where the volume leaves us. However, even this comparative absence is counterbalanced by Powrie’s clear identification of parallel histories from the outset, and, overall, the volume remains engaging, challenging, and stimulating throughout.

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This timely publication will interest those working in counter-terrorism, either academically or professionally. It contains five general chapters, which focus on policy, followed by ten case studies, with a final chapter drawing together the broad experiences and differing views of the contributors. What the contributors all share is an exclusive focus on Islamic terrorist financing and a broadly U.S. perspective.

The main difference in opinion apparent in the volume is the same facing policy makers and the intelligence community: to stop the money or to follow the money? This tension is well explained in Chapter 5, “Warning Indicators and Terrorist Finances,” by Phil Williams, and is a theme throughout. Williams recommends “the tacit abandonment of the freeze strategy” (89) but Raphael Perl instead argues that “the man with the money is as dangerous as the man with the gun” (257).

After a brief introduction by the editors, the opening chapter, also by the editors, provides an overview of the book’s purpose. Chapter 2, “Terrorism Financing Mechanisms and Policy Dilemmas,” by Nikos Passas, prepares the ground for evaluation of what is to follow by warning of the inherent dangers of relying on mass media, politicians, or Google for intelligence, warning as Passas does against “facts by repetition” (23). He rubbishes the claim that Al Qaeda was financed by “conflict diamonds,” a view shared by the 9/11 commission (see p. 116), but repeated by other contributors to the volume (42, 147). He further cautions policy makers to resist the impulse to be seen to be doing something (22) without thinking through the risk, noting that the monitoring and blocking of traditional modes of finance pushes Al Qaeda into a looser coalition of independent “cells,” wed by an idea rather than a framework, and all the more difficult to stop (33). He is one of the few to consider also the costs of anti-terrorism financing strategies in terms of democratic legitimacy (36–37). He describes the low direct costs of financing a terrorist action and worryingly advises that “the truth is that such small amounts cannot be stopped” (31; see also 177 on the unobtrusively financed London attacks of 2005).

The title of Chapter 3, “Organized Crime and Terrorism,” by John T. Picarelli and Louise I Shelley, is self-explanatory and this chapter considers the links, real and imagined, between the two. Chapter 4, “Terrorist Organizations’ Vulnerabilities and Inefficiencies: A Rational Choice Perspective,” by Jacob N. Shapiro, applies economic analysis to terrorist organizers’ decision making, providing a much better understanding on which to base policy choices than the usual assumption that terrorists are irrational, single-minded, religious “crazies.” After Williams’ chapter come the case studies. There is not scope in this short review to discuss each, so instead some select comments shall have to suffice.

Chapter 6, “Financing Afghan Terrorism: Thugs, Drugs, and Creative Movements of Money,” by Thomas H. Johnson, deserves special mention for providing a very clear summary of modern Afghan history, intervention, and financing of violence that can serve to enlighten those who could not have placed Afghanistan on a map prior to 2001. It is, however, short on recommendations, with the exception of the rather obvious “long-term commitment to a secure and stable Afghanistan” (114).

In Chapter 8, “Hezbollah Finances: Funding the Party of God,” Matthew Levitt either fails to appreciate or deliberately
downplays the broader functions of Hezbollah as a political party, social welfare provider, employer and so forth. Instead, the approach assumes that all activities are a “front” for terrorism (144). Although Levitt acknowledges that most funds go to non-terrorist activities (149), there is still the sense that all other purposes are only means to the end of terrorism, rather than that terrorism is one of the means of Hezbollah (albeit despicable) to a number of political, social and religious ends. The following chapter, “Arab Government Responses to the Threat of Terrorist Financing” (Moyara de Moraes Ruebsen), is more sensitive to the complexity of Hezbollah and explains why Arab governments are highly reluctant to ban it, and for similar reasons, Hamas (168).

Astonishingly, in Chapter 10, “Terrorist Financing in Europe,” by Loretta Napoleoni, only one paragraph is dedicated to Europe’s historical experiences with domestic terrorism and this only to complain that the 27 EU member states should have a single definition—and unified criminal law!—on the matter (181). It is only in the concluding chapter (by the editors) that the benefits of the European experience with terrorism are recognized (283–84) and here in passing. Napoleoni suggests the Madrid bombings were the “wake-up call” that the EU needed to consolidate its counter-terrorism operations (181); but she forgets that any political capital that might have been spent in this direction was immediately wasted by the Spanish Government’s hasty attribution of the attacks to ETA, an embarrassing error that went as far as the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 1530 and probably cost the ruling party the election a few days later.

Chapter 11, “Terrorist Financing and Government Responses in East Africa,” by Jessica Piombo, explodes the myth that “failed states” are havens for terrorist finance (190). Piombo also explains that most governments, facing immediate health and food needs, consider the “war on terror” as an American problem. Indeed, this is a view that will be altered neither with the publication of this book nor current U.S. policy (280).

Chapter 15, “U.S. and International Responses to Terrorist Financing,” by Ann L Clunan, provides a candid account of the tensions between competing U.S. domestic departments (and agendas) in the “war on terror” (257–59) and advises that the rush to act has led to unnecessary errors which have weakened U.S. credibility abroad (267, 278; see also 288). This is the only chapter to consider in any detail Security Council Resolution 1373, without, however, the degree of analysis that an international lawyer like the current reviewer would like to see. The comparative relevance of the General Assembly Treaty on Terrorist Financing (not in force in September 2001) and the significance of this “legislative” action by the Security Council to effectively bring into force for every United Nations member state the strongest counter-terrorism provisions of the Convention whilst omitting its “safety-valve” provisions, is lost. In Clunan’s defence, however, such technicalities are probably not the preoccupations of those who work directly in the counter-terrorism community.

In general, this volume contains some gems of information and a variety of policy perspectives on how to—and even whether to—stop Islamic terrorist financing. It will prove valuable to those working in the field and those interested in knowing more about the subject.

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Gregory Clark of University of California, Davis, is a prolific author on economic history. In terms of methodology, he is famous for using few mathematical equations and statistical regressions, but is able to generate useful insights from the long-term data he has painstakingly built up over the past twenty years. In terms of geography, his research concentrates on the economic history of England, and as a sideline, of India.

The book under review, published in the Princeton Economic History of the Western World series, edited by Joel Mokyr, presents interesting findings from one major aspect of
his studies: the Malthusian world of the Industrial Revolution, and eye-opening evidence collected from the United Kingdom and from India, as well as many comparative statistics from secondary sources. The tables, figures, and pictures are excellently produced and are very helpful.

The main propositions and arguments of this book (with its title echoing Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*, 1929), are provocatively summarized on the jacket, but I have good reason to guess that they are not Clark’s own wordings, because the messages are somewhat different from what I have read in the book. There have been many favorable reviews since its appearance in July 2007, and I have my own observations to offer.

In the useful overview of the short (16-page) first chapter, readers should go back often to Figure 1.1, which sums up the main story of the book. Chapter 2, “The Logic of the Malthusian Economy,” is a must. I was particularly impressed by Figure 2.6, which can be understood as a telling “detail” of Figure 1.1. Chapter 3, “Living Standard,” presents many instructive statistical tables that convinced me of the validity of Clark’s Malthusian model. Chapters 4 through 9 use the same logic and method to present other aspects of “The Malthusian Trap.” They also deserve a quick scan, if not careful reading.

Part 2 (chapters 10–14) contains two interesting chapters. In Chapter 10 some new facts about modern economic growth are presented. Chapter 11 is hard to follow, because Clark tries to falsify three theories on the emergence of the Industrial Revolution: the “exogenous growth theory,” “multiple equilibrium theories,” and “endogenous growth theories.” The arguments are rather obscure and long and would have been more accessible had Clark presented them in a more straightforward way, and then offered his counter-theory. Chapter 12, “The Industrial Revolution in England,” is simply the best chapter of Part 2, the “trademark” that made him famous.

I had difficulties with Chapter 13, “Why England? Why not China, India, or Japan?” In the final paragraph Clark concludes that: “Two important factors may help to explain this. Population growth was faster in both China and Japan than in England in the period 1300–1750. And the demographic system in both these societies gave less reproductive advantage to the wealthy than in England.” Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* (1877) opens with a well-know sentence: “All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” Here, Clark uses the successful framework for England to explain the failures of China and Japan, without telling the miserable stories of these two unhappy families. His method and logic simply do not fit. A simple search from the JSTOR database will find two related references in the *Economic Development and Cultural Change*: (1) Yifu Lin, “The Needham Puzzle: Why the Industrial Revolution Did Not Originate in China” (1995); (2) Kent Deng, “Development and Its Deadlock in Imperial China” (2003). Both papers show how remote Clark’s explanations are from the harsh Chinese reality. A Malthusian explanation matters, but there were much more serious troubles in China.

Chapters 15–17 make up Part 3, on “The Great Divergence.” Although the tables, figures and pictures are all very attractive, I feel this part is less instructive compared to the other two. Here Clark emphasizes his evidence on the micro- (industry and plant) level and uses the statistics of Indian cotton mills to show the source of inefficiency in poor countries. He devotes fifteen pages (336–51) to explain “Why were poor countries inefficient?” and another six pages (359–65) to treat a similar topic: “Why is labor quality so low in poor countries?” This is an unusual proportion (21 pages) in a 377-page book on “A Brief Economic History of the World.” Even his prose appears less efficient.

Chapters 17 and 18 are informative, but less surprising. Overall, I recommend chapters 1, 2, 3, 10, and 12 enthusiastically. This book is handsomely produced, but I did find one omission in Table 2.1 where “unit: million” should be added. Adding a trend line in Figure 16.16 would be more indicative and consistent with other figures. There are one or two typos. Finally, on page 390 the author’s surname is Wang, not Feng, which is also mistakenly used in the main text.

Although Clark criticizes Jared Diamond’s *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Society* (1997) (on pages 13, 37, 187, and the jacket), I still feel that Diamond’s macro geo-environmental interpretations remain a valid complementary reading to Clark’s micro
industry-level views, both in the pre-Malthusian and the post-Malthusian periods.

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Crossing New Europe: Postmodern Travel and the European Road Movie.
By Ewa Mazierska and Laura Rascaroli (London: Wallflowers Press, 2006), vii + 245 pp. £16.99 paper; £45.00 cloth.

The road movie is a typical American kind of film, relating to the mobility representative of U.S. society—at least so it seems. Indeed, as a genre it originated in Hollywood, but enhanced mobility has for the past forty or so years also been a characteristic of other societies, in particular in Europe. To be mobile means to change position, be this within space, time or society. This broad approach to the term is vital for understanding the films discussed in this book, although as a geographer, one tends to focus in particular on space. A second and equally important notion throughout the book is identity. The road movie is not just about travelling in the sense of sightseeing, it goes deeper and usually includes a journey through the protagonists' selves. The geographical side is thus completed by a psychological perspective.

In their book, the two authors (both active in the field of media sciences) provide an overview of road movies produced in and concerning Europe over roughly the past twenty years. The volume falls into two major parts. After an introduction to the subject, they first present a selection of European directors and their respective road movies (Ari Kaurismäki, Eric Rohmer, Patrick Keiller, and Werner Herzog). The second part is organized around four topics that can be summed up as rootlessness, post-communism, women, and marginality. There is little cross-reference between these two parts, which therefore appear as fairly autonomous, simply linked by the common theme of mobility in general. This fact may also explain why there is no overall conclusion to the book, trying to sum up the various perspectives and identifying common points.

The two authors cover a large range of movies. In part 1, “Authors on the Road,” they emphasize the representations of space and of particular people, as seen through the lenses of the four moviemakers. This is very much their personal story, and the topics vary accordingly. In part 2, “Geographies,” attention is paid to the possibility of film to allow the visual representation of life with all its characteristics, whims, and particularities. The four topics amply testify to this. Thus, the two parts also mirror two different approaches to the same subject. What may look as strange in the beginning, results in fact in an interesting combination: the overview in the first part contrasts with the analysis of three films per topic in the second, which acts as a complement.

The past twenty years have been characterized by a number of events—political, economic, and social—that have favoured the growth of the road movie as a genre. The end of the Soviet threat to Europe, the intensification of the European Union, the increase of market liberalization, the internet, international migration etc. have radically changed society. Increased mobility is intimately related to these transformations. While the private car became popular since the 1950s, the advent of low cost air carriers in Europe occurred in the 1980s. Individual mobility has thus greatly increased, both nationally and internationally, but so has the search for identity. The arrival of refugees and asylum seekers has created severe problems in many European countries, with nationalism on the upsurge. Identity is a frequent theme in several films presented in part 2.

Not everybody has experienced the positive sides of the transformations mentioned above, as can be easily gathered from all the films discussed in part 2. The western lifestyle is desirable, but it seems to be beyond reach; the buyout of former communist state firms rouses the appetite, but the reality looks different. The movies in this section are all to some extent related to the topic of marginality—the last chapter on the margins of Europe refers to films on the geographical periphery, not to marginality in an extended sense. The latter is briefly discussed at the outset of the chapter, and it offers interesting contributions to an ongoing discussion (Assefa et al., 2003; Copus and McLeod, 2007; Leimgruber, 2004, 2007; Schmidt, 2007a,
2007b). Marginality in the three other chapters of this part concerns the shattered economies of former communist countries, the drifting apart of society, and the position and possibilities of women.

The book left me with mixed feelings. Each movie is an individual piece of art, yet there are guiding threads through the work of every director, which are usually pointed out. Geography as a science is not the subject, but its driving element—mobility—is an important field of research in our discipline. It was only in the last chapter that I really warmed up to this book and found myself in a discussion that has been occupying me for more than a decade.

Crossing New Europe is one of many possible ways to make geography (trying to describe and understand the world), a variety demonstrated in a recent collection of texts by Corna Pellegrini (2007).

To non-cinema goers, this book may seem difficult because it presupposes knowledge of films and directors, but it may also open a new world and encourage them to pay more attention to this medium. To cinema goers, it offers a specific look at a particular genre of films. Geographers will find in it the extended view which emphasizes the humanistic perspective of our discipline. One weak point is the absence of a filmography that would have been a helpful tool for the reader and for the potential viewer, if such films are available on DVD or video.

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In this book, David Galbreath examines the origins, evolution and prospects of the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE). Commissioned as part of Routledge’s Global Institutions Series, Galbreath provides an insightful and optimistic, albeit not comprehensive, examination of this organization. Although a footnote to the analysis of the OSCE’s history, Galbreath’s work provides a first-time and most-welcome analysis of the role that the OSCE has played, and continues to play, in managing security in the context of the political transition that ensued in Eastern Europe following the end of the Cold War.

Galbreath’s enthusiasm is apparent throughout his assessment of the organization’s achievements and prospects. The book discusses the organization’s conception and its transition from “conference” to “organization,” and examines how it has managed to remain relevant within the changing European environment. It also includes a brief analysis of its role in relation to similar mechanisms such as the EU, NATO and the Council of Europe. The author addresses the scepticism that has emerged in relation to the future of the OSCE, arguing that it was the organization’s ability to transform itself to reflect the changing dynamics brought upon it by the end of the Cold War that has led to its success and continuing relevance.

Galbreath carries out his analysis in three parts. Firstly, the book deals with the organization’s historical development, detailing the three dimensions to security that characterised its innovative approach: politico-military, economic-environmental, and human. This approach, Galbreath argues, reflects the extent to which the organization was ahead of its time in reconceptualizing the way in which notions of security had been understood at the time. Secondly, the book provides an illustration of the OSCE’s role and effectiveness by discussing a number of case studies in which it has been involved in Eastern Europe where the bulk of the organization’s work takes place. Thirdly, a concluding section that highlights the gap that the OSCE addresses within the European security architecture and the relevance that it still retains. In particular, the author principally refers to the protection of national minorities and the work that the organization does in dealing with ethnonationalism.

The book consistently prepares the reader for the conclusion: not only is the OSCE still relevant to European security but it serves as a model for political cooperation that can be applied to other contexts. Despite Galbreath’s optimism, the OSCE is a sum of its members, and the author acknowledges the need for reform and the need for the full cooperation of
its member states. However, it is the non-legally binding framework for political cooperation and conflict prevention of the OSCE’s holistic approach to security that ensures its relevance in the twenty-first century.

Galbreath’s work is an original addition to the vast literature on the Cold War. More significantly, it is an important contribution to the analysis of the potential role that international regimes can play in promoting cooperation and security.

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Ruth M. J. Byrne has compiled an impressive amount of literature on the rational imagination, allowing philosophers and psychologists to dialogue with each other on its possibility and validity. She claims that the imagination is indeed rational and offers the following three-step argument in support of her position: “human reasoning is rational, human reasoning depends on the imagination of possibilities, and the set of principles that guide the possibilities people think about when they reason also guide their imaginative thoughts” (215). In essence, Byrne bridges the gap between rationality and the imagination by arguing that imagining alternatives to reality relies on a set of rational principles. Rationality and imagination implicate each other in the creation of counterfactual situations. These underlying principles, such as time, social obligations, and the like, are each examined through an intermingling of data from psychological experiments and philosophical theories. The hope, according to Byrne, is that the usefulness and reliability of the counterfactual imagination will not be called into question once it has been found to rely on rational principles: “If the counterfactual imagination is an irrational process, its usefulness and reliability are in doubt” (198). Although Byrne only deals with very specific definitions of rationality and imagination, particularly as they pertain to the imagination of counterfactual possibilities, her analysis does have much wider-ranging applicability.

The approach is not without its problems, however. For one thing, by limiting the definition of the imagination to the imagination of counterfactual possibilities, she might, in effect, be limiting the applicability of her research solely to the counterfactual imagination; there may be a difference in kind between the counterfactual imagination and other sorts of imagination, as in more creative pursuits like fiction writing or painting. It does not seem possible that the same—or similar—rational principles that underlie the counterfactual imagination would underlie these other domains as well. That is to say that her analysis of the rational imagination applies only to the gap between rationality and imagination (counterfactual possibilities) and cannot be applied to either rationality or imagination apart from counterfactuals. Byrne attempts to address this problem by analyzing concepts in the same way that she analyzes counterfactuals, but the same law-like regularities that one finds in counterfactuals are not so easily found in concepts (see p. 193 “Concept Combination”).

Taking a broader look at the claims that Byrne is making, the very usefulness and reliability of the rational imagination are called into question if it cannot be found to be supported by underlying rational principles. Leaving aside what “underlying” might mean, we can look at the practical application of the rational imagination. If the rational imagination were found not to rely on rational principles, then who would call its usefulness and reliability into doubt? Certainly not the people who employ the rational imagination on a day-to-day basis; the rational imagination has a specific function and absolutely certain rational principles are not necessary in order for it to function properly.

Despite the criticisms put forth here, Byrne’s book does provide a thorough analysis and synthesis of the literature and experiments on the rational imagination to date. On this merit alone, this book would be of interest and benefit for anyone interested in the field and certainly worth reading.

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New Perspectives on Freud’s “Moses and Monotheism”. Edited by Ruth Ginsburg and Ilana Pardes (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), vi + 258 pp. €68.00 paper.

This book “had its beginnings in a conference...held at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in June 2002.” Curiously, my own brief essay on “Freud, Moses and Jewish Identity” appeared in The European Legacy that same year; clearly, I was present in spirit. I am sorry to have added to this rather long gestation by a further delay in submitting my review.

Jung’s essay on “Psychology and Literature” (1930) had a relatively short afterlife, but it contains an important warning—that there is a major difference between applying psychoanalytic methods to the analysis of “naive” and consciously constructed texts. The difficulty of dealing with this “added layer” is of course enhanced when the author of the text is himself/herself privy to the insights of psychoanalysis, and it becomes almost infinite when the text is the work of the founder himself. The most memorable comment in the current volume comes in the last essay, by H. Schmuel Ehrlich, Sigmund Freud Professor of Psychoanalysis at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem:

The temptation to psychoanalyze Sigmund Freud is overwhelming. It possesses the characteristics of one of his drives: it is peremptory and insatiable; it appears from within; it flies in the face of reason and often overtakes one’s better judgment. Freud would probably chuckle and say something about the need to deconstruct, destroy and overwhelm the father. Responding to Maylan’s early attempt to turn his own psychoanalytic tool on him, he quoted Caliban from The Tempest: “You taught me language; and my profit on’t is, I know how to curse.”

“Anyone who proposes to psychoanalyze Freud might do well to keep these words in mind” [comments Yerushalmi].

It is not really surprising, then, that the most fruitful approaches come from those like Ehrlich who pay Freud the compliment of assuming that the Master was far too clever to expose himself to “his own psychoanalytic tool”; I was delighted to find that such a distinguished Freudian detects the same subtle and devious inversions in the text that had fascinated me—Freud’s identification with Moses “the Egyptian” is the most daring stage of a process in which he attempts to define his Jewishness by what it is not.

Robert Wistrich’s excellent essay on “Freud’s Last Testament” achieves a similar level of complexity by placing Freud’s theses firmly within the context of responses to an anti-Semitic environment which refused to retreat into ethnic and religious definitions of Judaism, and which held no attraction for this son of the Enlightenment. Jan Assmann’s introductory article on “The Advance in Intellectuality: Freud’s Construction of Judaism” gives a firm foundation for such discussions and establishes continuity with the “trialogue” between Assman, Yerushalmi, and Bernstein, which heralded the Moses Wave. If the other contributions are sometimes less striking or convincing, they all help to enhance our understanding of Freud’s “powerful final testament, which reaffirmed the extraordinary capacity of the Jewish people [and Freud’s own intellectual heritage] to survive brutality and ultimately to prevail” (Wistrich).

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The story of Piera Sonnino and her family is both frightening and familiar. As Jews living in Italy under fascist rule they were subjected to growing levels of official anti-Semitism. A climax was reached after the Italian surrender of September 1943 and the ensuing occupation by German forces, fully committed to exercising their racial mania in Italy, as they were in other parts of occupied Europe. The Sonninos of Genoa were able to escape the Nazi net for some time, relying largely during a period of refuge and hiding on the fundamental kindness of strangers. The eventual, desperate closing of the net—an event triggered, as in the case of the Frank family in Amsterdam, by an act of betrayal—had catastrophic consequences. Piera Sonnino, her parents and her five siblings were transported to Auschwitz; only Piera lived to tell the tale.
The comparisons with Primo Levi’s account of his Holocaust experiences in the seminal *If This Is a Man* are inescapable. Though Levi’s family circumstances differed, the basic contours of the story are the same. Auschwitz meant the murder, sooner or later, of those deported with Sonnino, though she herself, via further stages of incarceration in Belsen, Braunschweig, and Bendorf, ultimately returned to Genoa and to the ruins of what had once been an untroubled existence in the bosom of a close and loving family. Her survival had as much to do with good fortune as with strength; the touching family photographs contained in the book by no means suggest that she possessed a physical toughness which might have set her apart from her three brothers, her two sisters, or her parents.

But there are differences too which recommend this text as a supplement to Levi’s account. Where Levi wrote his manuscript out of a sense of urgency to tell his story, Sonnino proceeded in a considered way and apparently without the intention of publication. Her sixty-page manuscript was written in 1960 for the benefit of her daughters; not until after the author’s death in 1999, and on the initiative of one of those daughters, did it become available to a wider public. The long gestation period is evident in every page of the book. Every sentence gives the sense of having been carefully considered and crafted; events and circumstances are described with the economy and accuracy which only a profoundly gifted writer could achieve. The period of reflection seems to have affected the book’s tone also. There is little hint of bitterness or vindictiveness; rather, what prevails is a most moving account of the Sonnino family’s noble attempts to preserve their dignity and humanity in the face of the disaster unfolding inexorably.

The provenance of the manuscript is provided by the journalist Giacomo Papi, while Ann Goldstein, who has provided a wonderful translation, also discusses the historical context. Less convincing is the Afterword by Mary Doria Russell, which offers a one-sidedly benign assessment of Italian behaviour under fascism and during the German occupation. True, Jews were not the main targets of Italian racism, but an honest assessment of Italian society and its institutions before and during the war needs to keep the record of resistance in perspective. Nonetheless, this book is an important addition to the body of Holocaust literature, made no less valuable by its belated publication.

Peter Monteath

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**The Legacy of Socrates.** By James Rachels (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), xii + 248 pp. $34.50 cloth.

A dissenting mind, especially one openly disposed to argument and reasoning-out aloud, is of itself a gift (not unlike Prometheus’ gift of fire to ‘humanity’), but a gift which the bearer often has to bear the costs thereof. James Rachels’ writings carry the hallmarks of dissent with reason and argument, and commitment with moral and philosophical edge, and equally, a thoughtfulness speaking to public audiences and a wide-ranging readership. Rachels wishes to communicate. He presumes upon intelligent fellow readers, writers and thinkers. His essay on Charles Darwin’s writing and thinking will remain (15–31) an important contribution to the moral and philosophical foundations of Darwin’s ideas about human beings, species, and ‘being in the mould,’ not because it is a definitive piece of writing but precisely because it was written to remind us that Darwin remained committed as much to exploration as to argument. Questions and questioning are as important as explanations and understandings. Rachels’ own gift to the world of philosophical discourse and dissent is contained in his belief in Darwin’s capacity to change the world through observation, study, collection and collation (research-in-action), and quite remarkable writing and (again that word) the gift for writing. The Statue of Liberty did not arrive in New York Harbour by accident nor can freedom of thought be maintained accidentally (see Marvin Trachtenberg, *The Statue of Liberty*, 1976; Esther Schor, *Emma Lazarus*, 2006).

II

To a wise man all the earth is open. For a good ‘spirit/mind’—*psykhē* (conscious self), the entire *kosmos* is homeland: one’s ancestral land.

Demokritos, fragment 247.
Rachels’ essays are, at once, ranging and accessible. This spirit of enquiry is very much evident in the range of his interests, and his keen engagements with Darwin, Socrates (105–35), and Nietzsche (136–69) are signal essays. Philosophical exploration and questioning (reasoning-out the world) accompany, and should accompany, ancient and modern forms of scientific thinking or enquiry. Equally, whatever modernity represents and its opponents think it represents, philosophers and philosophical enquiry should not expect nor accept overly sanguine answers or conclusions. Intellectual fashions are not necessarily the friends of thought and the thoughtful. Nietzsche, currently, and for some time, has been a fashionable item (or should that fore-going term, with respect to Nietzsche’s writings and taste for aphorism, be supplemented by the terms iconic and problematic and the further qualification of being a genius of allusions and illusions, and therefore, one must proceed with extreme caution).

Rachels deftly captures Nietzsche’s philosophical skill and his capacity for intellectual ‘villainy’ (167), but this, of course, does not mean that Nietzsche should not be read. Rachels, The Legacy of Socrates is a timely reader.

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In An Imaginary England: Nation, Landscape and Literature, 1840–1920, Roger Ebbatson analyzes the emergence of a concept of Englishness on the basis of several texts pertinent to the creation of the national imaginary. Among the authors he analyzes are Alfred Lord Tennyson, Thomas Hardy, Richard Jefferies and others. In the introductory part the author elucidates the task he embarks upon, stating that his book ‘seeks to unmask some of the ideological aspects of landscape representation, reading against the grain to reveal the gender, race and class implications that haunt the political unconscious of [his] chosen texts’ (3). He also explains the choice of texts: he undertakes the study of less known texts by both canonical as well as marginal writers, which enables him to situate his study of Englishness as “a type of ‘border study’” which, in turn, allows for a dialogic mode of analysis where the “dominant and resistant voices” (2) are put on display. It seems like a very ambitious and a very interesting task, indeed, yet what readers acquire is a sequence of chapters, each of them organized wittily and ingeniously, to be sure; nevertheless, it is a sequence that does not add up to a holistic analysis of the phenomenon he aspired to investigate.

The fragmentariness of the separate chapters seems to go along with a somewhat random choice of the theoretical tools the author uses: from chapter to chapter we can observe the change of emphasis, and thus, the chapter on Charles Tennyson Turner is more of a close reading of his sonnets, while, for instance, the chapter on Richard Jefferies offers a more systematic and in-depth reading of the philosophical ideas informing his novel and an autobiographical text. Chapter 2 in turn is more preoccupied with imperialist politics and Marxist theories (Pierre Macherey and Georg Lukacs), whereas chapter 6 with postcolonial theories (supported with de Man). This feature of the book grows out of the division into chapters that concentrate on separate authors rather than aspects of Englishness that Ebbatson intended to trace.

Ebbatson’s book seems to be a document of his own time and its predicament, thus being of our own, too. It focuses on moments of ambiguity and spaces of no clear signification, thus bringing to no satisfying conclusion his musings upon Englishness as a concept. Yet, this is not so much a weakness as a strength of this book since we can understand it as a document of hybridity and the destabilization of identity, be it national, or gendered; it is an attempt at capturing what can never be stable or secure. In this regard it is a melancholic endeavor of reviving what has never been there.

What is missing, perhaps, and what seems to ghostly underwrite Ebbatson’s efforts,
is Benedict Anderson’s study Imagined Communities. The whole text refers to both imagined and belated attempts at situating Englishness, yet the author refers to the abovementioned text only once and then he does not seem to fully acknowledge his indebtedness to the very idea of nation as a concept and an “imagined community.”

What motivated the choice of the time frame is not clearly explained—it may be a generous gesture towards the readers who are to figure out its meaning by themselves; on the other hand, it may be viewed as an assumption that is not sufficiently grounded to be voiced clearly. It is understandable that the Great War proved to be a disastrous instance for the national imaginary, yet viewed from the continental European perspective the implied thesis that it was the First—not the Second World War—that ultimately destabilized the perception of identity and its foundations is not as obvious (after all, we cannot forget e.g. Arendt or Adorno, who are not called upon, or Heidegger or Bauman, who do get mentioned in the text).

An Imaginary England remains a collection of separate ideas rather than a unified study, but, as stated above, this is more its force than a flaw. If we bear this in mind, or especially if we are searching for a refreshing study of one of the authors Ebbatson is interested in, the book makes for a fascinating reading.

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Susanna Rabow-Edling has written a concise, informative work on the rather complex link between nationalism and nineteenth-century Slavophilism in Russia. As the author correctly states, it is crucial to understand the historical context in which Slavophile ideas emerged among Russian intellectuals. No idea emerges in a vacuum and Russian Slavophilism was no exception. The key to the development of Slavophile thought in Russia was Romanticism, which stressed the cultural originality of different nations. Previously, Russian intellectual schools of thought had imitated those of the West in order to make Russia appear more European. The Romanticists, however, rejected imitation, which they perceived as a sign of cultural backwardness. Slavophilism was designed to emphasize Russia’s cultural distinctness at a time when being different was seen as the key to the recognition of a particular culture by others.

Rabow-Edling claims that the emergence of Russian nationalism did not originate as an anti-European project. Instead, in order to remain European and to find a role for themselves, Russian intellectuals took it upon themselves to be the cultural guardians of the nation. Slavophilism was never a mass political movement and was confined mainly to the intellectual elite who wanted to overcome the cultural backwardness of Russia and to contribute to universal culture and education.

Chapter 1 deals with the issue of a “crisis of identity.” Various leading theories on the origins of the rise of nationalism are recapitulated and the link between nationalism and national identity is examined. The Slavophiles stressed the idea of the obshchina (peasant commune) over that of individualism, which was commonly seen by Russian intellectuals as overly egoistic. Rabow-Edling correctly asserts that the Russian intellectuals’ crisis of identity was due to a conflict between their modern identities and the traditional state, between modern culture and traditional society, between an ideal and reality, and between the educated elite and the mass of people (26–27).

Chapter 2 discusses the “problem of imitation.” While the Slavophiles accepted that imitation of the West in the applied and abstract sciences posed no problem, imitation in the cultural sphere was unacceptable because of the prominent position of culture in Romantic thought (37). Slavophile intellectuals criticized previous Russian cultural imitation, but, at the same time, they thought that the existence of an unrealized national basis provided an opportunity for Russia to contribute something new and unique to universal history (55).

In Chapter 3, the author argues that Slavophilism is best understood in the context of nationalism. Rabow-Edling devotes most of
the chapter to the different types of nationalism and concludes that “Slavophilism can be characterized as a cultural nationalism, a conscious intellectual project striving for the moral regeneration of the national community” (70). The arguments presented are sound and, in my opinion, valid.

Chapter 4 addresses the issue of the Russian enlightenment and the Westernizers. Rabow-Edling claims that “although the Westernizers’ formula for solving Russia’s predicament differed from the Slavophiles, it rested on similar assumptions about the significance of a national culture. . . . Russia’s greatness and cultural contribution were central to the thinking of both groups, as was the role of the intellectuals in expressing their national culture” (73).

Chapter 5 defines the Slavic notion of enlightenment. In contrast to enlightened intellectuals in the West, who saw enlightenment as being based primarily on reason, the Slavophiles’ notion of enlightenment (proveshchenie) was essentially spiritual in character: “In having both a spiritual and a national character, the Russian enlightenment was closely connected to the moral condition of both man and people; in fact it was the very life of the Russian soul. Western enlightenment, on the other hand, had no essential connection to the moral condition of man” (87–88). The Slavophiles wanted their enlightenment to combine both reason and faith. In practice, the main difference between the Slavophile and Western conceptions respectively was that the Slavophiles regarded the people as politically passive, whereas Western ideas largely involved mobilizing the people. This logic naturally led the Slavophiles to insist that “the nation was explicitly formed by the members of the educated elite” (98).

Chapter 6 explores the relationship between cultural nationalism in general and social change. Rabow-Edling correctly interprets Herder’s philosophy on the matter. Indeed, Herder’s concept of tradition was not conservative or reactionary in nature because tradition involved the life of the people, which was subject to change: “Just as Romanticism tried to combine the virtues of both tradition- alism and modernism, it sought to reach a middle path between liberalism and conservatism . . . . It tried to avoid the extremes of individual liberalism, which the Romantics believed destroyed all social bonds, and the extremes of communalism, which they felt suppressed individual liberty” (114).

Chapter 7 presents an analysis of the Slavophiles’ stance on social change. Unlike Western thinkers who placed their faith in the law and the state, Slavophiles focused on the nation and community. Legalism was rejected in favor of custom: “Customary laws were not formulated in advance by some ‘learned jurist,’ and they did not subsequently ‘fall like an avalanche in the midst of the astounded citizenry,’ wrecking some existing custom or institution of theirs” (118). The state was of limited importance to Slavophiles who held that the content or source of the laws emanated from the people, not the state. “Because the state held all the negative attributes, such as formalism, compulsion, and corruption, it was vital to keep the nation free from state interference” (121). Slavophiles indeed resented the centralizing tendencies of modern tsarism and saw the intellectuals along with the people as the saviors of Russia. As the Slavophiles were concerned mainly with the moral regeneration of the nation, not with the state and politics, their project cannot be considered a radical political one.

This book is based on solid scholarship and definitely makes the Slavophile project more understandable for people (like myself) who are not professional philosophers. Susanna Rabow-Edling has placed the issue of Slavophilism in the historical context of nationalism, enlightenment, and Romanticism. Her study will prove valuable for scholars and students alike.

FRANCIS D. RAŠKA
Charles University, Czech Republic
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This extremely useful little book deserves a place in every educational institution.

Barbara Little has managed, through research and relevant examples, to make the
past come alive not only for students, but for anyone interested in reading why indeed the past does matter. Free of cant and all those humbugs that restrict present-day historians, she writes with both clarity and interest.

The work states that we tend to ignore evidence in favour of what we think we know or want to believe, so we need the scholarship that historical archaeology provides to challenge these tendencies. Historical archaeology uses documents and historical methods but these are used in conjunction with material culture. The results often challenge the documentary history, thus providing alternative questions and interpretations.

She asks questions that give one insight on why the past matters and asks if we can connect with it to learn and create a better present and future. The learning she envisages is the sort that shapes our views and relationships, rather than the kind that influences important political decisions. The work is divided into sections, which ask questions such as what are our ambitions and what do we care about? Her examples are always interesting and taken more or less from a global perspective, although the United States, not surprisingly, predominates.

Each chapter starts with a quotation, sometimes by a historian but more often not. These are always pertinent and lead to an exploration of the theme of the chapter. She admits how difficult it is to wrest archaeology away from a white-centred perspective, although this is possible as demonstrated by recent approaches to the African Diaspora. From chapter 15 onwards she concentrates on case studies, beginning with the survival of the English Colony at Jamestown, and how the documentary evidence both supports and contradicts the archaeological one. She does the same for a number of other themes, such as Australian convict history and the history of African Americans.

The book is so diverse and written in such an engaging style, discussing topics and themes in so many countries and different situations, that everyone might not only profit but also enjoy reading it.

Mia Roth
Perth, Australia
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It is difficult to review a book on the history of Africa that emphasises in its subtitle the phrase “the quest for harmony” while describing the man who has utterly destroyed his own country as an “Iconic” leader. Robert Mugabe has made Zimbabwe, once a thriving country, one of the poorest in the world. Whatever the outcome for Zimbabwe, “harmony” is unlikely to be a result of his rule.

The book is intended for school and college students, who this reviewer hopes, will not be misled by it. Asante writes that he has found that the overwhelming emphasis in literature and the oral tales of the continent stresses the subject of harmony, balance and order. The probable reason for this emphasis, if this is indeed the case, is the fact that Africa is torn by what seems a never-ending series of conflicts and in general shows a total lack of harmony, balance and, certainly, order.

He states that no other continent provides us with the complexity of the African continent. However, upon reading the book one is struck by its simplicity. All Africans, according to him, share the same great African civilization. Can one really sweep a whole continent into one basket? He has difficulty with the Berbers, who are clearly an ancient part of Africa and are by no means black. But after some explanations on the subject, he magnanimously accepts them as true Africans. The Arabs, however, who have dominated such large parts of North Africa for over a thousand years, Asante does not regard as Africans and decries their influence on the continent, maintaining that they have attempted to obliterate the original culture of the black Africans.

Asante glorifies much in Africa, which really has nothing to do with its present-day population. Certainly we have been told that prehistoric man originated in Africa, but so what? This does not add in any way to our understanding of the continent as it is today. Asante stresses many other aspects of Africa, which he interprets as a reflection of its greatness. Among these he mentions the large number of contemporary medicines that come from its rain forests. He then names curare as
one of these. As this erroneous information comes to us on page 4 of the book, one naturally wonders how accurate the rest of Asante’s information is. Curare is a name given to various dark poisons used in South America and has no connection with Africa. The people of the rain forest are, according to him, masters of such cures and have taught the world about them. One reason they are so knowledgeable about medicines is that they perspire less in the rain forest than elsewhere, thus enabling them to do an exceptional amount of work. This kind of information does nothing for the book’s credibility.

Much emphasis is placed on the past glory of Africa, specifically on ancient Egypt. Once the author comes to the postcolonial period, his glorification of African leaders appears misplaced. In addition to his adulation for Mugabe, Julius Nyerere, who, as the author admits, completely ruined the economy of Tanzania, is nevertheless “respected by his peers, elevated by the masses, and revered as an elder statesman of Africa” (307). This may be completely true, but again would hardly lead to the balance and harmony to which the author maintains Africa aspires. He mentions Idi Amin, who ruined the economy of Uganda by expelling all its Indians, among other more horrific actions, only once, and then in passing. Idi Amin was obviously a very awkward topic and even Asante could not elevate him. So he is ignored. Other historical events, pointing to the lack of harmony present in Africa, such as the war in Biafra, are blamed on outside influences.

The work is over ambitious and probably as a result has led to not only factual errors (e.g., Albert Luthuli was not a founding member of the African National Congress of South Africa), but also to the omission of many important aspects of its history, such as the influence of the South African Communist Party on black politics in South Africa, an essential aspect of the history of that country.

Asante also includes some peculiar sections in the book: for example, that on African writing systems, most of which by his own account were apparently invented in the 1930s. Whether anyone actually used them, he does not state and indeed, it appears doubtful. What is the point of this? To show that Africans do indeed have their own systems of writing? This was done presumably to counteract the perception that literacy is a fairly modern phenomenon for large parts of black Africa not under Arab domination. If this was his aim, it did not achieve its purpose.

This is actually the fault of the whole book. It suffers under an immense inferiority complex, for which it tries to overcompensate by using all kinds of stratagems to show that the common view of black Africa is erroneous. But all that Asante has done with this work is to ratify any misconceptions that the common reader may have. If the book was written to change our minds about Africa, it has failed dismally.

MIA ROTH
Perth, Australia
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Minority cultures and populations have a “problem” with majorities, but recent scholarship has also demonstrated the reverse. Majorities are uniquely bothered by the presence or perceived challenges of alternative cultures and styles no matter how visible. Women are hardly minorities in any numerical sense, but since history implicitly has been a story of men (or a world without gender), narratives about women tend to fall into the broad category of minority history. After at least some thirty years the study of gender has opened up radically different ways of understanding majority-minority relationships. Nadia Valman’s bibliography itself reveals how much important activity has occurred in a relatively short period.

When gender is combined with the story of how Jewish groups have fared in national histories, the results can be explosive. Nearly every page of this study of the literary treatment of Jewish women in Victorian Britain is surprising and illuminating. In keeping with the focus of much *soi-disant* postmodern analysis, her illustrations go beyond literary criticism as once understood. The Enlightenment bequeathed a particular issue to western culture. Could Jews, few in number but richly despised historically by Christian civilization (even when secularized), be integrated and assimilated into
modern society? Would they embrace the national identities of host societies and forego extra-territorial yearnings? For Jewish apostates, the answer was somewhat clear, even if it entailed misgivings and a sense of betrayal, not to mention the consequences of disrupting the cohesion of observant families. For others who wished to leave the ghetto but retain a sense of an old and honorable faith, the question was one of trade-offs. To be accepted by the majorities—and that was never guaranteed—might require modifications in the inheritance, such as a reformed Judaism less obedient to custom and the Oral Law.

That was the Enlightenment, and the dilemmas remained. However, the nineteenth century in Britain began with a renewal of Christian faith commitments interwoven with romantic sentiments, and it ended with imperial adventures, theories of racial supremacies and degeneration, and a reinvigorated feminist movement. In the meantime the Jews of Britain, the last of the kingdom’s religions to receive the benefits of a liberal political outlook, had become “respectable” and were allowed to sit in Parliament. How did these novel developments affect the Jewish communities?

From Valman’s perspectives, the answers are best understood by concentrating on Christian and Jewish writings about women in general and Jewish women in particular. Ancient themes and bigotries were taken up and explored in changing contexts with unexpected twists by some of the century’s most celebrated gentile authors and by new generations of Jewish women authors. Evangelical writers awakened the themes of conversion, redemption, Christ-like suffering and, taking a strand from liberal individualism, self-exploration as distinct from a purported Jewish tribal loyalty. The mid-Victorian intellectual critique of market economics provided an opportunity to revive stereotypes about Jewish traders. Jewish women, however were said to possess aesthetic potential, and this had ramifications in the debates about Hellenes and Hebrews, the former (not surprisingly) coming off better. Late Victorian feminism led to discussions about Judaism as patriarchal and rabbis as insensitive and domineering. (Roman Catholicism also did not fare well.) Imperial encounters strengthened talk about genetic inferiority and archaic survivals, and large-scale immigration from the Pale reinforced past views of Jews as outsiders. Whatever the wider concern, discussion invariably led back to the “problem of the Jews” and the special position of the Jewish woman as the redeemer of her people, Israel.

Valman provides complex and arresting readings of these familiar issues, forcefully demonstrating that Jewish women writers bought into the Evangelical and other paradigms. They explored their position within Jewish and gentile society according to criteria derived from outside the historical experience of Judaism, and their writings manifested the same sort of attachments, ambivalences, confusions, self-reproach or alienation as the majority culture. The Jewish woman, Valman concludes, tested the commitment of British culture to the liberal principles of ethnic or religious toleration and respect, and that test was thorough, relentless and fascinating.

Victorian culture is often held to be manly, as befitted a colonial and industrial power. Valman shows, in comparison to other countries, how “feminine” it may really have been.

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Vasily Sesemann: Experience, Formalism, and the Question of Being. By Thorsten Botz-Bornstein (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), xiii + 134 pp. $30.00/€42.00 paper.

As Volume 7 in the series On the Boundary of Two Worlds: Identity, Freedom, and Moral Imagination in the Baltics, this welcome monograph connects the dots between the scattered manifestations of an intriguing figure who pops up in several of the worlds his life and thought straddled, though he had remained elusive for Western readers until now, because his writings in three languages did not appear in book-form before being collected in independent Lithuania. Vasily Sesemann (1884–1963) is considered Lithuania’s greatest philosopher, even though he only learned the language upon accepting a position there at the suggestion of his old friend Nicolai Hartmann. These two Baltic Germans followed parallel paths in St. Petersburg and Marburg, although Sesemann
came from a Finnish–Swedish milieu in Carelia and introduced semiotics to Finnish thought, through his critique of Formalism. For he also remained much closer to Russian intellectual life, be it Soviet or émigré, even providing philosophical grounding for the Eurasian movement in its review, with an abiding interest in Orthodox-inspired thought, which cost him years in the gulag after the war.

The author of the first Russian review of Sein und Zeit, Sesemann was part of the return to Being as a valid question for philosophy that Heidegger’s early work epitomized, along with Hartmann’s. Both Balts were indebted to the Russian twist of Neo-Kantianism: a gnoseological idealism illustrated by Symeon Frank and especially by Sesemann’s teacher, Nikolai Lossky. Having written a thesis on the philosophy of gymnastics (as a life-long practitioner) and focused on the issue of rhythm in many aesthetic writings, Sesemann was however not one to give in to an intuitionism that merely shifted from the outside to the inside the scientific identification of objects of knowledge with mental representations. Knowledge entails empathy with another that remains such: a concrete thing, not a rationally assimilable object, especially in self-knowledge, so that neither science nor art can deal only with pure structures to the exclusion of particular contents. Arising from the attempt to know Being—and not inherent in it, “logic itself depends here to a very large extent on contingency,” and thus on possibility, evident in Being’s temporality and in human activity as the “interplay of psychic and real life” (75). Thus, “Sesemann’s work culminates in a new logic of dream,” critical of “undue objectivization of the subjective” (77–78) even in Freud, yet anticipating Lacan while presenting parallels with Bergson.

Fine points like the latter’s Russian reception and Russian networks in German academia may help intellectual historians fill many gaps in tracing cultural transfers, and a host of judicious comparisons are made with later developments in various fields. Yet one misses the discussion of Gadamer that seems begged for by both the Marburg connection and the hermeneutic thread Sesemann ties between Russian and German thought—of which Thorsten Botz-Bornstein displays equal command, providing many bilingual citations, while unfortunately unable to exploit the important Lithuanian sources. His precious study of this overlooked philosopher includes useful bibliographies, with revealing, hard-to-find Eurasian texts in the appendix.

Christian Roy
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If you have ever wondered if the worse excesses of globalization can be resisted, and if that requires supra-modern responses directed by ultra-modern blowback types, this volume belongs on your Must Read list. It answers YES to the first question, but NO to the second. Rather, it shares short, engaging, and informative accounts from native peoples who refuse to be victimized by corporate and governmental agents of economic globalization. It tells an under-reported story of an on-going war between indigenous peoples and their enemies who seek to dictate the terms of resource harvesting.

While details vary, the stories of indigenous campaigns share a constant resolve: “Arguably, their most important demand is control over all decisions about their ancestral lands, and the right to determine when, if ever, resource removal or any other intrusion is to be permitted, and under whose terms—the right of ‘free, prior, and informed consent,’ presently denied in most parts of the world” (5).

First published in 2005, the book was then a kind of “primer” designed to explicate how the specific rules of economic globalization, the WTO, the World Bank, and IMF, tilted heavily against indigenous peoples. The 2006 revision goes farther to include additional adverse forces, and creative ways in which native peoples are resolutely resisting. It promotes a degree of “WTO literacy,” and makes possible understanding of the intricacies and trappings of highly complex rules “by which global institutions smooth the pathways for their corporate clients…[and] full access to resources, labor, and markets” (7, 8).
Indigenous people, or so argues co-editor Jerry Mander, pose “the frontier issues of our times.” They offer new values and worldviews that might be able to sustain the planet, as their worldview is vastly different from that of the dominant West. He urges communities of activists preoccupied with other pressing matters to include indigenous struggles as prime among their own, a hard-to-achieve development this volume should do much to advance. While the 27 stories have many dark moments, they also raise hope, for “indigenous people are now everywhere resistant, well-organized, and optimistic about eventual success…. The word is out. Collective action is possible. This is not the sixteenth century anymore” (223–24). At the heart of the fight is rejection of the “deification of private property or the expansion of short-term growth as an ideal development model” (224).

A demanding read, the book covers very diverse struggles; e.g., “High-Tech Invasion: Bio-colonialism,” “Climate Change in the Arctic,” “Mixed Promises of Ecotourism,” “Bolivia’s Indigenous Revolution,” and “Ogoni People of Nigeria versus Big Oil.” Appendixes include lists of active groups and resources, the UN Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People, and other such documents.

Skeptics may be tempted to devalue the entire struggle as romantic utopianism. Cynics, as a retrograde non-starter. But both types of critics miss the point: the struggle of native peoples offers a model of alternatives to runaway capitalism, and there is a great hunger world-wise for such options. Accordingly, the volume merits careful attention from readers open to considering pro-Green blueprints from people whose very survival over eons attests to their sagacity and sanity: they have much to teach us, and this valuable book demonstrates that.

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Alan Sokal, professor of physics at New York University, has embarked on a crusade to defend the “scientific worldview” (xi) against the onslaught of “sloppy thinking” (153), which is propagated by two major social sectors: (1) the post-modernist/social-constructionist/relativist cultural critics of science, who have lost sight of scientific evidence and objectivity and equate science with socially constructed “myths” and “narrations” (151); and (2) by the fundamentalists (religious, nationalist or pseudo-scientific), assured of the absolute truth of their beliefs, however contradictory or non-evidential these may be.

Let us remind ourselves of the background: in 1996, after “a few months of library research” (xiii), Sokal felt sufficiently proficient in the “verbiage” of post-modernist studies of science to publish an article in Social Text entitled: “Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity.” This article was a hoax. It parodied the radical post-modernist critiques of science, with their overstated metaphorical links between science and society, epistemological relativism (denying our ability to discover “truths” about Nature), and downright scientific incompetence. The publication detonated a passionate controversy, spreading beyond academia. Since then Sokal has published various articles advocating “a respect for evidence” (xi), which have now been collected into a single volume, Beyond the Hoax.

The book discusses a broad range of topics, clearly and eruditely. Part 1, “The Social Text Affair,” includes the original hoax article, richly annotated, exposing frequent confusions in science studies and providing Sokal’s professional overview as a physicist. It is followed by several papers expounding how relativization and subjectification, that is, putting evidence-based knowledge on a par with socially-produced “narrations” (basically saying that any theory is as “valid” as any other), can have crippling consequences for scientific and social progress (two very unpopular terms for post-modernists).

Part 2, “Science and Philosophy,” reviews the dominant tendencies of cognitive relativism in the contemporary (post-modern) philosophy of science: from solipsism and radical skepticism, to radical relativist interpretations of the Duhem-Quine under-determination thesis, Kuhn’s incommensurability of paradigms,
Feyerabend’s “Anything goes” principle, Barnes, Bloor, and Collins’ “Strong Programme” in the sociology of science, Latour’s “Rules of Method,” and more.

Sokal finds the epistemological and methodological relativism deficient, both in the natural and the social sciences, and offers a defense of “modest scientific realism,” where “knowing how things really are is the goal of science; this goal is difficult to reach, but not impossible (at least for some parts of reality and to some degrees of approximation)” (250). More precisely, our notions of “how things really are” would be best supported by evidence and rational judgment, and not seen as a mere “inter-subjective agreement.”

Part 3, “Science and Culture,” analyzes the fields in which disrespect for evidence and rational thinking appears most blatant. These include: (1) pseudosciences (such as vitalistic theories in alternative medicine and nursing; “Vedic science”; radical environmentalism; New Age cosmology; or ‘mythic’ history), where a subjective state of the mind determines reality, and thus everybody is correct; and (2) religions whose claims about the world, based on sacred scriptures, are deemed as the only correct, factual and true claims about reality.

Sokal advocates rationality, objectivity, scientific rigor, and the supremacy of evidence. Yet, his definitions of these concepts are (self-admittedly) weak. He is “using an intuitive notion of truth... that one either grasps intuitively or does not grasp at all” (247). The explanation of “rationality” amounts to a deeply-felt hunch:

**Historians, detectives and plumbers – indeed, all human beings – use the same basic methods of induction, deduction, and assessment of evidence as do physicists or biochemists. Modern science tries to carry out these operations in a more careful and systematic way – using controls and statistical tests, insisting on replication, and so forth – but nothing more (161).**

This conviction is to be taken as a matter of course, and is repeated constantly (“of course” recurs in the book almost as frequently as “evidence”). Sokal seems to somewhat underplay the ambiguity of evidence and the extent of controversy in science, making the establishing of “truth” appear easier and more certain than it might in fact be. Nonetheless, he succeeds in valorizing evidence and rationality (however imperfectly defined).

Sokal’s work might be superficially perceived as trying to demolish the cultural studies of science—a natural scientist’s effort to buttress his field against the encroachment of ignorant humanists—or as denying the vital relationship between science and society. Far from it: Sokal’s writing is imbued with social and ethical commitment. As he convincingly demonstrates, a disregard for factual matters—whether, for example, a specific medication actually works beyond the placebo effect or whether a country really has weapons of mass destruction—can have serious negative impacts on our life span and may endanger our very existence. The aim of the “scientific world view” is to serve social justice and survival. The book’s ultimate claim is that the political left is ill-served by the relativistic assertion that ‘everybody is right in his/her own way’—in fact its cause would be much better served by science.

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Fear is structured in two parts which are preceded by a 25-page introduction. Examining writings from Plato to Hobbes, it offers an intellectual history of fear and lays a crucial foundation with clear definitions of political fears. Corey Robin starts with the observation that the United States at present is high on adrenaline induced by fear, drugged and unable to perceive reality. He addresses why “looking to political fear as the ground of our public life, we refuse to see the grievances and controversies that underlie it” and suggests that “since fear seldom yields, over the long term, the unity and energy so many hope to obtain from it, we should probably look for those goods elsewhere, and approach fear for what it is—a symptom of pervasive conflict and political unhappiness” (3).

Robin expresses the hope that understanding our fear “renews us as a collective,”
and that “were we to understand the objects of our fear as truly political, we might argue about them, as we do about other political things” (6).

Part 1 of the book draws up an intellectual history of fear from four different vantage points, through Hobbes, Montesquieu, Tocqueville, and Arendt. Robin’s study of the ideas of these writers leads to a deeper understanding of important distinctions, including, for example, Arendt’s changing concept of fear and effort to dispel the sacred aura of the politics of fear. In this chapter Robin demonstrates “how these modern theorists and writers separate fear from elites, ideology, laws, and institutions, and thereby obscure its political origins and uses” (161). Each of these four chapters delves into the nature of fear far beyond these thinkers (as exemplified in his thoughts on Nicolai Bukharin), and his cultural critique extends in the concluding chapter of Part 1 (“Remains of the Day”) to what is left of the political Left since the Vietnam War, and the political Right since the fall of Communism.

Part 2, “Fear, American Style,” comprises three chapters which address what has prevented freedom and equality from becoming a reality in the United States: “the politics of fear and the liberal web of political institutions, laws, ideologies, elites, civic structures, and private associations that support that politics” (250). “Sentimental Educations” focuses on a “fusion of fears, in which the rational and the moral reinforce each other” (169). In “Divisions of Labor” he discusses the state and society’s repressive weapons applied by the elites in collaborative relationships with institutions, while “Upstairs, Downstairs” covers the suppression of unions and the culture of fear in the U.S. workplace.

Robin’s book offers an incredibly rich study that should become required reading. In a time when quickly thrown out publications on post-9/11 U.S. politics abound, Robin undertook the hard task of writing this profound analysis of fear in the United States. While the book lacks a separate alphabetical bibliography which would serve as a practical resource to readers, Robin provides detailed notes that include not only the source material for his insights but often point to more in-depth scrutiny of aspects that go beyond the scope of this book.

**Possessed Victorians: Extra Spheres in Nineteenth-Century Mystical Writing.** By Sarah A. Willburn (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 182 pp. £45.00 cloth.

With its cast of talking tables, electrical Chaldeans and imperialist fairies, Sarah A. Willburn’s study of extra spheres in nineteenth-century mystical writing contributes to the reassessment of Victorian subjectivity currently under way in literary and historical studies. Armed with both fictional and biographical accounts of trance, mediumship and possession, Willburn contests the notion that the ownership of private property alone offered the fullest expression of individual identity and agency during the nineteenth century. As a corrective to this emphasis on “possessive individualism,” Willburn coins the term “possessed individualism,” which she uses to describe the many characters in Victorian fiction who lack political economy in the traditional sense, but who gain spiritual capital through their commerce in the mystical realm. Her contention here is that mysticism was as central to the formation of the Victorian individual as liberalism and that a better understanding of Victorian subjectivity can only be achieved by considering both kinds of “possession” (material and spiritual) together.

The book is divided into three parts each of which deals with a different kind of mystical account. Part 1 looks at George Eliot’s _Daniel Deronda_, reading it as an example of corporate identity. Daniel, according to Willburn, is possessed by both Mordecai and Israel, allowing him agency of a kind unattainable by “possessive individuals” like Grandcourt and Gwendolen. In part 2 Willburn asks how Victorians understood the invisible and how they incorporated it into their lives, focusing in particular on Camilla Crosland and Lois Waisbrooker. Part 3 deals not only with commodities, gender, and a talking table named Mary Jane, but explores a series of trance novels that consider the threat that “possessed individualism” posed for Victorian society.
While Willburn acknowledges that there is a rich and growing historical literature on spiritualism and occultism in Britain, the United States, and Europe, her analysis does not incorporate this material as much as it might. Given her emphasis on the mystical realm as an arena for non-autonomous identity, for example, it would have been interesting to see the author engage with Alex Owen’s recent work on the formation of the modern self through esoteric magic practice (*The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* [2004]). It is also a pity that Willburn does not provide a conclusion. While the introduction outlines her argument and the idea of “possessed individualism” as a heuristic device in reading an eclectic set of mystical accounts, the lack of a concluding chapter leaves the reader with unanswered questions.

These criticisms aside, Willburn’s book does add to our understanding of Victorian subjectivity in interesting ways. In particular, it alerts the reader to the use of mysticism as a critique of liberalism and as a venue in which those denied agency by their society could explore identity, create communities, and accrue spiritual and cultural capital.

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