

nor that it is rejected only by those who wish to deny that 'beliefs and desires exist'. For some philosophers agree that people have beliefs and desires, and that the latter typically explain their behaviour, but they do not think that this second claim must be cast in causal terms, and even less in terms of mental states that cause, or causally explain, behaviour. Thus, these philosophers (perhaps together with the eliminativists, but for very different reasons) will find much to disagree with in this collection. On the other hand, the collection will be extremely helpful to anyone interested in gaining an overview and understanding of what might be called 'the functionalist approach' to a series of topical philosophical problems. And the collection is also, as the authors suggest, a striking example of collaborative work that succeeds in maintaining consistency of approach and a degree of interconnectedness across a wide range of topics.

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The Future for Philosophy

Edited by BRIAN LEITER

Oxford University Press, 2004. xiv + 357 pp.

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This is a collection of original articles by an impressive set of thirteen philosophers persuaded by Brian Leiter to write about the directions in which their areas of philosophy could best develop. They have interpreted their task in a variety of ways. Some simply describe the questions that most interest them, some give a forward-pointing history, some describe important neglected questions. The temptation not really to address the brief is tempting. After all, as Popper pointed out, to predict science one would either have to have now the good ideas of the next generation or know now the answers to the problems that scientists are struggling with. Informative science-prediction would be harder than science. And even a list of important problems and welcome developments is likely to look quaint in a few decades' time in the light of what actually developed. So too with philosophy. Or, rather, if this is not also the case for philosophy, that is very bad news. Assuming that we are part of an enterprise of real discovery, the good new ideas and important developments of the next twenty years should include some complete surprises. They may have little to do with the current projections of distinguished thinkers in classy English-speaking universities. I expect that all thirteen authors would agree.

A theme that runs through several of the essays is that of the relation between philosophy and common sense. Two essays, Brian Leiter's and Rae Langton's, focus on ways in which a philosophical theory can remove blinkers in a society's understanding of its own situation. Leiter praises the ambition of Marxist, Freudian, or Nietzschean theories to uncover ways in which we are victims of our culture's accounts of how we come to have the thoughts, desires, and values that we do. He defends fierce challenging versions of Marx, Freud and Nietzsche against recent watering-down efforts, in particular G.A. Cohen's recent attempt to recast Marxism as a moral philosophy rather than an account of historical development. Leiter puts his claim with a tone

of 'they were right, after all', but the important suggestion for the theme of the book can be put in a way that will get wider sympathy: this is a glaring gap in contemporary philosophy. We need enlightening and convincing theories of the ways in which societies pull the wool over the minds of their members, often in a way that is not in most people's interests. This point fits well with Langton's. She discusses the themes of projection and objectification in feminist philosophy, arguing that these two key ideas of often opposed theories can be combined to give a plausible account of how people can be persuaded to think as if an idea that is not in their interest were true. And in fact how as a result the idea can become true. Langton does not explore the question that most interests Leiter, whether understanding how the trick works defeats it. And neither Leiter nor Langton discuss the danger of getting it wrong, that a purportedly blinker-removing theory can itself serve as part of a manipulative ideology. I think they are right, and the general point explains something about contemporary philosophy: it is not by chance that we neglect the topic of socially significant misunderstanding. We need accounts of this that are logically coherent, supported by evidence, and which also mesh in an effective way with the way we ordinarily think about ourselves.

In this connection it is interesting that the book has no article on the future for the philosophy of religion. English-speaking philosophy of religion is generally a pretty tame affair, largely concerned with conceptual issues that arise within Christianity, and largely ignoring the social epistemology and social function of religion. What a pity that the book does not contain a sharp suggestive piece describing the prospects for liberating new attitudes towards the ubiquitous but puzzling phenomenon of religious belief.

The theme of unmasking social illusion meshes with another that surfaces in several places in the book, that of philosophy's two interfaces, with science and with common sense. Thomas Hurka discusses the way in which for fifty years or more moral philosophers have neglected the task of exploring the detail of everyday moral judgements. Like several other papers in the collection—Julia Annas on classical philosophy, Don Garrett on the history of modern philosophy, Nancy Cartwright on causation and explanation—he gives a history of work in the field in the past decades in a way that points to a possible way forward. In this case the way forward is to avoid both anti-theory and too-general theory, leaving room for moral theories that interact sensitively with the fine grain of our opinions about particular cases. Hurka ends with a quotation from Nietzsche urging unpretentious detailed moral judgement. This Nietzsche seems very different from Leiter's, and indeed there is a contrast with the projects endorsed by Leiter and Langton. Leiter and Langton would want us to ask whether some of the fine detail of conventional moral judgement is induced by some possibly malign social institution. (We might, for example, put less weight on benefits and harms to people we are not acquainted with, in a way that perpetuates divisions between richer and poorer around the planet.) I do not think Hurka need reject this concern. He is making a case for a certain project, which need not exclude other projects, not even those whose conclusions potentially undermine it. What he should insist on, I think, is that we treat undermining, demystification, and general

genetic debunking in the same fashion as we treat first order normative judgments: carefully, paying attention to detailed differences, and with an eye to the ways we do these things in everyday life.

Philip Pettit's essay is concerned with the tension between the need to reflect scientific discoveries and the need to connect with everyday conceptions. The former is necessary if one is to claim that one's philosophy is true, and the latter is necessary if one is to affect the attitudes that govern individual and social life. For Pettit the tension is acute because he takes our patterns of everyday thinking to have very limited malleability. I think that Pettit is exaggerating the difficulty, partly because I suspect that he underestimates the extent to which we can choose which parts of our inflexible innate equipment we bring to bear on a familiar issue. And also because it is the whole of philosophy rather than any particular philosophical project that has to make both connections. So for example at one end of the philosophy of science we have technical issues in the philosophy of physics, and at the other end we have very accessible, though hard, questions about the aims of science that Philip Kitcher discusses in his essay.

There are a great many ways of doing philosophy at the moment: linguistic, naturalistic, analytic, continental. Several of the contributors comment on the unhelpfulness of these labels particularly the analytic/continental contrast. Of course this is not to deny the relevance of various finer-grained distinctions, in particular those turning on how much attention one pays to the history of philosophy, to scientific theory, and to issues about language. Timothy Williamson's essay addresses the link between doing philosophy carefully and logically and taking it to have language as its object. He concludes that there is not much of a link, that the linguistic turn is generally a misnomer. In particular, he argues that issues about vagueness are not particularly about vague language, but about what the answers are to questions about the properties of individual physical objects. A core topic of philosophical analysis, if this is right, is thus not particularly an issue about meaning or truth conditions. This is not to say that Williamson is abandoning 'analytic' methods or attitudes. Far from it, his essay is deliberately sprinkled with formulations that evoke the ideal of doing philosophy in a rigorous careful way that minimizes the chance of logical error.

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EPISTEMOLOGY

Putting Logic in its Place

By DAVID CHRISTENSEN

Clarendon Press, 2004. xii + 188 pp. £27.50

Christensen carefully traces the detailed casuistry of an ongoing debate about the nature of rational belief. It is made clear from the beginning that the book will not deal with the dynamics of belief change (pp. 5–6). The focus is almost wholly on two major accounts of belief systems viewed more or less as static