Kim would like to be a physicalist, but is too much of an empiricist to be happy with having to deny the reality of mental causation. In his four 1996 Townsend Lectures, here published as a book, he examines a number of contemporary middle-of-the-road positions, and finds them untenable. We could still be physicalists if we were willing to construe all mental properties in functional terms, but that would mean misconstruing much conscious experience. If we are not prepared to do that, physicalism is left as a metaphysics whose many intellectual attractions are overshadowed by its manifest failure to save the phenomena.

Kim writes clearly and honestly, and his style, apart from the occasional intrusive feminine, is good. But the book is very much the book of the lectures, and easy hearing makes hard reading. For hearers it is a great help to have the lecturer remind them of points made in earlier lectures, but in written English it becomes tiresomely repetitive. Kim criticizes a number of contemporary thinkers—Davidson, Nagel, Baker, Block, Burge, Horgan, Fodor, Jackson, Pettit, Putnam, Searle, Smart—and on the day these criticisms would have been interesting and illuminating, but in a book their inevitable heterogeneity diverts attention from the main themes. His audience would have had a useful experience of doing philosophy, travelling with the lecturer as he laid out the problem, encountered difficulties, considered current alternatives, refined his terms, and came up with the final choices to be made: but the reader is impatient, and wants a more sustained argument and clearer signposting to pick out the underlying themes from not very relevant digressions.

Kim has philosophical commitments and underlying themes. Metaphysically he is a monist, but also an empiricist. His metaphysics drive him towards physicalism, his empiricism will not allow him to deny the reality of mental causation. But it seems impossible to accommodate the latter within the confines of the former. It is difficult not to sympathize with his predicament: one feels there should be only one world, and that things that happen as a result of our decisions should be in the same league as things that happen in consequence of some antecedent physical condition. And suspicions of anomalous monism and other fashionable philosophies are vindicated as Kim thinks through their implications.

Kim’s two main themes are supervenience and realization, the former characterising minimal physicalism, the latter offering some hope of accommodating mental causation within a physicalist ontology. Valium and Seconal can be said to have ‘dormitivity’, but in virtue of different chemical realizers (pp. 20–1). Many mental concepts can be characterized in functional terms: pain and fear are avoidance responses to injury and
danger. A physicist might hope to keep the vocabulary of mental causation with as good a conscience as pharmacist stocks sleeping pills. But he needs to enlarge his concept of ‘cause’, or he will tie himself up wondering how it is possible to explain someone’s falling asleep either by saying that he took a sleeping pill or by going into the physiological biochemistry of secobarbital. In fact we do not wonder. The explanations are both valid, and do not compete or result in over-determination, because they are explanations of different types. Kim is scathing about this response. Explanation, he says (p. 76) is a pretty loose and elastic notion, and we should insist that when proper, that is causal, explanations are invoked, we are dealing with real causes. We can insist: but only at the price of denying the autonomy of all the special sciences—not only psychology and biology, but chemistry and large parts of physics too. The chemist feels threatened by the physicalist who says ‘It is all in the Schrödinger equation’, and responds ‘Which Schrödinger equation?’. The physicalist’s paradigm of explanation is the time-dependent Schrödinger equation, whereas the chemist’s is primarily the time-independent Schrödinger equation. The chemist is interested in the properties of, say, copper sulphate: why it is blue, why in solution it replaces with copper the iron in nails dipped in it, why it goes darker blue when ammonia is added. He is not primarily concerned with just one single causal development, but with a whole class of actual and possible developments that do or would occur under actual or hypothetical conditions. Here is a change of focus. The chemist focuses on a wide range of causal developments, which he reckons are significantly similar, and seeks explanations of their significant similarity. Differences of energy levels explain different frequencies of blue. But differences of energy levels are not proper causes according to Kim, who holds that ‘the only way we can understand the idea of a causal explanation presupposes the idea that the event invoked in a causal explanation is in reality a cause of the phenomenon to be explained’ (p. 64, my italics).

The biologist’s interests and questions are different from the chemist’s. Both are concerned with the possible as well as the actual, but the biologist is, so to speak, more counterfactual. The chemist does not mind which photon comes in to his cuprammonium solution, since it will make no difference: the biologist does not mind which fly the frog’s tongue catches, because the differences will be compensated for. Organisms and populations are homeostatic. Biological entities are stable under a wider range of conditions than chemical substances and processes. Since the biologist’s focus of interest is different, his concepts and questions are different too. Biological because are in terms of function, evolution and adaptation, not energy levels, valences or solubility products. This is not to credit the biologist with a mysterious élan vital, or to deny the reality of chemical processes: rather, it is to recognize a shift of focus, with a corresponding factoring out of chemical processes, which fascinate the chemist, but which the biologist takes for granted. Granted photosynthesis, he can understand why trees tend to be tall, and giraffes are advantaged by their long necks.

These and many other examples show us that scientific explanations are not all of one piece, but different sciences have different types of
explanation that are quite compatible with their having a physical basis. Each science has its own questions, framed in terms of its own concepts, which characteristically are not definable in terms of a lower level science. Newton knew nothing of ensembles, a chemist cannot excrete, a physiologist does not deal with sub-species: but when thermodynamics has defined temperature and pressure, Newtonian concepts of kinetic energy and momentum show how the thermodynamic concepts can be realized in a gas of elastic particles obeying Newtonian laws, and when the physiologist has identified the process of excretion in mammals or birds, the chemist can provide the chemistry of urea or uric acid. In each case much selection is going on. The concept of an ensemble leaves out much information about each individual particle. The physiologist focuses on typical processes, ignoring many others. Much of lower-level science is irrelevant to higher-level science, which selects, according to its own criteria not normally definable or explicable in terms of the lower-level science, certain sorts of actual and possible lower-level processes as worthy of attention while disregarding many, many others.

Kim rejects this. He criticizes Horgan, who advocates ‘robust causal compatibilism’ for holding that higher-level causal properties can cross-classify lower-order ones. He asks himself what ‘cross-classify’ means, and is dissatisfied with the answer he gives, on the grounds that it must be incompatible with supervenience. But that is a mistake. Classification involves not only differences but similarities. The important feature of higher-level explanations is that they count as similar diverse lower-level realisations: it is all the same to the physiologist whether this nitrogen atom or that nitrogen atom becomes part of a urea molecule. And counting different instances as coming under the same classification does not in the least run counter to the principle of supervenience. The best example comes from moral philosophy, which Kim offers as a model for supervenience. Most moralists would agree that if I cite one case as being murder and another as not being murder, I must be able to point to some difference between them to justify my different judgments, but it does not follow that there must be some characterization of murder in purely descriptive terms, and indeed, there well may be none. What leads to all the multifarious cases of murder being so classified is, as Brennan convincingly argues, that they are all wrong.¹ The evaluation determines which descriptions are classified with which.

Are mental because in exactly the same case as biological because? Kim doubts it. So do I. My reasons, which have not found general acceptance, are to do with the logic of human explanation, which seem to me to be ‘dialectical’: however fully we characterize or explain a human phenomenon, it is always possible for there to be a further ‘but’ which entirely alters its aspect; in particular, I can always simulate or dissimulate, so that overt behaviour can never be conclusive—‘I did not mean it’ or ‘I was only pretending’ can call in question all the evidence hitherto available. Clearly, it

is going to be much more difficult to fit this logic, if it is the correct logic of human explanation, into the compatibilist schema outlined than to fit the explanations peculiar to the special sciences. But in any case mental causation does not look like biological causation, and many who would be ready to allow that biological explanations were quite compatible with an underlying Laplacian theory, jib at the prospect of explanations in terms of mental experiences and decisions being similarly accommodated.

Many of Kim’s difficulties arise from the ‘problem of causal exclusion’: even if mental features cannot be defined in physical terms, there would be no room for genuine mental causes in a strictly Laplacian universe. Given a sufficiently detailed account of the universe’s micro-state, its future development would be completely determined irrespective of any mental happenings. But it is only in a Laplacian universe that the problem arises. And contemporary physics is non-Laplacian: we cannot predict precisely how quantum-mechanical systems are going to develop, and it looks as if we never shall be able to predict their future development with absolute certainty. If this is so, Kim’s causal exclusion principle fails. Even if I could detail the state of the whole universe, I could not predict the behaviour of this or that molecule of cuprammonium sulphate, although I could predict with near certainty that it would be a dark Oxford blue colour, because a large range of possible alternative states of the universe would produce that result. I can understand and predict the properties of hydrogen, invoking quantum mechanics, but asking different questions, questions about the typical reactions of hydrogen in different causal environments rather than the particular development of one particular hydrogen atom, which does not have one path of development already determined, but could develop in a range of different ways. From that range the chemist picks out those most likely to satisfy the constraints of his problem, and he reasons about them. Similarly in the biological case, and perhaps similarly with mental causation. It could be that there was no single path of development of the neurophysiological state of the brain, but a wide range of possible ones. Neurophysiologically, no precise predictions could be made, no complete explanations offered, no definite causes identified. But if we change the focus, certain significant conditions could be discerned which would act as constraints on possible courses of development, enabling some limited predictions to be made, and some limited explanations to be offered. These limited explanations would not be partial in virtue of being selected from a complete Laplacian explanation, as Kim supposes (p. 66), but limited in answering only the problems posed at a given level in terms of the concepts and schemata available at that level. The Procrustean causal explanations that Kim needs to leave no room for any other sort of cause are not available. We have to make do with other sorts of explanation, and there is no good reason to suppose that traditional explanations of human behaviour are not among them.

Nevertheless, Kim’s account is valuable. We are all Laplacians under the skin. An explicitly Laplacian account enables us to focus on conflicting paradigms, just because it sharpens the conflict between different ideals of explanation. Many of them are thought to be suspect in our theorizing.
because we still suppose, half-consciously, that there must be an ultimate Laplacian level of description where perfectly deterministic causal laws apply. Kim seems to suppose this. It drives him to dualism—almost. But those who do not want to follow him that far can still learn much from his journey, and the choices he feels impelled to make along the way.

J.R. Lucas

A dam Smith and the Virtues of Enlightenment
By Charles L. Griswold, Jr.

This book is in the ‘Modern European Philosophy’ series of Cambridge University Press and the author Charles Griswold, is Professor of Philosophy at Boston University and has written widely on various periods in the history of philosophy, including the Scottish Enlightenment. Let me say at the start that I think that this is an excellent book from which all scholars of the Enlightenment, and philosophers more generally, can certainly profit.

The history of philosophy, and more specifically studies of particular philosophers, can be written in different ways. M.A. Stewart in his Introduction to his edited volume on the Scottish Enlightenment has a trenchant description of one way:

‘At its weakest, and in many English-speaking university departments where the content of the study is laid down by those who do not teach it [the history of philosophy], it refers to vicarious and unmemorable philosophical exercises of an entirely modern kind, fought out round a narrow, generally derivative, and frequently fanciful picture of at least one dead philosopher. Some journals still see a worth in this kind of academic shadow-boxing … .' (p. 2).

Yes! This rings a few bells. Griswold’s book is certainly not in that camp, although there is an attempt to relate Smith’s thought to contemporary terminology, such as ‘cognitivism’, moral realism’, and so on. I do not myself find this very helpful in understanding Smith (or anyone else, for that matter) since it is not at all clear what these terms themselves mean. As Berkeley says of philosophers, ‘we have first raised a dust, and then complain we cannot see’.

A second way of writing the history of philosophy is what might be called ‘the grand manner’. MacIntyre is a good example of this kind of approach, in which large-scale trends are noted. Typical of this sort of approach is terminology like ‘the Enlightenment project’ or ‘paradigm shift’. There is something of this manner in Griswold; certainly he tries to locate Smith to broad intellectual movements of thought.

A third way, borrowing perhaps from hermeneutics, is very explicit in its methodology. In terms of this sort of approach concepts such as ‘authorial intent’ are used. Griswold is especially influenced by this approach. He
assumes 'that Smith's works, whether taken singly or collectively, possess organic unity' (p. 26-7), and accords him 'hermeneutical charity', while contrasting this approach with others where the emphasis is on the 'multiplicity of voices', 'intertextuality', and 'the notion that in interpreting a work one cooperates in the production of its meaning'. This is all very self-conscious stuff, which carries the risk that commentators never get started on the author. This is emphatically not the case with Griswold, and it is the richness of his historical apparatus plus the detail of his historical knowledge which make this a stimulating and profitable book.

Let me take some examples of the way in which this combination of historical approaches to Smith can provide insights into his work. There is a problem as to whether Smith was offering a descriptive, psychological account of morality (as Hume was doing) or offering recommendations as to how we ought to live (as Hutcheson was doing) or something else again. There is conflicting evidence in the Smith texts, and Smith's use of the term 'sympathy', a term from ordinary language, as a technical term does not help. Griswold provides an excellent discussion of this kind of problem. Using concepts borrowed from rhetoric, he speaks of Smith's use of the protreptic 'we', and points out that Smith certainly sees moral philosophy as a descriptive study; it describes 'natural sentiments' and the judgments of 'impartial spectators'. On the other hand, Smith does not approve of every type of behaviour. For example, he disapproves of the 'monkish virtues'. But this disapproval, Smith's normative judgments, are articulated by means of the protreptic 'we'. He is not setting himself apart from us, but identifying our sentiments with those of enlightened Scotland.

A second insight of Griswold's book which is important, both for understanding Smith and as a lesson for moral philosophers, is his discussion of Smith's use of examples. Some readers will recall that when the study of Sartre became acceptable to analytic philosophers in the 1960s, many philosophers were struck by Sartre's use of dramatic examples, instead of the conventional library book or cricketing examples. Smith too makes a central use of examples in his work. These are sometimes from history but also from literature. 'Not only plays, novels, and poems but tragedies, in particular, intrigue Smith. Together they completely overshadow his relatively rare references to properly philosophical texts'. (p. 59). Griswold makes the point, perhaps exaggerating a little, that 'The Theory of Moral Sentiments' can be read as a story. Indeed, the metaphor of the theatre is important for Smith. He sees human life as an unfolding drama in which we are actors and of which we are also spectators. By highlighting the narrative and theatrical metaphors in Smith Griswold encourages us to see him in a contemporary non-foundationalist way. The book is rich in insights of this kind which will make the most hardened Smith scholar return to the texts.

Griswold is by way of being an enthusiast for Smith, and will hear of no wrong. For example, he notes that the plan of the book does not become apparent until the end (Part VIII). In those final sections (some of which were not added until the 6th edition) Smith's total plan becomes clear.
'The two useful parts of moral philosophy, therefore, are Ethics and Jurisprudence: Casuistry should be rejected altogether' (TMS VII.iv.34). Within ethics he distinguishes between those who wrote like grammarians—those who wrote on justice—and those who wrote like critics—those who in a looser manner described virtues. Now had this kind of distinction been made and followed up from the outset Smith's book would have been easier to follow. The fact that the distinctions did not appear until the end seems to me to be a structural weakness in Smith, not part of a grand plan. Indeed, the TMS is initially a writing-up of lectures, which Smith added to and revised over many years. Smith's position in this seems to me to be familiar to many philosophers who have written books, especially books based on lectures—it is only after the book is finished and revised that they realize what they are really trying to say! But because Griswold is assuming 'hermeneutical charity' he claims (p. 44) that this was all intentional, part of the method of rhetoric. It is only at the end of the play that we really understand what it has been about. Moreover, Griswold holds that this piecemeal unfolding of the plot helps 'to embed ethical theorising properly in our ordinary moral self-understanding' (p. 44). It is certainly a charitable interpretation of the book.

I have concentrated on his approach to the TMS, but Griswold also deals with Smith's other works, such as 'The Wealth of Nations', and the relationship between them. I have seldom read a historical commentary which is so full of scholarly detail but is also so rich in more general philosophical insight.

R. S. Downie

Self-Fulfilment
By Alan Gewirth

This is a book with a grand design: to justify self-fulfilment as making the best of oneself and hence worthy of pursuit. To establish this the book goes through an intricate argument with many different stages, each leading to the other. At each stage it raises a number of questions and considers objections. To justify self-fulfilment as worthy of pursuit Gewirth analyses it: what does it involve and what conditions must be fulfilled for a person to live a life in which he finds fulfilment? What counts as finding fulfilment in life and are there moral limits to what constitutes self-fulfilment? The book argues that there are, and, to this end, it argues for a conceptual link between self-fulfilment and morality. This involves developing a certain conception of morality, based on universal human rights, and linking it with other forms of morality of restricted scope. It also involves then connecting self-fulfilment, as making the best of oneself, with these moralities. This is a grand and even awesome project which Gewirth develops with meticulous scrupulousness.

It is obviously very difficult to give an adequate summary of the book in a short space and then to comment on it. Let me for the purposes of
such a summary divide it into the project itself, that is the argument which after the first introductory chapter takes up the rest of the book, and its nuts and bolts, namely the brief analyses and discussions of concepts that form the joints around which the project moves in its development through its various stages.

In the first introductory chapter the book begins by stating that it is generally thought that a happy life is one in which a person living it finds fulfilment and in that fulfilment has a good life. Such a life is one in which the person brings to fruition his deepest desires and worthiest capacities. It is thus a life in which what is best in the person unfolds. It is thus ‘a life well lived’ and so an ideal life at which to aim. Therefore ‘to seek for a good life is to seek for self-fulfilment’ (p. 3).

The real argument begins in chapter 2 and takes up the rest of the book. Already self-fulfilment has been said to constitute the fulfilment of one’s aspirations and capacities. Chapter 2 takes up the question of the fulfilment of one’s aspirations. Having asked what it takes to pursue and fulfil one’s aspirations, it claims that it is good to have aspirations, for they give zest, focus and meaning to one’s life (p. 47). Gewirth admits that this is a relative good and claims that the pursuit and fulfilment of aspirations is subject to moral criteria.

Having distinguished between three types of morality for his purposes he turns to ‘capacity-fulfilment’ in chapter 3 to argue for a reconciliation between self-fulfilment and morality as he conceives it. This raises for him the questions: How can I make the best of myself? Why must capacity-fulfilment be construed as requiring the development of what is best in one? And how do we determine what this ‘best’ is? To answer these questions he argues that reason is the best of human capacities and can be used to justify ‘universalist morality’, that is to answer the question why one should consider the rights of other people. The argument concludes that since ‘reason is an essential … capacity of the human self’ to consider other people’s rights is ‘to hearken to an essential part of the self’ (p. 77). Since, Gewirth says, this point of view recognizes the rights of others it ‘provides further evidence that self-fulfilment, far from being egoistic, is not only compatible with but is required by universalist morality’ (p. 85).

Earlier Gewirth had said, ‘I have rights to freedom and well-being’ and had called these ‘generic features of action’ (p. 82). In chapter 4 he says that these are ‘the necessary goods of action’ and so ‘can also be used to provide central components of personalist morality as further parts of capacity-fulfilment’ (p. 107). What he calls a ‘personalist morality’, he says, is one that ‘consists in counsels or precepts for living a good life, a life that best fulfills one’s intellectual, aesthetic, and other capacities in ways that contribute to one’s development and dignity’ (p. 54). The rest of the chapter is concerned to defend and develop this thesis and in the course of doing so considers such notions as identity, being oneself, being alienated from oneself, autonomy, well-being, self-esteem, culture in the humanist sense as Matthew Arnold understood it, having duties to oneself, and the values of love, friendship, loyalty to one’s family in connection with living a life in which one is oneself and finds fulfilment. Gewirth summarizes the
content of chapter 4 by saying that in it he has ‘discussed virtues of personalist and particularist moralities as providing the contents of capacity-fulfilment construed as making the best of oneself’ (p. 159).

There are, he says, at least two more questions which need to be considered and answered in chapter 5. The first concerns the connection between capacity-fulfilment and aspiration fulfilment, and the second question asks: ‘even if one makes the best of oneself, why is that of much value?’ (p. 160). The argument is complex, but it involves a discussion of ‘the inherent dignity of human beings’ as the ‘basis of rights’, a consideration of ‘spirituality as self-transcendent excellence’, ‘the meaning of life’ as constituted by ‘the many aspects of capacity fulfilment’, ‘the individual and social contexts of self-fulfilment’, and the question whether ‘self-fulfilment and rights are compatible’.

I have given the briefest summary I could manage of the project which the book executes and I have tried to convey something of the flavour of its language and Gewirth’s thought. I repeat, Gewirth pursues the arguments and considerations in which this project is executed with honesty, meticulousness and logical acumen. All the same, I must myself in turn say, in all honesty, that this is not a book for me. The intricate structure of the project is an impressive monument, but I find its connection with the realities of human life to which it is directed contentious and questionable. Despite the examples considered in the book, it is a structure too abstract and like the hat in John Wisdom’s legendary example it ill sits, like a monument, on the head it is supposed to cover: ‘My dear, the Taj Mahal!’ (see Philosophy and Psycho-Analysis, Blackwell 1964, p.248).

Now it seems to me that there are certainly questions about self-fulfilment worth considering, many of which Gewirth does raise: What is a fulfilled person, a life in which the person living it finds fulfilment? Is self-fulfilment the gratification of desire? If not, what is the difference? Not the gratification of desire, but fulfilment of the person: is fulfilment something different from gratification—should we say mere gratification? How is gratification something shallow, like narcissism and envy? Why does it not bring growth? Surely a fulfilled person must be himself: but what is it for a person to be himself? What is it for him to fail to be himself? Must a person believe in something, care for something, for him to be himself? Isn’t it here that morality comes in? And there are other questions too. Gewirth’s discussion of these questions is within the confines of his concern to develop his argument for justifying self-fulfilment as worthy of pursuit. Hence his contribution to them is restricted and not sufficiently bold.

It seems to me that his concern to justify self-fulfilment is over-blown and his method of execution much too laboured. He does say, more than once, that self-fulfilment is a ‘by-product’. That is just right; but he does not follow his own counsel and speaks of it as an ideal worthy of pursuit and even as ‘mandatory’. To live a fulfilled life, however, to find fulfilment in life, one has to forget about fulfilment. One must be absorbed in one’s engagements and not think about fulfilling oneself. How then can self-fulfilment be an ideal to be pursued? Yes, of course, one has to be oneself
in one’s engagements and give oneself to them. But giving oneself means forgetting oneself. There is nothing paradoxical in saying that to be oneself one has to forget oneself. What it means is that one has to turn away from self-concern, from what one can receive, and instead give oneself to what one loves, cares for, is interested in. It is in what one gives oneself to that one finds oneself—not in one’s ego. I would have loved to be a good bandoneon player, but only because I love the bandoneon and its music. I would rather talk of love, interest and concern than of aspiration; aspiration tends to bring the self, the aspirant, to the foreground of one’s thought.

The self one seeks to be and the self one has to forget are not two different aspects of oneself as Gewirth claims. What is in question are two different, indeed opposite, modes of being. In the one one exists as oneself, in the other one fails to be oneself. Such failure may take many different forms—for instance, one may be a yes-man, one may be convention-bound, one may live a lie, one may be driven by hatred, a slave to one’s resentments, carry a permanent chip on one’s shoulder, one may be obsessed with amounting to something, proving one’s worth to the world, one may be desperate to compensate for one’s feelings of inadequacy and insignificance, one may be consumed by greed for power, fame or fortune, etc. In none of these cases is a person himself; he does not exist as himself, he has not found himself—what he has not found does not yet exist, unlike a parcel lost in the post or a continent that is yet to be discovered.

To find oneself is to come to be, and that means authentic, not a copy or imitation, not subject to an unowned quest. As Rilke puts it in one of his Sonnets to Orpheus (Pt II, no xiii):

... be a ringing glass, which has, even though shivered to pieces, been rung.

Be—and, perceiving in that which is being’s negation merely the infinite ground of your fervent vibration, beat, through this never-again, to the fullest amount.

He finishes by saying ‘count yourself joyfully in and destroy the account’. In other words, don’t think about the cost. That would be to think of yourself.

Gewirth quotes Jesus: ‘if you want to save yourself you should lose yourself’ (p. 50). But what he says about it does not hit the nail on the head; it is weak. The first ‘yourself’ refers to the soul and the second to the ego, and the two stand opposed to one another. What Gewirth says is all of a piece with what he says about ‘spirituality’ as ‘self-transcendent excellence’ (italics mine), about morality as a legislation of ‘rights’, about the sufficiency of not being egoistical and respecting other people’s rights. Indeed his whole conception of self-fulfilment as the ideal of a good life goes with this. About the latter all I have the space for is to say—and here I speak for myself—that, of course, we should respect the right of others to live fulfilling lives; but not so as ourselves to live fulfilling lives. As to what constitutes a fulfilling life, what it takes to live a fulfilling life, these are philosophical questions. Is a fulfilling life valuable? I am not sure what
this question means. Is happiness valuable? Well, people would rather be happy than unhappy.

Let me now briefly touch on Gewirth’s consideration of the objection ‘that a fully moral person would be a “moral saint” who would be so obsessed with promoting the good of other persons or of society that she would completely overlook or reject her own needs and desires. So moral goodness would entail not self-fulfilment but self-abnegation of self-sacrifice’ (p. 87). My comment here is that a saint is not ‘obsessed’ with promoting the good of others. That is simply how it looks to Gewirth from where he stands. To describe a saint’s calling as an obsession is to downgrade it. Gewirth writes: ‘rationally justified universalist morality requires the rejection not only of one-sided egoism but also of one-sided altruism’ (ibid.). But putting others before oneself is not ‘one-sided altruism’. I do not know what a ‘rationally justified universalist morality requires’, but I do know that goodness demands that one should renounce the self, in the sense of ‘ego’. To forget oneself in this sense is not to neglect oneself, never to stand up for oneself, as Gewirth seems to think. It is, for instance, to overlook the danger to oneself when someone one loves is in need of help. Whether or not this is ‘supererogatory’, someone who has love in his heart, or goodness in his soul, will feel called to help. I am talking of a different form of morality from the one Gewirth has in mind: a morality of love and compassion rather than one of reason.

In his concern to justify a universalist morality of rights Gewirth writes: ‘… it is not rational for any agent to be exclusively self-interested’ (p. 84). This almost sounds like: your rational self-interest dictates that you should consider others. I am not saying that this is how Gewirth means it. But if it were, that would be a ‘low’, if not a ‘corrupt’, sort of morality.

As for the question, ‘Does self-renunciation exclude self-fulfilment?’, my answer would be that it does not. Did Mother Teresa live a fulfilled life? The question is hardly appropriate. Self-fulfilment is something so incommensurable with the saintliness of a Mother Teresa that their very juxtaposition has a discordant ring. T his said, however, and turning away from Mother Teresa, why should not a person who doesn’t think of himself, and who puts others first, not have a fulfilled life? Indeed, he is much more likely to live a fulfilled life than someone who always thinks of himself. The latter would hardly be likely to find fulfilment in his self-centred life. What a life of self-renunciation excludes is not self-fulfilment, but a preoccupation with it.

‘To fulfil yourself you should forget yourself.’ But if you forget yourself so that you will live a life of fulfilment you will not have forgotten yourself. So it would be best to stop thinking about and attaching importance to your own fulfilment.

As for self-acceptance, which Gewirth also speaks about, one needs to distinguish here between self-acceptance and acquiescence. Thus one can accept one’s limitations; but one acquiesces in one’s cowardice. One cannot ‘accept’ one’s cowardice. For to accept it one has to be oneself; whereas one cannot be oneself in one’s cowardice, one cannot own one’s own
cowardice, since cowardice is a failure of self. Gewirth misses this altogether when he says: ‘... one does not define oneself as cowardly ... although a realistic assessment of oneself may justify such a description— but rather in terms of characteristics that one wants to have and to guide one’s life by’ (p. 116).

Equally when Gewirth speaks of the ‘self-esteem’ necessary to a life of fulfilment as ‘the agent’s sense of his own worth’ he omits to mention that self-esteem, like humility, when it is genuine, is silent, it does not occupy any space in one’s consciousness. Again when Gewirth writes that ‘love does not require the extreme kind of altruism’ which we find in saintliness, that love’s altruism ‘corresponds to the moderate altruism upheld by the Principle of Generic Consistency’ (p. 147), the kind of love he has in mind is a ‘reasonable’ and ‘tepid’ sort of love. Would one describe compassion as ‘reasonable’? I don’t think that what Gewirth says here is an accident: a person who makes self-fulfilment into an ideal is bound to be limited to a tepid kind of love. By ‘a person’ I do not mean Gewirth here at all, since I do not know him as a person. I am only commenting on what his philosophy embraces.

İlham Dilman

In Critical Condition: Polemical Essays on Cognitive Science and the Philosophy of Mind
By Jerry Fodor

In Critical Condition is a selection of Jerry Fodor’s book reviews and critical notices. Many, but not all, of the essays originally appeared in non-specialist publications like The London Review of Books or The Times Literary Supplement and were ‘originally intended for an audience that was either lay or interdisciplinary’ (p. x). However, it should not be assumed that this volume presents a watered-down version of Fodor’s vituperative philosophical spirit. Fodor’s combative style of philosophy does indeed make for entertaining reading, but it does not conflict with his ability to offer extremely incisive arguments on a wide range of topics. The critical tenor of the work, coupled with the tenacity with which Fodor pursues his targets, reveals a good deal about the general philosophical and methodological assumptions which have driven, and continue to drive, Fodor’s distinctive brand of philosophical naturalism. In Fodor’s preface he suggests that his reviews may be used as a navigational aid to allow the reader to steer a safe course through the Polynesia of contemporary philosophical positions on mind, meaning, mental structure, and evolutionary theory. Here be the demons of holism and conceptual role semantics; there be the jagged rocks of adaptationism and all around are the shipwrecks of many a voyager who misjudged the implications of current brain research for theorising about mental representation. Fodor also reminds us of his own location on this map. On Fodor’s reckoning: ‘What’s required is a mix
of intentional realism, computational reductionism, nativism, and semantic atomism’ (p. ix). Of course, there aren’t many people who believe everything that Fodor believes. This means that Fodor can vent his critical spleen at some of the most distinguished players in philosophy and cognitive science: M cDowell, Peacocke, the Churchlands, Dennett, Pinker. The fact that a thinker isn’t subject to discussion and rebuke in this book is probably just a reflection of the fact that the essays which make up this collection all stem from the 1990s and are addressed at works published in that decade. Fodor’s arguments against the theories of meaning of, for example, Quine, Davidson, Lewis, and Block, can be found in his earlier book, co-authored with Ernest Lepore, Holism: A Shopper’s Guide (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

The essays are divided into four sections: ‘Metaphysics’; ‘Concepts’; ‘Cognitive Architecture’; and, ‘Philosophical Darwinism’. Some of the essays involve a critique of a thinker on more than one of these headings, but by and large the divisions do act as a helpful way of structuring Fodor’s attacks. There is not space to do justice to the wealth of detailed argument throughout this volume. Instead, I want to draw attention to the fact that two different kinds of criticism are to be found in these essays. This will, I hope, shed light on some of the contents. What are these two kinds of criticism? Let me call them ‘Big Picture’ criticisms and ‘Local Argument’ criticisms. Many of the reviews attack specific positive arguments. Thus, in the section on cognitive architecture, we find critiques of arguments concerning the structure of mental representations (the essays on Paul Churchland, and Smolensky), and critiques of a (distinct) set of arguments about cognitive modularity and innate representations (Karmiloff-Smith, Elman et al., Mithen). Similarly, we find ‘Local Argument’ criticisms in the section on Philosophical Darwinism. In his essays on Dawkins, Dennett, Pinker and Plotkin, various arguments for adaptationism, and adaptationist variants of evolutionary psychology are refuted. In each case, Fodor identifies some claim, or set of claims made by the author under review and then subjects the arguments offered (or the arguments which could be offered) to an acute critical dismissal.

To take an example, Fodor and Smolensky have been engaged in a long-running debate about the constituent structure of mental states since the late 1980s. The debate is continued here with two responses to Smolensky (from 1990 and 1996). Fodor claims that human cognition and language use is systematic and compositional. It is systematic in that our ability to produce and understand some complex representations (or utterances) is intrinsically connected to our ability to produce others. If someone can understand ‘Brown fox eats rabbit’ they can also understand ‘Brown rabbit eats fox’. If we assume that cognition is systematic then we also have to make certain assumptions about the way in which complex representations relate to their simpler constituents. On Fodor’s view, we need to suppose that complex mental symbols (‘Brown rabbit’; Brown fox’) inherit the causal features (or more specifically, the causal features that matter to their being deployed in mental processes) from the causal features of their constituents (‘brown’; ‘rabbit’; ‘fox’). If our cognition is compositional and
systematic then any acceptable theory of cognition must show why our cognition is compositional and systematic. Fodor's own atomistic, intentional realist, conception of representation, one which situates representation in a 'Classical' computational cognitive architecture, purports to do just that. Connectionist models of representation, Fodor insists, exhibit a wide range of failings. Sometimes systematicity is just left out of the picture. Sometimes the theorist thinks that it is enough to show that a connectionist model is consistent with compositionality and systematicity without explaining why it is that our cognition is systematic. His target in the essays here is the line of argument which seeks to show that, somehow, the connectionist model can explain systematicity and compositionality. Fodor shows how these arguments, as offered so far, fail. Smolensky, as Fodor presents him, claims that if a theory of representation can employ algorithms which derive a specification of the requisite constituent structure from unstructured representations, then this is sufficient to explain how complex symbols get to inherit their causal role from the causal properties of their constituents. As Fodor points out, such a line of argument fails. All Smolensky has explained is how we can derive one kind of specification of representation from another. The derived structure is situated in theorising about representation, the structure is not part of the representations themselves and thus cannot be appealed to by way of explaining how it is that complex representations get to have their causal features.

In Critical Condition brims with detailed and incisive local arguments about many topics. But, here and there throughout the book, we also find something over and above specific arguments aiming to refute particular philosophical claims. For example, the first section, 'Metaphysics', opens with Fodor's denunciation of John McDowell's attitude to science. McDowell, (in Mind and World) according to Fodor, is part of a philosophical tradition that views science as 'an invading army' (p. 8). Philosophy's role is to provide safe havens for various elements of our self conception. Fodor concludes that this whole strategy is 'wrong-headed' adding that 'science isn't an enemy, it's just as [...] the mind is already in the world; our problem is to understand it' (p. 8). McDowell's views are identified as being part of a longer philosophical train of philosophical error that 'runs from Kant through the Hegelians to Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Davidson (and Hilary Putnam since he left MIT for Harvard)' (p. 3). Here Fodor is setting himself against a 'Big Picture' of how persons, mind, world, value, science, philosophy and meaning all fit together.

We find the same kind of 'Big Picture' criticism in the section 'Concepts'. Peacocke's conception of concepts and concept mastery is chastened for being part of a tradition which views concepts as epistemic capacities. Here the list of miscreants includes Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Chomsky, Piaget, Saussure, Dewey, Davidson, Dennett, Rorty and Quine (p. 27). Davidson and Wittgenstein have the honour of being rounded up for a third time as usual philosophical suspects when they appear, along with Quine, Goodman, Putnam, Kuhn and Derrida as guilty of advocating the 'disagreeable idea' that there is no such thing as rational choice between conflicting paradigms, forms of life, or conceptual schemes (p. 144).
Thinkers like Quine, Putnam and Davidson are sensitive to the way in which our concepts, methodologies, interests, values and cognitive limitations shape our philosophy, science and, perhaps even our ontology. On Fodor's view such positions aren't tenable. We get some sense of why Fodor sets himself against this sea of troubling opponents in the essay on Patricia Churchland and Alvin Plantinga. The essay's specific focus is upon arguments about the implications of evolutionary theory for the possibility of objective science. But Fodor also muses on matters more general, more metaphilosophical. Here, Fodor labels his own view 'Scientism' (p. 189). His view involves the claims: (a) 'the goals of scientific inquiry include the discovery of objective empirical truths' (p. 189); and, (b) 'science comes pretty close to achieving this goal, at least from time to time' (p. 189). Fodor adds that Scientism is 'obviously and certainly true; it's something that nobody in the late twentieth century who has a claim to an adequate education and a minimum of common sense should doubt' (p. 189). He observes that many people reject Scientism. Once again, there is the list of heretical positions: 'relativists'; 'pragmatists'; 'Idealists'; 'apriorists'; 'feminists'; 'fundamentalists' (p. 189). He shares his puzzlement with us, noting that he finds it 'hard to understand' why people should reject scientism, and why they should do so in such large numbers. He adds the note of resignation: 'over the years I've sort of gotten used to it'.

The 'Local Argument' and 'Big Picture' forms of criticism each generate their own distinctive literary tone. When Fodor is tenaciously tearing apart some argument (against an assumed background of a shared 'Big Picture') Fodor is exciting and invigorating to read. Fodor tirelessly seeks to rid the world of error. This is all fine and well and the philosophical world is a better, more correct, place for having Fodor in it. But his 'Big Picture' criticisms operate in a quite different way and read quite differently. Where there is a difference in philosophical world view there is often no room for an argument, against shared assumptions, about which world view to adopt. Scientism's bulldog has nothing to get his teeth into. Fodor's acute critical skills cannot engage, there is nothing which can be done by way of local argument which would move those who deviate from the true path of Scientism. Given the assumption that there is one obviously and certainly correct world view all we are left with is Fodor's ongoing state of puzzled resignation to the foibles of human idiocy, a state occasionally punctuated with the expression of a jibe here, a provocation there. It would have been extremely instructive to read Fodor's views on questions like: Why is it that different world views can seem to hang together (from an internal point of view)? What is it that leads someone to accept one world view rather than another? Is there any principled way of evaluating distinct world views? But perhaps we already have Fodor's answers to such questions. The questions have been answered in favour of a particular kind of naturalistic conception of the world. In fairness to Fodor, this collection isn't meant to be a metaphilosophical monograph. So, these comments about the different forms of criticism should not detract from the fact that most of the book involves Fodor at his best: engaging in
readable, incisive, original and powerful argument. Whilst some of the essays might be hard going in places for non-specialists In Critical Condition provides an invaluable critical snapshot of many key issues in contemporary philosophy and cognitive science.

Neil Manson

Peter Winch
By Colin Lyas

Philosophy Now is a series aimed at providing introductions to the work of recent well-known philosophers. If the other commissioned books meet the excellent standard set by Colin Lyas, the series will make a valuable contribution to the understanding of contemporary philosophy. Lyas’ chapters illuminate the unity of Peter Winch’s work, and each is accompanied by informative reading lists.

Lyas begins by giving a brief glimpse of Winch’s career. He emphasizes his formative years at Swansea (where, by the way, J. R. not O. R. Jones taught) and Rush Rhees’ enormous influence on him. Lyas says that at Swansea a certain conception of philosophical enquiry has been kept alive, one rooted in Wittgenstein’s work. It is, above all, a contemplative conception of philosophy, which avoids treating the subject as either a master-science, or simply as an underlabourer clearing up confusions in other disciplines. Winch showed the sense in which philosophy is concerned with logic, language and reality. He showed that the distinction between the real and the unreal does not mean the same in every context; an insight arrived at, not by empirical surveys, but by conceptual elucidation. This calls for an attention to things which, for various reasons, we are reluctant to give them. Giving this attention leads neither to relativism (Gellner), nor to ignoring the possibility of false consciousness (Marcuse). These accusations depend on invoking the very meanings in human discourse to which Winch is trying to direct our attention.

The Idea of a Social Science remains Winch’s best known work. It is concerned with the concept of social investigation. Winch was not saying, as many critics claim, that explanations of human activities cannot use concepts unknown to participants in those activities. Rather, he was pointing out that whereas we investigate natural phenomena in terms of the rules of scientific enquiry, human activities are already governed by rules which are internal to them. Any explanation must not violate these conceptual rules.

Winch made a broad distinction between causal laws which govern natural phenomena, and reasons involved in human actions. This led to philosophical disputes about reasons and causes. Lyas could have given more attention to the fact that, in his later work, Winch thought that quarrelling over the labels ‘cause’ and ‘reason’ avoids the real philosophical work which needs to be done. We speak of causes in human actions and
reactions, as when we say, ‘The news caused her great distress’, but we still have the task of showing how this is grammatically different from, ‘The seafood caused her upset stomach’.

Winch’s insistence on paying attention to the grammar of human activities led to even greater controversy when he published his paper ‘Understanding a Primitive Society’. He criticized the assumption that magic and witchcraft among the Azande could simply be dismissed as pseudo-science or superstition. Winch was attacking the cherished Enlightenment ideal of a universal reason by which all practices can be assessed. Accusations of relativism abounded, but these ignored Winch’s emphasis on the importance of ‘the independently real’ in any sphere of discourse. Winch insisted, however, that science does not have the sole prerogative on this notion. When it is said that science corresponds to what is ‘independently real’, whereas religion does not, a context-free reference is being made to a confused and, hence, unspecifiable notion. In his later work, Winch emphasized that contradictions, between Darwin and Genesis, say, can arise. Whether they arise, however, depends on what Darwin and Genesis mean to one. He opposed the idea of a hidden, latent contradiction in Genesis which science makes explicit.

Failure to see sense in practices in other cultures may be due to the pointlessness in our own lives in this respect. We are unlikely to see any point in Zande magic if we think that rites can be related to the contingencies of life only as efforts to control or influence them. In his later work, however, Winch argues that problems of understanding cannot be equated with a distinction between ‘them’ and ‘us’. I may fail to understand widespread tendencies in my own culture, and feel closer to activities and attitudes in times remote from my own.

The recognition of differences within the same culture, apart from a brief flirtation with the possibility of a natural morality, had been present from the start in Winch’s work in ethics. He argued that good examples are indispensable for serious discussion, and attacked the view that ‘the logic’ of moral concepts transcends such details. For example, Winch attacked the general idea of morality as a guide around difficulties, pointing out that, were it not for morality, there would be no difficulties of a certain kind. But moral considerations do not form a homogenous class. People differ, not simply in the priority they give to moral alternatives, but in what they take those alternatives to be. Whereas the principle of universalisability has a point in relation to the consistency of one’s own views, its claim that others must reach the same conclusions in the same circumstances, if one’s views are to be called moral at all, is vacuous, especially when those circumstances are said to include how a situation strikes one. Winch is not denying the possibility of moral criticism, but is anxious to show that it is made in terms of the values people hold. ‘Coming to a moral opinion or decision’ cannot be independent of those values; it would have no importance if it were.

Winch’s work in the philosophy of the social sciences has been enormously influential. By contrast, his work in ethics has been largely ignored. The neglect of Winch’s direct challenges to well-known views in
Winch also tried to combat the widespread academic condescension towards religious belief. The state of philosophy of religion depressed him. For Winch, not to give religious concepts the same contemplative attention one gives to others, leads to obscurantism and evasion. It was through early discussions with Rhees that Winch came to see that the grammar of 'God' cannot be likened to a thing of any kind. He showed how we must pay attention to the methods of projection in which religious pictures have their sense. To say that God is in a picture is not to say that it is a picture of God.

Winch learnt a great deal from the work of Simone Weil. In devoting a chapter to *The Just Balance*, Winch's book on her, Lyas is not turning away from the themes we have discussed. On the contrary, they are all in Weil: primitive reactions and concept formation, relations between the self and others, including moral and political relations, and the question of the kind of reality religion has. In the space Lyas had, it is understandable that Winch's agreement with Weil should predominate, but Winch did have serious reservations about, for example, her discussion of friendship, and what he took to be her neglect of difficulties which arise in intimate human relationships. In these connections, Lyas argues that Winch's distinction between philosophical and personal insights becomes rather artificial, and that Winch himself was not entirely happy with the distinction. Winch's remarks are certainly related to his personal reflections, but, philosophically, he wanted to emphasize moral views which were not his own. He insisted that Weil's conception of political justice could not be shown, by philosophy, to be superior to that of Hume. Winch's point is to show the possibility of Weil's conception. Again, Winch stresses Weil's achievement, in her essay on *The Iliad*, in giving a powerful account of a morality which is not her own. Winch numbered Weil, along with Plato in his dialogues, and Kierkegaard in his pseudonymous works, as giants in a contemplative, philosophical tradition. Giving this contemplative attention to the world, Winch argues, is not only technically difficult, but makes severe moral demands on the enquirer, since he or she will have personal commitments and aversions of their own.

Winch's philosophical legacy goes against contemporary tendencies to turn philosophy in scientific directions. Lyas argues that Winch would not deny that new scientific discoveries may affect the ways in which we think about things. Certainly, Winch does not deny that there can be explanations of language games. For example, there can be physiological explanations of what may prevent a child from acquiring them, or historical explanations of how they originated or developed. The point, however, is that such explanations will not give us what we need in wrestling with philosophical difficulties. Lyas says that he would have liked to see explanations from moral psychology in Winch's work, which would tell us why moral considerations are important to us. I think Winch would have balked at this suggestion, and that the 'why?' is coming in at the wrong place. He would insist that our endeavours to be decent are not for anything.

Lyas shows how Winch's work cuts through contemporary debates
between realism and anti-realism. It leaves us with the ordinariness of the
real in all its variety. Winch’s method, however, is not, as Lyas seems to
suggest, one which simply helps us to disentangle conceptual confusions so
that we may see the world aright. That is too close to the underlabourer
conception of philosophy which, as Lyas recognizes, Winch rejected.
Partly through the influence of Rhees’ paper, ‘Wittgenstein’s Builders’,
Winch came to appreciate that it is confused to see human discourse as a
series of rule-governed, self-contained games. The significance of what is
said, in one context, depends on how it is said in others, and on the bear-
ings of those other contexts on it. It would not be language otherwise.
Rhees’ views are elucidated more fully in *Wittgenstein and the Possibility of
Discourse*, but Winch did not live to respond to it. Nevertheless, Rhees’
emphases are a key to changes in Winch’s later work. Earlier, his emphasis
is on the agreement which makes discourse possible; agreement in a form
of life. Talk of following rules went with that. Of course, Winch did recog-
nize the role of ‘the personal’ in politics, morality and religion, but he did
so by distinguishing between social and personal dimensions. In his later
work these are more intimately bound up with each other. Winch still
emphasizes the bearings things have on each other, but now emphasizes
how ragged a phenomenon that is, and how fragile are the conditions
which make common understandings possible; conditions which are
threatened by the coercion and contingencies to which we are subject.
Winch said that were he to rewrite *The Idea of a Social Science* he would
not give the same emphasis to rules.

Peter Winch, my late teacher and sorely missed friend, was deeply com-
mmitted to philosophical enquiry. It was a vocation to him. His integrity in
discussion was something to marvel at, and his students were treated as
equals in a common pursuit. He was an example of the contemplative
tradition for which he had such a high regard.

As Lyas says, there is now a Winch Nachlass at Swansea. Even for those
who know Winch’s work there is much to be gained from Lyas’ essay. For
those unacquainted with Winch my advice is simple: read Lyas so that you
may see what you have been missing.

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