

an object on its own terms). By discovering beauty in the mundane (the mission of art), aesthetic educators encourage active thinking in other disciplines, while their “open” attitude toward alternate “readings” of a work demonstrates that art education is applicable to multiculturalism.

Overall, the anthology is an often fascinating presentation of issues facing *public education today*. Whether it accurately represents the breadth of educational philosophy is an entirely different matter. Institutions grounding America’s public and parochial schools—liberal arts, verbal facility, humanistic attention to the entire person, graded classrooms, universities, and so on—developed in the period between Aristotle and Rousseau. Curren is free to reject the ideas of educational theorists, from Cicero through the whole of Christian philosophy, but he should reckon with them. Yet even within Curren’s framework, certain omissions are glaring. For instance, Horace Mann, a pioneer in American public education, posits the “great, immutable principle of natural law,” upon which he bases “the absolute right of every human being that comes into the world to an education.” Indeed, he believes citizens *must* be literate in order to read the texts that produce just societies and moral individuals, especially civil law and the Bible. Whatever its deficiencies, Mann’s is an educational philosophy worthy of consideration. Evidently, an objectivist metaphysic, a realist epistemology, a natural law ethic, and a toleration of supernatural perspectives are either too quaint or too controversial for Curren even to mention. Would the anthology make a good course text? Abraham Lincoln may have said it best: “People who like this sort of thing will find it just the sort of thing they like.”

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Paul Ricoeur: De l’homme faillible à l’homme capable. Edited by Gaëlle Fiasse. Paris: PUF, 2008. Pp. 178.

This collective volume comprises six dense but enjoyable—concise, insightful, clear—studies by noted scholars dealing with the practical hermeneutics of Ricoeur’s late writings.

In “Enchevêtrements de la mémoire” Jeffrey Andrew Barash provides a critical exegesis of *Soi-même comme un autre* and *La mémoire, l’histoire, l’oubli*, where Ricoeur tackles the ethical question of the socio-political and historical cohesion by means of a discussion of *phronēsis* (p. 20). Barash discusses Ricoeur’s re-appropriation of the Aristotelian notions of *phronēsis*, *euboulia*, and *ēthos* in order to articulate his views of the conditions for the possibility of collective identity.

In the second essay, “De Gadamer à Ricoeur: Peut-on parler d’une conception commune de l’herméneutique?,” Jean Grondin gives a clear and succinct analysis of the differences between the hermeneutics of Gadamer as “more phenomenological” and Ricoeur as “more epistemological” (p. 50) in the spirit of a symposium “Gadamer and Ricoeur” (p. 62). Discussing the idea of the challenge of historicity common to both Gadamer and Ricoeur (p. 53), Grondin argues that neither believed that their hermeneutics would lead to relativism, although neither addressed the problem of relativism directly (p. 54). Ricoeur professed a hermeneutical phenomenology of personal autonomy in which what *can* make a difference is not history or tradition (as for Gadamer) but the person. This is a philosophy of hope in the face of the Moloch of history that extends to a practical philosophy of political responsibility. Gadamer, on the contrary, spoke of “philosophy’s political incompetence” (p. 57)—even though Grondin notes Gadamer’s later turn from fatalism to an affirmation of human initiative.

In “L’animal herméneutique” Johann Michel discusses Foucault’s statement that, until the seventeenth century, the preoccupation for truth went hand in hand with the preoccupation for the self, and that Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Freud, on the one hand, and Karl Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, on the other, have renewed this tradition. Michel understands Ricoeur to both continue the philosophy of a “spiritual epistemology” in a Foucaultian sense (like Habermas), which stems from the essential preoccupation for self-refiguration, and to oppose the Cartesian and post-Cartesian idea of a rather mediated and never “perfectly” transparent self (pp. 71–72). Although Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of the self draws on Heidegger’s philosophical enterprise, it is not in complete agreement with it. Heidegger’s radical philosophy of being is at the exact antipode of Descartes’s philosophy in the sense that if Descartes lacks the concern for self-care, Heidegger, on the contrary, lacks the concern for knowledge proper (since he treats knowledge as a mode of being). Ricoeur reconciles the concerns for *truth and method*, or for epistemological and ontological hermeneutics. If in the early works, Ricoeur’s reflexive hermeneutics is rather oblivious to the self’s (*soi*) internal encounter with the other, in the late writings, on the contrary, it explicitly presents itself as a philosophy of alterity—although, contrary to Levinas’s “antiphénoménologie” (p. 89), the face of the other never obliterates the face of the self.

In “Au coeur de la tension éthique: narrativité, téléologie, théonomie,” Alain Thomasset insists on Ricoeur’s critical re-appropriation of Aristotle for the following three concerns: narrative, ethics, metaphysics. He highlights the teleological function of narrative, namely, formation of the self, where self does not simply designate the characters of the narrative, but more deeply and purposively the readers who are thus called to self-examination and self-constitution. Attestation is always already an attestation of otherness—of one’s body, of one’s conscience, of other subjects. Commenting on Ricoeur’s ontological re-appropriation of Aristotle via Spinoza and Heidegger, Thomasset clarifies the religious dimension of the third form of otherness, namely, conscience: as alterity in a both original and foundational sense, it defines the subject as capable of, and called to, ontological and ethical attestation. Following Spinoza’s idea of *conatus*, Ricoeur understands conscience as the expression of desiring and “persevering in being,” which is ultimately a desire for God and expresses rather than diminishes the autonomy of the self.

In “Asymétrie, gratuité et réciprocité,” Gaëlle Fiasse (who also edited the volume) sets forth a lucid and detailed analysis of alterity as a constitutive element in the articulation of ipseity’s ethical significance. She argues that Ricoeur’s phenomenological ethics rests on the “binome” of gratuity and reciprocity (p. 120). Reciprocity refers either to persons actually exchanging esteem and good will, as “intersubjective reciprocity,” or to the golden rule, as “normative reciprocity.” Normative reciprocity is not at odds with gratuity; it is, on the contrary, incomprehensible without it. For Ricoeur, the ethics of solicitude for each other, in the form of the gratuity of esteem, takes precedence over deontological morality. By extending the idea of gratuity to the sphere of social and political justice, the golden rule marks the transition from the ethics of gratuity to the morality of imperatives. Fiasse argues that the dialectics of gratuity and reciprocity is also constitutive of Ricoeur’s explanation of forgiveness, which is animated by two crucial commitments: one to the always exceeding resources of goodness, and the other, in the form of hope, to a future conversion of the enemy into a friend.

In “Vers une herméneutique de la traduction,” Richard Kearney describes Ricoeur’s hermeneutics as a hermeneutics of and about translation. In *Sur la traduction* Ricoeur shows translation to be a task (i) of self-expression with and for the other, (ii) of original comprehension of meaning, (iii) of attaining self-identity through the “true hospitality” (p. 170) of

love, which dis-alienates the other and makes possible one's becoming *oneself as another*, and (iv) of pursuit of socio-political justice by "an exchange of memories and narratives among different nations" (pp. 171–72). The essential ethical functions exhibited in these paradigmatic tasks of translation are linguistic hospitality, flexible translation, narrative plurality, transfiguration of the past, and forgiveness.

Scholars and students seriously interested in Ricoeur, and especially Ricoeur's late writings, will welcome this substantial and much needed resource. The book belongs on the shelves of every university library.

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The Vision of Gabriel Marcel: Epistemology, Human Person, the Transcendent.
By Brendan Sweetman. Amsterdam and New York: Editions Rodopi, 2007.
Pp. 187. \$60.00 cloth.

Brendan Sweetman's *The Vision of Gabriel Marcel* is an important addition to Marcel studies, an excellently written primer on his thought, and a major contribution to contemporary philosophical scholarship. Given Marcel's unique contemporary approach to philosophy and his complicated technical jargon, faithfully expressing what he says with a high degree of scholarship in easily intelligible language is no easy task. Sweetman has done precisely this and more. By considering the way in which Marcel undertook to react to the situation of philosophy in the twentieth century, Sweetman has been able to show precisely why Étienne Gilson could justifiably call Marcel "the most authentic and most profound philosopher of our time" and "a true heir of the metaphysic of Being" (p. 123).

Marcel's importance for a recovery of philosophical reason in the West has been somewhat overshadowed by the attraction of Continental thinkers to the teachings of Martin Heidegger (p. 150), the narrow interests of Analytic thinkers (pp. 103–19), and the systematic approach to philosophy by some Thomists like Jacques Maritain (pp. 121–34). Sweetman rightly recognizes that Marcel grasped elements about the modern predicament, especially about relations in general and human relations, that these other thinkers have missed, which enables the study of Marcel to act as a bridge and to facilitate better communication among these groups.

The book includes prefatory essays by Kenneth A. Bryson and Katharine Rose Hanley, as well as an introduction and nine chapters by Sweetman, entitled: (1) "Marcel's Critique of Cartesianism," (2) "Human Being as a Being-in-a-Situation," (3) "The Activity of Knowledge," (4) "Secondary Reflection, Ethics, and the Transcendent," (5) "Religious Experience, and the Affirmation of God," (6) "A Marcelian Critique of the Problem of Skepticism," (7) "Marcel and Traditional Philosophical Problems," (8) "Non-Conceptual Knowledge: Marcel and Maritain," and (9) "From an Epistemological Point of View: Buber and Marcel."

In his introduction Sweetman recognizes that, since philosophy is an act of a human person, the Cartesian misunderstanding of the human self (which replaced the classical understanding of the human person as a being-in-a-situation with an artificially-contrived and abstract one as a transcendent spectator) caused fundamental problems to arise for subsequent Western philosophical thought in all areas of human relations, especially in epistemology, ethics, and religious experience. Sweetman claims that Marcel recognized many of the problems that this disordered understanding of the self was causing for contemporary philosophy. He claims that Marcel attempted to remedy them by giving ontological priority to philosophical questions arising from concrete philosophical experience of the human person as essentially embodied.