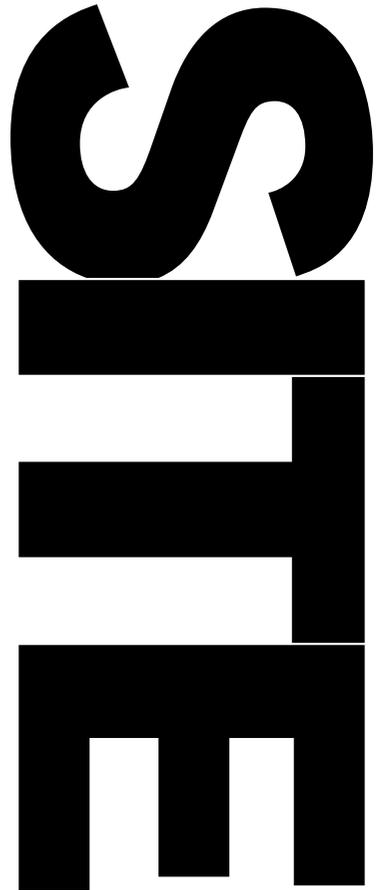

Remake Remodel



CONTENTS *French Philosophy Since 1945* • *Utopian Thinking in Past and Contemporary Times* • *Universal Modernism, Swedish Art Heroine* • *“Pastoral Power” and the Techniques for Controlling the Poor and Unemployed* • *Inventing a Silence* • *The Ground Zero Mosque that Wasn’t One: Media and Architecture in America* • *Who’s afraid of Red, Blue and Yellow?* • *Water Lilies and the Gesture of Melancholy: On Monet’s Late Works* • *Adorno and the Problem of Late Style* • *Cogito Ergo Insurgo! The Italian University: Laboratory of Crisis and Critique* • *On the Role of the University in the Age of Management Politics* • *The Multiple University and the Heroism of Forms: Variations on an Infinite Autonomy* • *Adventures in the Sausage Factory: A Cursory Overview of UK University Struggles, November 2010–2011* • *Dutch Austerity and Free Academies: An Interview With Katja Diefenbach*

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Remake Remodel

This is the new version of *SITE*. Since the most recent issue, no. 29–30 (2010), we have had to cope with the difficult problem of having our funding from the Swedish Cultural Council reduced by two thirds. While for decades this government body has been a major and generous source for Swedish cultural journals, and has made it possible for a small country like Sweden to sustain a highly diverse publication ecology, recent shifts seem to introduce a different policy.

The drastic cuts were made for reasons that to us appeared obscure: the official explanation cannot be deemed as anything but intellectually vacuous — the funding was cut down because of the journal’s “low quality,” a judgment not accompanied by any further exemplifications or explanations.

Since then we have been forced to remake and remodel our way of working, which as such need not be a negative thing. Instead of publishing in a tabloid format, we have switched to a more book-like format that makes it possible to continue international distribution in

a more efficient way, and in the end hopefully makes the journal easier to buy for readers inside, as well as outside, of Sweden. *SITE* will henceforth be available from most Internet booksellers, selected bookstores, and will be easy to order in those who will not keep us in stock.

The necessity of remaking and remodeling is however not restricted to journals. In recent years the European university system has been affected by major changes due to financial restrictions and policy changes that seem to directly target teaching and research in the humanities. This is no doubt a global trend, and the major thematic section, “Quality Education,” with contributions by Karl Lydén, Kim West, Sara Farris, Hans Ruin, Stéphane Douailler, Danny Hayward, and Katja Diefenbach, addresses this problem as it has emerged in different national contexts.

In the UK, Italy, Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Spain, and in virtually every country in Europe, the Bologna Process seems to have produced a general quantification of higher learning along

with restricted academic freedom and worsened labor conditions for professors, lecturers, and university employees at large. As was already presaged in Lyotard's classic analysis in the late '70s, the grand narratives of legitimation of education have lost their credibility in contemporary, post-industrial society: both the narrative of knowledge as a means of emancipation, and the German Idealist narrative of *Bildung*, have vanished, and legitimation seems to only reside in performativity, resulting in the mercantilization of higher learning. The question remains not only of how such a process may be resisted — for instance by a kind of passive resistance: minimize your attention, just send in the report — but also the question to what extent these transformations, deeply imbricated as they are in mutations of Capital itself, also open other possibilities.

A smaller thematic section is devoted to the idea of “late style,” and presents texts by Sam Smiles, Bente Larsen, and Sven-Olov Wallenstein. Initially presented at a symposium at

Moderna Museet in Stockholm, organized in conjunction with the exhibition “Turner Monet Twombly: Later Paintings,” they examine the idea of late style, as it has been developed by, among others, Theodor W. Adorno and Edward Said, both in relation to the three artists, and as a general question of philosophy and aesthetic theory.

This issue also contains essays by Charlotte Bydler, Sinziana Ravini, Fredrika Spindler, Maurizio Lazzarato, Alex Costanzo, and Joel McKim. The topics addressed range from the Swedish artist Barbro Östlihn's work in New York in the 1960s, utopias in contemporary art, and the writing of the history of post-war French philosophy, to deployment of pastoral power technologies in French politics, the cinematic work of Wang Bing, and the debates surrounding the construction of an Islamic cultural center close to Ground Zero in lower Manhattan. •

THE EDITORS

French Philosophy Since 1945

Fredrika Spindler

French Philosophy: Insides and Outsides of Academia

Depending on one's inclination, one can choose to think of it as a miracle — or, for the more inquisitive, in can be put in terms of a question: what soil, what events, what constellations made possible what might loosely be termed French postwar philosophy? Or, put differently: what are the points of coincidence, affinity, convergence, confrontation, displacement, and disagreement of such various thinkers and philosophers as Jean-Paul Sartre, Luce Irigaray, Jacques Lacan, Georges Canguilhem, Henri Maldiney, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze,

Michel Foucault, Jean-Luc Nancy, Sarah Kofman, Louis Althusser and Jacques Rancière — to name but a few — who, with extraordinary productivity, both individually and collectively, managed to renew, invent, and recreate the philosophical landscape in the postwar period? At the intersection of these two questions, something both unusual and compelling can be outlined: a new (and much needed) segment of a history of ideas and philosophy, circumscribed in time and space yet pointing towards wide-spread and far-reaching roots, complicating its chronology by tracing lines of convergence and points of disjunctions in the form of specific themes or areas of problematization.

It is thus no trivial project that the editors Étienne Balibar and John Rajchman have undertaken with the 456-page anthology *French Philosophy Since 1945: Problems, Concepts, Inventions*,¹ the fourth and last volume in The New Press's Postwar French Thought Series. Few, however, would have been better equipped to construct such an ambitious anthology — Balibar being a part and co-creator of the winding process that the book maps out, Rajchman an excellent transmitter and interpreter of many of its main figures. The double perspective — the French horizon, which is the focus and point of departure, and the Anglo-American context, which is the presumed site of reception — also wields a double advantage: on the one hand, we get a profound presentation and thematization of a complex whole; on the other hand, a set of texts (complete or excerpts) that are

1 • Étienne Balibar and John Rajchman (eds), *French Philosophy Since 1945: Problems, Concepts, Inventions* (New York: The New Press, 2011).

published in revised translations, or for the first time, in English. This opportunity to partake of well-known texts by famous authors, as well as lesser known essays of either the same authors or others, indispensable for the French context while less well-known internationally, constitutes just one of the reasons why this book is a veritable goldmine.

But the book is more than just another anthology, regardless of how well it fulfills its role in that respect. What is presented is not just a certain set of key texts that all have constituted theoretical turning-points in their own time as well as today, but also a full and multiple thematic formulation of the questions at stake in the postwar reality from out of which new philosophical and theoretical movements such as structuralism and post-structuralism, the historically minded epistemology and new psychoanalytical theory would stem, as well as the New Novel, New Wave Cinema, and an increasingly unbounded aesthetic theory and practice. It is also from out of this scientific and cultural multiplicity that it becomes possible to understand the development of what Balibar and Rajchman, to be sure only on one occasion (presumably because of philosophical decency), call French “Continental philosophy”, that is, its fundamentally cross-disciplinary character; its intimate grounding in the whole of humanities but also in the new natural sciences; its inevitable connections to political and social science as well as to arts and literature. From this commingling it becomes possible to understand why French postwar philosophy has had and continues to have such a transformative influence in most of these fields of culture today: as Balibar and Rajchman put it in their introduction, “no area would remain unaffected” (xvii). Yet, enlarging the analytical scope also renders possible a innovative way of historicizing from a specifically philosophical perspective: by widening the thematic inquiry to disciplines outside of strictly academic philosophy, and showing how analogous, though at every moment particular, questions are taken up, formulated, and discussed in divergent ways, the philosophical orientations also appear in a wider perspective than what previous presentations have achieved — for instance that of Vincent Descombes’s *Modern French Philosophy*,² whose main focus is the Hegelian and phenomenological discussion. Not least, this is valuable for clarifying what might simply be termed the complexity of French philosophy: namely, that the invention of formations

such as structuralism, new linguistics or social anthropology cannot be properly understood unless one makes evident their connection to contemporary re-readings and radical actualizations of

2 • Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. L. Scott-Fox and J. M. Harding (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

historical philosophers such as Spinoza, Kant, Nietzsche, Bergson and Marx, as well as the Stoics and ancient philosophy.

The Concept and the Subject

From what parameters, then, can French postwar philosophy, with its many different orientations, be understood? Balibar and Rajchman take their point of departure in a late text of Foucault, his introduction to Georges Canguilhem's *The Normal and the Pathological*,³ where he discusses the development of modern or contemporary French philosophy in relation to German and English traditions, as well as their roots in Kant and the Kantian invention of critical philosophy. Central here is the very transformation of the idea of critique: the need to formulate a new critical thinking — what Foucault calls “the fourth critique” — departing from what in the historical development may be understood as the problem of finitude. What is at stake is how to formulate a critical thinking that no longer may be grounded in God or Man. This question, first put forth in the discussions in the 1930s of Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*, enables Foucault to point out two diverging readings and developments: one championed by Cavailles, which Foucault calls “a philosophy of the concept”, the other proposed by Sartre, developing into a “philosophy of the subject”. After the war, this initial divide was to be complicated and, in turn, generated a large number of new orientations, for example via Canguilhem's development of Cavailles's philosophy of the concept in a historicizing perspective that draws on the life sciences, to Foucault himself, who would develop a conceptual analysis starting from a wider range of questions involving humanism and philosophical anthropology from Heidegger and Marx, as well as new methods in linguistics, critical theory, and social sciences. Hence, the question of the new formulation of critical thinking needs to be staged so as to encompass these parameters, and here, too, Balibar and Rajchman follow Foucault, in what he called bifurcations and their relating points of rupture, or “heretical points”.

This tracing of lines and the localizing of breaking-points constitute a method that less proposes a history of individual philosophers, schools or movements, but rather pulls its strength from pinpointing those questions that emerged out of this originary divide between philosophies of concept and object. In short, the method here consists in defining “the clusters of discussion, or constellations of discourse, each with its points or lines of divergence” (xxi), as well as the inventions and concepts that stem from them. This is the basis for the seven principal clusters of discussion or areas of problems, which also make up

3 • Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, trans. Carolyn R. Fawcett (New York: Zone Books, 1991).

the book's seven parts — In Search of a New Critique, Histories of Truth, Questions of Difference, Event, The Subject, Institution and Insurrection and Thinking in Art — all of which are independent, but also overlapping. The problematizing rather than chronological set-up is completed at the very end of the book by a much needed, detailed and comprehensive chart that links individual works and persons to national and international major events. The result is a rare historical overview of a philosophy understood organically, moving by junctions and ruptures, growths, connections, and ramifications.

Critique, History, and Truth

Starting out with short and clarifying introductions, each part sketches a kaleidoscopic image of a multifaceted thought in movement. Part one, In Search for a New Critique, is rooted in the need to formulate a new critical thinking, a critical attitude that, in Foucault's words, is understood as "a kind of general cultural form, both a political and moral attitude, a way of thinking [...] the art of not being governed like that and at that cost" (38). This necessity is formulated from out of the different horizons opened up by Kant's philosophy, in whose aftermath the question of the finitude of man became the common denominator. That which was sought in different disciplines was an awakening from and a departing from the "anthropological slumber" bequeathed by Kant: Althusser develops an anti-humanist Marx and analyzes humanism as an ideology, understood as a transcendental illusion; Ricoeur formulates the necessity of a new hermeneutics, grounded in what he calls the school of suspicion, whose key figures are Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, in contrast to a tradition of interpretation based in reminiscence and a phenomenology of the sacred. In "The Ends of Man", Derrida identifies the question of man's finitude as the key issue in French contemporary philosophy, but he also shows how it was already embedded in the metaphysical tradition culminating with readings of Hegel and Husserl. This question, which for Derrida just as for Levinas, albeit differently, calls for a thorough questioning of the idea of the Law, is then taken up in an almost opposite way by Deleuze, for whom the end of Man (as the end of God) constitutes a resolute liberation, making possible new ways of thinking and experiencing outside of the bonds of subjectivity.

A different perspective on these epistemological issues is then offered in the selection from Claude Imbert's *For a History of Logic*, which offers a brilliant and long overdue introduction to the French reception and interpretation of the divide between Husserl and Frege, via the mathematicians and philosophers Jean Cavailles and Albert Lautmann, where later Merleau-Ponty

and Wittgenstein would play major roles. Barthes and Blanchot are present here too, as front figures in the discussion of the new criticism's role in art and literature, while Althusser, Rancière and Bourdieu lay out the foundations for a new critical thinking concerning the political.

Part two, *Histories of Truth*, takes its point of departure in the postwar rethinking of the philosophy of mathematics, and the introduction of the role of history in mathematics. Derrida, translating and writing the introduction to Husserl's *The Origin of Geometry*, stresses the idea of a "history of truth" with far-reaching consequences for both the thinking of mathematics and for writing; Michel Serres develops Leibniz' mathematical models while Deleuze, starting out from studies of Bergson, traces a "minor" mathematical tradition, less focused on axioms and deductions than on problems and potentials, a tradition that after Bergson was developed further by Ilya Prigogine and Whitehead. The history of the natural sciences becomes plural, as Foucault shows in his highly pedagogical readings of Koyré, Bachelard, and Canguilhem, thereby making possible the development of the idea of a production of knowledge based on different, co-existing but also conflicting models.

In a critical history of systems of thought, it is thus the very notion of truth that undergoes a transformation from "demonstration" to "event", which is developed philosophically by Foucault and psychoanalytically by Lacan through the question of truth as fiction. For Badiou, truth as event calls for the question of fidelity, while, in Deleuze's view, it constitutes the possibility of transforming our understanding of the philosophical activity as such. If "truth" is understood as an emerging event, this means that its emergence as such is always dependent on the dramaturgy singular to the question or the problem itself: "dramatizations of ideas were always prior to relations of truth" (64); an ontological chronology which in turn calls for the necessity for every philosopher to understand how the drama in question is played out, who its actors are, and what constitutes its main target. The notion of truth is also discussed by Pierre-François Moreau through Spinoza's re-evaluation of the status of error, which can be related to Marx and Lenin, while Julia Kristeva addresses the relation of truth and plausibility in relation to "true-real". A consequence of this displacement of the notion of truth is the question of what cannot be contained by thinking, while still appearing as a constitutive part of it — thereby calling for a responsibility: the aporia, the question or the paradox, the incertitude or indetermination inherent to thinking.

Differences and Events

This question constitutes the bridge to part three, Questions of Difference — difference here understood as yet another decisive element for the new critical philosophy on all levels: ontological, political, linguistic, since it deals precisely with the ungraspable, slipping, and paradoxical, with the neither-nor. From Merleau-Ponty, in his “In Praise of Philosophy”, to Lacan’s idea of the “purloined letter”, Lévi-Strauss’s “floating signifier” and the linguist and philosopher Jean-Claude Milner’s development of this in the form of “paradoxical sets” within all forms of identification, to Derrida’s forming of the new concept *différance*, everything turns around the question of the conditions of questioning. For Deleuze, the notion of difference just as much concerns the conditions of thought, but its structure of ungraspability can only be understood in a radically positive or productive way that refuses all negative ontology. Liberated from its traditional subservience to logics of identity and contradiction, difference becomes the productive element within which all thinking can take place. The concept of difference is also central to political philosophy. Formulated in different ways by Rancière, Nancy, and Lyotard, it designates the empty space of positive identity and sense in relation to which all new forms of democracy must be formulated. The question is “what is the nature of wrongs for which there pre-exists no agreed means of settlement and which thus confronts us with questions and dissensus?” (120) Revolving around the same question, but in different ways, the fundamental and necessary groundlessness proper to philosophy here weaves its fabric through variations of difference: difference, *différance*, *différend*, disagreement.

Another aspect or variation on the same theme is developed in part four, now in terms of Event. If the philosophical and critical question ultimately concerns the conditions and the possibilities of thinking from out of a necessary perspective of finitude, itself characterized by a both inevitable and constitutive aporia or paradox, a central problem becomes how and in what forms *sense* appears. The event is thematized precisely as those critical moments when we are forced to think rather than reproduce *doxa* in its various forms. In Balibar and Rajchman’s words, “it is the peculiar time of invention or creation in thought or philosophy” (149), critical turning-points that resist all programmatic prevision and mastering. The event, contrary to the “accident”, necessarily generates sense, thereby forcing us into becoming-other (Deleuze), but in this also rendering necessary a larger reflection on what we, ourselves, were, are, and become: thus, the event is linked to questions of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, action and agency. The problem hence appears to have a large number of

ramifications, and it demands analysis from various points of view. The event in relation to history is thematized by, among others, Foucault (actuality) and Althusser (the multiple structure of history), in Deleuze's understanding of Hamlet's "time out of joint", and in Derrida's post-Marxist reading of ghosts and messianic times, but also, from a very different perspective, by Sartre in his analysis of history as agency.

The link to the political is formulated in different interpretations of the revolution — as a possibility in the '60s, and as a failure in the '80s — but it also opens toward a multifaceted discussion in Foucault's understanding of "the time of the political". Yet another major discussion takes on the question of the event from the point of view of temporality. The roots of this can be found in Kant, Bergson, Husserl and Heidegger, and they are worked out in different ways, for example in Derrida's call for the future in terms of messianic time, which contrasts to Deleuze's analysis of the event as Aion, annulling the past as much as what is yet to come. The event understood as that which "happens to us" acquires a strong ethical sense in Victor Goldschmidt's analysis of Stoic temporality, which is also developed further by Deleuze via Spinoza and Nietzsche, where the ethical question becomes the question of how not to be unworthy of the event. With the explicit or implicit backdrop of World War Two, it also becomes possible to develop Freud's notion of the "traumatic event": in psychoanalytical theory, we find it in Lacan, in literature, in Blanchot and the idea of the literary event associated to "spaces of death", and also in history, in Pierre Nora's and Paul Ricoeur's discussions concerning memory and the Shoah.

The Subject Reconsidered

Part five traces a problem that is strongly intertwined with all the other themes: the Subject. Contrary to a certain number of received, simplistic representations of contemporary French philosophy's critique of, and even doing away with, the subject, a complex discussion is here advanced where the problem of subjectivity may be understood along two major axes: either in terms of the contrast between the idea of the "constitution of the subject in language, discourse and social formations", and or in terms of the idea of the subject's "constituting role" in philosophies of consciousness (193). From the decentering of the subject and the discussions concerning the body and embodiment, critical readings are directed against the phenomenological ideas of the Flesh: Lacan talks of "the body in bits and pieces", Derrida of "the proper body" anchored in "hearing-oneself-speaking", while Deleuze, drawing on Artaud, develops the "body without organs" as well as the idea of an impersonal transcendental field

from out of which “a life” can be understood in liberating contrast to the life of the individual.

In connection to the subject, the idea of alterity also requires rethinking, similarly to the idea of community, which is developed along different paths by Sartre, Levinas, and Derrida. In this part, there is a rich display of texts and excerpts: in addition to the expected texts by Deleuze (the luminous “Immanence: A Life”), Derrida, Blanchot, and Lacan, we also find Simone de Beauvoir, Georges Bataille, Luce Irigaray — who in a brilliantly tight excerpt discusses Hegel’s view on the woman — and Levinas. Canguilhem’s “What is Psychology?” retraces psychology’s philosophical roots. The text — which ends with the famous warning that the road from the Sorbonne (that is, contemporary psychology’s reluctance to relate to philosophy) indeed may in one direction lead to the Pantheon, but that the other direction leads to the local police station — should rightly be made compulsory reading by all theorists of cognitive behavioral therapy. In this section, we also find the analytically inspired philosopher Jacques Bouveresse’s highly relevant reading of the understanding of the body in Descartes and Wittgenstein, as well as Foucault’s own presentation of his philosophy (written under pseudonym), which focuses on processes of subjectivation. Finally, Derrida’s critical dialogue with Jean-Luc Nancy is indispensable reading for anyone who has ever taken an interest in the question of the subject in contemporary philosophy, and its various developments from Heidegger to Foucault and Deleuze.

The Institution and the Political and the Aesthetic

The question of the subject inevitably leads to that of the political, which here, in an especially interesting way, is problematized under the heading Institution and Insurrection. Foucault’s definition of the critical attitude — “we don’t want to be governed like that anymore” — constitutes the point of departure for a formulation of the political as something that has to be thought outside of the given framework of the state and the institution; something that can be found in interstices, resistances, and alternative groups, outside of all predefined forms of identity and belonging. It is a political space defined in contrast to all forms of institutional power, indeed co-extensive with them, but never fully circumscribed, caught, colonized, or mastered by them. Hence, the question will also be about identifying not only what the institutional strategies are and how they are articulated, but also, what the counter-strategies are, which always appear within them. The political, in a time characterized by geo-political transformations and displacements of the forms of war and peace, needs to be understood as an-archic,

groundless, without reference to any transcendent or historical ideas: it has “no other guarantee than its own activity, no necessity other than its own responsibility” (274). Therefore, the questions of the political must be reformulated and re-wrought: among the new conceptual constellations we find, for example, the relation between force and law, justice and violence, and, not least, the relation between war and politics. Foucault’s famous reversal of Clausewitz’s formulation that war is the continuing of politics with other means, Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of the War Machine, Virilio’s analyses of war and media, and also Derrida’s discussion about violence and law, are here emblematic. With the challenge of thinking the common in terms of space and identities (Rancière, Nancy), the idea also appears of a necessary outside that determines both the political and the philosophical: Foucault’s Group for Information on Prisons, the open university in Vincennes, and the Collège International de Philosophie, can all be seen as expressions of this movement. In this part of the book, the choice of texts is rich and multifaceted: Merleau-Ponty on Machiavelli, Sarah Kofman’s analysis of Kant’s idea of woman’s dominion in the *Anthropology*, Jean-Claude Milner’s study of identities in given and “indistinct names” from a logical, political and psychoanalytical perspective, and Lefort’s brilliant essay on power based on an analysis of La Boétie’s *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude*, are some of the examples.

From the political to the aesthetic, the path is short. The last part of the book, *Thinking in Art*, shows how French postwar philosophy cannot be thought outside of the transformation of literature and art that have occurred during the past five or six decades. In a movement that both returns to and transforms Kant’s idea of the aesthetic, aesthetics in all forms — theoretical as well as practical — becomes a great laboratory for the inventions, problems, and movements of this time. New and far-reaching relations between philosophy, art, and literature can, as Balibar and Rajchman suggest, be said to have redefined the very history of philosophy understood as constructed on the basis of the philological and hermeneutic models of the nineteenth century, characterized by Hegel’s and later Heidegger’s theories of aesthetics and culminating with “the end of art”. Instead, central concepts, both in art and philosophy, have migrated into transnationalism (rather than cosmopolitanism), heterotopias (rather than utopias), and “minor languages” (rather than great narratives). In this part, Merleau-Ponty writes on thinking in painting, Foucault on other spaces, Henri Maldiney on the relation between gaze, speech, and space, and Rancière on the politics of aesthetics and the idea of a distribution of the sensible.

A French Style?

Is it then possible, by way of Étienne Balibar and John Rajchman's anthology, to answer the question of what made French postwar philosophy possible, from which soil it developed, and why it, perhaps through what Pierre-François Moreau calls "a French style" (xx) in philosophy, were to spread and exercise a still undiminished influence, not only on the international philosophical scene, but also in many other disciplines, in the arts, and in political theory?

Answers can, no doubt, be outlined as the thematization and the collection of texts progress through the book: beyond the many — and sometimes irreconcilable — differences between the French theorists, thinkers and philosophers, which unfold in the space of two, at the most three, generations, there is, to start with, a common heritage in Classic and Modern philosophy — Kant, Nietzsche, Marx, but also Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz and Bergson, without whom postwar French philosophies would have been literally unthinkable. Common to them also is the openness toward other disciplines and the will to reach beyond a strict and closed academic space. Last but not least, they have in common a vital capacity to actualize, renew, and transform the historical heritage, while a new historical moment was shaped around them. This, if anything, certainly meets the Nietzschean definition of philosophy's productive untimeliness. However, the question of common denominators to some extent becomes the one of less interest, since one of the strong points here is showing connections, clusters of discussion and diverging paths from shared contexts: at the center there are the questions and their prismatic multiplicity, never the answers in view of a desired consensus. Therefore neither the problematization nor the textual choice appear as polemic, on the contrary, it is open and rich, although without ever giving the impression of arbitrariness.

But despite the anthology's richness, questions can of course be raised. Beyond the impossibility of ever presenting a complex and living history in an all-encompassing way, the editorial choices always profile themselves both by inclusion and exclusion. That Balibar and Rajchman indeed trace royal paths, densely populated by major canonic names — Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze — represented by numerous texts does not constitute a problem in view of the rather absurdly minor place these philosophers tend to receive in the vast majority of contemporary philosophical dictionaries. The otherwise solid mobilization, reaching from Althusser to Sartre, Badiou to Bouveresse, Canguilhem to Milner, Gauchet to Goldschmidt, apostrophes, displaces and coexists with the famous texts. More problematic however, is the editorial choice concerning

female representation: of 62 texts, only 5 have female authors, something that moreover has the unfortunate side-effect of making names as decisive for philosophy as de Beauvoir, Irigaray, Kristeva, Kofman, and Imbert appear as obligatory tokens. From a practical point of view, an index of names would have supplied extended possibilities of orientation in the developmental rhizome constituted by this presentation. These shortcomings — of which one cannot be considered minor — do not, however, obscure the fact that Balibar's and Rajchman's book constitutes an invaluable source — indeed, the very source-book they had the intention of creating — for anyone who wants to relate to contemporary philosophy. The bringing together of well and lesser known texts, the dissensual co-existence of so many fundamentally different philosophers within a shared milieu, the problematizing and thematizing framework that holds and knits them together, in itself constitutes a decisive and fundamental contribution to the ongoing (hi)story of philosophy. ●

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