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Reappraisals of Rousseau: Studies in Honour of R.

A. Leigh. Edited by Simon Harvey, Marian Hobson, David Kelley, and Samuel S. B. Taylor. (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble, 1980. Pp. viii + 312. \$27.50.)

This *Festschrift*, originally published by the Manchester University Press, marks the occasion of the completion of R. A. Leigh's edition of Rousseau's *Correspondance Complète*. Leigh's *Correspondance* is a remarkable scholarly achievement; for the most part the articles which compose this celebratory volume are not, although the level of interest sustained by the collection is high, though perhaps falling short of the value promised by its inflated price.

There are sixteen papers here, ten in French and six in English. A number of the most prominent British and continental Rousseau scholars are among the authors, including several of those responsible for the Pléiade edition of Rousseau's works, such as Bernard Gagnebin, Robert Derathé, John Spink, Jean Starobinski, and Henri Gouhier. These and the other contributors share a commitment to careful textual scholarship, a critical affection for Rousseau, and a pronounced bias against insufficiently nuanced interpretations. If these "reappraisals" have any connecting thread, it is certainly not a matter of shared method, still less of doctrine; rather, they all reflect a lively taste for discrediting those one-sided caricatures of Jean-Jacques as romantic, revolutionary, neurotic, or whatever, which stand between Rousseau and the contemporary reader. One comes away from these essays without a sharp image of Rousseau in mind, but this is hardly a shortcoming in a volume whose goal is to suggest the richness and complexity of an author more frequently appropriated than read.

The articles are grouped in four sections: ways of feeling and seeing (four papers on the sentiment of existence and happiness), politics, writing, and intellectual relationships. The section titles are not, however, reliable guides to content, and many of the articles throughout the work are concerned with political issues. Ten of the pieces raise questions about Rousseau's relationship to earlier and later writers. Some of these seem laboriously concerned with the minutiae of historical detective work, such as John Lough's study of possible Rousseauian influences on the authors of articles appearing in the later volumes of the *Encyclopedia*, Gagnebin's argument that Rousseau's conception of law may have had some but not much influence on the authors of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*, and Robert Shackleton's piece on the possibility of the young Rousseau's collaboration in the Dupins' responses to Montesquieu.

Others, however, have larger matters squarely in view. Derathé provides an instructive and entertaining account of nineteenth-century misreadings of Rousseau from a variety of points along the political spectrum (by DeBonald, Constant, Comte, and Proudhon), revealing the prevalence, then as now, of the tendency to consider the *Social Contract* through the dark light of each reader's political nightmares. Another example of the way in which detailed literary historical studies can illuminate an important text is Georges Poulet's discussion of early eighteenth-century appearances of the crucial concept of the sentiment of existence. Poulet shows that use of this concept always involved the claim that the transformation of feeling into reverie and the triumph of repose over frenzy are necessary conditions for human happiness, and that it provided the basis for a secular alternative to the more familiarly early modern notion of happiness as activity and acquisition.

Among the other pieces on the concept of happiness, one deserving special mention is Starobinski's characteristically elegant and suggestive paper on the *day* as the unit of happiness. His point is that the moments of greatest happiness in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* and *Emile* are revealed through the image of a daily cycle (as in the festival of the grape harvest at Clarens and the day in the country at the end of book 4 of *Emile*), a period of time organized by the natural rhythms of sunrise, sunset, work, rest, and (always) meals. Human happiness is imagined as the precarious restoration of "biological time" over "historical time" (the disorderly march of events set in motion by passion) as the rule and measure of human life. A similar claim is made in Samuel Taylor's very exciting essay on Rousseau's romanticism. Taylor argues that Rousseau indeed prefigures romanticism but not in the way usually thought (he is not the founder of the cult of nature and the great champion of passion against reason). His romanticism rather consists in his diagnosis of the human problem as the inevitable conflict of antagonistic forces within the psyche, and his apparent conviction that the solution to the species-defining problem of incoherence lies neither in the *mores* of ordinary society nor in philosophy, but in the power of imaginative reconstruction. By thus reconceptualizing the function of art as redemptive, Taylor's Rousseau is less the forerunner of Lamartine and Byron than of Baudelaire and Gide (and, I would add, of Nietzsche and Heidegger).

Readers of the *APSR* may also be interested in Bronislaw Baczko's plausible account of why Rousseau treats Moses as a legislator rather than a prophet (strangely, there is no mention of Machiavelli here). But the best piece in the book is

Felicity Baker's treatment of why Rousseau chooses to express an easily comprehensible thought in such a strange way when he says that whoever disobeys the general will "will be forced to be free." Not only is this article, entitled "La Route Contraire," a brilliant discussion of the force/freedom issue, but also the most edifying treatment of Rousseau's paradoxes that I have seen. Baker's writing is heavy going for readers not familiar with the semanticist's vocabulary (beware of "hyponyms," "polysemy," and "semantic fields"), but the effort pays. Baker's case, too briefly, is that Rousseau uses paradox as a pedagogical device designed to loosen the grip of prejudices embedded in ordinary language. The desired effect is not quite shock, but a temporary *depayement* (this suggests interesting parallels with the Socratic practice of inducing *aporia* through paradoxes of his own). This essay was a revelation to me, and of all those in the book seems most likely to keep the copying machines, if not the cash registers, humming.

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Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas. By David Held. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980. Pp. 511. \$32.50, cloth; \$12.75, paper.)

Ironically, David Held's *Introduction to Critical Theory* succeeds as an exercise in exposition and fails as an effort at critical evaluation. Held notes in his introduction that he intends to "explicate and assess central aspects of critical theory" (p. 14). His attempt, however, reveals him as an apologist for critical theory, one who excels in lucid discussion of complex ideas and defense against hostile interpreters but falls short in his self-appointed task of assessment of critical theory's key assumptions and implications.

The strength of this book lies in its informative discussion (which at times borders on the oversimplified since Held has a propensity to put things into lists and charts) of Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, and Habermas. Held selects these four as central figures of critical theory, a tradition of thought which flourished in the Frankfurt school—comprised of Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Lowenthal, and Pollock—and continues in the contemporary work of Habermas. He clearly establishes the unique contribution of critical theory to political discourse, and notes that the critical theorists' interest in the state and mass culture and their commitment to traditions too often overlooked in the Anglo-American world

revitalized Western Marxism and sparked the political activism of the New Left. Their works "recast the terms of reference of critique and reinforce the emancipatory intent of Marx's enterprise" (p. 353). Individually and collectively, their ideas provide an ongoing challenge to orthodoxy of the left and right. Furthermore, to Held's credit, he does not dwell on material which is readily available to the interested reader. His discussion of the origins of the Frankfurt school, for example, is sufficient to place his subject in its proper historical perspective without recapitulating what has been discussed in such works as Martin Jay's *The Dialectical Imagination*.

Held's reply to Marxist attacks on critical theory is well organized and forceful. He argues that there are significant differences among the critical theorists which these critics, influenced by "Leninism or Trotskyism and/or by Louis Althusser's understanding of Marxism" (p. 354), overlook as they conflate the individual positions. Held places the criticisms into four general categories: critical theory reproduces idealist positions, overemphasizes philosophical and theoretical problems at the expense of Marxist topics, devotes too much time to superstructural phenomena such as aesthetics and culture, and demonstrates an isolation from working-class politics. He notes, for example, that Marcuse might be guilty of reproducing idealist positions, but that this charge cannot be leveled against Adorno.

Unfortunately, the internal contradictions which will appear in Held's own assessment of critical theory are also evident in his rebuttal to the Marxist critics. In his eighth chapter, in which he discusses Marcuse's ideas in detail, he applauds Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel. Held's own comments indicate that he does not think that Marcuse reproduces idealist positions. He writes, "The truth of Hegel's philosophy," as Held reads Marcuse, "was negated by historical reality itself. The critique of society could no longer remain valid at all stages of history" (p. 232).

Held's treatment of Marcuse further illustrates the qualitative disparity between Held as explicator and defender and Held as critic. One of Held's major criticisms of Marcuse is that the latter ultimately falls prey to the concept of a universal essence of human nature and thereby abandons his credentials as an historical thinker. In Held's works, "As such, he [Marcuse] relies on a general theory of 'man' to understand the specific actions of human beings and yet, at the same time, claims the specific actions of human beings are the locus of the general theory of 'man.' The position tends toward an essence which is fugitive among its own historical manifestations" (p. 389). Actually, Held himself responds to this criticism in an earlier chapter in which he argues, in effect, that