affirms, were not "mindless reactionaries" but were committed to "a very specific, Montesquieuian conception of how liberty was to be preserved in a post-revolutionary world" (p. 67). In brief, they believed that only a stable and vibrant landowning nobility could provide a foundation for liberty.

The remainder of the book largely concentrates on exploring the parameters and character of the debate between royalists and liberals that followed from this claim. Here Dijn takes the reader into more familiar territory but again she seeks to develop an unfamiliar argument. Despite their initial enthusiasm for the English, aristocratic model of government and society, French liberals, Dijn argues, became increasingly critical of aristocratic liberalism and came to entertain grave doubts about both the viability and desirability of effecting an aristocratic restoration. The irreversible social and economic changes since 1789 rendered such a class obsolete and thus incapable of acting as a barrier to despotic government. An alternative therefore had to be found.

Dijn explores this part of her argument at some length and draws her evidence from a wide variety of sources. If she writes of Constant and Guizot, she also examines the opinions of lesser figures such as Charles Dunoyer and Charles Ganilh. She looks at debates about the bicameral system, decentralization, press freedom, and, most importantly, inheritance laws. Her conclusion is that liberal responses came in a variety of forms, but ultimately (and especially after 1830) they concurred in believing that the bourgeoisie and a bourgeois political order provided the most likely safeguard of liberty and order. Nevertheless, they continued to agree with their royalist opponents—and presumably with Montesquieu—about the dangers of a levelled and atomistic society.

Probably the least convincing part of Dijn's account is her discussion of Alexis de Tocqueville and, specifically, of *Democracy in America.* Tocqueville's new political science, she writes, was "an attempt to formulate an alternative to the doctrine of aristocratic liberalism" (p. 137). His "highly critical analysis of the rise of democracy," she continues, "was in many ways inspired by the royalist discourse" (p. 148). As Dijn herself acknowledges, the difficulty here is that we do not know the extent to which Tocqueville was familiar with this literature. She might, however, have consulted the Eduardo Nolla edition of *Democracy in America* (soon to appear in English) for guidance. Either way, it commits Dijn to the position that Tocqueville's visit to America had little or no impact on what he thought. Somewhat remarkably, Tocqueville's *Old Regime and the Revolution* is passed over in less than a page. Remarkably, Tocqueville's text was received at the time as a work of great originality (Tocqueville himself certainly thought that it was original) but, if Dijn's overall thesis is right, he was saying little that had not been said countless times before and was at most a commonplace.

Where does this lead? To the conclusion that aristocratic liberalism endured into the Third Republic and to a questioning of the distinction and contrast between Anglo-American and French political thought. Montesquieu's lessons about the need for intermediary powers were not ignored. Indeed, Dijn suggests by way of conclusion that they cast a shadow that reached as far as François Furet and the revisionist historians of the French Revolution.

This, then, is a spirited and ambitious book. It is not always convincing and it frequently asserts more than it proves. At times, the argument is straightforwardly perplexing. It does, however, have the important merit of delving into corners of nineteenth-century French political debate long hidden in darkness and of recovering a political vocabulary rendered marginal by the dominant discourses of the age. As such, it is a welcome contribution to the growing literature on French liberalism.

The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir: Ambiguity, Conversion, Resistance. By Penelope Deutscher. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 222p. $90.00.
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— Lori Marso, *Union College*

Why read Simone de Beauvoir today? In spite of the iconic status of *The Second Sex* (1949) and its author, both are more often dutifully cited than carefully read. Yet, within the past decade or so, many theorists have fruitfully returned to the work and life of Beauvoir. Of these, Penelope Deutscher's elegant and generous new book provides the most compelling case for reading Beauvoir with new eyes, just as Beauvoir brought a fresh perspective to the philosophies she engaged.

Repeatedly stressing the "web-like conceptual structure" of *The Second Sex* and Beauvoir's other work (p. 8), Deutscher traces the plural disciplines and multiplicity of voices on which Beauvoir drew. Beauvoir kept diverse voices alive in her texts, and resisted resolution or closure. This has frustrated some readers and inspired attempts to determine whether Beauvoir was indebted most, or exactly how much she was indebted, to Sartre, Hegel, Merleau-Ponty, or Heidegger. Other readers have traced and affirmed the most developed or consistent definition of ethics Beauvoir offers. In contrast, Deutscher celebrates these ambiguities and tensions as inviting the interplay between the conflicting registers in her writing and the ways they challenge each other.

Doing so, Deutscher converts Beauvoir from a thinker that we feel we already know to one who, though recognizable, is also strange, new, and compellingly other. In fact, one of the key terms in Deutscher's reading is "conversion." Though conversion is most often associated with deliverance and salvation, the term was borrowed by Sartre and Beauvoir to "describe a possible response to their ontologies" (p. 14). Noting that "conversion" appears fourteen times in *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947), Deutscher

traces Beauvoir's use of the language of conversion as indicating a transformed relationship to being—a radical subjective change that might involve a new openness to the "other."

Deutscher also uses the concept of conversion to indicate a transformed relationship to texts and ideas, arguing that Beauvoir often converts key concepts in philosophy without indicating to her readers that she has done so. As is well known, Sartre's equation of "desire to be" with the desire to "appropriate, possess and compete with the other" is converted by Beauvoir into a failure in regard to personal and political relationships (p. 39). This failure is a refusal of ambiguity, a refusal to recognize that we are both subjects and objects simultaneously and to assume the implications of our ambiguous existence. This particular insight, regarding how she reinterprets Sartre, is common in recent Beauvoir scholarship. Deutscher presents and builds on these nuanced readings of Beauvoir's ethics, but refuses to resolve the key tensions in Beauvoir's texts. In fact, she deliberately draws our attention to precisely the places where Beauvoir's methodology is most troubling and contradictory, demanding that we confront Beauvoir's conflicting insights.

Deutscher finds Beauvoir's work on ambiguity especially rich when she turns to Beauvoir's response to an essay by Maurice Blanchot critiquing the "novel of ideas." Deutscher argues that Beauvoir's positive appropriation of Blanchot's emphasis on ambiguity obscures how Beauvoir actually converts Blanchot's meaning. Blanchot argues that the "novel of ideas" fails to ambiguously present the complexity of human relations. To adequately depict ambiguity, Blanchot asserts, the writer must "deceive" and cheat (or act in bad faith). Beauvoir agrees that depicting ambiguity is of key importance, and she affirms Blanchot's emphasis on the concept. However, Beauvoir's affirmation of ambiguity puts the emphasis on honesty, rather than bad faith. As Deutscher elaborates, "For Blanchot, ambiguity is indissociable from the inevitability of a 'bad faith,' [whereas] Beauvoir saw the possibility of an alternative to bad faith, and considered it the ideal" (p. 50–51). Deutscher's reading of this exchange invites us to turn a more critical eye on Beauvoir's affirmation of ambiguity in her ideal image of reciprocal relations between the sexes. Beauvoir says that this kind of reciprocal recognition might take place only in the context of redistribution and new relations between the sexes, yet her sanguine description seems to presume that ambiguity could potentially be resolved and affirmed as a calculable outcome rather than engaged as existential risk.

Could Beauvoir have *better* or *differently* depicted the ambiguity of the human condition? Rather than describe it positively as the ideal—the recognition of being as both subject and object—might Beauvoir have shown ambiguity to be bound up with risk, vulnerability, and embodied temporality? Indeed, Beauvoir also wrote of ambiguity in this way. In chapters on ambiguity, bad faith, repetition, alterity, and reciprocity, Deutscher simultaneously pins down and opens up the contradictions in Beauvoir's multiple insights. A compelling example of this tactic is Deutscher's reading of the intersections of sex, race, and alterity in Beauvoir's work. This intellectual terrain has been well trodden, but Deutscher garners new insights by bringing Beauvoir's work on age othering and generational difference into the conversation. As Deutscher puts it, "There is in Beauvoir's work a 'virtual' conversion of ambiguity that could be accomplished by allowing her own writing on aging to act as a differential with respect to her writing on sex, gender, and perhaps also race" (p. 140). While Beauvoir argues that "old" is the other and describes the lived experience of aging, she also suggests that there is no coherently abstractable "old age" that can be extracted from the "web constituted by matters of class, wealth, health, race, culture, sex, work, opportunity, occupation" (p. 140). So, while Deutscher points to the ways sex, gender, and race often work in Beauvoir's texts as "group" or "block" categories that fail to intersect, she also opens up an alternative possibility by showing that Beauvoir's writing on aging converts some of these groupings to make them far more complex and ambiguous.

There is much in Deutscher's reading of Beauvoir that I have not touched on in this short review. The book is densely written, and requires full attention to the complex and multiple philosophical traditions and methods with which Beauvoir engaged, as well as attention to the description of the daily experience of lived bodies that Beauvoir presents. The chapter on "Conversions of Repetition" is especially compelling. Here Deutscher presents Beauvoir's description of how devalued subjects experience their lives as temporally frozen, bound to repetition, and trapped in immanence. Yet, Deutscher reminds us that for Beauvoir, repetition is never only that because forms of resistance are always available, and she examines which social and economic conditions allow more inventive kinds of existences and innovative disclosures of meaning. Opening up the multiple, complex, and inconsistent voices, traditions, conversions, and resistances in Beauvoir's texts, Deutscher shows that the most satisfying (and I would add, the most political) claims in Beauvoir's work are the more ambiguous ones.

Gender and Justice in Multicultural Liberal States. By Monique Deveaux. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. 265p. $99.00 cloth, $37.95 paper.

Multiculturalism and Political Theory. Edited by Anthony Simon Laden and David Owen. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007 419p. $91.00 cloth, $34.99 paper.
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— Georgia Warnke, *University of California at Riverside*

The books under review reflect state of the art discussions of multicultural theory, reexamining key concepts and