Book reviews

Thomas M. Schmidt *Anerkennung und Absolute Religion : Formierung der Gesell-schaftstheorie und Genese der Spekulativen Religionsphilosophie in Hegel's Früh-schriften.* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzbook, 1997).

Hegel did not 'carry on his studies in public'. Apart from the two essays *On the Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (1801) and *Faith and Knowledge* (1802), Hegel did not publish his system of philosophy until 1807 with his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, a work which had its roots in the varied sketches and drafts of the period 1801–1807. The works which Hegel wrote in Jena during this period were edited long after his death; it was really Dilthey who thought that the Jena period deserved serious attention, and the materials were not edited until 1915–1935. But it is now clear that the Jena period of Hegel's thought was the essential period of the formation of his mature philosophy.

Schmidt links the scholarly revival of interest in Hegel's philosophy of religion in the wake of W. Jaeschke, the social theoretical interest in Hegel's Jena period rooted in the work of Habermas and Siep, and the recent attempts in German Hegel commentary to reconsider and reconstruct Hegel's 'dialectic' in contemporary terms. These tendencies in recent German scholarship have developed in an isolated manner; Schmidt tries to bring them together in a fruitful way and I think he largely succeeds in this.

The book starts with a consideration of the young 'Kantian' of the so-called *Theological Youth Writings* and the discovery of religion as *Erhebung zum unendlichen Leben* or 'elevation to infinite life'. Schmidt emphasizes the importance of the shift in the Jena period in the understanding of 'religion'; in particular the new commitment to a thoroughly philosophical explication of religion in philosophical terms. There is a thorough discussion of the targets of the Jena period; Kant, Jacobi and Fichte. These writers are all taken to express alienation caused by the 'analytic understanding'. The various drafts from the Jena period are attempts to provide a philosophical reconciliation of this alienation through an absolute which provides the sublimation of the polarity of subject and object. This Jena project was developed in close collaboration with Schelling's *Identitätsphilosophie*. Particularly interesting is Schmidt's discussion of Hegel's relation to Schelling in Jena. As Schmidt points out, even in this period of close collaboration with Schelling, Hegel emphasized much more strongly the integration of reflection into the speculative knowledge of the Absolute (191). The rationalistic temper of Hegel is clear even at this stage of his intellectual development.

The conception of Hegel's project in Jena differs from the *Phenomenology* in

certain central points. Yet Jena is interesting as the period in which Hegel, in close alliance with Schelling contra Fichte, Kant and Jacobi, develops his own distinctive form of Absolute Idealism. As Harris points out in his monumental *Phenomenology* commentary, 'when Hegel set out to be the logician of identity Philosophy, the doom of intellectual Intuition was sealed' (H. S. Harris, *Hegel's Ladder* (Hackett: Indianapolis, 1997), I, 25). In opposition to the 'simple indifference' of Schelling's Absolute, Hegel develops a dynamic philosophical theology in which the unity of the God-head is constituted by a dynamic process.

Hegel's Idealism has a much stronger political component than Schelling's Idealism. Schelling's abiding interests in nature and mythology are combined with a relative disinterest in politics. The central concepts of Hegel's mature system: 'mediation' (*Vermittlung*), or 'recognition' (*Anerkennung*) contrast with the Schellingian metaphors of insight and rupture. Indeed, Hegel's influence has been greatest amongst the politically-orientated German philosophers of the Frankfurt School, and Habermas. The more mystical Schelling had his abiding influence in the South, with the inspiration of the 'delirious Silesian cobbler' Jacob Boehme and the support of the Bavarian theosopher Franz von Baader, to Heidegger's a-political philosophy of Being as *Er-eignis*. Hence we have one obvious genealogy of the contrast between the social – political thought of post-war Frankfurt and the mystical – quietistic tradition of post-war Freiburg: *Intersubjektivität oder Sein* – philosophy as social theory or the piety of thought about Being?

There is however another Hegel apart from the Young–Hegelian social theorist. He was trained as a theologian in Tübingen, and he was the most influential force in nineteenth-century German theology through Strauss, Bauer, Feuerbach etc. Even in modern German theology, the anti-Barthian wing has a strong debt to Hegel: Pannenberg, Falk Wagner, and Rohls are obvious examples. Findlay notes: 'The Christian God is essentially redemptive, of a self-alienation that returns to self in victory. If Hegel was nothing better, he was at least a great Christian theologian' (Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* tr. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), xxvii).

The link between the theological and the political rests in the development of the concept of the Absolute in the Jena period, whereby finite knowledge is seen as a mode of the self-explication of the Absolute and religion is the self-recognition of the Absolute Spirit. Unlike the Romantics – and briefly Schelling – Hegel sees religion, not art, as the locus of self-recognition of the absolute. He does not envisage religion in a primarily individualistic sense but in its mediating function within a community: Hegel places particular emphasis upon the *Kultus* in his *Religionsphilosophie*, i.e. the social dimension of religion. Hegel's emphasis upon the Spirit which has attained consciousness of itself *as Spirit* is linked to the claim that self-consciousness is not an immediate given but is mediated through the self's relation to another.

Hegel's famous Master–Slave section in the *Phenomenology* is part of a claim that self-consciousness is constituted by recognition and acknowledgement. Hegel was fond of the Trinitarian implications of this view of the Spirit as mediation: Christianity is the absolute religion because it recognizes mediation as the characteristic of the Absolute Spirit in its central dogmas of the Trinity and the Incarnation. Schmidt discusses these issues carefully, but remains close to the Jena texts.

This book is a genetic account of the development of Hegel's philosophy of religion rather than a '*geltungstheoretischen Erörterung des systematischen Anspruchs der Hegelschen Religionsphilosophie*' (14) 'a consideration of the validity of the systematic claim of Hegel's Philosophy of Religion'. That is to say that the book is a careful analysis and description of Hegel's texts rather than a confrontation with the claims made. It is a carefully crafted and lucid discussion of the relevant works and their context, but not an exercise in the philosophy of religion. If anything, Schmidt seems particularly wary of a '*mystisch-kryptotheologischen Gottesbegriffs*' (133 cf. 12). Hegel's concept of the speculative identity of subjectivity and objectivity is a 'not a secretly mythological or ontotheological concept but a rigorously scientific-scholarly notion' (133–134), the '*Erhebung vom Endlichen zum Unendlichen*' is 'no contemplative *unio mystica*, but a methodologically necessary transition in the process of science' (*Wissenschaft*) (199), or: 'Hegel did not regard identity as crypto-theological' (124). If such terms as 'theological' or 'contemplative' are taken pejoratively, Schmidt may be correct. But Hegel is nevertheless a philosopher of religion in the profoundest sense: his *Phenomenology of Spirit* is an *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*; Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of religion are presented as a revival of *natural theology*; and he is quite happy to point to his own roots in German mysticism. Many Hegel commentators are, understandably, rather allergic to these claims and Schmidt adroitly avoids the speculative troughs; this work is a valuable and impressive piece of Hegel scholarship, but provides surprisingly little of interest for the philosopher of religion.

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David O'Connor *God and Inscrutable Evil: In Defence of Theism and Atheism.* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998). Pp. xiii+273. £53 Hbk, £19.95 Pbk.

In our world there is a great deal of apparently pointless evil. While this fact does not provide conclusive proof that there is no omniscient, omnipotent and omnibenevolent creator, it seems at least good evidence for that con-

clusion. The standard theistic response is to hold that the *apparently* pointless evil may serve a divine purpose and hence cannot be counted as evidence against the existence of God. O'Connor counters this standard response with what he terms the 'reformed logical argument from natural evil', arguing that there is a possible world (W_p) containing no natural evil which is entirely produced by natural processes, and hence with far less apparently pointless evil than the actual world. He argues that W_p could serve all of the divine purposes suggested in this connection by contemporary analytic philosophers of religion defending theism. Thus, granting that in the actual world a great deal of evil could be justified as serving some divine purpose, nonetheless, given the possibility of W_p, there is a vast deal more than necessary. This excess evil is prima facie gratuitous and should be allowed as evidence against the existence of God. O'Connor grants that someone already solidly within the theistic camp might rationally retain their belief even in the face of such evidence, perhaps by appealing to 'sceptical theism', the view that our perspective is so limited that we simply have no basis for judging how much evil one might reasonably expect in a God-made universe. On the other hand, given the problem of 'divine silence' and the fact that a great deal of prima facie pointless evil is exactly what one would expect on an atheistic view, the evidence does supply 'support-in-place' for the atheist, that is, the atheist is justified in seeing the vast amount of apparently gratuitous evil as additional reason for maintaining the position he already holds. And so, against the standard theist response to the problem of evil, the amount of evil in our world is indeed evidence against belief in the existence of God.

A number of O'Connor's arguments are persuasive. The first task of the book is to insist, against some contemporary philosophers of religion, that gratuitous evil is indeed a problem for the believer. Hasker has argued that it isn't, because we need to believe that there is genuinely gratuitous natural evil in order for us to act to prevent it and hence to accomplish the divine purpose of soul-building. O'Connor points out, rightly, it seems to me, that when natural evil presents the possibility for soul-building, it is only *ostensibly* gratuitous. Ostensibly gratuitous evil is adequate to accomplish the divine purpose and so genuinely gratuitous evil remains a problem (53–63).

O'Connor's central argument against Schlesinger's 'No-Best-Possible-World-Defence' seems well-taken. The fact that one cannot accomplish a 'best' does not absolve one of guilt if one could do far better than one has done. And so even if one agrees that there is no best possible world God could have made, the possibility of a far better world than ours, W_p, suggests that the excess evil in our world is evidence against a perfectly good God (161–173).

There are difficulties with O'Connor's argument, though, and it seems to me they stem from reliance on insufficiently grounded assumptions, mainly about modal possibilities. For example, O'Connor counters Plantinga's sug-

gestion that apparently natural evil is really the result of the moral evil of Satan and his followers and hence justifiable through the Free Will Defence, by holding that God could have made W_p in which Satan doesn't exist, and that that would have been a better world (120–121). But would it? The Christian traditionalist (I shall use the term 'traditionalist' for the theist who denies that there is much if any genuinely gratuitous evil) might respond that, since Satan played a key role in the 'fortunate fall' which resulted in the Incarnation, a world without him, while perhaps containing less physical suffering, would apparently not contain Christ. It is not clear to me that such a world is obviously preferable. O'Connor might respond that God could have engineered the Incarnation through some other, better, path, but the traditionalist will rightly inquire how he knows this.

Plantinga's argument includes the assumption that God has middle knowledge. The traditionalist who denies divine middle knowledge might argue that God could not know how Satan would freely choose until Satan has been created and actually chooses. O'Connor's response is that, even if Satan has libertarian freedom, God would know enough about his 'psychological traits, tendencies, capacities, and so on' (127) to know that He'd likely get a better world by not creating Satan. The traditionalist is rightly sceptical that O'Connor is sufficiently well-versed in demonic psychology to know what God would or would not know about what Satan is likely to freely choose. My university teaches a course in deviant psychology, but I'm pretty sure it doesn't cover angels. I would not argue that solving the problem of natural evil is best accomplished by postulating that Satan and his minions have spent history and prehistory tormenting the dinosaurs et al., but, be that as it may, O'Connor's responses rest on unsupported claims.

A more serious problem is that this same sort of criticism can be levelled at the very core of the reformed logical argument from natural evil. O'Connor's case depends upon showing that there is some possible world which contains no natural evil which results entirely from natural processes and that this possible world can achieve the divine purposes of soul-building etc. just as well as (in the traditionalist view) the actual world does. Given that it is the possibility of W_p that the traditionalist denies, it is surprising how little time O'Connor spends on it. W_p, he holds, will contain no natural evil which results entirely from natural processes (NERNP), though it will contain moral evil and natural evil not entirely the result of natural processes (NE-RNP). There is no systematic analysis of the difference between NERNP and NE-RNP. 'The following illustration will establish the distinction,' he explains, then offers the example of cat blown out of a window by the wind as an instance of NERNP and a cat pushed out of a window by a small child or accidentally nudged out by an adult as instances of NE-RNP. The crucial difference is the 'morally nonculpable agency' involved in the later two cases (89). But it is puzzling to associate accidental nudging

with agency. If the adult had tripped and fallen against the cat would this be NERNP or NE-RNP? The distinction loses all coherence when, later in the book, O'Connor offers as an example of NERNP the following true case: a New Jersey couple living in an apartment without air conditioning with their incapacitated son both died of heart attacks during a heat wave, leaving the son to die slowly of starvation and dehydration over a period of a week (190–192). This hideous event is obviously in large measure the consequence of human agency. People do not die of the heat in New Jersey with no-one to know or care without a long series of human choices leading up to it. Were the couple ignorant of their danger? Why? Did they understand the situation but choose not to ask for help? Why? Did they ask for help, but not receive it? Was there no government agency, no local church, no friend or neighbour willing to help? Why? It is hard to imagine that this event could have occurred without morally culpable choices in its history. How, then, is it NERNP? Since the crucial distinction between NERNP and NE-RNP is unclear, it is difficult to even begin to bring W_p into focus. And this is not the only difficulty.

We know at least this: W_p contains no NERNP. Can we get some very general picture of what W_p looks like? In order for W_p to serve the divine purposes it must, for example, contain human beings. But in the actual world human beings are the result of a process of evolution in which the sufferings of pre-historic animals have apparently played a key role. Not so in W_p (barring the Satan hypothesis); nothing suffered before the advent of man. It seems that in W_p human beings and whatever else there may be are the result of radically different causal processes than in the actual world, or of no causal processes at all. But (*pace* the occasionalists against whom much could be said if time permitted) this suggests a world wildly different from our own. O'Connor says that 'the fact that there would be the same abundance of [NE-RNP] in W_p, if it were actual, as there is in the actual world, together with the further fact that W_p provides just as well as the actual world for the occurrence of moral evil, gives us a core part of the reformed logical argument from natural evil,…' (90). But if W_p is a radically different world from ours it is difficult to see how O'Connor can support an assessment of the amount of NE-RNP it will contain or of how well it will provide for the occurrence of moral evil. It cannot be a matter of stipulation, since the very question at issue is whether or not a world with no NERNP could do the job the actual world is supposed to do. The traditionalist need only argue for a healthy scepticism with respect to the possibility of W_p to defeat O'Connor's claim that the reformed argument from evil constitutes evidence against belief in God. This is not the 'sceptical theism' mentioned above which holds that with respect to the actual world we just can't judge whether or not the evil is gratuitous. It is a broader scepticism which argues that disputed claims about the compossible proper-

ties of possible worlds wildly different from our own need a great deal of discussion and defence before they will command assent.

What O'Connor actually seems to have in mind with W_p is a world very much like ours is now – human beings, plants, animals, gravity, etc., but in situations involving NERNP in which a sentient being in our world would feel pain, in W_p, it won't. O'Connor suggests a circuit-breaker mechanism, either installed from the beginning or operated by God on a case-by-case basis, such that only an event involving moral choice or human agency (if the latter is what distinguishes NE-RNP) can produce pain (86). For the reasons mentioned above – that pre-historic pain seems a necessary part of a world like ours – I am not sure a world of this sort is really metaphysically possible. But suppose it were. At the very least the circuit-breaker would have a dire impact on the acquisition of knowledge. The first people or the infant, just beginning to experience the world, would face a very puzzling world indeed. If you stub your toe on the rock that fell there, you do not feel pain. If you stub your toe on an identical rock which was, unbeknownst to you, carelessly left there by some human being, you do feel pain. If the forest fire was started by lightning, neither you nor any of the other animals feel pain. (O'Connor is not clear on whether or not you would burn painlessly to death, or whether in W_p nothing would die of purely natural processes – another important lacuna in the description of W_p.) If an apparently identical forest fire was, unbeknownst to you, started by the tribe in the next valley, you and the other animals will feel pain. When the species or the individual is just beginning to acquire knowledge, this apparently inconsistent behaviour in things is bound to make it very difficult to make sense of the universe. Were we living in W_p and not the real world, even if we could eventually get a handle on the idea that x will cause pain if there's moral or non-moral agency in its history, it might well take us many more generations than it actually has to arrive at the state of scientific knowledge we currently enjoy. In both our world and in W_p someone can be maliciously shot. But it may be that our world is a better world for saving the life of the victim, since the consistent behaviour of things has enabled us to acquire knowledge more quickly. O'Connor's circuit-breaker world may actually end up with more human pain than the actual world, even though none of it will be NERNP. (Would a pre-history of animal suffering outweigh whatever advantages a consistent universe bestowed on humanity's ability to learn? O'Connor does not address the question of human versus animal suffering.)

O'Connor might respond as he does to a somewhat similar point made by Swinburne, that in W_p, God could simply divinely illumine us with whatever knowledge we need (104). The traditionalist will answer that apparently God prefers science to be a matter of human choice and effort, and that there may be very great goods achieved in terms of human growth through His

(largely) standing back and leaving us to work out the problems on our own. Do these goods outweigh the cost in suffering which a consistent universe involves and which we would be spared in W_p? Well, maybe. And that is all the traditionalist needs to establish that she does not have to accept W_p as a real possibility.

One possible way of answering the above criticisms of W_p would be to alter the description just a bit. Hypothesize that the circuit-breaker allows for human beings, but not other sentient beings, to suffer from NERNP, and that the entire rest of the sentient universe *behaves* as if it did. That is, in terms of behaviour the history of the universe in W_p is the same as the history of the actual universe. W_p would then look to us just the way the actual universe looks, and all the goods to be achieved, at least for human beings, could be achieved, but there would still be a vast reduction of pain in that at least the suffering of non-human animals would be eliminated. The problem with this move (in addition to the fact that the idea of all those perfectly comfortable animals behaving as if they were suffering is, at best, pretty bizarre) is that, should the traditionalist become convinced that this revised W_p is the world a good God would make, she is free to hold that the actual world is W_p.

O'Connor's argument hinges on the possibility of W_p, a world better than ours by virtue of the total absence of NERNP, yet equal to ours in that it can serve the divine purposes just as well. But without a more developed description of W_p the traditionalist can stand by her denial of W_p's possibility. O'Connor has not succeeded in providing evidence against the existence of God.

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Robin Le Poidevin (ed.) *Questions of Time and Tense*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). Pp. xii + 293. £35.00 Hbk.

Some of what we say, think or write has no significant tense. An example is 'two twos are four': this could never change its truth-value; to be more precise, it could change its truth-value only by changing its meaning. Other things are tensed. Thus 'today is a Tuesday' and 'yesterday was a Monday' change their truth-values twice a week, without once changing their meaning.

What in reality corresponds to the distinctions of tense drawn by human thought and language? Some (the 'detensers') maintain that there is no tense in reality; others (the 'tensers') disagree. Of the twelve essays in this book (eleven new, one published previously), several deal with this disagreement at its most general. Others pursue the disagreement into many different

areas. Thus one essay concerns the emotions : if it is irrational to mourn things in the remote past, or dread them in the remote future, can we be rationally disturbed by them in the present? Another concerns the borderland between physics and metaphysics : is the only workable notion of simultaneity one relative to frames of reference, and thus incapable of allowing any notion of an absolute present? Another concerns free will : what distinction between past and future makes it possible for me to decide whether to sleep in tomorrow but not whether to have slept in yesterday? Another concerns ethics : how can the interests of future people matter, if only the present exists? Another concerns aesthetics : when does a fictional narrative require us simply to imagine the events narrated, and when does it require us to imagine them as, say, past? Readers of *Religious Studies* may be especially interested in one essay arguing that only detensers can explain how a timeless God acts in the world, and another discussing the Father's eternal begetting of the Son.

In spite of the contributors' efforts, it remains unclear just what the debate between tensers and detensers is all about. For example, it cannot be about whether tensed sentences mean the same as tenseless ones ; for it is easy to realize – as all contributors would agree – that no sentence whose meaning allows it to change truth-value can have the same meaning as one whose meaning forbids such changes. Nor can it be about whether there is any useful information that only tensed sentences can convey ; for all contributors would agree that I am in no position to keep today's appointments if I do not know today's date, and all I have to go on are tenseless truths.

We seem to approach the real issue between tensers and detensers if we take it to concern what sorts of change are possible. I have described tensed sentences as changing their truth-values, so that e.g. 'George has graduated' changes from falsehood to truth once George graduates. From some remarks in the book, it seems that tensers and detensers disagree on how to take such a description. Only tensers take literally such talk of changing truth-values (e.g. 188). Detensers by contrast take it to be misleading : the things that literally have truth-values are not so much tensed sentences themselves as tokens of those sentences ; all tokens of 'George is a graduate' that occur before his graduation are false ; all that occur after are true ; and each of them retains the same truth-value permanently ; for 'tensed tokens do not change truth-value over time' (32 ; cf. 113, treating it as evident nonsense that 'the very same tensed token (e.g. this very inscription of 'Socrates is sitting') can be true at one time and false at another').

There is a difficulty with this way of taking the debate. Detensers cannot avoid having to countenance literal changes in truth-values simply by insisting that truth-values belong only to tokens of tensed sentences. For a sufficiently durable token may undergo such changes : the token of 'This book belongs to E. M. Forster', inscribed on the flyleaf of my copy of Russell's

History of Western Philosophy, was once true but is now false. The resolute might of course reply that this supposedly single inscription consists in fact of at least two different tokens: a permanently true one, which perished when, as we say, the book left Forster's possession; and a permanently false one, which came into existence thereafter. Similar manoeuvres will then rule out all other survival through change: thus instead of the supposedly single book, which once belonged to Forster and now does not, there will be at least two books, one permanently in Forster's possession, and another permanently out of it, the one annihilated and the other created to replace it when, as we say, the book left Forster's possession. Indeed, we will, by moving the book, create and annihilate as many different books, each of which remains permanently in place, as there are places through which 'the' book 'moves'. The upshot is, I dare say, a possible metaphysic. But this metaphysic is too unappealling to provoke a long debate. Denying that truth-values can change is therefore perhaps not the heart of the detensers' position, but more an incidental slip, or at worst an unfortunate corollary.

Both tensers and detensers, as presented in this volume, seem to share a common assumption about the analysis of tensed discourse. When faced with the tensed 'Victoria married Albert', they analyse it into subject-predicate form. The subject is a singular term for an event 'the marriage of Victoria and Albert'; the predicate is a tense 'is past'. Thus the book is full of such turns of phrase as 'the event or state of affairs referred to by the token' (33), '*e* will happen' (page 47's way of speaking generally about future tense statements), and 'My headache exists (now)' (page 200's way of saying 'My head is aching'). Where tensers and detensers differ is over what sort of fact it takes to make true tensed discourse so analysed.

Tensers typically say that some property of pastness answers to the predicate 'is past', as chicness answers to the predicate 'is chic'. The sentence 'Paris is chic' is made true by the fact that its subject (the name 'Paris') refers to a thing which possesses the property answering to its predicate. So too, say tensers, 'Victoria married Albert' is made true by the fact that the marriage of Victoria and Albert possesses the property of pastness. Detensers, by contrast, typically construe the predicate 'is past' along the lines of 'is to the north'. The sentence 'Paris is to the north' is not itself either true or false, as it would be were there any such property as being-to-the-north for Paris to have or lack; rather, it is the tokens of that sentence that have truth-values, and the true tokens are those located south of Paris, the city to which they refer. So too, say detensers, the sentence 'Victoria married Albert' is not itself either true or false; truth-values belong instead to tokens of that sentence; the truth-value of a token depends on whether the token is or is not later than the marriage of Victoria and Albert, the event to which it refers; and such facts about the relative dates of token and event can themselves be reported in entirely tenseless terms.

Here we do have the makings of a prolonged philosophical debate, of the familiar kind where the debate is prolonged only because both parties agree on a falsehood. For if it looks plausible to analyse 'Victoria married Albert' as 'the marriage of Victoria and Albert is past', that is only because of some quite fortuitous features of that sentence which it does not share with tensed discourse generally.

In the first place, 'Victoria married Albert' has a simple past tense. Try a subject-predicate analysis of a sentence with an iterated tense, such as the future perfect 'Victoria will have married Albert'. A predicate grammatically combines with expressions of one syntactic category (singular terms) to produce expressions of another (sentences). Iterated predicates ('George is fat is tall') are therefore nonsense. And so are iterated tenses, if tenses are always predicates: 'the marriage of Victoria and Albert is past is future'.

One moral to draw from the future perfect would be that since tenses are sometimes not predicates, they never are. However, this is not the moral drawn by the two contributors who notice iterated tenses. Instead, both simply suppose that if an iterated tense makes any sense at all (a point that one of them is reluctant to concede), then it requires a somewhat different analysis from that which they continue to find satisfactory for simple tenses (39 and 49).

'Victoria married Albert' has a second feature which makes the subject-predicate analysis plausible: it is, as we all know, true. Try such an analysis of 'Elizabeth married Essex'. It turns a straightforward falsehood into something on the lines of 'the city paved with gold is chic' or 'the city paved with gold is to the north'; for we know that the subject of 'the marriage of Elizabeth and Essex is past' has no event for it to refer to. Or try such an analysis of future contingent statements, like 'Charles will marry Camilla'. Suppose Charles will marry Camilla. Then you can hope to get away with saying that the marriage of Charles to Camilla is referred to by 'Charles will marry Camilla'; that it will become present; and that when it does, 'Charles is marrying Camilla' will be true. If, however, you try to extend this to allow for the possibility that Charles won't marry Camilla, then you cannot hope to do better than by including the words I have here italicized: 'when the *putative* states of affairs these statements refer to become present, these statements, recast in the present tense, will be *either* true or *false*' (page 208's formulation of something that would be acknowledged by even the wackiest views on future contingents). But this is not good enough. We may grant that, if Charles never marries Camilla, then their marriage is a merely putative state of affairs, and the present tense 'Charles is marrying Camilla' will be false. But when exactly will the merely putative state of affairs become present? How could 'Charles is marrying Camilla' then be false? And how could its falsehood at that single future time make 'Charles will marry Camilla' not true now?

The subject-predicate analysis of 'Victoria married Albert' depends for its plausibility on a third feature of that sentence: Victoria never will have married Albert more than once. For consider the difficulties in such an analysis of 'it has rained' and 'it will rain'. One difficulty is that it rains too often for there to be anything singled out by the subject(s) of 'the rain is past' and 'the rain is future'. Another difficulty is that, on this analysis, 'it has rained' and 'it will rain' are apparently inconsistent: they are apparently analogous either to 'Paris is chic' and 'Paris is dowdy', or to 'Paris is to the north' and 'Paris is to the south'; and in neither case could the pair be true simultaneously.

Tensers and detensers are aware of the apparent inconsistency. But they do not take the apparent inconsistency to cast doubt on the subject-predicate analysis of tensed discourse. Instead, like McTaggart (whose claim that 'past, present and future are incompatible determinations…no event can be more than one' is cited on 18, 46 and 102), they regard the apparent inconsistency as real.

Not all the book speaks of tenses as predicates. Moreover, some parts that do talk in this way make points that can survive translation into more satisfactory terms. However, the book is marred by important passages that could not survive such a translation.

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