

nuanced and cannot adequately be discussed in this short note. But we can say that Haar repeatedly comes back to phrases such as "a *latent sketch* of artistic configurations" (196), and a "secret outline of forms" (216) when describing the earth (both in the artwork and the world of artistic existence) as the origin and substructure of human, linguistic existence. Though Haar finds ample support in Heidegger's writings, one is nevertheless led to wonder: What is the ontological status of this latent articulation immanent in earth? In what sense can earth be transepochal, ahistorical, if it contains such articulations to which the poet, artist, and thinker respond? How is the ahistorical/prelinguistic song *from* the earth to be compared to the historical/linguistic song *about* the earth? One must finally ask if the graceful and thoughtful prose Haar has given us is, as he hopes, a resonance of the former, or a spontaneous production of the latter. The success of Haar's insightful exposition of the ahistorical substructure of existence stands and falls on the answer to these questions.

REGINALD LILLY

University of New Hampshire

Richard McKeon. *Rhetoric: Essays in Invention and Discovery*. Edited with an Introduction by Mark Backman. Woodbridge, CT: Ox Bow Press, 1987. Pp. xxxii + 220. \$25.00.

'History of philosophy' is an ambiguous term. It has been applied to doxography, a history of doctrines apart from their systematic relations or context. It has been applied to rational reconstructions of what a thinker must have meant apart from whether the thinker ever said it and from the context that provides checks on possible interpretations, rational or not. And it has been applied to contextual interpretations, which set philosophers and philosophies in the context of the language, history, and culture that condition them.

Richard McKeon practiced the history of philosophy (or of thought, a phrase he sometimes prefers) in a different way: in terms of the subject matters thinkers treat and the functions they try to perform under the rubric of philosophy (rhetoric, poetry, grammar, and so on). Thus it is a history of changing definitions and differing conceptions, and of the spread of intellectual devices and ideas from realm to realm and from age to age.

McKeon's kind of history is based on the observation that the terms we use—the names of our arts and sciences and the concepts employed in them—are stable but ambiguous. Thus it might be called a semantic history. It is also based on the insight, explained in the concluding essay, "A Philosopher Meditates on Discovery," that the truth is one, though it can be expressed in many different ways. And his history is consciously intended to provide both theoretical clarifications and insights and practical guidance in the resolution of contemporary problems.

McKeon's work has not been widely influential in philosophy, although he is considered a major figure in the recent "renaissance of rhetoric" to which this volume primarily directs itself. However, despite the title, the selection of articles reprinted, and the

editor's emphasis on the term 'rhetoric' rather than 'philosophy', these essays can well be read—in roughly the reverse of their present order—as the discovery, illustration, and application of what McKeon calls his "new philosophy" (120). It is a philosophy built on the notions of "historical semantics" and "philosophic semantics" (218–20) and aiming to reunite philosophy and rhetoric, wisdom and eloquence, theory and practice.

In the concluding essay, he describes his own intellectual development and the complex matrix of subject matters, methods, principles, and aims that can be used to characterize philosophic positions unambiguously despite their ambiguous use of common terms.¹ The system of historical semantics is illustrated by the two preceding essays. "Rhetoric in the Middle Ages," a *tour de force* of medieval scholarship and famous among medievalists and historians of rhetoric, shows how rhetoric affected not only rhetoricians, but also philosophers, theologians, and logicians from Augustine into the Renaissance. "Poetry and Philosophy in the Twelfth Century" presents the varying conceptions of the two disciplines and the oscillation in their relations from identity to antithesis.

In "Symbols, Myths, and Arguments," "Discourse, Demonstration, Verification, Justification," and "Creativity and the Commonplace" McKeon uses historical and philosophic semantics to analyze concepts and at the same time diagnose the directions and needs of philosophic thought and common action in our time. One can sense a contemporary relevance in the themes of these essays, and McKeon suggests as much. But the remaining essays apply his ideas more directly to the construction of an art, be it a new rhetoric or a new philosophy, adequate to the problems of our time, "the absence of interdisciplinary connection and . . . the breakdown of interpersonal, intergroup, and intercultural communication" (11).

"The Uses of Rhetoric in a Technological Age," from which I just quoted, claims that we need a "new architectonic productive art," a "new rhetoric" that rejoins wisdom and eloquence, theory and practice; and McKeon goes on to outline the methods and principles, the fields and problems of this new rhetoric. "The Methods of Rhetoric and Philosophy" argues that "the methods of a new rhetoric transformed to philosophic uses is needed to bring invention to bear on innovation of insights . . . and to bring judgement to bear on issues of causes" (65). Finally, "Philosophy of Communication and the Arts" shows how "the arts of communication and construction give promise of constituting a new philosophy in which the pluralism of arts and philosophies makes use of semantic differences for diversified treatments of the common problems and subject-matters of philosophical inquiry" (119).

Thus one can disagree with Mr. Backman's arrangement and his emphasis on rhetoric instead of philosophy. We miss an index (such as McKeon himself provided in *Freedom and History and Thought, Action, and Passion*) to help us find our way through the complexities of his semantic systems and his Ciceronian prose. Nevertheless, this collection should contribute to a new appreciation of Richard McKeon's historical

¹ The system has been clarified and presented comprehensively in a recent book by one of McKeon's students, Walter Watson, *The Architectonics of Meaning* (Albany: S.U.N.Y. Press, 1987); and see my review, *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 26 (1988): 505–507.

strategy and his pluralism, which has been called "the most significant philosophic discovery of the present century."²

GERALD A. PRESS

Hunter College

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Agassi, Joseph. *The Gentle Art of Philosophical Polemics: Selected Reviews and Comments*. La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1988. Pp. 521. Cloth, \$45.95. Paper, \$19.95.
- Albert, Karl. *Philosophie der Philosophie*. Albert, Philosophische Studien, Vol. 1. Saint Augustine: Academia Verlag Richarz, 1988. Pp. 634. DM 88.
- Allen III, Paul. *Proof of Moral Obligation in Twentieth-Century Philosophy*. American University Studies, Series 5, Philosophy, Vol. 45. New York: Peter Lang, 1988. Pp. xii + 187. \$31.65.
- Anderson, R. G. W. and Christopher Lawrence, eds. *Science, Medicine and Dissent: Joseph Priestley (1733-1804)*. Papers Celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the Birth of Joseph Priestley together with a Catalogue of an Exhibition Held at the Royal Society and the Wellcome Institute for History of Medicine. London: Wellcome Trust/Science Museum, 1987. Pp. xi + 105. Paper, NP.
- Aquila, Richard E. *Matter in Mind: A Study of Kant's Transcendental Deduction*. Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. Pp. xiv + 245. \$35.00.
- Baird, Robert M. and Stuart E. Rosenbaum, eds. *Morality and the Law*. Contemporary Issues in Philosophy. Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1988. Pp. 148. Paper, \$9.95.
- Baker, Gordon. *Wittgenstein, Frege and the Vienna Circle*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988. Pp. xxii + 274. \$34.95.
- Barone, Francesco, et al. *La mia prospettiva filosofica: Nuovo circolo*. Padova: Gregoriana Libreria Editrice, 1988. Pp. 107. Paper, L 18.000.
- Bennett, Jonathan. *Events and Their Names*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1988. Pp. ix + 243. Cloth, \$28.50. Paper, \$16.50.
- Berkeley, George. *Oeuvres*. Vol. 1 and Vol. 2. Edition publiée sous la direction de Geneviève Brykman. Epiméthée, Essais philosophiques. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985 (Vol. 1); 1987 (Vol. 2). Pp. 432 (Vol. 1); 395 (Vol. 2). Paper, NP.
- Bernasconi, Robert and David Wood, eds. *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*. Warwick Studies in Philosophy and Literature. London: Routledge, 1988. Pp. xii + 194. \$69.50.
- Bewell, Alan. *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment: Nature, Man, and Society in the Experimental Poetry*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989. Pp. xiv + 331. \$36.00.
- Borradori, Giovanna, ed. *Recoding Metaphysics: The New Italian Philosophy*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988. Pp. 227. Cloth, \$39.95. Paper, \$15.95.
- Branham, R. Bracht. *Unruly Eloquence: Lucian and the Comedy of Traditions*. Revealing Antiquity, 2. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989. Pp. 279. \$27.50.
- Brumbaugh, Robert S. *Plantonic Studies of Greek Philosophy: Form, Arts, Gadgets, and Hemlock*. SUNY Series in Philosophy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989. Pp. 296. Cloth, \$49.50. Paper, \$16.95.

² Watson, *The Architectonics of Meaning*, ix.