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REVIEW

David Pettigrew and François Raffoul (eds.), *French Interpretations of Heidegger: An Exceptional Reception* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), ISBN: 978-0-7914-7559-1

Isabelle Garo, *Foucault, Deleuze, Althusser et Marx – La politique dans la philosophie* (Paris, France: Demopolis, 2011), ISBN: 978-2-35457-027-9

The milieu in which Foucault worked was saturated with the effects of Martin Heidegger and Karl Marx. While he attempted to avoid easy assimilation to either of their viewpoints, both thinkers indelibly mark his writings. Two recent volumes aim to describe the reception of these two figures and the legacy that their particular characterization of metaphysics had on twentieth-century French thought. Both works tend to argue for their respective authors as exceeding the alternatives suggested by Foucault and his contemporaries. However, a renewed approach to these German predecessors sheds light on Foucault's problematic, providing a different outlook on his understanding of subject-production and self-fashioning.

David Pettigrew and François Raffoul compiled and published a selection of papers originally presented ten years ago at the annual meeting of the North American Heidegger Conference. (1) This conference, devoted to the topic of "Heidegger and France," was inspired by the publication of Dominique Janicaud's seventy-year intellectual history, *Heidegger en France*. However, rather than a historical account, the contributors describe elements of Heidegger's thought that are evident, sometimes counter to intuition, in various French luminaries. These often take the form of defending Heidegger and emphasis on his supremacy over his interpreters. The contributions are generally more successful in those instances where the French author in question's proximity to Heidegger is great, such as in Andrew Mitchell's view that Heidegger's conceptualization of decomposition pre-empts Jacques Derrida's argument for the necessity of contamination as a key term supplementary to his thought. (131) Mitchell's contention proceeds from a careful explication of Heidegger's development of this notion from the reading of Georg Trakl. (142-143) An attempt to recuperate a figure as far from Heidegger's orbit as Gilles Deleuze, valiantly attempted by Jonathan Dronsfield, is less convincing. (151)

Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg produce a significant contribution to the study of Heidegger's connection to Foucault in their essay, "Self-Fashioning as a Response to the Crisis of 'Ethics': A Foucault/Heidegger *Auseinandersetzung*." (103-129) Milchman and Rosenberg stage this critical encounter with an eye towards the German philosopher and French theo-

rist's experience of "a profound crisis of 'ethics' in the modern world." (103) Rather than an account of influence or comparison of distinct relationships to the tradition, Milchman and Rosenberg read each thinker as especially concerned with "the kind of self one fashions on the basis of one's answers to the general questions asked or the interpretations of a philosophy that one makes." (103)

Milchman and Rosenberg argue for the importance of the very young Heidegger of the Freiburg lectures, prior to *Being and Time*, and link him to Foucault's very late work on the care of the self. (106-107) In their view, these early lectures avoid a metaphysical inheritance that affects the more famous great work: "It is on the way to *Being and Time* that it is most clear that Heidegger's focus is on Dasein's *So-sein*, in contrast to a purported 'essence' of its being, its *Was-sein*, with its overtones of metaphysical fixedness that stalks Heidegger's breakthrough work of 1927." (107) By diminishing the significance of his fundamental analysis of *Dasein* and its temporality, the two scholars hope to draw attention to alternative possibilities that present a less reified approach to selfhood.

In this reading, both Foucault and Heidegger bear witness to a crisis resulting from the death of God, and the concomitant end of man as guarantor for thought and action. In their view, this is not only a widespread social problem, but also a pressing concern for personal action within the institutional sphere: "While the death of man is the historico-cultural soil upon which this crisis of ethics manifests itself, both Heidegger and Foucault also saw that crisis instantiated in the institutional-political world in which they lived." (111) They argue that the significance of death in Heidegger's work is best understood in terms of a "world collapse," a loss of coherent cultural meaning in modernity that opens the possibility of self-fashioning, such as that explored in Foucault's late works. (119) Further, Milchman and Rosenberg link Foucault's political and social interventions to Heidegger's own concern with Weimar University's change in direction towards technical instruction. While this essay explores the points of similarity between the two thinkers, the reader might nonetheless ask whether Heidegger's reputation as a reactionary, in contrast to Foucault's left-wing commitments, is elided too easily. While Heidegger retained a certain privileged attention to the destiny of the West and Germany in particular, Foucault's involvements were generally characterized by more militant and daring efforts on behalf of the mad, prisoners, and workers' movements. These *gauchiste* involvements suggest a much more explicit proximity to the critical and practical Marxist tradition than Heidegger ever entertained.

While Foucault avoided mention of Heidegger, his ambivalence regarding Marx is much more explicit. After a series of epistemological criticisms of the pretensions of Marxist thought in *The Order of Things*, he relented by admitting the possibility of an Althusserian reformulation of Marxist thought that would exceed humanist presumptions, before returning to a more direct hostility to Marxism in the mid-1970s and later. Scholarship regarding this mixed relation has tended to criticize Foucault's eschewing of the Marxist problematic as a failure to consider the material relations of state and economics in subjectivity and its production, such as in Nicos Poulantzas' analysis in *State, Power, Socialism*, or re-inscribe Foucauldian descriptions into a Marxist account, such as in Jason Read's *The Micro-Politics of Capital*. Isabelle Garo's new work, *Foucault, Deleuze, Althusser et Marx – La politique dans la philosophie*, provides a meticulous intellectual history of the French reception of Marx. Beginning with the

initial narratives, competing yet twinned, of official French Communist Party positivism and the Hegelian alternative suggested by Jean-Paul Sartre in the 1950s, Garo describes the transformation of Marxist discourse by the three titular figures into an anti-historicist, anti-humanist counter-discourse, and its eventual eclipse by the anti-communist *nouveaux philosophes*.

Not unlike the Heideggerians of Pettigrew and Raffoul's volume, Garo suggests Marx as an unsurpassed source for the French readings he inspired. In her second chapter, devoted entirely to Foucault, she argues that

le rapport de Foucault à Marx et au marxisme est sans doute le plus original, le plus constant et le plus profond parmi les auteurs non marxistes de sa génération, prenant la forme d'une confrontation permanente et essentielle, qui, si elle entre en résonance avec les débats et les mutations historiques du moment, ne leur est cependant réductible. (81)

At the same time, Garo reproaches Foucault for constructing a straw-man version of historical materialism, caricaturing Marx and Marxism in order to sharply differentiate his own analysis. (109, 112) She argues that this reflects undue deference to Heidegger's analysis of metaphysics, drawing attention to an alternative view of the relation between the two thinkers from Milchman and Rosenberg's attention to self-fashioning. For Garo, even the late work on the care of the self furthers Foucault's basic concern with a dislocation of Marxist dialectic, altering the understanding of the specific materiality of sociality with an eye to the excluded and the administered. (97)

In particular, she is attentive to Foucault's displacement of the language of alienation in favor of the study of norms; the political valence of the question of truth; society considered according to the model of war and the development of the theory of biopower; and the late works on liberalism as a mode of government. Garo argues that Althusser's contemporaneous reformulation of Marxism renders Foucault's characterization of it, as hopelessly anthropological and historicist, untenable. (111) Further, she demonstrates that Foucault's early work on psychology was marked profoundly by earlier Marxist analyses, particularly that of Georges Politzer. (88) In her view, Foucault's polemic with Marxism is essentially unending and interminable, partly the because of the impossibility of fully overcoming the Marxist problematic. (133) While she is highly attentive to historical conjunctures, she resists a linear characterization of Foucault's development, rather bringing together a variety of moments in his work in order to position his view of subject formation alongside the more orthodox Marxist account, especially by means of the question of deviation from norms of behavior. (84) Despite Foucault's interest in the "new philosophers" and their anti-Marxist interest in the figure of the plebe, rather than the proletariat, Garo draws attention to Foucault's refusal to accept the notion of "totalitarianism" as a unified concept. (127) She concludes her work with the hope that she might contribute to a renewed attention to the role of class in social analysis. (388) For this reason, one might read Garo as a partial corrective to Pettigrew's and Raffoul's volume; she asserts a basic concern with the class-based and exploitive nature of capitalist social relations. This presents a rather more focused, if constrained, notion of the ethical and political engagements that follow the withdrawal of God and humanism in contemporary thought.

The study presents a valuable contribution to the understanding of Foucault and his close contemporaries, and should be translated, promptly and carefully, for the Anglophone reader.

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