

only so we might understand ourselves and our own culture better, but presumably so we might be more aware of where and why we are projecting so as to see the "other" more clearly. If this is *not* the purpose, then the value of the kind of academic exercise represented by *Curators* is less clear to me. Thus if my prediction proves correct, that this volume marks the inception of a long line of postcolonial critiques of Buddhist studies, I would hope that these future studies address the question raised by Lopez's work and reflect carefully on the purpose behind such endeavors.

Barbra Clayton

McGill University

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***Radical Evil.* Ed. Joan Copjec. S2. London and New York: Verso, 1996. ISBN 1-85984-006-X. Pp. xxviii+210.**

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From a press that has refused to consider religious and theological issues coming out of the New Left and British analytic Marxism it is refreshing to see something that glides in more closely to the traditional (but now eroded) territories of religion and, especially, theology. Not that there is anything particularly traditional about the way evil is dealt with in *Radical Evil*. This is the second volume in series "S" from Verso, edited by Joan Copjec, who has been busy, along with Slavoj Žizek, pursuing the legacy of Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis into society, politics, and economics.

The essays range from deliberations on eighteenth-century philosophers to the central role that the Jewish Holocaust has had in twentieth-century politics and philosophy. Indeed, apart from Renata Salecl's essay on hate speech and human rights, the contributions may be organized along this divide: papers on Schelling (Žizek), Kant (Rogozinski), Machiavelli (Sfez), and Kant via Lacan on Sade (Zupancic), appear interspersed with papers on fascism (Maccannell), Auschwitz (Hewitt), and the memory of Germany's Nazi past (Geyer).

The volume begins with Kant's proposal of the idea of radical evil in his *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793). In her introduction Copjec argues that Kant tried to move past the standard view and his own earlier one that evil is a negative phenomenon. In making evil a positive element Kant posited human will as all pervasive, but then this reveals the problem that humans choose good for evil reasons. Interestingly, although Copjec blocks a long history of theological reflection on evil, she accepts a basic theological category that is itself increasingly troubled: human nature. Time and again the argument for a sinful human nature is used within the Church, and in conservative politics, for political quietism. Any progressive politics is thereby excluded.

Žizek's essay twists its dialectical way—characteristically—through the work of Schelling, in which he discovers, via Lacan, a number of contradictions. First, the point from which meaning and purpose is attributed to the natural world—humanity—is the same point from which emerges senseless destruction and the useless expenditure of forces. Second, evil arises not from human limitation but

from human perfection. Eventually this means that evil is constitutive of God's being, insofar as God is perfect. The paradox of Zizek's discussion is that it is simultaneously the most explicitly theological and materialist of the essays in the collection.

Remaining with Lacan, Alenka Zupancic considers Lacan's discussion of Kant beside Sade and Don Juan. Radical evil surfaces here with two approaches to the object of desire, the infinite progression—part by painful part—of Sade (torture and the infinitely prolonged moment just before death) and the hasty repetition of Don Juan (sexual conquests, with the fantasy of a timeless love). After pursuing the gradual identification of these two possibilities, Zupancic finishes with a tantalizing Nietzschean flourish that resonates with many of my own suspicions: if we follow Don Juan, the occasional ethical act may be possible, but the possibility of a whole ethical existence could not exist—"there is no such thing as Ethics in general" (124). This would be the ultimate refusal of theology as well, whose opposition of good and evil has (if I follow Jameson) been transferred into the realm of sexuality.

Before turning to the (for me) more interesting papers on fascism, I should mention the three least interesting papers: Jacob Rogozinski on Kant, Gerald Sfez on Machiavelli, and Renata Salecl on hate speech. Rogozinski's paper is the most conventional, arguing that Kant's confrontation with radical evil, and the conflict with reason, led to a refusal to deal with it more systematically. In a likewise straightforward manner, Sfez explores Machiavelli's assumption that evil is not merely one quality among others, but that it is the essential quality of human, political, existence. Salecl's is the weakest: instead of the promised use of Lacan on hate speech, what eventuates is little sustained argument, a designation of some of "the greatest antinomies of our time" (universal and particular, the dilemma of hate speech), and a call to engage in struggle for the content of universals.

A distinct contrast are the three that focus on the Nazi experience. The most considered is that of Michael Geyer on "The Politics of Memory in Contemporary Germany." Geyer's paper is an exploration of the success (through intellectuals), unraveling (through politicians such as Helmut Kohl), and new turns (embodied in films like *Schindler's List*) of the politics of memory. What comes through is the way the Nazi era left its imprint on everyone in Germany, on the daily fabric of people's lives, and that most of those who lived through that time were involved in some way.

Geyer's powerful paper resonates closely with that by Juliet Flower MacCannell, whose interest is the return of fascism and its positioning as the only serious opposition to democracy. In a breathless paper MacCannell makes good use of Lacan, asserts the attack on democracy in contemporary capitalism, and suggests that fascism is technically a pseudo-patriarchal economic form, feudalism-capitalism that systematically destroys all that it holds up as nostalgically valuable (organic community, mutual respect, et cetera). The disappointment here is that the discussion of fascism as an economic mode, and its connection with radical evil, is all too brief. Most interesting is MacCannell's reading of Hannah Arendt's reflections on the trial of Adolf Eichmann (in charge of the Final Solution), who

claimed to follow Kant's ethics. For Maccannell, Eichmann's position is a distortion of Kant, yet others in this same volume would argue that this is part of the internal logic of Kant's own position.

In the most remarkable essay of all—Andrew Hewitt's "The Bad Seed"—a reading of Eichmann and Kant is joined by discussion of the themes of the body (via Adorno and Arendt) and the "taint" or "stain" of radical evil (Kant). These themes lead Hewitt to reflection on the body's response to the concentration camps: women ceased to menstruate, normal diseases disappeared and were replaced by an ill-defined dis-ease, and men ceased to ejaculate, except for homosexual unions. The issue is life and reproduction: the need for sex disappears in the context of horror and privation. Yet homosexual sex continues, serving "to recirculate the 'bad seed' as the 'hygienic' avoidance of a conception" (95). In so far as there is no possibility of conception, the flow of seed continues for homosexual acts, but not for heterosexual acts that will lead to conception: the camps effect genocide *avant la lettre*. What is most welcome in Hewitt's reading is an insistence on the materiality of evil: it is the body, physiology, that is the focus of our attention.

In this way Hewitt's paper comes closest to that which I find lacking in this volume, and that is an explicitly Marxist contribution. What is wanting is a materialist analysis that provides a sustained reflection on radical evil—especially the Nazi experience—from the perspective of political economics. It is only then that the sheer materiality of evil, evil as a positive force in Kant's sense, may be understood properly. At the same time, but only in conjunction with a materialist analysis, should the long history of reflection of evil from theology be brought to bear: here many of the themes that appear in this volume would also be found—the role of human will and freedom, the positivity of evil, and the inability of humans to do good.

Roland Boer

United Theological College, North Parramatta, Australia

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***The Becoming of Time: Integrating Physical and Religious Time.* By Lawrence Fagg. Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1995. ISBN 0-7885-0060-0. Pp. xiii+ 282.**

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This book of fertile metaphors does not so much prosecute an argument as note interesting arenas of similarity between some religious texts and some recent findings of theoretical physics. It then seeks to elucidate these similarities through metaphors that suggest that, at some deep level, science and religion are saying the same thing. Religious insights are translated into scientific metaphor and scientific results are translated into religious metaphor. Following these interdisciplinary translations, the author frequently breaks into praise of the universe's profundity and expresses his own awe at the self-evidence of his conclusions. The reader is left to fill in the conceptual gaps or, barring that, to appreciate the author's creativity in juxtaposing old and new material in surprising and exciting ways.