

COMPTES RENDUS

RODIS-LEWIS, GENEVIÈVE. *Descartes: His Life and Thought.* Translated by Jane Marie-Todd. Cornell University Press, 1998. 264 Pp. ISBN 0-8014-3372-x. \$39.95.

"Mme Rodis-Lewis is one of the twentieth-century masters of the history of philosophy. The life of Descartes has been one of her life-long passions, and this book represents the culmination of her many year of investigation. Her new biography corrects many long-held errors, and sets out a clearer picture than we have ever before had of a figure instrumental in the creation of the modern philosophical and scientific world. This is an important book by a serious historian of philosophy that very much deserves to be read." Daniel Garber, University of Chicago.

Winner of the Grand Prix of the Académie Française for lifetime scholarly achievement, Geneviève Rodis-Lewis is uniquely qualified to celebrate René Descartes. This major intellectual biography illuminates the personal and historical events of Descartes's life, from his birth and early years in France to his death in Sweden, his burial, and the fate of his remains.

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GENETTE, GÉRARD. *The Work of Art: Immanence and Transcendence.* Translated by G.M. Gosgarian. Cornell University Press, 1997, 256 Pp. ISBN 0-8014-8272-0. \$16.95.

"Genette's exploration of the ontology of art builds a bridge between poststructuralist and analytic work on the theory of the arts. I see Genette's move in the direction of a sophisticated fusion of continental and analytic sources as a high promising event." Paisley Livingston, McGill University.

Gérard Genette situates art within the broad realm of human practices, extending from the fine arts of music, painting, sculpture, and literature to humbler but no less fertile fields such as haute couture and the culinary arts. His discussion touches on a rich array of examples and

is bolstered by an extensive knowledge of the technology involved in producing and disseminating a work of an art, regardless of whether that dissemination is by performance, reproduction, printing, or recording.

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RENAUT, ALAIN AND LUKAS SOSOE. *Philosophie du droit*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1991.

As part of the studies conducted under the aegis of "Recherches Politiques", the authors of this most interesting book are trying to clear up misunderstandings, if not mutual ignorance, between scholars of European and North American jurisprudence (In French, *jurisprudence* means "case law").

Professor Renaut, who teaches at the University of Caen and has published several volumes on Law and Philosophy is the presenter of the European side of the equation. Professor Sosoe is well versed in German philosophical thought and is a distinguished scholar who has copiously published on the German aspects of jurisprudence specialization.

After a lengthy and thoroughly thought-out general introduction which explores the core thoughts of jurisprudence, namely a definition of jurisprudence (or the philosophy of the law) and then explores issues involving law without human rights and rights of people without any subject law. The analysis of the several authors, i.e. L. Strauss, M. Villey, M. Heidegger, H. Arends and A. MacIntyre who are cited, quoted and commented on at length is excellent in laying the ground work for the balance of the book which includes a dissection of the antimodern deconstruction of current legal philosophy. i.e. jurisprudence, then moves on to a modern critique of the historical background and positive approach of the philosophy of the law.

For the lawyer interested in this esoteric area, if he or she is and American steeped deeply in the traditions of the American approach to the law, the book is most helpful in resolving our current philosophical debates in the field of law and the perceived growing gap between the thinking of European and North American jurists. For the philosopher this compendium should occupy a prime place in his life (her) library.