

**FERRY, LUC & ALAIN RENAUT.** *Pourquoi nous ne sommes pas nietzscheens.* Paris: Grasset, 1991.

This is a collection of essays on Nietzsche, often by very well known writers who have been deeply involved in the French Nietzsche discussion. To understand the nature and significance of this work, it is necessary to consider it against the background of the ongoing French debate about Nietzsche's theory. The French Nietzsche debate that began at the end of the last century, continued in desultory fashion until it was given a decisive jolt by Heidegger's two volume study of Nietzsche. In France, and as a result of Heidegger's influence, attention to Nietzsche, as well as to Freud and Marx, three thinkers whom Ricoeur has called "the masters of suspicion" was linked to an attack on the values of the Enlightenment. This attack required a deconstruction of reason as a mere symptom to be understood in physiological, psychological, or economic terms, in short from an extrarational angle of vision.

The message of the present volume, stated in the title, "Why we are not Nietzscheans." It is a collective effort to indicate why, other than the long enthusiasm for Nietzsche, it is not really possible to be a Nietzschean, a follower of Nietzsche. In the present French philosophical scene, the French Nietzsche is influenced by Derrida and his followers, including J.-L. Nancy and especially Sarah Kaufman, and even more so by Heidegger. It follows that to the extent that the authors reject the French view of Nietzsche they are also rejecting deconstruction, including the Derridean influence, as well as Heidegger's view. Beyond the discussion of Nietzsche, this volume represents an effort to emancipate oneself from Heidegger's main French representative, Derrida, and from Heidegger, still the main "French" philosopher in the postwar period.

The volume contains a preface and eight papers, printed in alphabetical order by author's name. There is no indication of the source of the papers or the affiliation of the various authors. Although the writers are often well known, they are not identified. The level of the contributions is uniformly good. All the writers are very well versed in Nietzsche's thought.

The preface, due to Luc Ferry and Alain Renault, states that for those who began in the 1960s, it was advisable to take a genealogical approach in order to show that the claims of reason were merely symptomatic. But today, it is necessary to abandon deconstruction in return to reason. Since it is not viable to return to reason as absolute knowledge, it is necessary to think with Nietzsche against Nietzsche.

The first two essays, by Alain Boyer and Comte-Sponville, are attacks on Nietzsche's thought itself. In "Hierarchy and Truth," Boyer contends that Nietzsche is obsessed with hierarchy. In passing, he dismisses most of Nietzsche's main concepts, including those of interest to Heidegger, as uninteresting (15). The discussion considers Nietzsche's view of science that Boyer criticizes as uninformed (17-21). He maintains that to leave religion behind is not to abandon value, and he affirms that we need to take a rationalist stance (31).

The paper by Comte-Sponville, whose first book was on Nietzsche, is called "The brute, the sophist, the aesthete: art in the service of illusion." In the course of the discussion, he frequently comments on the views of Clement Rosset, a philosopher at the University of Nice. He begins by stating that every philosopher needs to come to grips with Nietzsche (39).

Nietzsche's works are not so important; it is simply exaggerated to see in them the start of a new era (40). According to Comte-Sponville, Nietzsche is both theoretically and practically immoral (46). His thought is essentially racist (54). Any effort to pass this off as metaphysical, as Heidegger does, is erroneous (57). Nietzsche's pretended fidelity to life betrays the humanity of human beings (61, 64). In fact, Nietzsche's idea of truth is self-contradictory (72). Nietzsche is finally an aesthete who places art over truth (89). One cannot be a Nietzschean unless one prefers brutes, sophists, or esthetes (90).

Vincent Descombes, who teaches at Emory University and at the Ecole des Hautes études pratiques, contributes a paper on "The French interest in Nietzsche." He begins with a portrait of the typical French Nietzschean (102). For Descombes, French Nietzscheanism is incoherent (107). After discussion of the origin

of this movement, he criticizes Deleuze's influential discussion of Nietzsche (120-126).

Ferry and Renaut, two well known young French anti-establishment figures, provide a paper titled "What needs to be demonstrated is not worth much." They begin by noting that for Constant and Tocqueville, the essence of modern society is the emancipation from tradition (131). They see Nietzsche as a neo-traditionalist who criticizes modern democracy and provides an analogue of the traditional universe (133). For Nietzsche, only tradition is good (141). Yet his effort to combine tradition and modernity is incoherent (148). The paper ends with a warning against abandoning argument in a return to authority (149).

Robert Legros, a well-known Belgian Hegel scholar and phenomenologist, contributes a thoughtful essay, "Nietzsche's metaphysics of life," influenced by E. Fink and M. Haar. Every philosopher needs to follow Nietzsche in criticizing metaphysics, but the critique of metaphysics leads to a disavowal of Nietzsche who finally accepts its distinctions (158). For Nietzsche, metaphysics concerns the essence of truth (159). His critique of metaphysics implies a separation of appearance and reality (170). But this critique is inconsistent in many ways since Nietzsche presupposes what he excludes (173, 184, 190). Hence if we are Nietzschean we cannot be Nietzschean (193).

Philippe Raynaud, who has published a book on Max Weber, provides a paper on "Nietzsche as educator." For students of Raynaud's generation, Nietzsche offered a way to emancipate thought from "metaphysics" (197). Raynaud identifies three forms of French Nietzscheanism linked to the views of Deleuze, Foucault, and Nietzsche's impact on French culture (198-201). Nietzsche's critique of the Enlightenment is essentially irrational (211). Nietzsche provides a critique of modernity (214).

The paper by Pierre-André Taguieff, "The traditional paradigm: Horror of modernity and antiliberalism: Nietzsche's reactionary rhetoric," is the longest in the volume. Taguieff identifies modernity as the commitment to perpetual discussion and traditional antimodernism as opposed to liberal democracy (219). He sees Nietzsche as influencing an alternative to rightwing

traditionalism due to Ronald and Donos Cortes in the political voluntarism of nationalism, exemplified by Action française (220). The paper begins with an analysis of antimodernism and the idea of decadence in virtue of which Nietzsche is a traditional thinker (220-230). This is followed by a summary of Nietzsche's attack on liberalism (230-237). Then there is a discussion of nihilism (238-246), followed by a summary of Nietzsche's attacks on dialectic (246-252), on modern mediocrity and liberal degeneration (252-246), and cultural decadence (256-263). Taguieff notes that for Nietzsche, discussion is a sign of weakness (264). The paper ends with an account of Nietzsche and Action française, a rightwing Catholic monarchist movement (276-284). The treatment of parallels between Nietzsche's thought and his influence on the thought of various rightwing movement is very interesting.

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**KOLB, DAVID.** *Postmodern Sophistications: Philosophy, Architecture, and Tradition.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990. xi 216 pp.

"Do we stand sufficiently above traditions that we can manipulate them and make them from some detached point of view as if they were tools for other purposes" (p. 2), as modernists have claimed? Or are postmodernists right to criticize "the attempt to institutionalize an individual or social subject free from traditional restrictions" (p. 6)? But neither the modernist refusal of the authority of tradition nor postmodern play with historical contents takes history seriously enough. Kolb insists that we are more essentially placed in history, even as he refuses to grant history such authority as would stifle our need and ability to change and adapt.

This thoughtful study, which should appeal to anyone interested in postmodernism, especially to architects, divides into two parts separated by thirteen illustrations. The shorter first part