

acknowledge awareness of an event that is lost. In the amnesic syndrome, what is lost is awareness *that* a residual capacity for retrieving information has been preserved. Weiskrantz discusses two ways in which a commentary may play a key role in the experience of awareness. First, it may simply be that it is by means of a commentary that we can make known our awareness, the awareness being a precondition for the commentary. Second, it may be that the commentary is not only *enabling* in this way, but that it is actually *endowing*: it is what is meant by saying that one is aware. This stronger position, which Weiskrantz favours, is likened to the view that awareness is a matter of "higher-order thoughts," that to be aware implies that one has a thought about a thought.

This engagingly written work by a distinguished psychologist holds much of value to philosophers, the study of pathological cases of memory, perception, and so forth, serving to highlight what is crucial in the normal cases. Of particular interest is the treatment of animals. It is natural to suppose that, while animals can, of course, see, hear, and so forth, perception is for them a totally unreflective affair; they cannot stand back, as it were, from their perceptual acts in the way we can when we not only see but register the fact that we see. The stronger view might be put by saying that to be aware that one sees something, say, is simply to know that one sees it, and knowledge that one sees is something that can be manifested in what one says (a commentary) or does (equivalent behaviour). We might well feel that any animal response which is taken to give proof that the animal knows that it sees will turn out, on closer inspection, merely to give proof that it sees. However, Weiskrantz argues that animals other than humans may possess the ability to indicate whether or not they are aware of a stimulus to which they have responded. Thus, when asked to classify a flash of light, monkeys suffering from blindsight treat the flash as equivalent to a non-light, even though they can detect it and locate its position behaviourally. If this is to be interpreted as Weiskrantz suggests, then the conception of animal awareness as essentially a matter of a mindless capacity for appropriate behavioural responses to visual, auditory and other sense stimuli—much, that is, as with a blindsight patient—is a distortion. It doubtless holds for lower forms of life, but it makes sense to say, not only that the monkey sees, but that, in suitable circumstances, it knows that it sees. This is but one of many currently live debates to which this fascinating study contributes.

BEDE RUNDLE

DAVID WEISSMAN. *A Social Ontology*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. xv + 380 pp.

According to the blurb on the back cover, this work is in the grand manner of the great metaphysicians of the past. However, Weissman by his own account likens his book to Justus Buchler's *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes* and to Mario Bunge's *A World of Systems* (22). In any case, Weissman's meta-

physical adversary is individualism, or atomism, which he claims underlies many of our assumptions about ethics, law, liberal democracy, and free market capitalism. Arguing against atomistic ontologies, he affirms that all of reality is based on systems and that every particular is a system created by the reciprocal relation of its parts. The author argues that systems are sometimes mutually dependent and many (especially human ones) are joined in higher order systems such as families, friendships, businesses, and states that are overlapping and nested. Weissman tests his claim against empirical examples cited in chapters on persons, sociality, and value. He also considers how his theory applies to deliberation, free speech, conflict, and ecology.

The key concept in Weissman's metaphysics is system. According to Weissman a system is complex since it embodies a network of spatial, temporal and causal relations. A system has an inside and an outside. The inside is constituted by parts in reciprocal relatedness while reciprocal relations with external factors constitute the outside. Every system has a developmental history, which implies a determined result but not one that cannot be altered further. Systems may be related in different ways: for example, they can be mutually independent, reciprocally connected, overlapping, hierarchically organized, or nested.

One interesting application of Weissman's theory is to free speech. He maintains that it is important to understand free speech in the context of the social systems in which it functions. Individualism fails to do this when it wrongly discounts the ramifications of free speech throughout society. First, the consequences of speech can deeply affect the human psyche for good or ill. For example, malicious speech directed at a person can affect his or her mental health. Second, speech can affect every system in which an individual plays a role. For example, malicious speech directed toward a person can affect her family, her job, and her community. Third, speech can affect the speaker and the system in which he or she participates. For example, Senator Joseph McCarthy's speech affected his Republican friends and himself. Fourth, speech can affect the fragile status of language, such as when a language used dishonestly comes to be seen as untrustworthy in itself. Fifth, every jurisdiction that desires to enforce a policy of free speech has its own special history with implications for the restrictions it imposes on speech. For example, contemporary Germany imposes more restrictive requirements on the display of Nazi flags than does the US because its history is different. Finally, speech hinders or enhances the common good. This common good is a complex consisting of the tolerance, respect, and dedication that "we show one another as we discover our affinities, our mutual dependence, and our fellowship within stable systems" (321). Speech is also an instrumental good for many of the stable systems in which we participate such as the systems of public education and judicial deliberation.

Although Weissman brings out many of the implications of his system based metaphysics, there is one implication that he surprisingly fails to explicitly explore: the controversy in the philosophy of social science between

methodological individualists such as Karl Popper and methodological holists such as Emile Durkheim.

MICHAEL MARTIN

CARL WELLMAN. *Real Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. 279 pp.

Wellman makes a convincing case here for his claim that his theory of rights is the most adequate theory of rights in the literature. He has devoted his professional career to working in the field of moral reasoning and rights theory. He knows the literature well. He constructs his theory out of the insights of Wesley Newcomb Hohfeld, H. L. A. Hart, Joel Feinberg, Judith Jarvis Thomson and Joseph Raz, among others. He has paid careful attention to criticism of his earlier work, *A Theory of Rights*, especially Neil MacCormick's criticism of his conception of a right as a determinate set of atomic Hohfeldian positions (claims, privileges, powers and immunities). In *Real Rights* he argues for a revised concept of rights as indeterminate sets of such atomic moral positions together with the norm or norms that constitute the set. More specifically, he argues that ordinary moral rights consist of a core atomic position, such as a liberty, (e.g., the liberty to defend oneself in self-defense) and associated elements such as (1) claims against third parties not to interfere with the exercise of one's liberty of self-defense, and (2) immunity against loss of the core liberty to defend oneself by any independent act of a third party. The associated elements of a right can vary depending on what is practically necessary to protect the core of the right.

The care with which Wellman constructs his theory of rights, his sustained attention to fundamental conceptual questions, and the resulting subtlety of his theory distinguishes it from other current theories of rights, which do not attend so closely to the fundamental issue of what a right is. This alone makes the book an important work. But there are other reasons to study this book carefully. In the February 1, 1991 issue of the London Times Literary Supplement, the British philosopher John Gray gave a hostile review of Judith Jarvis Thomson's *The Realm of Rights*, which presents a theory of rights similar in a number of ways to Wellman's. The gist of Gray's complaint against Thomson is that she presents a theory of moral reasoning which imports into moral reasoning the rigidities of legal reasoning. Although Wellman does not once mention Gray's review, he is well aware of how controversial and implausible his theory of moral reasoning will appear to people who oppose, or think they oppose, individualistic liberalism with its allegedly simplistic concern for the rights of the individual.

Wellman himself decries the rigid and simplistic appeal to rights and the consequent adoption of rigid moral positions that is found in much contemporary moral debate. His solution is to insist that real rights are grounded on plausible moral reasons which include whether recognition of the right will contribute to "sociability factors" such as trustworthiness and cooperation. He also argues that careful and sensitive attention to the way that we actually