PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHICAL DIALECTICS
An Essay on Metaphilosophy
Nicholas Rescher

A study in philosophical methodology aimed at providing a clear view of the scope and limits of philosophical inquiry.

While the pursuit of philosophy “of” studies—of science, of art, of politics—has blossomed, the philosophy of philosophy remains a comparatively neglected domain. In this book, Nicholas Rescher fills this gap by offering a study in methodology aimed at providing a clear view of the scope and limits of philosophical inquiry. He argues that philosophy’s inability to resolve all of the problems of the field does not preclude the prospect of achieving a satisfactory resolution of many or even most of them.

“Disgruntlement with the endemic disagreements among philosophers down through the centuries has led to intermittent hope that some gifted metaphilosopher might create a ‘perennial’ philosophy. Nicholas Rescher has a more modest, but still worthwhile, goal in mind—to trace the development of certain perennial issues in the history of philosophy and examine the principles and methods that have led to progress on these issues. Short of final solutions, he shows that many refinements have been successful and the insolubilia of old have become less vexing.” — Howard P. Kainz, author of G. W. F. Hegel: The Philosophical System

“Rescher’s book goes where philosophy rarely goes, offering a clear-eyed examination of the purposes, principles, and prospects of philosophizing itself. This is metaphilosophy at its very best, reflecting both the breadth of knowledge and the depth of insight of one of our very best philosophers.” — Patrick Grim, author of The Incomplete Universe: Totality, Knowledge, and Truth

Nicholas Rescher is University Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh. He is the author of more than one hundred books, including Epistemology: An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge; Realistic Pragmatism: An Introduction to Pragmatic Philosophy; Predicting the Future: An Introduction to the Theory of Forecasting; Process Metaphysics: An Introduction to Process Philosophy; and Dialectics: A Controversy-Oriented Approach to the Theory of Knowledge; all published by SUNY Press.

MARCH | 144 pp.
1 figure
$40.00 hc 0-7914-6745-7

FAMILY MATTERS
Feminist Concepts in African Philosophy of Culture
Nkiru Uwechia Nzegwu

Charts new trends in gender studies through a compelling analysis of Igbo society.

Prior to European colonialism, Igboland, a region in Nigeria, was a nonpatriarchal, nongendered society governed by separate but interdependent political systems for men and women. In the last one hundred fifty years, the Igbo family has undergone vast structural changes in response to a barrage of cultural forces. Critically rereading social practices and oral and written histories of Igbo women and the society, Nkiru Uwechia Nzegwu demonstrates how colonial laws, edicts, and judicial institutions facilitated the creation of gender inequality in Igbo society. Nzegwu exposes the unlikely convergence of Western feminist and African male judges’ assumptions about “traditional” African values where women are subordinate and oppressed. Instead she offers a conception of equality based on historical Igbo family structures and practices that challenges the epistemological and ontological bases of Western feminist inquiry.

“Nzegwu has produced a genuinely groundbreaking text that will no doubt have a major impact on the study of Africa and our historical understanding of the social and political dynamics of the construction of ‘modern’ families and gender relations for generations to come.” — Lewis R. Gordon, author of Existential Africana: Understanding Africana Existential Thought

“I know of no other book expressing the reality of West African women through such a clear and strong indigenous voice, one that requires scholars take much more seriously questions about the foundations of their disciplines....” — Susan E. Babbitt, author of Artless Integrity: Moral Imagination, Agency, and Stories

Nkiru Uwechia Nzegwu is Professor of Africana Studies and Philosophy at Binghamton University, State University of New York.

A volume in the SUNY series, Feminist Philosophy
Jeffner Allen, editor

MARCH | 352 pp.
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In Nietzsche and Embodiment Kristen Brown reveals the smartness of bodies, challenging the traditional view in the West that bodies are separate from and morally inferior to minds. Drawing inspiration from Nietzsche, Brown vividly describes why the interdependence of mind and body matters, both in Nietzsche’s writings and for contemporary debates (non-dualism theory, Merleau-Ponty criticism, and metaphor studies), activities (spinal cord research and fasting), and specific human experiences (menses, trauma, and guilt). Brown’s theories about the dynamic relationship between body and mind provide new possibilities for self-understanding and experience.

“I applaud the author’s successful attempts to connect philosophy to the quotidian. From her account of her fasting friend, Doug, to the more extensive discussions of curry and (pre)menses, Brown connects abstract philosophy to life—which to my mind is exactly what Nietzsche is trying to do.” — Brian Domino, Miami University

“This work is not only important for its nuanced interpretations of Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Merleau-Ponty, but also for its insights into the problem of how interpretation arises. It will be read for both its exegesis and its original insights.” — James J. Winchester, author of Nietzsche’s Aesthetic Turn: Reading Nietzsche after Heidegger, Deleuze, Derrida

Kristen Brown is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Millsaps College.

A volume in the SUNY series in Contemporary Continental Philosophy

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BRIEFINGS ON EXISTENCE
A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology
ALAIN BADIOU
TRANSLATED, EDITED, AND
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
NORMAN MADARAZS

Explores the link between mathematics and ontology.

This book continues Alain Badiou’s project to posit an integral link between mathematics and ontology. Originally published as part of a trilogy in 1998, Briefings on Existence engages the ideas of Deleuze, Spinoza, Plato, Aristotle, and Kant and outlines how the philosophical inquiry into Being and existence converges with the possible world topology of category theory. Set against the background of a multiplication of gods that can be declared dead (the gods of religions, metaphysics, and poetry), Badiou argues that the extension of these events has fallen short of accomplishing its collective promise, but can be achieved through the mathematical understanding of ontology. After several remarkable decades of theoretical invention, French philosophy stands at a crossroads, and Badiou’s egalitarian materialism is one of its strongest calls forward.

“Twice in its history, philosophy has arisen from the sophists’ threat: first with Plato and then again with Kant, who saved it from Humean skepticism. Today, when we again live in an era of globalized sophism (deconstructionist relativism, finite ‘weak thought’), Alain Badiou’s project is no less than to repeat the Platonic-Kantian move, and to reestablish philosophy as the theory of universal Truth. The task is immense—and the miracle is that Badiou effectively delivers what he promises. For this reason alone, Badiou’s thought is the single most important event in contemporary philosophy.” — Slavoj Zizek

Alain Badiou is Director of the Department of Philosophy at École Normale Supérieure, Paris. Several of his works have been translated into English, including Manifesto for Philosophy, also published by SUNY Press and also translated by Norman Madarasz, who is Visiting Associate Professor of Philosophy at Universidade Gama Filho, Brazil.

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Rodolphe Gasché, editor

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NIETZSCHE AND EMBODIMENT
Discerning Bodies and Non-dualism
KRISTEN BROWN

Examines the significance of Nietzsche’s writings for contemporary debates about embodiment.

In Nietzsche and Embodiment Kristen Brown reveals the smartness of bodies, challenging the traditional view in the West that bodies are separate from and morally inferior to minds. Drawing inspiration from Nietzsche, Brown vividly describes why the interdependence of mind and body matters, both in Nietzsche’s writings and for contemporary debates (non-dualism theory, Merleau-Ponty criticism, and metaphor studies), activities (spinal cord research and fasting), and specific human experiences (menses, trauma, and guilt). Brown’s theories about the dynamic relationship between body and mind provide new possibilities for self-understanding and experience.

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The first systematic treatment of Karl Popper’s contribution to the philosophy of the social sciences.

This is the first book-length exploration of Karl Popper’s often-neglected contributions to the philosophy of social science. William A. Gorton situates Popper’s ideas on social inquiry within the broader framework of his thought, including his philosophy of natural science, his ontological theories, and his political thought. Gorton places special attention on Popper’s theory of situational analysis and how it aims to heighten our understanding of the social world by untangling the complex web of human interaction that produces unintended—and often unwanted—social phenomena. Situational analysis, Gorton contends, involves a significant departure from the method of the natural sciences, despite Popper’s plea for the unity of scientific method. Gorton also addresses some common misconceptions concerning Popper’s stance toward economics and Marxism, making the provocative claim that contemporary analytical Marxism provides the best current example of Popperian social science put into practice.

“Gorton deals critically, but sympathetically and insightfully, with Karl Popper’s philosophy of the social sciences, and his method of situational analysis as a model of social-scientific explanation in particular. While the topic is dense, Gorton manages to make it lively and interesting. His book makes a singular and significant contribution to the philosophy and methodology of social-scientific inquiry.” — Terence Ball, author of Reappraising Political Theory: Revisionist Studies in the History of Political Thought

William A. Gorton is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Alma College, Michigan.

A volume in the SUNY series in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences
Lenore Langsdorf, editor

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BETWEEN TRANSCENDENCE AND HISTORICISM
The Ethical Nature of the Arts in Hegelian Aesthetics
Brian K. Etter

Argues that the concept of the ethical is central to Hegel's philosophy of art.

Between Transcendence and Historicism explores Hegel's aesthetics within the larger context of the tradition of theoretical reflection to emphasize its unique ability to account for traditional artistic practice. Arguing that the concept of the ethical is central to Hegel's philosophy of art, Brian K. Etter examines the poverty of modernist aesthetic theories in contrast to the affirmation by Hegel of the necessity of art. He focuses on the individual arts in greater detail than is normally done for Hegel's aesthetics, and considers how the dual constitution of the ethical nature of art can be justified, both within Hegel's own philosophical system and in terms of its relevance to the dilemmas of modern social life. Etter concludes that the arts have a responsibility to represent the goodness of existence, the ideal, and the ethical life in dignifying the metaxological realm through their beauty.

"This book addresses important contemporary issues in a straightforward and clear manner. Etter is very knowledgeable about art and contemporary aesthetics and uses this to inform his interpretation of Hegel. He does an excellent job explicating and critically analyzing Hegel's views to illustrate his relevance for contemporary art and art criticism."
— William Maker, editor of Hegel and Aesthetics

Andreea Deciu Ritivoi

This is the first book to systematically explore contemporary continental philosopher Paul Ricoeur's contribution to modern rhetorical theory. Andreea Deciu Ritivoi analyzes provocative test cases and investigates four topics central to the core vocabulary of the field—opinion, practical reasoning, commemoration, and solidarity. Her findings provide clarification on important problems and shed new light on troubling social and political issues. Placing Ricoeur's views in a larger intellectual context, Ritivoi identifies both the philosophical influences that have shaped them over the years and the correspondences with various relevant rhetorical theories. In doing so, she proves that a rhetorical enterprise refashioned with Ricoeur's help enables us to address questions that are crucially relevant to our time yet also grounded in the historical basis of the discipline.

"This book makes a significant contribution to both Ricoeur scholarship and that of rhetorical theory. Ritivoi blends philosophy with rhetorical theory, seamlessly using examples that both explicate Ricoeur's more abstract thought and ground its applications in matters pertinent to rhetorical theory."
— Irene E. Harvey, author of Labyrinths of Exemplarity: At the Limits of Deconstruction

Andreea Deciu Ritivoi is Assistant Professor of English and Rhetoric at Carnegie Mellon University and the author of Yesterday's Self: Nostalgia and the Immigrant Identity.

A volume in the SUNY series, Rhetoric in the Modern Era
Arthur E. Walzer and Edward Schiappa, editors

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PHILOSOPHY
THE GODS AND TECHNOLOGY
A Reading of Heidegger
RICHARD ROJCEWICZ

An analysis of Heidegger’s philosophy of technology.

The Gods and Technology is a careful and original reading of the principal statement of Martin Heidegger’s philosophy of technology, the essay Die Frage nach der Technik (“The question concerning technology”). That essay is a rich one, and Richard Rojcewicz’s goal is to mine it for the treasures only a close reading of the original German text can bring out. Rojcewicz shows how the issue of technology is situated at the very heart of Heidegger’s philosophical enterprise; especially for the late Heidegger, the philosophy of technology is a philosophy of Being, or of the gods.

For Heidegger, technology is not applied knowledge, but the most basic knowledge, of which science, for example, is an application. The ultimate goal of this study, and, as Rojcewicz writes, of Heidegger’s thought, is practical: to find the appropriate response to the challenges of the modern age, to learn to live in a technological world without falling victim to the thrall of technological things.

Richard Rojcewicz teaches philosophy at Point Park University. He is the cotranslator (with André Schuwer) of three volumes of Heidegger’s Gesamtausgabe: Parmenides (GA 54), Basic Questions of Philosophy (GA 45), and Plato’s Sophist (GA 19) and the translator of Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle (GA 61). He is also the translator of two volumes of Husserliana, Husserl’s collected works: Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book (Hua 4; cotranslated with André Schuwer) and Thing and Space: Lectures of 1907 (Hua 16).

A volume in the SUNY series in Theology and Continental Thought
Douglas L. Donkel, editor

FEBRUARY | 256 pp.
$60.00 hc 0-7914-6677-9

THE GERMAN INVENTION OF RACE
SARA EIGEN AND MARK LARRIMORE, editors

Illuminates the emergence of race as a central concept in philosophy and the social sciences.

In The German Invention of Race, historians, philosophers, and scholars in literary, cultural, and religious studies trace the origins of the concept of “race” to Enlightenment Germany and seek to understand the issues at work in creating a definition of race. The work introduces a significant connection to the history of race theory as contributors show that the language of race was deployed in contexts as apparently unrelated as hygiene; aesthetics; comparative linguistics; anthropology; debates over the status of science, theology, and philosophy; and Jewish emancipation.

The concept of race has no single point of origin, and has never operated within the constraints of a single definition. As the essays in this book trace the powerful resonances of the term in diverse contexts, both before and after the invention of the scientific term around 1775, they help explain how this pseudoconcept could, in a few short decades, have become so powerful in so many fields of thought and practice. In addition, the essays show that the fateful rise of racial thinking in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was made possible not only by the establishment of physical anthropology as a field, but also by other disciplines and agendas linked by the enduring associations of the word “race.”

“This volume brings together a diverse set of important essays in an area of scholarship that is only beginning to become well defined and developed in North America. It could eventually become something of a founding document for a very fruitful arena of cross-disciplinary scholarship.”
— Jon Mark Mikkelsen, Missouri Western State University

Sara Eigen is Assistant Professor of German at Vanderbilt University. Mark Larrimore is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Philosophy at The New School.

A volume in the SUNY series, Philosophy and Race
Robert Bernasconi and T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, editors

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JANUARY | 248 pp.
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PHILOSOPHY
LIBERATION AS AFFIRMATION
The Religiosity of Zhuangzi and Nietzsche
Ge Ling Shang

Uses the concept of religiosity to challenge traditional views of Nietzsche and Zhuangzi as nihilistic and anti-religious.

In this book, author Ge Ling Shang provides a systematic comparison of original texts by Zhuangzi (fourth century BCE) and Nietzsche (1846–1900), under the rubric of religiosity, to challenge those who have customarily relegated both thinkers to relativism, nihilism, escapism, pessimism, or anti-religion. Shang closely examines Zhuangzi’s and Nietzsche’s respective critiques of metaphysics, morals, language, knowledge, and humanity in general and proposes a conception of the philosophical outlooks of Zhuangzi and Nietzsche as complementary. In the creative and vital spirit of Nietzsche, as in the tranquil and inward spirit of Zhuangzi, Shang argues that a surprisingly similar vision and aspiration toward human liberation and freedom exists—one in which spiritual transformation is possible by religiously affirming life in this world as sacred and divine.

“This book makes a strong case not only for reading Zhuangzi and Nietzsche as religious thinkers, but also for seeing their religious visions as similarly oriented. The suggestion that thinkers with some affinity for the goals of poststructuralism could have a less purely negative approach is significant and interesting.” — Kathleen M. Higgins, coeditor of From Africa to Zen: An Invitation to World Philosophy, Second Edition

“This book brings these two thinkers into the most extended dialogue ever attempted. It fills a need and highlights the significance of this encounter.” — Brook Ziporyn, author of The Penumbra Unbound: The Neo-Taoist Philosophy of Guo Xiang

Ge Ling Shang is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Grand Valley State University.

A volume in the SUNY series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture
Roger T. Ames, editor

FEBRUARY | 240 pp.
$60.00 hc 0-7914-6667-1

HEIDEGGER, RORTY, AND THE EASTERN THINKERS
A Hermeneutics of Cross-Cultural Understanding
Wei Zhang

Explores the cross-cultural endeavors of Rorty and Heidegger, particularly how this work addresses the possibilities of comparative philosophy itself.

Wei Zhang joins the ongoing hermeneutic quest for understanding and appropriating the East-West encounter and cross-cultural engagement by exploring Martin Heidegger’s and Richard Rorty’s cross-cultural encounters with Eastern thinkers. Zhang begins by examining Rorty’s correspondence with Indian philosopher Anindita N. Balslev, outlining their debate about the discipline of comparative philosophy and curriculum reform, as well as the nature or origin of philosophy itself. She then focuses on the dialogue between Heidegger and a Japanese professor concerning the nature of human language and discusses whether Heidegger’s view of language allows for a true understanding between East and West or whether it admits only misunderstanding and prejudice are possible. Finally, the author presents a conceptual dialogue with Heidegger’s primary text on hermeneutics and phenomenology, Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity. Utilizing the dialogues and correspondence between Heidegger, Rorty, and the Eastern thinkers as textual examples, Zhang deconstructs and recovers layers of misconceptions of the various interpretations of the East-West encounter.

“The book tackles some of the most important issues in modern philosophy: ones concerning the possibility and conduct of comparative philosophy. As the world rushes toward becoming a global economic community, questions concerning cross-cultural study, communication, and understanding have taken on special significance. The processes of globalization promise much but present pressing social and political challenges as well. However, for reasons such as those detailed in this book, we have seen far too many scholars who have sat and scratched their heads, not only wondering where to begin but undermining the efforts of others by arguing against the very possibility of comparative philosophy.” — Douglas W. Shadrer Jr., coauthor of Pathways to Philosophy: A Multidisciplinary Approach

Wei Zhang is Assistant Professor of Asian Religions at the University of South Florida.

A volume in the SUNY series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture
Roger T. Ames, editor

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