Ricoeur, Paul. *The Course of Recognition.*Translated by David Pellauer. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005. Pp. 297. $29.95 (cloth).

There is a good body of work in recent French philosophy on the issue of recognition. Emmanuel Renault, Christian Lazerri, and the antiutilitarian MAUSS (Mouvement anti-utilitariste en sciences sociales) come readily to mind. Axel Honneth and Charles Taylor are influential, but so, too, are Bourdieu and other French sociologists. In spite of the original contributions of these French authors, none of their work has been made available to English readers to date. A first step toward filling this lack has been made with this translation of the final opus of the recently deceased Paul Ricoeur on the theme of recognition.

Ricoeur's starting point is deciphering the everyday uses of the word 'recognition'. Browsing through diverse connotations of 'recognition' in the best French dictionaries, Ricoeur identifies implicit and unsaid meanings that connect together the various entries in three large groups. These three groups are then each the subject of a chapter in the book. Ricoeur insists that this initial classification is necessary before turning to philosophy. The task of philosophy, according to him, is not to improve the lexicon of a language. It is to draw out genuine problems that "slice through the simple regulating of ordinary language" (17).

Ricoeur nonetheless sets out an original critique of philosophical writings, one that is restless and that prospers in many unexpected fields. If successful, this critique promises fresh insights on the ordinary uses of the word. On its first definition, "recognition" as "identifying an object or a person" would be understood to also carry a tension with the way "things themselves" appear. In its second sense, appearing in chapter 2, the "recognition of one's own identity" would include the individual and collective capabilities that precondition the understanding of one's self-identity. And, finally, the third meaning of "recognition as mutual recognition," treated in chapter 3, would include an understanding of the particular subtleties of asymmetry.

Ricoeur drives his investigation with his characteristic hermeneutical analysis of both canonical and unanticipated authors. The first chapter covers the field of "Recognition as Identification" with texts of Descartes, Kant, and Marcel Proust. Knowledge theories have indeed treated "recognition as identification" under the heading of judgment: that of judging an object as "the same" through an identification process. Ricoeur traces in the *Meditations* of Descartes the occurrences of the verb "to recognize" at moments following expression of doubts and hesitations. As is the case in the subsequent discussion of Kant, Ricoeur does not directly engage the issues here. His goal is instead to show that these canonical theories of knowledge miss an important lesson of recognition.

Inspired by a swift reading of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Proust, Ricoeur argues that, in addition to the objectifying attitude that he criticizes as being insufficient, recognizing takes into account the "emotional dimension" of a "lived experience," encompassing the variety of modes of being of the recognizee and, in particular, its episodes of changes. Ricoeur convincingly shows that, in contrast to the authors just cited, Descartes and Kant did not learn this lesson. However, what is needed to complete Ricoeur's argument are the conceptual modifications

required of Descartes's and Kant's theories in order to include the experiential dimension that he refers to.

Other recognition theories, in particular those of Hegel and his followers, have explored important insights regarding the integration of recognition into knowledge. If these insights are right, grasping an object with a concept would engage one's thoughts in a self-recognition project that is arguably in line with the "lived experiences" referred to by Ricoeur. The section dealing with the "ruins of representation" misses the opportunity to show how to reconstruct knowledge claims on these ruins. On the one hand, one could argue that a theory of knowledge would simply be sided with a compatible theory of recognition. On the other hand, neo-Hegelians, such as Robert B. Brandom, would press for profound changes in the way that theories of knowledge are to be understood. It is left to the reader to locate the hermeneutical analysis of Ricoeur in this debate.

The second chapter, entitled "Recognizing Oneself," is the densest section of the book. One reason explaining this abundance is that Ricoeur is on a familiar terrain: the presence of earlier, important books of his, namely, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) and *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), hover over the whole chapter. The emphasis is on the recognition of one's self through the acknowledgment of one's own capacities. This recognition would be supported by an "anthropological base" that Ricoeur hopes to tie with a philosophy of action and a practical philosophy. Starting with Ulysses, Ricoeur attempts to bridge the Greek's emphasis on practical wisdom with the reflexive philosophy of Descartes and Locke and, finally, with the claims of justice put forth by contemporary authors such as Amartya Sen.

Ricoeur aims to make explicit the connections linking the modern notions of self with those of ancient world thinkers. This quite intriguing story begins with the chanting heroes of canonical Greek literature, who question their selves as they strive to explain the choices they have made. In so doing, says Ricoeur, these heroes recognize for themselves a sense of responsibility. The story then develops with the ethics of virtues developed by Aristotle, especially the virtue of wisdom. Following the correct rules of this virtue engages one to act as would a "wise man" under a given set of circumstances. Such a wise man directs his action under a second-order rule about rational action—the rule of *phronesis*, of prudence. Through the exercise of his discretion, he reveals an important part of himself: his own point of view. This emergence of the moral self in action is the reason why Ricoeur wishes to trace back in Ancient Greece "the emergence of the point of view of the subject in the description of rational action" (87). To be sure, Ricoeur admits that this analysis is a retrospective reach. But it is no small feat to have been able to reach through many centuries of writing and thinking with such a clear and concise canvas.

On the downside, there is a price to pay for Ricoeur's expansive take on recognition. The middle part of this chapter gets muddled in too many directions, ultimately diluting the analysis. In going for the guts of the "kinship between attestation and self-recognition" (91), Ricoeur opens several debates. From Austin and Davidson to the notion of narrative identity, he takes over the theme of memory and promises and delves into Bergson, Augustine, and Husserl.

These developments refer to other books written by Ricoeur, and many readers will find it difficult to relate them to the general theme of the book.

I suspect that this difficulty surfaces in part because the topic of memory and promises has a greater affinity with the chapter on mutual recognition placed at the end of the book. On a first note, it appears artificial to treat individual and collective memory separately. In fact, this disturbing separation repeats itself, but more mildly, in the treatment of the individual and collective capacities at the end of the chapter. Once again, what seems to belong to a social analysis is treated with a phenomenological account of the self—even if it is true that Ricoeur conceives it as a "transition point" toward mutual recognition.

Ricoeur could hang onto this last observation and reply that he is focusing on the "gaps" between the three components of recognition that he explores. In that sense, the breaches of memory and capacities cut through different senses of recognition; they happen to be areas that encroach upon both the second and the third chapters. This reply could be granted if Ricoeur had touched upon these topics in his next, and last, third chapter, but this is not the case. Another possible reply would be for Ricoeur to insist that the very invisibility of the other in his treatment of memory, attestation, and capacities effectively internalizes, in a performative way, the dynamic negativity of self-recognition. What is always in danger of being ignored, of being made invisible, is the presence of the other. This inherent difficulty of recognition in remembering oneself and in attesting to one's own capacities would then be acted, as it were, by the philosopher himself.

Yet, in the process of attesting to one's own capacities, one is communicating something to an other self. Only when the other is recognized does the whole process of communication start to make sense. Memory and attestation depend on the interplay of self-recognition and recognition of the other. It may sound plausible for a precommunicative concept of the self to be understood as a phenomenon that appears before one's own eyes. But, in treating intersubjective notions such as memory, attestation, and social capacities before making space for the other, Ricoeur repeats the commonplace error of situating the hermeneutical understanding of interacting selves before the communicative moment.

Ricoeur has placed the most interesting discussion of this second chapter at the very end. This is where he skillfully introduces Sen's seminal work on capabilities and explores the ties between Sen and Taylor. The capabilities approach brings forth a set of social goods which are considered crucial for individual self-development. In that vein, Taylor proposes an analysis of social goods which may contribute to the capabilities approach. Ricoeur pinpoints this contribution in the "evaluative framework" developed by Taylor: "This [Sen's] concept of an 'evaluation of situation' is close to that of the 'strong evaluations' which for Charles Taylor conjoin self-assertion and an ethical position expressed in terms of the good rather than of obligation" (144). Indeed, a fundamental question at the heart of the capabilities approach is that of the good life: according to this approach, economic agents are driven by the answer to the question "How should I live?" in the form of effective opportunities.

To my modest knowledge, this rapprochement of economics and virtue ethics is quite novel. Ricoeur makes an important opening in this direction. As is characteristic of this chapter, the endeavor is to unearth an "anthropological

base" at the foundation of the capabilities approach: "What is important is our having discovered reinforcement for a concept of human action as rooted in a fundamental anthropology" (146). But, as I have said earlier, I believe this anthropology is faulty if it insists on understanding action in a precommunicative way.

The third and final chapter of the book carries the title of "Mutual Recognition." This chapter is profound and original. Many readers will first notice that Ricoeur takes the position of the opposing party from the influential reading in France of the lectures on Hegel by Alexandre Kojève, published in 1947. According to Kojève, what takes place during the master and slave dialectic in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a struggle for recognition that concludes either in domination or death. Some Hegelians, such as Robert R. Williams, have gone so far as to say that many French postmodernists have built their approach in an unspoken embrace or rejection of Kojève's alleged misinterpretation of Hegel. Ricoeur eschews these tangled waters by sticking with the theme of Otherness in Levinas and showing its ramifications in, for instance, the interpretation of the young Hegel by Axel Honneth.

In this chapter, Ricoeur displays an artful capacity to inspire the ongoing research on recognition. Many contemporary thinkers have chosen to shun the troubling question of "What is it that must be recognized?" with something akin to an institutional approach: the answer would not lie in discovering the essence of recognition but, instead, in finding a creative approach to the negotiation of recognition claims. This approach is clearly the one preferred in the defense of multiculturalism. For instance, Will Kymlicka emphasizes the design of fair "structures of culture" that are distinguished from substantial "characters of culture" (Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* [New York: Clarendon, 1989], 167). The idea behind this separation of political from more substantive problems is, most of the time, congruent with considerations about the pluralism of worldviews and the public role of philosophy. Yet this approach, however sound it may be, has displaced deep conflicts in the hands of institutional "designs" that are guided by the need for immediate results, which are likely to shade important issues.

The problem that Ricoeur relentlessly puts forth in his final chapter is that of the asymmetry of agents in the process of recognition. Like the making of a promise, one party is in debt, while the other is in demand. And contrary to appearances, neither the act of recognizing nor the act of promising end once the demand or the promise is fulfilled. Ricoeur insists on the moral motivations that bring together the recognizing and the recognized party. At the end of the book, these moral motivations are analyzed under the triple heading of states of peace, gift exchange, and mutual recognition. Here, recognition takes the form of "gratitude," as exemplified by festive undertakings of recognition. The virtues of giving and of receiving are real, and they express, in the eyes of Ricoeur, the limits of an always asymmetrical recognition bounded by peace and gratitude.

In a first reading of the book, I was critical of this emphasis on moral motivations, since it seemed to be overburdened by a psychological approach. But, on a second reading, I had to refrain from my critique. Ricoeur makes the point that he has no intention to "take the place of a resolution for the perplexities raised by the very concept of a struggle, still less of a resolution of the conflicts"

(218). In other words, Ricoeur is proposing a well-needed complement to the institutional design trend that has invaded contemporary political philosophy. Contrary to many, he stands before the most perplexing issue of recognition with eyes wide open: indeed, demands of recognition may never end and take the form of an "unhappy consciousness" (218). One can try to resolve this potential inflation of claims by sorting out political and substantive issues. But a solution that takes only this path could create vast areas of frustration that canny elites have learned to fuel, or come to neglect recognition claims on the grounds that they hide a Pandora's box waiting to be opened. I suspect that this neglect mechanism is one of the reasons why so many legitimate recognition claims still languish in limbo as we speak. The course taken by Ricoeur may be difficult to square with the mainstream approach in contemporary political philosophy—political liberalism, to name it—but it nonetheless deserves careful attention.

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Problems concerning expertise are as old as Plato and never more urgent than today, where specializations are nested within specializations, and there is an uneasy dependence of democracy on expert counsel. In this context there is theoretical work of practical consequence to be done, and being done, from epistemology to ethics to political philosophy to legal theory to sociology. Thus, the subject of expertise affords philosophers, historians, sociologists, and scientists an important opportunity for constructive conversation.

The essays collected in Evan Selinger and Robert Crease's fine new anthology, *The Philosophy of Expertise*, suggest that hope for such constructive conversation is not misplaced. Selinger and Crease have gathered an impressive set of fifteen papers, among the richest, most rewarding written to date, organized loosely into three parts corresponding to three axes of analyzing expertise. Part 1 is dedicated to exploring expert-novice relations, part 2 to the constitutive character of expertise, and part 3 to examining expertise critically from nonexperts' perspectives. This partition proves a somewhat imperfect fit, however. John Hardwig's essay defending the rationality of epistemic dependence scarcely "contests" expertise and seems better suited for part 1 than part 3; Peter Singer's argument on the possibility of moral expertise seems better placed in part 2, exploring the character of expertise, than in part 1. These are minor points, though, overshadowed by the quality of the essays themselves.

Alvin Goldman and Scott Brewer tackle the following intriguing problems: How should third parties adjudicate conflicting expert testimonies? Must one be an expert to justifiably decide whom to believe? If so, judges and juries will be paralyzed by conflicting testimony of expert witnesses; widespread public agnosticism on much scientific knowledge will be required whenever lone dissenting experts exist. Yet, short of developing the skills to evaluate expert tes-