

Robert Pippin's *Interanimations* is in a sense an extended argument for the value of the history of philosophy as a *method of doing philosophy*. The book begins with an impassioned defence of this kind of philosophical method, and Pippin hopes that the text as a whole will serve as an argument for this claim, as well as a demonstration that the philosophers he deals with here are relevant to contemporary concerns.

Philosophy, for Pippin, is essentially dialogic – its nature involves discussion, a back-and-forth between positions – all philosophers are engaging with *some* other philosopher or position. Choosing to engage with a historical figure is therefore justified as it amounts to choosing the best starting point from which to begin one's own dialogue.

Pippin argues that the history of philosophy (as a method of philosophizing rather than an exercise in textual reconstruction or historical situating) is fundamentally about *re-animating* ideas, *using* these ideas and *engaging* with them in debates that are live and relevant today. Therefore we shouldn't be too worried about whether we read our own concerns or views into historical figures (as long as we can be honest about when and the extent to which we do so), as this is what the process of engaging with historical figures, of *re-animation*, is all about. This claim should be borne in mind when approaching the text – it is clear that a lot of Pippin himself ends up in the figures that he deals with.

The rest of the text constitutes a series of Pippin's engagements with contemporary thinkers' interpretations of Hegel and Nietzsche (with the exception of one chapter on contemporary Kantians, and one chapter on Pippin's interpretation of Nietzsche). Although this method is at times helpful in bringing out subtle differences between Pippin's views and those of his interlocutor, it can sometimes make the text rather hard going – if looking at Heidegger's Nietzsche seems difficult enough, a further level of difficulty is added by looking Pippin's Heidegger's Nietzsche in dialogue with Pippin's own Nietzsche. While this does occasionally add to the difficulty of the text, it is justified by Pippin's overarching argument – these are *reanimations*, dialogic encounters which also serve as an exploration of Pippin's own views.

The first chapter deals with a number of contemporary Kantians, focusing on responses to the rigorism and formalism objections. The argument is essentially that these modern responses either fail to fully meet the objection, or concede too much ground to be properly *Kantian* positions. The concluding argument of the chapter provides a nice transition to the chapters on Hegel – many contemporary responses to the formalism objection attempt to ground the claims of Kantian ethics on some independent absolute value (such as the end-setting capacity of reason). As Pippin argues, this response is simply unavailable to Kant given the setup of the Critical system; it is, however, a response which is available on a Hegelian picture. Whether it is a response that is available to Pippin's Hegel is unclear, a point I return to below.

The Kant chapter is followed by chapters dealing with Brandom, McDowell, Zizek, and Honneth's Hegels. Some of the most difficult sections of the text are the chapters on McDowell and Brandom – one has the feeling that these debates are so

familiar to Pippin that he forgets that may not be as familiar to others, and at times not enough is done to make clear the significance of particular points of disagreement, or the ways in which Pippin's Hegel is able to escape the problems he raises for McDowell and Brandom's, especially given the closeness of their views.

There is a general worry which arises repeatedly in the chapters on Hegel, and which Pippin alludes to in a footnote in the final pages of the text: Given an account of Hegel (such as Pippin's) which makes minimal metaphysical commitments and denies any role for the absolute in grounding value or structuring the development of reason, how is it possible to defend the claim that we make some kind of progress in our rational endeavours? How can we know that our apparent progress in our systems of sense-making is not simply a matter of historical contingency? Pippin raises this point in the chapter on Brandom where he argues that the latter is unable to account for the ways in which a system of sense-making can suffer a breakdown, but it is not made clear how Pippin's Hegel would fare better.

The above relates to the worry I mentioned earlier: on this minimally metaphysical account of Hegel, it is not clear how Pippin's Hegel is able to claim that there is some independent value which attaches to reason; and in his rejections of other views Pippin does not do enough to make his own (presumably preferable) view clear. For example, the question of the ground of reason arises a number of times throughout the Hegel sections: Zizek's claim that reason is grounded in an abyss (or, put differently, in the irrational) is rejected; McDowell's claim that reason is grounded in nature is rejected; and Brandom's account is criticized for relying too heavily on subjective practices to ground reason. However, Pippin's own account is never made explicit, and given the above rejections it is hard to see that there is much philosophical space left for an alternative view.

The second half of the text deals with Nietzsche, engaging with Nahmas, Williams, Heidegger, Strauss, and MacIntyre's particular re-animations. There is also a chapter outlining Pippin's own expressivist take on Nietzsche, and this and the final chapter on MacIntyre are the two in this section which seem to contain the most of Pippin's positive view.

Although a lot of ground is covered in the text, there are a number of central themes which tie the work together, and which give insight into Pippin's own concerns: the nature of normativity and the possibility of normative change and progress play a central role. There is also a question of grounding and origins which runs throughout: how can we make sense of freedom, reason, or the self as self-constituting? If the self becomes what it is through self-constitutive acts, how are we to think about what is acting prior to and within these acts of self-constitution? If freedom only exists within certain collaborative rational and social practices, how are the free acts necessary to enter into these practices possible? These questions serve to structure and bring together the various philosophers Pippin tackles; the one disappointment of the text is it is never made explicit exactly how or whether Pippin's own account is able to deal with them.