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Review Essay

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Review Essay: Shawn E. Klein's (ed.) *Steve Jobs and Philosophy: For Those Who Think Different*

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1. Introduction

Shawn E. Klein's edited collection *Steve Jobs and Philosophy: For Those Who Think Different*[1]—the most recent addition to the Popular Culture and Philosophy series—draws upon the insights of nearly twenty intellectuals to discuss "Steve Jobs's life and work, and their impact on our culture and the way we live" (p. xii). The book's contributions fall under four major sections that correspond to elements of Jobs's well-known persona and Apple's famous "Think Different" marketing campaign: craziness, troublemaking, rebellion, and nonconformity. None of these descriptors carries heavily positive connotations, though the book itself is a tribute to the man responsible for revolutionizing technology. The uneasy combination of both demonology and hagiography finds its ways into the tenor of many of the essays, although Klein notes, in his Introduction, that the book intends neither. Still, when dealing with a subject matter like Steve Jobs, I doubt it could be otherwise.

This is a timely contribution to the intellectual analysis of Jobs's life and influence. Although Jobs passed away from cancer in 2011, his presence looms large for many—including the legions of faithful consumers who were inspired by Jobs's products and audacity and who continue to track Apple's every move. The youngest generation knows only a world crafted by Jobs and his creations; any efforts that help us to understand that world are welcome additions to the literature.

I break down each major section by providing a brief summary of every contribution and offer some critical comments about the contributions. These comments are best understood not as damning critiques, but as expressions of how I think the conversations might continue. Ultimately, this is a tidy and successful introduction to multiple areas of philosophy, including normative and applied ethics, metaphysics, political philosophy, philosophy of action, moral psychology, and philosophy of mind. By design, many questions are thus left unanswered. However, as any educator will attest, getting people

[1] Shawn E. Klein, *Steve Jobs and Philosophy: For Those Who Think Different* (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2015).

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excited to think and talk about ideas is always the real battle. Quite frankly, I enjoy this book and feel drawn into the conversations initiated within it. Thus, if stimulating interesting discussions was a goal of Klein and the contributors, then they have done a nice job.

2. "The Crazy One"

a. Summaries

Steve Jobs's purported craziness is introduced by James Edwin Mahon, who discusses Jobs's well-known ability to create a "reality distortion field" for those around him ("The Reality Distortion Field of Steve Jobs"). Mahon not only asks whether it is ethical to distort the reality that others perceive, but also argues that Jobs's ability to alter perceptions of reality was crucial to his success—in part because the "illusions" he created were often better ways of perceiving the same reality (or creating a new one). As Mahon states, "None of those who did what they did under Jobs would have been able to do the things that they did without his having made them believe that the 'impossible' was, in fact, possible" (p. 13). The next contributor, Carrie-Ann Biondi, intends to understand the nature of entrepreneurship within generally capitalist societies ("Counter-Culture Capitalist"). The entrepreneur, she claims, possesses "creativity, courage, initiative, perseverance, integrity, and resilience in the face of failure" (p. 21). Even though the entrepreneur is seen as interested solely in increasing his or her material well-being, Jobs, among others, demonstrates that the entrepreneur possesses the drive for self-expression, even against the dominant currents within a culture. In support of this, Biondi claims that Jobs could have retired early as a multi-millionaire, but he did not do so (p. 15).

Terry W. Noel adopts some similar themes to Biondi's in his essay ("The Anti-Social Creator"). Noel argues that we cannot safely attribute any of the four cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, courage, and temperance) to Jobs, especially insofar as Jobs often exhibited an excess or deficiency of such virtues (pp. 28-31). Rather, he claims, we ought to view Jobs as possessing the virtues of an entrepreneur—virtues that the "ordinary" person, whose life tends toward the "staid and predictable," simply does not possess (p. 35). Those virtues are "independence of mind," "vision," and "audacity" (p. 33). He, like Biondi, also claims that although the entrepreneur does not conform to the norms of society (p. 35), society ultimately benefits from the activities of entrepreneurs (pp. 25 and 36). Section I concludes with ruminations by Kyle Munkittrick on the role of Pixar in providing entertainment that may make us reconsider how we understand personhood and the beings to whom we attribute personhood ("What Pixar Taught Millennials about Personhood").

b. Comments

Important questions arise in this section. Mahon's opening essay relies heavily upon the Talosian characters from Star Trek to discuss the ethics of reality distortion fields. His analogy of Jobs's behavior to that of the

Talosians seems a bit misplaced, however, because Mahon ultimately concludes that what Jobs did was "the opposite of what the Talosians did, at least in some cases" (p. 11). Unlike the Talosians, Jobs helped "free people from their illusions" (p. 11). In other words, Mahon thinks that the example of the Talosians is illustrative only by way of contrast. That leaves one wondering why so much space is spent discussing the ethics of distorting people's perceptions instead of discussing what Jobs actually did. (I kept hoping that Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" would appear instead.) Additionally, Mahon includes a claim I find implausible. He states that there is nothing morally wrong with creating illusions for oneself (p. 9), but surely this must be qualified. (Could Robert Nozick's "experience machine" find a way into this discussion?) Despite these criticisms, Mahon's essay is a perfect example of how these contributions can stimulate even more questions. It is an exciting way to start the book.

One of the more difficult questions that Biondi raises in her account is how to understand where profit-seeking fits among the perceived benefits of engaging in entrepreneurial activities—foremost among them the need to be "creative" (p. 21). That is, if nonpecuniary satisfactions drive the entrepreneur, as Biondi claims, what role does money play? We might propose that money is an *indicator* or even a *condition* of successful entrepreneurship, but Biondi includes a quotation from Jobs that makes it appear as if it were the primary *cause*: "'If people copied or stole our software, we'd be out of business. If it weren't protected, there'd be *no incentive* for us to make new software or product designs'" (p. 22; my italics). Perhaps for Jobs financial reward and nonpecuniary benefits are interdefinable, but that cannot be right—nor is it consistent with Biondi's thesis. Thus, his statement provokes a need for further discussion of how the financial reward of entrepreneurship relates to its other benefits. Biondi's essay also raises some difficult questions about the nature of intellectual property, which she defends. What is it, and what should it look like in a free society? Can ideas be "property"? Couldn't it be the case that (at least) some forms of intellectual property artificially hamper innovation and competition, thus causing illicit harms? These are hot debates, and Biondi does well in introducing the reader to them.

Noel affirms that Jobs's rejection of traditionally virtuous behavior was necessary for his success as an entrepreneur. He states that the innovations we see with Apple come "to exist precisely because people like Steve Jobs don't think the four cardinal virtues apply to them . . . . For rebels like Jobs, the four virtues are prison walls" (p. 35). This is a bold claim, and it hinges upon what we understand the cardinal virtues to entail for our behavior and attitudes. Early in the account Noel implies that any traditional understanding of the cardinal virtues means that they must be exhibited in balance between two extremes, and Jobs failed at that (p. 29). At another point, however, he claims that Aristotle defined virtue as a mean, but not as a "formulaic rule" (p. 34). That is, Aristotle thought that the exercise of a virtue would *tend* to land in between two extremes *on average*. But that does not

entail for Aristotle, nor does it entail for any traditional theory, that virtue is always smack dab in the middle of excess or deficiency. Some situations call for more of a certain virtue, some call for less. For example, just because a soldier has to be extraordinarily courageous to deal with radically dangerous situations, well beyond the everyday courage required of ordinary people, it does not then follow that the soldier is not virtuously courageous. Thus, when Noel claims that entrepreneurs must takes risks and therefore cannot exhibit a lot of prudence, given the situational demands presented by the "sheer uncertainty of entrepreneurial markets" (p. 28), a traditional virtue ethicist, following Aristotle, might respond by agreeing. Nonetheless, I am sympathetic to Noel's suspicions that *some* of Jobs's outrageousness and imbalance enabled *some* of his genius, but it is too far to say that genius entailed viciousness (vis-à-vis traditional virtues), for which Jobs also apparently had a knack. And, of course, none of my objections positively establishes that Jobs could be called virtuous on a traditional account. I just want to be clear that there is some nuance that could be exploited for further discussion.

My hunch is that Munkittrick's concluding essay was placed within the "craziness" section because of the message it conveys, namely, that a purportedly once-crazy idea—the notion that we could extend "personhood" to nonhumans—is now quite conceivable because of the world that Pixar has created. I am not at all convinced by Munkittrick's argument, but that is not a knock. For Munkittrick succeeds in reminding the reader of the arbitrariness we encounter when attempting to define personhood, and the essay is quite engrossing. Still, I do not think that Pixar is as revolutionary as Munkittrick thinks. Although he says that the "power of Pixar" is that it has shown "that humanity does not have a monopoly on personhood," he overlooks the fact that generations of religious believers have considered the possibility that *God* is a (nonhuman) person, too (pp. 48-49).

3. The Troublemaker

a. Summaries

Stephen R. C. Hicks opens the section on Steve Jobs's troublemaking by suggesting a troubling idea: our schools are failing to prepare students to become entrepreneurs ("How Can We Make Entrepreneurs?"). Whereas schools enforce conformity and regularity, entrepreneurs need space for creativity and experimentation. Hicks's analysis is not all bad news, however. He argues that various activities and mindsets—and even a deeper consideration of the Montessori model of education—offer productive paths for encouraging entrepreneurship in the future (pp. 63-64). Following Hicks, Robert F. Salvino does not emphasize Jobs's troublemaking so much as his vision, and he attempts to understand Jobs's creatively destructive vision in the context of Apple's actual achievements and ethical lapses ("The Visionary Entrepreneur"). Salvino does not give Jobs or Apple a complete pass, but he does not fail them, either. He claims that Apple has at least some responsibility to "confront the issue" of unjust working conditions in its

overseas factories (and he believes that it has taken some steps to do so) (p. 74). He also argues that Jobs most certainly and unjustifiably verbally abused some employees. Lastly, he claims that had Jobs engaged in more philanthropic activity, doing so would have diverted important resources to inefficient ends and distracted Jobs from the pursuit of his own vision.

Ryan Krause and Owen Parker's essay argues that we ought to understand the entrepreneurialism of Steve Jobs not in terms of invention (credit for that, they claim, may really be due to Steve Wozniak), but in terms of value creation, as proposed by Ayn Rand ("But Steve Jobs Didn't Invent Anything!"). Jobs tapped into the "philosophically objective value" that Apple's technology could provide and then, by "demonstrating the technology's value to potential customers," was able to "create socially objective value" (pp. 81-82). Next, William R. Thomas's essay offers a capitalist's Euthyphro problem ("What Does Market Success Show?"). He asks, "Were Apple II and the iPod great products regardless of how they sold, or do we say they were great because they sold well?" (p. 87). His conclusion is that Apple's products were great regardless of how they sold, but as a result of their greatness, they sold well in a marketplace where they could become available to satisfy people's needs.

b. Comments

I particularly enjoy the challenge that Hicks presents to an educator: First, take a list of traits that one sees in successful entrepreneurs, such as "leadership," "perseverance," and the embrace of "trial and error" (p. 61). Then, ask yourself what activities you are doing to help encourage behaviors that depend on those traits. It is one thing to "talk the talk" about the various traits we see in entrepreneurs. It is quite another thing to take concrete steps to promote those values in education. Hicks makes one claim, however, that is open for question. He says, "we live in an era that, for the first time in history, is taking entrepreneurism seriously" (p. 54). It may the case that *academics* are taking it seriously, but I fear, following the work of economist and Nobel Laureate Edmund Phelps (see *Mass Flourishing*[2]), that the great period of general dynamism, with its endless entrepreneurship and innovation, has passed. It may only be because the "owl of Minerva" is spreading its wings, to adopt G. W. F. Hegel's famous dictum, that we are just now taking stock of the importance of real innovation. Still, I hope that Hicks is right.

Salvino's account follows a particular trend that is implicit in many of the other essays, too. On the one hand, he claims, "Jobs placed quality on a pedestal—above character, above reputation, above profit maximization" (p. 71). On the other hand, he argues that Jobs was a man of "integrity" (p. 73). A deeper analysis is needed, because one must wonder where the line is between "character" and "integrity." Unwittingly, perhaps, Salvino's remarks reveal the tension that all of us feel about Jobs.

[2] Edmund Phelps, *Mass Flourishing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

The final two essays of this section are quite similar. Both see Apple as providing real value for consumers and thus offer strong defenses of Jobs's efforts. Nonetheless, a skeptical reader may push back. First, in Krause and Parker's attempt to understand Jobs's innovations through the lens of Rand's objective theory of value, we find subjective theories of value minimized. Yet, by doing that, we may be giving too much credit to rationality in explaining Apple's success or Jobs's behavior. Certainly, it is true that Apple products have great utility relative to human need. However, one suspects that very few (honest) users of Apple products will say that "having" to purchase the newest Apple product is anything other than the result of being swept up in the excitement of a new version of a product that they already possess and that suits their needs just fine. Thus, I have some questions for the authors: Could objective and subjective theories of value work together to explain Jobs's and Apple's success more fully? Are they mutually exclusive? Why or why not?

Second, in the next essay, Thomas faults companies that create, produce, and market according to customer *desires* as opposed to *needs*. He believes that endorsing Humean assumptions of rationality, wherein reason is purely instrumental in the service of desires, including harmful desires, cannot produce a rational expectation of long-term success for a firm. Rather, in order to predict a greater chance of success, a company must respond well to "objective needs, not arbitrary whims" (p. 95). Must *all* desires get shoved aside in this equation? Functionally, a company's attempt to satisfy consumers' *higher-order* desires could produce the same results as its attempts to satisfy their objective needs. Although those desires are not "arbitrary," they can still be called desires (and thus not rooted ultimately in reason). Further discussion, as with the previous essay, would be most welcome.

4. The Rebel

a. Summaries

Section III begins with Jason Walker's comparisons of Steve Jobs with Jacob Marley, primarily because Jobs was (in)famously unwilling to donate to charity in the manner of Bill Gates or Warren Buffett ("Marley and Steve"). Walker thus investigates whether Jobs can be accused of a "grievous moral failing" (p. 101). In order to address this issue, he tries to evaluate Jobs through the normative frameworks of Aristotle, Kant, and utilitarians such as Peter Singer. Walker concludes that even though Singer would offer the greatest indictment of Jobs's lack of charitable giving, it is Kant's understanding of persons as "ends-in-themselves" that might provide the antidote. Editor Shawn E. Klein teams up with Danielle Fundora to follow Walker's discussion of Jobs's ethics with an analysis of the moral and spiritual tradition that purportedly influenced Jobs the most: Buddhism ("The Noble Truths of Steve Jobs"). They ask whether Jobs reasonably can be seen as a paradigm of Buddhist discipleship, especially given his well-known eccentricities and flaws. They conclude that Jobs's lifelong journey to be true to himself, with all its bumps along the way, is consistent *at least* with the fact

that "Buddhism is a worldview for human beings—not for perfect beings . . . [who] sometimes fall short of living up to . . . professed ideals" (p. 124).

Robert White takes up some of the problems in the messaging of Apple's famous "Think Different" campaign ("Two Sides of Think Different"). While not denying the value of genuine independent thinking, White hastens to add that that campaign's blanket embrace of merely "thinking differently" can lead us into the uncomfortable position of praising pseudo-independent thinking. Relying heavily on Rand's framework, White concludes that making careful distinctions between Jobs's actual independent thinking and pseudo-independent thinking provides standards that allow us to articulate consistently both our praise for and our criticism of Jobs. Jared Meyer takes some similar strands of argument in a different direction, utilizing Douglas Den Uyl and Douglas Rasmussen's neo-Aristotelian ethics as a guide for understanding the perfectionist element of Jobs's life and work ("The Moral Perfectionist"). Meyer thinks that Jobs is a good example of the continuous work of moral development: "He shows us that living a flourishing human life is difficult, requires constant re-evaluation, and, most importantly, is unique to each individual" (p. 147).

Section III closes with Jason Iuliano's extended discussion of "Corporate Moral Agency"—specifically with regard to the question of whether Apple, as a corporation, can be considered a moral agent and thus be held morally responsible for its actions ("Does Apple Know Right from Wrong?"). Iuliano intends to put some teeth into the idea, often heard on the news or read in the papers, that corporations, qua corporations, exhibit intentionality in their behavior (quoting a newspaper headline that reads "Apple loves Clean Designs," among others [p. 152]). He does not explicitly endorse the idea that we *ought* to attribute moral agency to corporations in order to "reduce the responsibility deficit" that emerges when "corporations take morally bad actions," but he does at least suggest as much (p. 160).

b. Comments

The first two essays of this section (Walker's and Klein and Fundora's) are perfect illustrations of how this volume may serve as an introduction to philosophy while utilizing vivid and modern examples. In addition, Walker's argument takes an interesting turn when he argues that "Kant does insist that assistance to the poor and needy is an imperfect duty. But self-care—attending to your own happiness—is likewise also an imperfect duty" (109). Thus, he suggests that Singer's demand that a person engage in charitable giving could, on a Kantian analysis, turn an individual into a mere means to the ends of others, thus leading to a violation of one duty in order to follow another. This is due to the complicated nature of imperfect duties and the imprecise way in which they are executed. To be clear, Walker does not discount that Kant would maintain that Jobs has duties to himself and to others. His intention is to take the moralistic wind out of Singer's sails and thus avoid Singer's conclusion that Jobs was guilty of a serious moral failure (at least on that issue). I only wish, however, that Walker had discussed the

role that *dignity* plays in Kant's account of persons. That notion goes a long way toward explaining the nature of our moral obligations toward others, especially relative to the moral law, and it could enrich the discussion. Furthermore, Klein and Fundora's excellent synopsis of Buddhist thought is sympathetic to Jobs without devolving into mere spin—they acknowledge his faults but gracefully contextualize them as entirely human. Buddhism, they suggest, can help us understand the value of the humility of not jumping on a vitriolic, judgmental bandwagon, especially when dealing with persons on their "path" toward Enlightenment (p. 125). A question that comes to mind, however, is: Could other traditions do that job just as well, or better?

White's essay returns to themes seen earlier in the book—particularly what it means to be a visionary and the important character traits that enable sound reasoning. I appreciate his stout rejection of the idea that "we will come to think that Jobs had to have his negative traits in order to have his positive traits, and vice versa" (p. 136), but this conclusion is arrived at via some questionable epistemological claims. I worry that White demands too much from us when it comes to sorting out absolute fact from fiction. *Ex ante*, at least, we simply do not have the capacity to know that our observations and theories about the world carve nature at its joints, so to speak—or even that our best and most reliable theories are necessarily true. *Ex post*, we can often say, "Such and such theory did not work to explain the facts (as we perceive them), predict phenomena, etc." Even then, though, we can always be proven wrong because our perspective may have skewed our understanding of the facts. Intentionally or not, White veers toward a thesis of in-principle infallibilism for human knowers. But one can be a fallibilist about the human propensity to err while still maintaining belief in objective reality.

Meyer also returns to earlier themes in his discussion of Jobs's endless and uneven quest to define himself. This essay is a particularly enticing introduction to Den Uyl and Rasmussen's heroic efforts to synthesize a traditional account of morality with a classical liberal defense of the individual. Still, I find Meyer's combination of neo-Aristotelianism and Rand's ethics to raise a number of questions; in general, they are not presented as completely compatible, at least on his account. For example, Meyer defends a number of Jobs's behaviors (such as his fruit diets, use of psychedelic drugs, forays into Eastern spirituality, and so on) as having the effect of providing life lessons that built both Jobs's character and the foundations that led to his greatest achievements (pp. 140-41). However, Meyer then cites Rand as arguing that "*reason* is central to the very maintenance of human life" (p. 142; my italics). I doubt, however, that all of Jobs's activities were sanctioned by reason as promoting objective utility for the individual. It appears that the flights of fancy that marked many of Jobs's pursuits were indeed valuable to him in an indirect way (and perhaps fundamental to his genius)—even though, when looked at directly via reason for their impact on his health or survival, they could have done objective harm to him. Perhaps there is a relationship here between neo-Aristotelianism and

Rand's ethics, but I do not see it. Meyer's presentation, nonetheless, leaves me craving more.

Iuliano's essay is among the most thought-provoking in the volume. It is a useful review of some important literature on a difficult topic, namely, whether we have grounds for holding corporations responsible for their behavior. I am particularly impressed by the way Iuliano elegantly reviews the increasingly popular arguments for the idea that corporations are moral agents. Those arguments have their merits, but I will not go so far as to say they are knockdown. In part, that is due to the weakness of the arguments (not from Iuliano, but primarily from its well-known proponents) for the supposed implications of endorsing the moral agency of corporations. One such implication is that acknowledging the moral agency of corporations would allow us to fill the "responsibility deficit that frequently arises when groups take actions" (p. 160). That is because, following the work of legal theorist and philosopher John Hasnas, I am not sure that there is or has been any responsibility deficit when it comes to holding corporations (including corporate officials, employees, and sometimes shareholders) responsible for bad behavior. In other words, one must wonder whether the quest to establish the moral agency of corporations is a solution in search of a problem.

5. The Misfit

a. Summaries

Paul Pardi opens Section IV by arguing that Steve Jobs is best understood as embodying the philosophical tradition of existentialism ("Close Your Eyes, Hold your Breath, Jump In"). This is in contrast to Jobs's main competitor, Bill Gates, whom Pardi considers to be a pragmatist. "Existentialists tend to live life 'in the moment'," according to Pardi, and understanding this impulse helps us to understand all of Jobs's idiosyncrasies and quest for meaning in his "life's narrative" (p. 167). Next, Alexander R. Cohen describes at great length Apple's legal woes regarding eBooks, concluding, based on Rand's views, that "anti-trust laws are deeply unjust" (p. 182) ("Did Steve Jobs Live and Work for You?"). Then, Christopher Ketcham, using a mix of actual quotations and inspiration derived from their words and works, puts Jobs in conversation with Martin Heidegger on the value of technology for human life. Kethcham's Heidegger asks the important questions: "[I]s the utility [of technology] worth the price of the change in our lives?" And, "Does its utility, its functionality, and design comport with what our conception to be human really is?" (p. 193) ("Jobs and Heidegger Square Off on Technology"). Finally, Dennis Knepp utilizes Slavoj Žižek's adaptation of Hegelian logic in order to understand how the contradiction inherent in Macintosh's "simple sophistication" unfolds over time (p. 196) ("Simplicity Is the Ultimate Sophistication"). More specifically, Knepp proposes that one can understand the progression of Jobs's creations from Macintosh to the NeXT Cube, and then back to the iMac, through this dialectic: "The original positive idea is contradictory and unstable. The second

idea as a negation is a symptom of this contradictory instability. The third idea is actually a starting again for the first idea" (p. 197).

b. Comments

The final section of this book is a hodgepodge of ideas, combining only loosely related essays that feature occasional biography, important moments in Apple's history, and scattered philosophical reflections. (Was it intentional that the "misfit" section contains the most diverse essays? If so, that's clever.)

Pardi's emphasis on how existentialism serves as a useful framework for evaluating Jobs's life quest is a welcome change of pace in the volume, and I would be curious to explore more how Jobs's Buddhism might fit into this thesis. (If I were to rearrange some of the essays in this book, I might place Pardi's essay alongside the aforementioned Klein and Fundora essay.) Following Pardi, the real value of Cohen's contribution is not actually in the philosophical ruminations at the end of his essay (at this point in the book, similar arguments, rooted in Rand's thought, have been rehearsed repeatedly), but in his detailed case study of Apple's foray into the eBook market with the iPad. Business ethics professors could benefit from this, regardless of their views on Rand's philosophy or the value of various anti-trust laws.

In another world entirely, Ketcham's fictional dialogue between Heidegger and Jobs is playful but maddening, which is inescapable given the two subjects in question. I find myself less interested in Heidegger's questions about technology than I am in the suggestion attributed to the Jobs character, namely, that new technologies ultimately do not make communication impersonal. Rather, he claims, "technology will find a way to bring back the face-to-face in a way that seems as real as if the other is standing right here in the room" (p. 191). Whether this comes true is one of *the* central issues that will confront us very soon, no small thanks to Apple. As a college professor, I have noticed, even over a few years, not only a diminishing of my students' capacities to focus on longer readings, classroom lectures, and complex writing assignments, but also a degradation of their communication etiquette and skills. Perhaps I am just a Luddite, but I am not hopeful that Apple products are the cure. Is there an app for that?

The last essay by Knepp is pure fun. Whether one thinks, at one extreme, that Hegel and his disciples have uncovered some deep and inextricable truths about reality, or, at the other extreme, that he and they are simply telling convenient just-so stories, Knepp's essay is an entertaining way to map Jobs's efforts throughout his career while introducing interesting philosophy. One question I wish Knepp had asked, however, is whether the determinism inherent in Žižek's Hegelian approach to understanding the progression of events admits of any exceptions. He includes a quotation from Žižek on this issue:

> The lesson of repetition is rather that our first choice was necessarily the wrong one, and for a very precise reason: the "right choice" is

> only possible the second time, for only the first choice, in its wrongness, literally creates the conditions for the right choice. The notion that we might have already made the right choice the first time, but just blew the chance by accident, is a retroactive illusion. (p. 205)

Those are fighting words. To accept them, however, takes a leap of faith that I am not sure is warranted.

6. Conclusion

My specific critical comments are intended to draw out more carefully the conversations initiated in this collection's essays—because these are conversations that ought to be had. I have some quibbles about the book in general, though. A number of essays are redundant. Fewer contributors, perhaps writing longer essays, could have addressed that problem. Additionally, there is far too much focus on Ayn Rand's thought at the expense of other ideas. Certainly, Rand's is an important voice to be heard in any discussion about entrepreneurship and capitalism. However, other important and well-known proponents of entrepreneurship and capitalism have significant and sophisticated ideas to help us understand and appreciate the work of someone like Steve Jobs. There is no mention of luminaries such as Milton Friedman, Friedrich Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, or Robert Nozick. This is an inexplicable gap. Finally, the end of the book contains brief sketches of some of the philosophers mentioned in the book. Although they are all inescapably incomplete, I found the treatment of Thomas Aquinas, perhaps one of the greatest philosophers in history, rather unfair and misleading. To reduce Aquinas's political positions to a defense of monarchism, slavery, and the burning of heretics (p. 209) is a rather cheap way of turning people off to what is, in actuality, a very humanistic philosopher with a sophisticated view of politics—one that influenced, via Richard Hooker, the great liberal philosopher John Locke. Aristotle also supported monarchism and natural slavery, though that is left out of his sketch (p. 208). Why pick on Aquinas?

Nonetheless, Klein's contributors offer their insights in a supremely approachable manner, and the book is a pleasure to read. One encounters serious philosophical issues in relatively short essays throughout, and they are handled invitingly in order that newcomers to philosophy might access them. This book is a wonderful introduction to many areas of philosophy, made palatable and accessible by its focus on one of the greatest entrepreneurs we have ever known. Beyond simply serving as an introduction to these fields, however, the volume serves to stimulate conversations—and for this even professionals should be grateful.