

decided or determined by religious tenets? Another is the matter of freedom, especially in connection with the sense of ‘self’. Is authenticity compatible with freedom and the absence of a self (56, 60ff., 81, 97, 98) and is ‘freedom’ even comprehensible at all? For example, it is said “Who we are is not determined by any underlying trait or characteristic that we are born with. It is, rather, up to the individual to shape his or her own identity by choosing certain projects and taking action in the world.” (Chapter 5, 63; cf. 64) and “[...] the existentialist position makes it clear that I *make myself* who I am through my free, meaning-giving choices” (Chapter 8, 135). The very *basis* for freedom and for making oneself who one is seems to be absent if there is no self from which to start; it would in fact be inconsistent to say that “the individual” can shape “his or her *own* identity” and to speak of “*my* free, meaning-giving choices” on the basis of which “*I make myself* who I am” since there cannot be an individual before he or she makes his or her own identity, nor can there be an ‘I’ before I am made. Only by resorting to a theory that differs widely from what existentialists envisage might a way out of this difficulty be offered (leaving the matter here whether such an alternative would itself be acceptable). I will readily grant that Aho is nuanced in discussing these matters, especially with respect to what he says about Nietzsche, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (60, 74–79), but it remains difficult to see how freedom might be possible and what, if anything, a self would be; this problem is in particular prominent in Sartre’s philosophy.

These critical comments are minor relative to the book as a whole and were mainly mentioned to provide a complete, balanced review. They do not derogate from the fact that the book is a valuable addition to the existing literature and may become part of academic curricula. It does presuppose some general knowledge of philosophy, and apart from that, its merits will only fully be appreciated by those who can place the work in the context of the history of philosophy and realize what is at stake in what existentialist philosophers maintain. Such readers will indeed be able to appreciate the work, and surely share my judgment that Aho has produced an outstanding book.

Jasper Doomen

Joshua Alexander: *Experimental Philosophy: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity 2012. ISBN-13: 978-0-7456-4918-4; 154 pages.

In the last decade the number of papers on experimental philosophy increased exponentially. Eventually, some of those papers were collected in books such as *Experimental Philosophy*, a compilation edited in 2008 by J. Knobe and S. Nichols, and *Experimental Philosophy And Its Critics*, an anthology published four years later by T. Grundmann and J. Horvath. But being a relatively recent research program, experimental philosophy needed a comprehensive *monographic* study. Alexander’s book is an attempt to fill that gap.

Alexander’s *Experimental Philosophy* is not precisely an introduction, as the subtitle reads. It is instead a clearly written overview of the main topics concerning experimental philosophy. As such, it can be a useful guide for all those who are already acquainted with some issues of the new movement and want to gain a better picture of the whole field. In order to be an introduction, the book would need (among other things) an extensive chapter

discussing the place of the movement within the sphere of contemporary analytic philosophy. Should we understand experimental philosophy as a new way of philosophizing, now that the old research program started more than a century ago with the “linguistic turn” has lost its centrality? Which are exactly the differences between the new movement and the “ordinary language philosophy” (or “Oxford linguistic philosophy”) as a specific development inside the linguistic turn? If we basically construe experimental philosophy as a reaction against the linguistic turn in general – and against the ordinary language philosophy in particular – which continuities among these approaches should nevertheless be emphasized (for it is clear that experimental philosophy does not herald a turning back to 19th century positivism)? Critics and exponents of experimental philosophy like Kauppinen (2007) and Sandis (2010) have succinctly sought to make sense of the new movement by placing it in relation to the framework established by postwar analytic philosophy. But more work should be done around this topic and Alexander limits himself to just some loose remarks, as I will show below.

Of an introduction in experimental philosophy I would also expect a clear definition of *intuitions*, the very subject of the movement. The first chapter, whose heading is “Philosophical Intuitions,” ends without providing the reader with a satisfying treatment of the topic. For those readers unfamiliar with the new movement, the phrase “philosophical intuition” can evoke different associations, such as “the intuitions that philosophers have” – and that is certainly not what Alexander means by it. It would be also advisable to offer at least a short account of the history of “intuition” as a philosophical concept; for it is not difficult to see the different connotations that the notion evokes between, for instance, an empiricist and a Platonist. The reader finishes the book conjecturing that intuitions are something like the spontaneous cognitive answers that people have when faced with some real or imagined, philosophically relevant scenarios. If this guess is right, then some questions need be dealt with: which are the differences between intuitions and emotional responses? Is it possible to distinguish intuitions from emotions? And what distinguishes an intuition from a judgment? Is an intuition something prior to a judgment? (In any event, the phrase “intuitions that concern philosophically relevant matters” is preferable to the sometimes misleading expression “philosophical intuitions.” If I asked my neighbor what she thinks of the origin of the universe, I would not call her spontaneous answers “astronomical intuitions.”)

After liberating themselves from the European colonial powers and declaring the independence, the new nations of North and South America faced an enormous challenge: to forge an identity. Contrary to the old European countries, many young American nations did not have a “glorious past” to exhibit. Accordingly, the strategy was to create a contrast: If Europe is the land of the past, then we are the land of the future; our strength is a promising tomorrow. Experimental philosophy as a young movement finds itself in a similar situation. Since it does not have a huge portfolio of discoveries and theories to show, the tactic is to promise a better future under its guidance. It is true that experimental philosophers can exhibit some interesting findings (like the “side-effect effect”), but they lack conclusive theories to explicate them. Alexander repeats throughout his book that not possessing a definitive interpretation of (almost none of) experimental philosophy’s findings is not necessarily a weakness. On the contrary, it is an opportunity for growth; as he insists, “more research should be done.” An in-depth “study of people’s philosophical intuitions” will ultimately give us a better understanding of *what* people think about phi-