

nence épistémologique. On mesurera cette naïveté critique à la lecture de deux ouvrages récents *Philosophie de la science contemporaine* de Roland Omnès (Paris, Gallimard [Folio], 1994) et *La fin des certitudes* par Ilya Prigogine (Paris, Odile Jacob, 1996) — j'ai fait un compte rendu de ce dernier ouvrage dans *Horizons philosophiques* (vol. 6, n° 2 [1996], p. 129-133). Pour le premier, on consultera la discussion informelle «Consistent Interpretations of Quantum Mechanics» (*Review of Modern Physics*, vol. 64, n° 2 [1992], p. 339-382), où la théorie des «histoires» (avec les intégrales de chemins de Feynman) qu'ont formulée Gell-Mann et Hartle à la suite de Griffiths est supposée consistante sans plus. Il n'est pas inutile de rappeler qu'en logique et en mathématiques la consistance ou non-contradiction doit être démontrée. Que Michel Bitbol ait tenu compte avec un minimum de moyens dans son introduction philosophique à la mécanique quantique de la dimension formelle de la critique fondationnelle est une heureuse initiative et son livre peut de ce point de vue servir d'initiation à l'analyse épistémologique de la mécanique quantique.

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Announcement/Chronique

Robert E. Butts (1928-1997)

Robert E. Butts died on March 26, 1997. His health had been poor in recent years, but his sudden death came as a shock to everyone who knew him.

Bob was "Mr. HPS," as Robert Cohen once called him. His chief scholarly work was in the history and philosophy of science; his principle concern was methodology. He was the leading Whewell scholar of the day, and one of the principle commentators on Leibniz and Kant. Many years of work on the latter two culminated in *Kant and the Double Government Methodology* (1984). His fine work on Whewell, *William Whewell's Theory of Science* (1968), a combination of selections and interpretative essays, rescued that rich thinker from oblivion and started the current round of interest. His other interests are reflected in the topics of some of the volumes he edited, including books on Galileo, on Newton, and on German constructivism. Most recently, he was working on witchcraft, its history, and what it had to tell us about rationality. A selection of his essays was published as *Historical Pragmatics* (1993).

Bob was a model historical philosopher and philosophical historian. He instilled this way of doing things in his students, and he influenced his colleagues by his example. For his sixtieth birthday a *Festschrift* appeared: *An Intimate Relation: Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science Presented to Robert E. Butts* (J. Brown and J. Mittelstrass, eds., 1989). The main title is deliberately ambiguous, intending to convey both Butts's attitude to doing history and the philosophy of science and his colleagues' attitude to him.

Though we think of Butts as a philosophy of science and hence as a paradigm “analytic” philosopher, his interests and sympathies would surprise many who did not know him well. His dissertation (Pennsylvania, 1957, under Paul Schrecker) was on Husserl. He often spoke warmly of other major “continental” figures such as Sartre, de Beauvoir, and Heidegger. He was not particularly sympathetic to current trends in continental philosophy, but the older figures he held in high regard.

Butts’s work as an organizer and administrator is unparalleled. He moved from Bucknell to Western Ontario in 1963 to become head of one of the colleges. When they later merged, he chaired the full department from 1967 to 1972, then again from 1988 to 1992. His first term as chair was a period of enormous growth, and he made the most of the money and opportunities of the time. Calling himself “The Madison Avenue Chair,” he built an excellent department, strong in many areas, but most famous in the philosophy of science, a field in which it is rightly regarded as one of the best in the world.

Bob served the larger Canadian and international community very well. He represented Canada on various committees; he organized and hosted the Fifth International Congress of Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science (held at Western, 1975); he edited the premier journal in the field, *Philosophy of Science* (1980-90); he founded and edited the book series, *Western Studies in the Philosophy of Science*; and, of course, he served on many association and editorial boards. He was also the president of the Canadian Philosophical Association (1989-90). On his retirement, Bob was awarded the prestigious Humboldt Research Prize, a distinguished award that marked an equally distinguished career.

In his three decades at Western, Bob supervised several students, including both of us (JRB in the late 1970s, MM in the mid-1980s). We found the Butts style very congenial. For the most part it was *laissez faire*, but since he knew so much about the history and philosophy of science, he was an invaluable resource whom every student gladly used. And the moment one needed a bit of bucking up from the usual trials of dissertation work, the sympathetic encouragement was immediate and genuine, either in the form of constructive comments on one’s work or simply some good food and wine at his home.

Because of declining health, Bob did not entertain as much in recent years as he had formerly. As students, we spent considerable time at the Butts dining table. He was a remarkably good cook. A lesson he liked to teach was how to take philosophy seriously without allowing it to be all consuming; it was, after all, only one of the things that made life worthwhile. Everyone who had the good fortune to join Bob at the table enjoyed his food almost as much as his company. We will miss him.

He is survived by his wife, Valentine Rodger, three children, Erick, Lise, and Gregory, and four grandchildren.

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