the subject acting and thin the world.

t section of Givenness Three: ‘Marion and ses more on the God-le. Continuing the call
ation to hermeneutics, t’s chapter 12
in what Kearney calls a ‘poetics’ (p. 242) where o go beyond the modal possible/impossible to
agized eschatological hat transcends the
otions of potencias as
erceive power of the
this part, comparisons
ought are made with St.
Cassidy (chapter 11:

evitque: Augustinian
in Marion’s
gy of Love’), while the
onohue explores links
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The Absent Threshold:
Afterword’). Chapter
More’) contains the
 dialogue between
Kearney in response to
estions posed by the
conference.
us and God is an
all for who wish to
an-Luc Marion. As the
title of this volume
an-Luc Marion) suggests,
us are asked of Marion;
 a starry-eyed collection
questions of Marion
ative is an
al subjective genitive).
the book witnesses to a
for the profundity of
ought, most of the
ave serious questions to
ask of Marion. I have no doubt that
Marion’s body of writings will stand
like a saturated phenomenon for
many years to come. With this in
mind, the editors are right to use the
plural ‘questions’ in the sub-title of
this volume, since many more
questions are raised than answers
provided at this stage of the reception
of Marion’s thought. Givenness and God
is to be welcomed as the first attempt
of English-language thinkers trying to
grapple with these fertile and
provocative questions of Jean-Luc
Marion. Despite the dazzling array of
questions, Leask and Cassidy have
deftly arranged the contributions into
three parts which provide a structure
to begin exploring Marion’s ideas.

One of the few defects of this
volume is that it lacks the extensive
bibliography that can be found in K.
Hart’s volume and which is a great
help to all students of Marion.
Despite the fact that Givenness and God
has not attracted the ‘big’ names in
Hart’s volume (Caputo, Milbank,
Romano et al.) it is noteworthy that

The Greek Praise of Poverty: Origins of Ancient Cynicism, William D. Desmond (Notre
(cloth). ISBN. 0-268-02582-7 (pbk). Price$48/$25

The substance of this book is that
praise of poverty is implicit and latent
in Greek culture before the Cynics
begin to praise it openly in the late
fifth and early fourth centuries. It is
sometimes forgotten when
contemplating the glory that was
Greece that the country had a
subsistence economy where a fall into
abject poverty was an ever-present
danger. In such circumstances two
situations can arise. The wealth of the
famous is desired and praised by all.
Yet there may be also be praise for
the real toil of the unknown worker
on the land, who though poor, can
keep the state from disaster. Where
previous scholarship on the Cynics,
for example, privileges praise of wealth in Greek culture, Desmond seeks to privilege praise of poverty. Chapter 1 'Approaches to Ancient Cynicism' (pp. 1-25) describes the discrete avenues usually trodden in studies of ancient Cynicism. The Hellenistic, the philosophical, the 'oriental' the psychological, and the Marxist, explain the origin of the pervasiveness of Cynicism in the late Classical world. Desmond summarises the ways in which these approaches fix on different cultural and political processes. From the decline of the polis in the Hellenistic period leading to the re-evaluation of life along individualistic minimalist lines (and perhaps corresponding to the rise of the 'ordinary man' in New Comedy), he proceeds to consideration of the notion that Cynicism especially in its asceticism is un-Greek and oriental. Again, admiration for the lone figure standing against all odds in his yearning for true freedom, or the idea that Socrates and others such as his follower Antisthenes are seen as 'spoilers' of 'aristocratic' philosophical ideas has led to the conclusion that class exclusion is the impetus for the increased popularity of Cynicism. Marxist ideas that money excludes meaning that those previously included such as intellectuals, or those unluckily newly impoverished, become the fertile ground for the growth in Cynicism. These exclusivist approaches are not rejected by Desmond but characteristically subsumed into his approach which stresses inclusivity: the rise of the ideas that later crystallised in Cynicism have deep roots in Greek history, politics, philosophy, and even in the limits imposed by the actual harsh and unforgiving landscape of Greece itself. His view that praise of poverty is latent in Greek culture - it is there and not there before the Cynics ever appear as a force - is the paradox he himself creates and seeks to explicate through close reading and wide knowledge in this book. Desmond proceeds methodically.

Prefaced by quotations from Crates, Chapter 2 'Praise of Poverty and Work' (pp. 27-103) is the longest chapter of five making up 45% of the text. The purpose is to track traces of two famous Cynic paradoxes that 'poverty is wealth' and 'idleness is work' through extant literature. There are three main sections dealt with under the headings: 'Wealth: What is Wealth? What is Poverty?' with subheadings 'Qualitative and quantitative wealth' 'Sources, uses, and abuses of wealth', 'The burdens and benefits of wealth'; second, 'Idleness is Work: the Cynic Version of An 'Industrious Optimism'' with subheadings 'The traditional work ethic', 'The imperial work ethic', 'The philosophical work ethic'; and lastly, 'The Economic Background to Cynic Asceticism'. The processes of thought which eventually produced these paradoxes are traced with subtlety and cleverness not without resort to Cynic anecdotes. The ways in which traditional praise of wealth evolve and become part of the Cynic world-view are followed through consideration of 'opposites' or binary ideas. Subjective wealth or internal wealth is contrasted with external possessions, qualitative wealth and quantitative wealth, high philosophical theory with popular notions of wealth, the internal 'riches' an individual might possess versus his external goods. The analysis exploits the clash of evaluation of wealth and poverty, and 'opposites' or binary ideas. Subjective wealth or internal wealth is contrasted with external possessions, qualitative wealth and quantitative wealth, high philosophical theory with popular notions of wealth, the internal 'riches' an individual might possess versus his external goods. The analysis exploits
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might possess versus his
is. The analysis exploits
the clash of different systems of
evaluation of what actually constitute
'wealth' and 'poverty' using examples
adduced from the life of Solon, Plato,
or the Comic playwrights among
many others (p. 63). So for example,
the consistent method of philosophy
in formulating ideas is placed side by
side with the subjective, qualitative,
internal understanding of wealth as
popularly understood. 'Popular
thought' cannot construct as
consistent and rigorous a system as
philosophers might wish, but such
diffuse 'thought' is what Desmond
seeks to investigate. He shows that
'poverty is wealth' is found in Greek
culture before the Cynics principally
in the general 'belief' in popular
thought that wealth itself is a kind of
poverty. Because of all the demands
made on external wealth (contributions to the state
shipbuilding programme for
e: example), the notion persists that
'material benefits are a specious form
of influence' (p. 69). The second
paradox ('idleness is work'), sees the
same method applied: Desmond
considers Hesiod's definition of the
individual who works solely to satisfy
his needs in a subsistence economy.
Both this definition and the idea of an
imperial work ethic smiled upon by an
industrious optimism are two sides of
the same coin. The former
emphasises the necessity of work
often frowned upon by vicious gods,
by inclement weather or by the
vagaries of chance. The latter
emphasises the toil necessary to
promote expansion of the Athenian
empire and its industrious optimism.
Seemingly exempt from the
vicissitudes of fortune, that expansion
could proceed endlessly. The honest
toil of the poor worker becomes
identified with the worker-General
like Philip II or Alexander. Stories
that depict the apparent difference
between the world conqueror and the
Hellenistic sage can also be used to
display a latent 'certain accord'
between the two: Alexander would
choose to be none other than
Diogenes were he not Alexander (p.
81). The insatiable general's realisation
of the limitlessness of the boundaries
of empire is easily transformed into
the recognition of the boundaries of
the mind by the philosopher and the
possibility he can master them. From
consideration of sources, for example,
Proclus, or Xenophon, or Socrates
in Plato's Apology who compares his
efforts in the examination of
craftsmen and politicians to the
labours of Hercules (p. 87) we
proceed to the philosopher-king of
the Republic an 'abstract' person
removed from base desires by his
own innate good nature and by his
training in ways to approach the
Good, working ceaselessly not only
towards the Good but also towards
the common good. Diogenes Laerrius' 
report of the huge number of books
written by philosophers (almost four
hundred by Aristotle) adorns the
account of Aristotle's industrious
optimism regarding the highest duty
of man: to philosophize, a task for
which humankind is uniquely
equipped. The Cynic ascetics, we
are told, give a radical twist to the
philosophic work ethic: ascetic jomei
bring the true wealth of self-
mastery (p. 93). This wealth is available
to Everyman if he would but work
towards achieving it.

The Cynic paradox 'weakness
is strength' or powerlessness is power
is dealt with in Chapter 3 'Praise of Poverty and War' (p. 105-142). The context is military in keeping with Desmond’s view that this aspect of Cynicism has been somewhat overlooked. Here again literary sources are used with some imagination and lots of scholarship to reconstruct a view of the victory of the just mind (rather than of brute force). The idealised philosopher-soldier fighting for an ideal rather than plunder or money enters the Greek imagination: the reluctant hero Odysseus in rags ‘nourished’ by the earth of Ithaca though it be poor or precisely because it is so, conquers not by his offering of twelve ships but mainly by means of his native intelligence (p. 113). Similarly, the hardship and poverty of his native place can form a ‘gymnasium of virtue’ for the soldier (p. 114), in circumstances where he fights solely for freedom from tyranny. This is a sentiment notable in funeral speeches (p. 110). Material poverty is the Cynic philosopher’s ‘Ithaca’ and from there he launches his fight against the tyranny of greed for material goods (p. 137). These are goods that can be taken away at the whim of fortune but a heroic philosopher-soldier can, like Odysseus in Anisthenes’ Odysseus, alone and through his innate wit bring down such tyranny (p. 139). Such a hero can never be said to be truly defeated in spirit. Funeral orations and also mythical traditions about the lone military hero wealthy in his victories and nourished in situations of material hardship, combine to produce the idea of the lone philosopher soldiering unconquered and true to his soul against myriad enemies bound to the fallibility of external goods and buffeted by fortune.

Chapter 4 ‘Praise of Poverty and Philosophical Wisdom’ (pp. 143-67) traces the intellectual asceticism of the Cynics back to Eleatic ontology and attempts to give the Cynic paradox ‘the fool is wise’ a respectable ancestry, one rooted in Greek philosophy. Again, Desmond interprets sensitively the tenuous links between Eleaticism and the Cynics, yet shows these links are an all pervasive philosophical atmosphere breathed by the Cynics and ‘unconsciously adopted’ by them (p. 145). Now since the Cynics professed not to care a whit about and indeed rejected the formulations of all philosophies (p. 145), Desmond solves this by having the Cynics soak up these formulations through their pores, so to speak, and so they make of Eleatic ontology an ethical system. The wise man separates himself from life and death even to the extent of seeming foolish and thinks his way to a higher, happier reality (p. 152). He must be ready to be a laughing stock just as Socrates was, and though he may be relatively poor he will be wealthy in wisdom. The language of the Platonic dialogues, for example, Symposium, Phaedrus, Phaedo, Theaetetus, and Republic is adduced to show this dualism and presages the ‘separation’ of the Cynic philosopher from worldly values and his orientation towards the higher value of Truth. It is precisely because the Cynics were highly sceptical about the possibility of knowledge that the individual is all for them. The ties a person might have to family, work, war and so on are as nought. The Cynic philosopher is all, is, all else is not. Everything else is smoke. This is defence against not that the sage is all of cynic philosophy dignity of the indi quoted: the sage himself, smooth an. 2.7.86). For the pra notion of the self-st commentator on ex art owes much to writings of the Cynic his virtual horn corresponding 'hos' Sabine farm acquire: its modest amount of clear water stream.

Chapter 5 ‘Cynic Ideals’ (pp. the conclusion to the § the basic premise i though not so c common coin of Gr popular and rarefi Cynic philosophy at classical period. Th psychology character Hellenistic period i given the decrease power of the polis a the notion of the impressive self the C married to Eleatic Ambiguous attitudes resonate in Greek

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Chapter 5 'The Persistence of
Cynic Ideals' (pp. 169-74) is a
conclusion to the book and revisits
the basic premise that Cynic ideas,
though not so called, were the
common coin of Greek thought both
popular and rarefied long before
Cynic philosophy arrived in the late
classical period. The inward looking
psychology characteristic of the
Hellenistic period is not surprising
given the decrease in the
military
power of the
polis and contribute to
the notion of the 'self-contained
impassive self the Cynic adopted and
named to Eleatic ontology (170).
Ambiguous attitudes towards wealth
resonate in Greek literature and
culture – the demands on wealth
make material assets more bother
than they may be worth; or, because
wars bring less rewards than losses,
Greek culture esteems valour,
worthless in money terms, even in
defeat. These attitudes are very
difficult to pin down but the Cynics
have found a champion in Desmond
who at once firmly links them to the
'smoke' they did not care for and who
also finds roots for them at the very
core of Greek culture and thought.

There are copious notes
carefully explaining many ideas, for
example, on Cynicism as a 'school' (p.
177n17), on work and logoi (p. 182-
3n16), or on the 'wealth' of wisdom
(p. 211n52), all replete with references
to Greek authors. A well organized
Bibliography and Index complete the
book.

This book is a welcome
addition to consideration of Cynic
ideas especially because these ideas
have informed much of later Roman
culture and so even our own. The text
itself ends with mention of Cynic
ideas in Menippean Satire,
Christianity, and finally even in
Shakespeare. The virtuous Cynic
along with the often ambiguous
nature of his worldview receives
careful treatment in this original and
thoughtful book

Maeve O'Brien


Elliot's book on Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger's notions of imagination is not only ambitious in