



conclusion of the book when he argues for the indispensability of ‘liberal political theory’, claiming that a renunciation of liberalism is ‘not a morally serious posture, in the strict Kantian sense that one could not coherently will that others adopt this renunciation as a universal principle of action’ (p. 197). This form of transcendental argument (a slightly modified version of the Kantian ‘categorical imperative’) sits, in my view, rather uneasily with his Dewey-inspired post-foundational pragmatism.

All in all, *Culture and Democracy* is an impressive work that brings important contemporary theory to bear on a normatively inflected, yet concrete, analysis of media policy and politics in three different public spheres.

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Gadamer’s Century: Essays in Honor of Hans-Georg Gadamer

Jeff Malpas, Ulrich Arnsward and Jens Kertscher (eds.)

The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2002, xiv + 363pp.

ISBN: 0 262 13403 9 / 0 262 63247 0.

Max Weber’s Central Question

Wilhelm Hennis (translated by Keith Tribe)

Threshold Press, Oxford, 2000, x + 241pp.

ISBN: 1 903152 01 1.

Max Weber’s Science of Man: New Studies for a Biography of the Work

Wilhelm Hennis (translated by Keith Tribe)

Threshold Press, Oxford, 2000, ix + 220pp.

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The Federal Republic of Germany, born of political humiliation but heir to a proud cultural and philosophical heritage, was the site of what Manfred Riedel called ‘the rehabilitation of practical philosophy’ (Riedel, 1972). This practical philosophy was intended to be independent of both Western liberalism and eastern communism. Its proximate sources were German. Given what many considered to be the special relationship of modern German culture to the culture of classical Greece, it was often claimed that practical philosophy also had more distant, Greek sources. What was supposedly being rehabilitated was nothing less than the classical philosophy of ethics and politics. Practical philosophy



therefore reached back to a time before the Enlightenment's separation of facts from values, and well before Marxism's separation of 'praxis' from ethics. The 'practice' of practical philosophy was, more specifically, the *praxis* of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*. Its ethics was the kind of ethos or habit that Aristotle identified with human excellence. Its politics were more diffuse. They were conservative in that the ethos they sought to promote was one of law-abiding respectability, and in that they aimed at social stability. Given the disastrous results of Germany's recent revolutionary politics of both left and right, this is unsurprising. Practical philosophy's politics were also conservative in that they were separated from production and trade. The primary fault of Western liberalism, and still more of eastern communism, was that the practice of political judgment and action was not clearly differentiated from and upheld against corrupting economics. Riedel's own solution was to turn to Hegel. For many others, the only answer was constitutional separation of the state from the market and encouragement of public virtue in individual political actors.

German political and intellectual culture still feels something of the effects of practical philosophy, but what Riedel once presented as a single movement is now no more. Its passing has gone unremarked upon in the Anglophone world because there its existence was universally ignored. The work of Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt was assimilated, however anomalously, to American political theory. So, too, was that of the émigré Frankfurt School and its successors. What is juxtaposed to Anglo-American philosophy as 'continental' is what developed in post-war Germany's other occupier: France. The flood of translations of and commentaries upon first Nietzsche and then Heidegger which has swept through American and British universities was originally due to the use made of them by Parisian academics. Whereas Nietzsche and, still more, Heidegger had grappled with the Greeks, few of their French followers had any such concern. Therefore, the 'other' of analytic philosophy is not now a historically conscious practical philosophy but an anti-historical postmodernism.

Hans-Georg Gadamer is the most notable exception to this rule. This authentic student of Heidegger could neither be ignored nor assimilated to either the Anglo-American or the post-modernist camp, and the intellectual lineage he claimed was distinctly German and Greek. His magnum opus, *Wahrheit und Methode*, was published in 1960, which was when the so-called rehabilitation of practical philosophy was really taking hold. Since it was first translated into English in 1975 his Anglophone reputation has continued to grow, but that reputation is of an idiosyncratic hermeneuticist and not of a member of any wider philosophical movement.

Although Gadamer had the practical wisdom to wait until he had learnt for six decades before he published a major work, he also had the good fortune to enjoy a further four decades in which he could elaborate upon its arguments and, also, see his *Gesammelte Werke* published and many of his essays



translated into English. He died in 2002, which is when *Gadamer's Century* was published. This book includes essays by its two German editors and by Hans Albert, as well as by Paul Ricoeur and Gianni Vattimo, and by a number of American philosophers notable for their long-standing interests in German thought. Nevertheless, the book itself, if it is not to be considered less than the sum of its very various parts, is most notable for presenting a Gadamer who speaks to the concerns of analytic philosophy; Arnswald and Kertscher bring the hermeneuticist into engagement with Wittgenstein, while Malpas (its third editor), Charles Taylor and John McDowell all engage him with Davidson's critique of the very idea of a conceptual scheme. This last essay is important, but less for illuminating the philosophy of Gadamer than for developing that of McDowell. Of similar importance is the essay by Alasdair MacIntyre, who, rather against the spirit of hermeneutics, attempts to further separate that which Gadamer owes to the Greeks from that which he owes to his fellow Germans. This book is not, then, an introduction to or overview of Gadamer's work. Collections of commentaries that serve both of these purposes better are those edited by Lewis Edwin Hahn (1997), which includes an introduction and replies by Gadamer (not least to Davidson), and by Robert J. Dostal (2002), which shares an essay ('Gadamer's Hegel' by Robert B. Pippin) and two other contributors (Taylor and Georgia Warnke) with *Gadamer's Century* but also affords more sustained treatment of Gadamer's important sources in the Greeks and Heidegger.

The other two volumes under review are devoted to another German interpreter of the specifically human sciences: Max Weber. Unlike Gadamer, Weber died too young to produce a magnum opus, leaving it to others to do so from his papers. This task Wilhelm Hennis considers to have been misconceived. The unfinished form of Weber's work renders its own interpretation hermeneutically problematic, and there is no more polemical — and controversial — an interpreter than Hennis. His critique of the conventional Anglo-American, Parsonian interpretation of Weber as builder of a new conceptual scheme for social science is itself contested by German sociologists and embraced by Anglo-American postmodernists. What the latter ignore is Hennis' reason for controverting that conventional interpretation, which is that he interprets Weber as, instead, the last great representative of an ancient tradition of practical philosophy.

Keith Tribe has performed a great service to Anglo-American political theorists in making Hennis the most translated of German practical philosophers apart from Gadamer. One of the two volumes under review — *Max Weber's Central Question* — is called by the publishers a second edition because it substantially reproduces *Max Weber: Essays in Reconstruction*, published in 1988. The essay that attracted post-modernists to that volume was that identifying 'traces of Nietzsche in the work of Max Weber', but this is the



shortest and most incidental of its five translated essays. What this second and retitled edition omits is Tribe's introduction. What it adds is Hennis' intellectual autobiography, in which he traces his early career as an academic and a social democrat, and his changing attitude toward Weber, but not his later becoming a major political commentator of the German right. This apparent transformation is, however, readily explicable in terms of the inherent conservatism of German practical philosophy.

The second volume by Hennis translates *Max Webers Wissenschaft vom Menschen*, published in 1995, and also includes a 'translator's appendix'. The five constituent essays by Hennis concern various aspects of Weber's thought, sources and pedagogy. The longest and most synoptic is the first: 'Max Weber's Science of Man'. Although all of these are of great interest for scholars of Weber, it must be added that this second volume will be of less interest to specifically political theorists than the first. This not only sets out Hennis' elemental conception of Weber's 'central question', 'theme' and science (or, as Hennis then happily called it, philosophy) of man — that of the relation between 'personality and life orders' — but also examines Weber's relation to the German Historical School of Economics and the relation of his 'liberalism' to his practical 'logic of judgement'. What the two volumes present is neither any new account of Weber as a systematic thinker, because Hennis denies that he was such, nor any systematic account of practical philosophy, because practical philosophy is set against systematization, but a coherent if diffuse account of Weber, which illuminates much about him and, also, about the conservative rationale of practical philosophy's account of the shaping of personality by social order.

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Democracy and the Rule of Law

Jose Maria Maravall and Adam Przeworski (eds.)
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