

BOOK REVIEWS

Jürgen Habermas. Editor. *Observations on "The Spiritual Situation of the Age."* Contemporary German Perspectives. Translated and with an introduction by Andrew Buchwalter. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1985. List of Contributors and General Index. pp. 381. Reviewed by Martin J. Matustik, Fordham University.

The English translation of the two-volume collection of critical essays, *Stichworte zur 'Geistigen Situation der Zeit'*, contains fourteen out of thirty-two contributions by contemporary German leftist intellectuals (selections for this translation were made by Andrew Buchwalter and Thomas McCarthy). Habermas conceived the project as volume 1,000 of the *edition suhrkamp* to be published in the year (1979) which commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of the Federal Republic of Germany. In soliciting essays, he provided Karl Jaspers' cultural criticism of late Weimar Germany, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, which appeared two years before Hitler's rise to power (1931), as a paradigm for the type of theoretical and practical diagnosis of the "present age" needed in the contemporary German republic (pp. 2-4).

Nevertheless, there are three differences that distinguish Habermas' proposal from Jaspers' stand-point. The first two have to do with methodology, the latter is a normative issue. Habermas explains why the title, *'The Spiritual Situation of the Age'*, is to be put in quotation marks: First, while Jaspers adopted "the absolute perspective of the great philosopher," Habermas abandons Hegel's monological fusion of reason and history as a transcendental ground for grand philosophical theory and instead frames social criticism by empirical and hermeneutic parameters (pp. 2-4; xv). Secondly, it follows that critical evaluation of the present age cannot be accomplished by one individual but will call on the collaborative effort of enquirers and the use of communicative, dialogical reason. Thirdly, given the shift in focus from a Hegelian metaphysical mediation of history and the *Zeitgeist* to a mediation by a communicative rationality, the critical angle of the book is to differentiate between the pathologies and discontents of the present and the emancipatory potential of modernity.

What underlies the methodological and normative concerns of the collection is Habermas' theory of communicative action. The selection of the contributors--all come from the undogmatic left and defend the project of modernity and the values of reason, democratic institutions and humanism--was not arbitrary. Habermas' edition of critical essays, drawn from a wide variety of authors, tests his theory in a concrete critical discourse of modernity. An immediate objection protests that Habermas' choice is totalitarian and excludes from the discourse those voices that want to unmask the exhaustion and failure of Enlightenment. The

objection might add that by selecting only those who defend modernity, Habermas' evaluation of the present age exemplifies what is worst in any defense of critical rationality: dominating and absolutizing logocentrism which cannot stand any difference, which is too serious and which crunches the playfulness of open discourse.

While Habermas gives full attention to post-modern currents in his recent volume, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge: the MIT Press, 1987), the present *suhrkamp* edition was intended to offset certain one-sided developments in the contemporary German thought and politics. The West German context parallels to some degree the contemporary European and American scene. On the one hand, there is the recent neoconservative shift to the New Right in the German intellectual and political milieu, e.g. the so-called *Tendenzwende* in the aftermath of the terrorist actions in the German Autumn of 1977. On the other hand, the authors of the present volume address theoretical and practical failures (among postmodern leftists and the New Right) to diagnose the pathologies of modernity with a view to possible cures (pp. 5, 15). For Habermas, as in 1931 when Jaspers engaged in cultural criticism so also today, "the duty of the intellectuals [is] to react with partiality and objectivity, with sensitivity and incorruptibility, to movements, developmental tendencies, dangers, and critical moments. It is the task of intellectuals to make conscious a murky reality" (p. 3).

Buchwalter's substantial introduction as well as the introductory essay by Habermas sum up the main themes developed in the present volume (pp. vii-xxxvii, 1-28). First, the theme of general anxiety and despair underlies the anti-nuclear and ecological movements as well as the loss of faith in democratic institutions and the economic future (essays by Wolf-Dieter Narr, Claus Offe, and Ulrich Preuss in the first section, "Perspectives on Politics and Society," pp. 31-121). The Green party, that entered parliamentary politics in 1983, challenges the social contract of the post war German Republic. The Greens address equally the budgetary crisis of welfare-state capitalism and the values associated with materialism, acquisition and profit-oriented mentality.

The second important theme vocalizes the rise of general surveillance, from the mid-70s to the present, by the state and police system in response to terrorism (e.g. Albert Wellmer, "Terrorism and the Critique of Society," pp. 283-307). Further, under this theme authors evaluate how some changes in the German Criminal Code, which now anticipates anti-statist activities and civil disobedience, and in the Decree against Radicals, which requires all state employees to declare loyalty to the status quo values, are all signs of the legitimation crisis of the second German republic (the section, "Perspectives on German Affairs" contains essays by Hans Mommsen, Albrecht Wellmer and Horst Ehmke, pp. 263-332). Again, in place of these developments, the Greens call for direct,

participatory democracy which would free itself from the present structures and party system.

Thirdly, the issue of German identity emerged again as a national question. If the national status of divided Germany was a taboo after the defeat of Nazi nationalism, the question of national identity is now an accepted topic which pervades both the neoconservative nostalgia for a rebirth of national spirit and some leftists' concern with reunification and national sovereignty (e.g., Horst Ehmke, "What Is the German's Fatherland?" pp. 309-32; and Dieter Wellershoff, "Germany--A State of Flux," pp. 335-68).

Fourthly, the book should be of special interest to the American reader insofar as the essays move beyond the German *Zeitgeist* and take up some universal problems pertaining to our present epoch. Among these would count, in the first place, the status of human and social sciences and the role humanities and liberal arts play in shaping meaning, conscience and values in Western culture (the section "Perspectives on the *Geisteswissenschaften*" includes an essay on theology by Jürgen Moltman, on literary criticism by Peter Burger, and on historiography by Hans-Ulrich Wehler, pp. 181-259; the section, "Perspectives on Culture and Religion" comprises an essay by Karl Heinz Bohrer on "The Three Cultures," pp. 125-55). In the second place, three contributors address the relationship among religion, theology and social criticism (Dorothee Söllee, "Thou Shalt Have No Other Jeans before Me" pp. 157-68, Johann Baptist Metz, "Productive Noncontemporaneity," pp. 169-77; and Jürgen Moltman, "Theology in Germany Today," pp. 181-205).

In the third place, all commentaries on the German intellectual and political situation after the 1960s shed light on the contemporary debate between critical theory (Habermas) and postmodernism (Nietzsche, Bataille, Derrida, Foucault, Rorty) that nowadays cuts across the traditional division between Continental and Anglo-American philosophy (especially Peter Burger, "Literary Criticism in Germany Today," pp. 207-20). Like the 1979 broadcast in West Germany of the television film *Holocaust*, so also recent events—the book by one of Heidegger's former students, Victor Farias, *Heidegger and Nazism*, revelations about Paul de Man's Nazi sympathies and the Kurt Waldheim phenomena in contemporary Austrian politics—seem to steer the debate on both sides of the Atlantic towards a more critical evaluation of the roots of post-modernism in politics and philosophy.

It was Habermas' intention to diagnose the post-modern leftist critique of reason and neoconservative analyses of political discontents as a dialectic of Enlightenment that is not only self-referentially inconsistent but also incapable of developing the cure for the pathologies of modernity. The present volume, in place of an argued explication, exemplifies Habermas' distinction between communicative reason and the colonization of the life-world by systems of instrumental rationality. This

distinction is the condition of possible cure of pathological modernity by modernity's own resources. The book facilitates insight into the current state of the debate with a scholarly background and provocative angle.

Hans Blumenberg, *Work on Myth*, trans. Robert M. Wallace. The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985. xl + 685 pages. Reviewed by Roy Martinez, Spelman College.

This massive book is a testimony to the erudition and fertility of a singular mind bent on understanding the meaning of myth and illustrating its therapeutic function in the human animal. Hans Blumenberg was born July 13, 1920, in Lübeck. Before retiring from the University of Münster in 1986, he taught philosophy in Kiel, Hamburg, Gessen, and Bochum. Although he has published extensively on a wide range of subjects, only a few of his writings have appeared in English. Robert M. Wallace deserves credit for his lucid and engaging translation into English of two other books by Blumenberg published by MIT Press: *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (1983) and *The Genesis of the*

As stated earlier, the range of his publication suggests a man of broad intellectual culture. He has written on Bultmann's "theological logic," on the possibility of ethics today, on ancient philosophy in the patristic period, on Kant and the question of the "Grace of God," on Nicholas of Cusa, on Metaphorology, on the concepts of reality and the possibility of the novel, on the significance of rhetoric, on the origin of theory, and the list can go on. And this varied accomplishment comes out quite unequivocally and poignantly in *Work on Myth*. This book does not purport to be a systematic treatise with a single overarching argument. Instead the author proffers several theses, though he does not always show how they connect. The reader is therefore sometimes left unaided to provide whatever nexus or structural unity he assumes is present in Blumenberg's insights.

Nevertheless it is significant that the book opens with a quotation from Kafka and closes with a question referring to a commentary on Kafka's examination of the Prometheus myth. This might suggest that whatever the ultimate thrust of *Work on Myth*, Blumenberg is intimating that he shares an intellectual affinity with the author of *The Castle* and "Metamorphosis." But it would be naive to assume that such affinity is primarily what Blumenberg means to disclose in so seminal and complex an undertaking. Rather, it would be wiser to infer that the fundamental inspiration of his philosophical thinking is partly Kafkan. And this becomes more evident in his attitude towards the Enlightenment.

As suggested by the title, the book's main theme is myth, more specifically the role played by myth in human existence. The author

makes it clear that myth, besides being on equal footing with logic, is primary and indispensable in man's experience: "The fundamental patterns of myths are simply so sharply defined, so valid, so binding, so gripping in every sense, that they convince us again and again and still present themselves as the most useful material for any search for how matters stand, on a basic level, with human existence" (p. 150). However, for reasons unexplained, Blumenberg confines his analysis of mythology to the Greeks, concentrating his liveliest efforts on the myth of Prometheus. Indeed, if there is any thread of continuity in the book, it is to be located in Blumenberg's intense and unswerving focus on Prometheus, who remains the central figure of *Work on Myth*. The choice of Prometheus, however, is not arbitrary. In view of the fact that Blumenberg strenuously wrestles with the *human condition* as a purely philosophical problem, and given his restriction of mythology to the Greeks, he had no better option - if justice is to be done to his theme - than the myth of Prometheus. Accordingly, with captivating buoyancy he examines the various versions of this myth throughout the history of Europe: in Hesiod, Aeschylus, Plato, Apollodorus, Diodorus Siculus, Lactantius, Julian Apostata, Tertullian, Boccaccio, Herder, Heine, Goethe, Vico, all the way to Gide and Kafka.

Although myths are human creations, neither their authorship nor their origin in time can be established. Embedded as they are in human experience, in that they emerge contemporaneously with man's efforts to come to terms with conditions and forces beyond his control, myths must be looked at as a device whose function is to mitigate the fears and terrors arising naturally from the unknown. Correlative to the unknown is anxiety (*Angst*), which is "intentionality of consciousness without an object" (p. 4). In assigning names to the utterly alien, which manifests itself as strange powers, man is enabled to deal rationally with them. This ability to explain, or give an account of, the conditions of his experience and the consequences of his acts significantly reduces the uncanniness of the world. In fact, it renders the world more familiar. It sheds light into the night of the unfathomable, introduces form and figure into the amorphousness of chaos, thereby bringing what was previously intractable - because alien and undefined - within conceptual reach. In this way "the world becomes 'friendlier.'" It approaches what the man who listens to myth needs: to be at home in the world" (p. 113). Accordingly, for example, Poseidon, god of the sea and figure of uncanniness, "can delay Odysseus's return home, but cannot prevent it; that return is the successful assertion of the world's familiarity, in opposition to the embodiment of its uncanniness" (p. 119). Odysseus is surer of himself. However, this self-confidence can be illusory. For Poseidon is also the figure of "doubtful goodwill, of dangerous irritability" (p. 118). The familiarity that engenders this sureness of self reposes on Poseidon, that is, on uncertainty. "Poseidon is perhaps called earthshaker because the

earth was thought of as floating on the sea. Earthquakes have always been men's most extreme experiences of insecurity" (p. 109). The upshot is that myth covers up the terror, pretends that security has been attained, but all the while anxiety settles in the core of existence, snug like a bug in a rug. Another way of expressing this absence of repose or finality in existence is to say that "myths do not answer questions; they make things questionable" (p. 126).

The fundamental problem in human existence is what Blumenberg calls the "absolutism of reality." Its full meaning comprises the absolute impossibility of rendering transparent to himself man's ontological *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem*. It is thus a limit concept. This limit is at the nerve of the anxiety which myth helps to allay. As the author puts it, what this concept means is that "man came close to not having control of the conditions of his existence and, what is more important, believed that he simply lacked control of them" (p. 4). From the very beginning, then, myth has been with man. The human animal has always been working with it. This is the work "of" myth. Without it man would probably suffocate under the sheer weight of this existential behemoth: the absolutism of reality. The work "of" myth thus lightens the burden of existing, and by the nature of the situation alone work "on" myth is bound to continue, assuming on its way a variety of forms. "There is no end of myth" (p. 633). In fact, "There is no modality of remembering myth other than that of work on it; but neither is there any success in this work other than that of exhibiting the ultimate possible way of dealing with the myth - which runs the inescapable risk of being refuted, of being convicted of implying a still-unfulfilled claim by the appearance of yet another possible way" (p. 632).

One such unhealthy attitude toward myth is that of the Enlightenment. The unbounded appreciation and glorification of *ratio* that characterized the eighteenth-century thinkers misled them about myth. Their faith in the ability of science to remove the ills and terrors besetting mankind, their substitution of the natural for the supernatural, their conviction that reason, if obedient to the natural law, can insure *progress* and the *perfectibility* of the human race, was one more variation of myth-making, though the *philosophes* thought that they were beyond myth. But their gravest error was to suppose that the darker side of existence can ever be eradicated. Their one-eyed reason was sorely defective. They saw myth as "the darkness out of which reason lighted its own way," to be replaced by science (p. 265). Their absolute faith in the rationality of science prevented them from understanding that "it can be rational not to be rational to the utmost extent" (p. 163). Had they understood this paradoxical situation, then they would have realized that man's effort to feel at home in the world is merely an expression of his essential alienation in it. What is more, such is the structure of existence that self-confidence and uncanniness are indissolubly bound.

It is this theme of not-at-homeness, I hazard, that attracts Blumenberg to Kafka. Where the thinkers of the Enlightenment not only tried to attenuate but also hoped to do away with the rougher edges of reality, Kafka zooms in on them, accentuating their inevitability. It is within the ambit of reason to discern that it itself may be without ground. All too often, however, rationality is "too ready to engage in destruction when it fails to recognize the rationality of the things for which no rational foundation is given, and believes it can afford to get carried away by the process of establishing rational foundation" (p. 163). Blumenberg's faith in the powers of reason induces in him a sympathy for the Enlightenment. But unlike their narrow reason, his is a logos of comprehensive vision. In the heroes of Kafka the sense of alienation and frustration resulting from the perpetual receding of the objects of their yearning is acutely brought to the fore. The despair that accompanies this dismal state of things nevertheless requires a spiritual strength. Kafka's message suggests that in this fortitude lies man's salvation. And Blumenberg seems to agree with him.

Finally we read on page 399: "Everything up to this point in this book has a gradient; all the lines converge on a hidden vital point at which the work expanded on myth could prove to be something that was not fruitless. It was not fruitless if it could feed into the totality of *one* life, could give it the contours of its self-comprehension, its self-formulation, indeed its self-formation - and this in a life that is open for our access, without the merciful hiding places that we all demand for ourselves." This privileged personage is Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Since the central figure of the book is mythical Prometheus, and Goethe publicly identified himself with this Greek Titan, Blumenberg saw fit to devote a lot of space to him: Almost two hundred pages deal with a psychological analysis of Goethe, and an examination of his relationship with his literary contemporaries. These are Moses Mendelssohn, Lessing, Jacobi, Friedrich Schlegel, Schiller, Schelling, et al. In addition there is a portrayal of Goethe's curious admiration for Napoleon, whom the former also considers as Promethean.

Blumenberg gets very involved in this section of the book. He leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that Goethe literally dominated the literary world of his time. Both as a man and as a man of letters Goethe comes out as titanic as Prometheus himself. What is more, he was convinced - though the conviction ebbed and flowed - that he himself was a god. According to Blumenberg this divine self-interpretation on the part of Goethe is corroborated by an "extraordinary saying" in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* *Nemo contra deum nisi deus ipse* (No one can stand against a god unless he is a god himself) (p. 524). Goethe saw himself and Napoleon as being especially endowed to deal appropriately with fate and nature because they themselves were constituted of the same elements as these. Incredible, this.

The wealth of ideas and insights in *Work on Myth* cannot be faithfully represented in this review. The book displays the author's imposing scholarship. He is equally at home in biblical interpretation and patristic theology, in Greek philosophy and literature, in critical and modern philosophy, not to mention the ease with which he grasps the underlying currents running through the thoughts of his contemporaries such as Cassirer, Bultmann, and Heidegger. His attitudes vary with the subjects he treats. Accordingly, there is grudging admiration for Anselm's rigorous intellect, an undisguised antipathy to St. Paul, an intellectual sympathy with Marcion, an ambivalent attitude toward Nietzsche, and an amazement at Goethe's open conceit.

There is great merit in *Work on Myth* quite apart from the author's original contribution to the subject of myth and its therapeutic function in human existence. The vim with which Blumenberg presents his material reflects the dynamism of a resourceful mind that hopefully will give us more of the same.

Narration and Knowledge, by Arthur C. Danto. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985. pp. xvii + 399. Reviewed by Robert Switzer, Pennsylvania State University.

This book is an interesting and significant contribution to the philosophy of history, both in its critical analysis of the limits of such philosophy, and its positive articulation of the nature of historical knowledge and narrative structure. It provides us with a new edition of Danto's early work, *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge University Press, 1965), and in addition three essays (from 1966-69) which reveal an increasing openness to the authors and issues of Continental philosophy. The original book, as Danto wrote in its Preface, involves "an analysis of historical thought and language, presented as a systematic network of arguments and clarifications, the conclusions of which compose a descriptive metaphysic of historical existence" (p.xv). These positive philosophical contributions are more fully articulated in the later essays. The last of these, "Narration and Knowledge," as Danto writes in his new (1985) Introduction, "moves beyond analytic philosophy to a kind to rapprochement with phenomenology, seeking to show the structures of philosophical consciousness as such" (p. xiii). And indeed, this work will reward careful study not only by philosophers of history, but also by those interested in philosophy of science and the broader questions of temporality and narrative structure.

Despite the rare and commendable breadth of Danto's philosophical horizons, it remains the basic contention of even this newly enlarged work that the only viable philosophy of history is analytical - that indeed the alternative, what he terms "substantive" philosophy of history, is

impossible. What Danto means to outlaw are not historical accounts - though necessary and related limits are uncovered here as well - but accounts of the whole of history which attempt to identify patterns among events and project them into the future, in terms of "ultimate meaning." Whether ultimate or not, historical meaning is understood by Danto as significance within a larger temporal whole; this notion is key to his analysis of the narrative structures of historical accounts generally, and to his amendments to the Covering Law Model, classically stated by Hempel, which sought to subsume history into a Neo-Positivist conception of science.

Before turning in depth to these issues, Danto devotes chapters II- VI to deftly argued considerations of the various forms of historical skepticism - specifically, those attacking historical knowledge on the basis of the meaning, the reference, or the truth-values of historical statements. In each case, the issues - the pragmatism and verificationism of C. I. Lewis and A. J. Ayer, Russell's famous question, "How can it be proved that the world did not come into existence, complete with historical and geological relics, a few minutes ago?" and historical relativism - are explored in detail. Danto manages either to refute the skeptical position, or to show that it has no special bearing on history *per se*. In terms of the perennial question of relativism, for example, Danto grants that here is no such thing as "pure" description, that the historian's preconceptions and schemes of organization will determine the set of possible historical accounts and so distort "history-as-actuality," but argues, contra Beard, that this is not a failing of history *vis-a-vis* the sciences, but a mark of the latter as well. The detailed analyses in these chapters of structures such as tensed sentences, past-referring predicates and topical motivating interests, are crucial in furthering the over-all argument of the book.

This argument, as I have indicated, hinges on Danto's account of narration as the basic organizing scheme of history (chs. VII, VIII and XI). On this view, description, interpretation and explanation radically interpenetrate each other - "history is all of a piece" (p. 115). A complete, adequate and "impartial" record of events is not merely unattainable in practice; logically, Danto argues, it would not be history at all. One can imagine an Ideal Chronicler, a being with present-tense omniscience who can record everything that happens as it happens; Danto's insight is that the uselessness of this plethora of data would result primarily from a lack of selection and organization into patterns of salience, resting in turn on the unavailability to this Chronicler of narrative sentences. The essence of these sentences, as defined by Danto, is to give descriptions of an event under which that event could not have been witnessed - that is, specifically, by making reference to later events known to the narrator (historian), for whom they are past, but unknowable to an eye-witness, for whom they are future. The statements, "The Thirty Years War began in 1618," and Piero da Vinci begat a universal genius," could not have been known true at the

known true at the time of the events they describe. Since, Danto argues, "it is only in the future that the events he witnesses will take on a measure of significance," (p. 159), the Ideal Chronicler - as indeed anyone - must be denied the possibility of historical awareness of the present. Thus "Methodological Individualism," the last chapter of the original book, concludes, after a reference to the owl of Minerva, with the following words:

Philosophies of History attempt to capture the future without realizing that if we knew the future, we would control the present, and so falsify statements about the future, and so such discoveries would be useless. We capture the future only when it is too late to do anything about the relevant present, for *it* is then past and beyond our control. We can but find out what its significance was, and this is the work of historians: history is made by them. (p. 284)

Having argued that historians create history out of the past through the organizing instrument of narrative structure, Danto next considers whether they also explain it (chs. X-XI). His claim in chapter VII was that in history, narration is explanation - that the selection and organization involved in telling what happened will also tend to explain why it happened (p. 130). He develops this further by suggesting that what is explained in narrative - with its "beginning, middle and end" structure - is not merely an event, but a change in a subsisting subject. Danto's model is the following:

- (1) x is F at $t-1$.
- (2) H happens to x at $t-2$.
- (3) x is G at $t-3$.

where (2) explains (1)-(3) (cf. p. 236). Danto's irenic response to the controversy surrounding the application of the Covering Law Model to history was this: Even though the change may not be covered by a general law under all descriptions, it can be redescribed in such a way that H can be selected as causing changes of the "type" $Fx-Gx$, in the light of some general, though probably implicit, law (pp. 220-26, 238). The move from a concrete to a general description becomes of course the crucial step; Danto likens it to a re-gestalt; (p. 221) and admits that the rules for this are "perhaps difficult to specify" (p. 227). Finally, in the case of history, general laws normally cover an open and nonhomogenous class of instances, such that we can predict a plausible range of occurrences, but not the precise event (pp. 224-26).

A committed Hempelian, at least, would by this point have lost all patience with Danto's efforts to mediate the dispute, Danto having violated this view's basic tenet of predictability: that any explanation of X must ground the belief that X did in fact occur. In the last two decades,

however, Hempel's efforts to subordinate history to science have lost their currency; after Hanson and Kuhn, Danto writes in his new Introduction, it was rather that "all of science was brought under history," becoming "matter for the kinds of interpretation that earlier theorists had identified as the methodological prerogative of the human sciences: ways of reading the world" (p. xi). While Danto's original position did stress the autonomy of narrative history from science, now he would express himself more forcefully: "it is unlikely," he writes, "that an event can be covered by a law under the same description in which it is covered by an historical narrative" (p. xii).

Danto's positions are not without their difficulties; I can briefly touch on two here. History is compared to a story; this is, I think, a peculiarly apt analogy, and indeed one which Danto might have been more happily guided by than he was. For there is more to a story than narrative - and more to history as well; characters, attitudes, and ideologies and other contextual forces shape events without themselves being events. Secondly, while the significance of events in a story may become finally and definitively clear only when the story is over, it does not follow that an intelligent reader must be utterly incapable of perceiving any shadow of this significance in the midst of a first reading.

To the first point, Danto seems to suggest that context is generally implicit in narrative (cf. p. 141); my suggestion in the second is that narrative is similarly implicit in context - that the present can acquire significance in terms of what might be termed a "narrative fore-structure" which selectively organizes experience in terms of projection into the future as well as appropriation of the past. "Substantive" philosophy of history can offer us no certain or absolute perspective on the present as historical - but neither is history of the past ever final, as Danto shows, since it is always possible that the new events in the future will suggest reassessment. Danto's insistence on isolating the beginning, middle and end of historical narratives would seem to demand a perspective unavailable to us; history and philosophy of history are efforts to understand a story that is still going on, and which inescapably we are *in*.

My suggestion, however, is that we can have a sense of the direction of an unfolding story, and events can have foreshadowings of meaning. It is true of course that we are often wrong - mystery writers excel in tripping up our expectations. But this is possible only because we have expectations; we have read similar tales before, and have developed an ear for their rhythms. In one of the three marvelously rich later essays which complete this new edition, in the midst of proscribing the limits of *verstehen* or "sympathetic understanding" in history, Danto writes that "The quality of a period would be unknown to those who lived in it if it were the only form of life they knew" (p. 269). Thus the relevance of history to our understanding of the present: "We are, through contrasts with predecessors and contemporaries, alive to much concerning our period."

But, he adds, "much remains hidden and will be revealed only through contrasts we cannot draw, with periods later than our own" (p. 297). This is, I think, most fair, and seems to support the view that the possibility and limits of "substantive" philosophy of history - understood not as prediction of the future, but as an effort to be as alive as possible to the quality and direction of the story we are living, and to the horizon of history as the domain of our humanity - remain questions worthy of further attention.

Overall, Danto's contributions to the philosophy of history have been outstanding, and we are fortunate indeed to have this new edition of this work. This volume does not end the debates it both describes and enters; nor does it make reference to those that have occurred in the literature in the last twenty years or so. But while the Covering Law Model, for example, has lost much of its lustre even in the sciences, most of the clarifications and insights of this work have retained their value and philosophical pertinence. Danto's insistence on the autonomy of history and his analysis of narrative structure have been most influential. Indeed, it is wholly consistent with Danto's position that the real significance of this book has come to stand out more and more clearly with the passage of time.

Phenomenology--Metaphysics or Method?, by Gerhard Funke. Trans. David J. Parent, with a foreword by Thomas M. Seebohm. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1987; pp. iv + 264. Reviewed by C. S. Schreiner, Pennsylvania State University.

For its most disciplined practitioners phenomenology would always remain--to echo Jean Wahl describing the *Cartesian Meditations* in a letter to Wallace Stevens--an "approach to the unapproachable" in which "an inexhaustible infinity of a priori" would be interrogated with an unusual extravagance of rigor. Such an "approach" would inspire and provoke a list of writers/ thinkers too familiar to the readers of *Auslegung* to be repeated here. No less influential in its full import would be Husserl's elaboration of Brentano's theory of intentionality. Experience, as subjective exteroception in a field of horizons, an impetus of *Sinngebung* (sense-bestowal) and construal, was portrayed as other-directed, as already somewhere and something else. Husserl's contributions will probably endure not only because the articulation of their blind spots ushered in a new era in theory, during which Husserl became a whipping-post for anti-subjectivist critiques; his contributions will also remain with us as, in toto, an insomnia of pursuit which insisted on tracking down and releasing ensnared infinities, on catching sight of the spread of *Vorzeichnung* (predelineation) and of concatenations of temporal and corporeal phenomena which comprise the taken for granted intentional

manifold of everyday life. Husserl's work has accurately been characterized for its rigor of infinity, for its inexorable tendency to infinitize itself, its own tasks, as well as the elements of the ordinary.

Such Husserlian rigor is by no means absent from Gerhard Funke's recently translated *Phenomenologie--Metaphysik oder Methode?*, first published in 1966. Funke's book, briskly written albeit devoid of live detail or demonstration, is a "manifesto" (Seebohm's term) representing a German branch of phenomenology which refuses to totalize Husserl's work as a mere preparatory step within the tradition which had cultivated existence philosophy, ontology, and hermeneutics. Whether through argument or hegemony, Funke presses transcendental phenomenology into service to cover all of these bases. Today's readers, coming to Husserl by way of avant-garde critiques, rarely feel the same rush of deliverance when reading him that Sartre did in the 1930's. Funke's text does reanimate the ambition of Husserl's project, and his interpretation of phenomenology deserves to be carefully read by Anglo-American philosophers and critics. The footnotes alone, comprising almost half the book (the main text ends on p. 177), provide English-speaking readers with a full report of post-war German research in phenomenology.

Reading Funke we are witnesses to a severe watchmanship, an insomnia that also permeated Husserl's pages. This insomnia, a mistrust of the given, tries to prevent the given from slipping through the gates of consciousness to establish a hidden dominion of dogma. The guiding principles of Funke's inquiry, which also quicken his own Kantian rigor, are Husserl's *epoche* and the *Ruckfrage*, the questioning back from something given to the "constitutive conditions of possibility" (p. 26) and "presuppositions under which something comes to appearance as something" (p. 97). An ideology of presence and phonocentrism would, according to Derrida, manage to infiltrate Husserl's theory and remain an invisible given which would prevent it from releasing one of the few infinities it didn't fully encounter--the play of difference which precedes intuition and defers recuperation. This Derridean finding does not inform Funke's treatise. Funke will insist on a "transcendental" phenomenology; yet his rigor is such that he thoroughly interrogates many of the metaphysical givens that are traditional components of transcendental theories. He insists that phenomenology "must not go over to the proclamation of metaphysical-speculative doctrines" (p. 90). Funke's critical phenomenology will continually dissolve the self-possession of self-validating modes of authority, objective inquiry, dogmas, cultural units. The "transcendence" which appears here is the exposed correlation nexus in the circle of understanding, the "grounding connections which are secretly at work in each case" (p. 91); and "authority" for Funke will "always let itself be known only in and with its connections of grasping from which and in which it understands itself" (p. 108). Thus the Kantian thing-in-itself cannot be accepted as numinous by Funke's program, since the thing-in-

itself cannot but reside as a correlation in the phenomenal field, the circle of understanding; nor will any of its modern clones such as, Funke says, a Heideggerian "Being-in-itself" presiding over an ontic-ontological difference (p. 116). We must be wary, Funke insists, of the doctrines of "awestruck esoterics" (p. 91). Even disruptions of intentionality such as anxiety or the "impossible inclusion" of the alterity portrayed by Levinas (Funke only mentions Heideggerian *Angst*) can only be accounted for, described or intimated, from the perspective of someone's consciousness.

This insomniacal phenomenology must turn on itself; it tries to show that it has learned about itself from the problematics that afflicted the Husserlian program, especially its last phase. The *Lebenswelt* will not be used, as so many other philosophers have used it, to curtail the fury of the epoche and launch into a taxonomy of psychophysical beings in their "natural" habitat. The *Lebenswelt* is not for Funke the metaphysical "ground of origin" (p. 103), but another unity of sense, a field of operation which is a correlate of a specific temporality and set of presuppositions. The *Lebenswelt* will show from its appearances, like other phenomena swelling into the present, its constitutive conditions as a product of an historical ensemble of performances of consciousness. What Funke ceaselessly tries to avoid is valorizing any philosophical discovery as a "utopian" concept or resting place. The *Lebenswelt* cannot be a utopia for a critical philosophy; neither can Heidegger's "four-fold" or "clearing," or Scheler's "person" or "value." There can be no authoritative nowhere (utopia) since everything has its place in time. Such an assertion leads Funke to an interesting notion of "topicality" which strikes us as singularly postmodern. To acknowledge ongoing temporalization is to forfeit profundity or reification. "Genuine science," Funke says of his phenomenology, "knows know profundity" (p. 70). The fixity of the *Ruckfrage* in Husserl's thought, then, must also be unbound in order for the exigency of the future to assert itself in the onrush of the present. The crisis of reason, itself now already making different demands on historical protagonists, cannot be resolved merely through a recovery of some earlier, "primal" thinking or landscape. Heidegger is no less culpable for buying into the "fallacy of the earlier" (p. 126).

Certainly Funke's phenomenology makes a more explicit use of hermeneutical axioms than Husserl's. "It is never possible," he says, "to overleap interpretation as interpretation" (p. 27). Funke will not uphold Husserl's semantic idealism or theory of essences; yet a notion of transcendental inquiry remains the backbone of Funke's phenomenology. Funke's "method" is the insomnia of a transcendental inquiry which, in its investigation of the constitutive activity which bestows sense and claims certainty, is more "objective" than sciences which don't recognize that their truth is a certain ontic sense-formation and one point of view among others. The "origin" to which sense connections lead back, and which phenomenology describes, is not egoity or absolute presence, but *Leistung*

(performance or production). To be more precise, said origin is the complicity of *Leistung* and coming-to-appearance; this is where the "ontic" is instituted (p. 157).

Readers of Funke's manifesto cannot overlook the existential grain of a program so empowered by its own operative concepts. A philosophy can never by its mistrust of the given, that also affirms the concrete historicity of its own operative concepts, speak of "the" *Lebenswelt* unless it disregards the situational interests and antagonisms of an intended existent which make possible a concrete variation of an *Lebenswelt*. Phenomenology will never, if it is to remain a critical philosophy, take this disregard for granted. Funke emphasizes that phenomenology will not market its own convictions or facts, but only expose the "doxic-topical" composition of naive disciplines that dogmatically uphold convictions and facts to the exclusion of all others. But every method or philosophical approach will finally have a binding power, will make an appeal to those who would uphold it or refuse it. At the site of the *Leistung* and *phansis* (coming-to-appearance) complicity is bound in a certain direction; relevance determines this direction, perhaps, and perhaps also an imperative. If this imperative issues from the demands of a pregiven concept of reason, a very particular realm of sense is instituted. As Funke warns, "For reason, only what should be, can be" (p. 159). Here Funke treads difficult turf, for he doesn't want to come across as another Kant or Husserl, but he also refuses to betray them. What is most important for him, it turns out, is what concerned Heidegger: the task of protecting the opening, the free site for the possibility of appearances to show themselves in a variety of ways. But Funke will address this issue by speaking of "transcendental subjectivity", unlike Heidegger. "Transcendental subjectivity, which, let it be said in conclusion, we ourselves functionally are, does not represent a 'pregiveness of a higher kind,' but can be characterized only as the constitutive freedom of the origin." And in the next sentence Funke turns about and, again unlike Heidegger, calls in reason. "Genuine origin, however, must probably be reason with its evidences, on which everything depends" (p. 159). The question remains: is this last utterance prescriptive or descriptive, and what does the answer to this question have to do with the already impossible task of construing phenomenology as *either* method or a metaphysics?

Every method makes an appeal, never stands valueless but harbors a protreptic and promises a specific future. Husserl's method was an urgent call to recuperate the contact between man and world, reason and existence. Is Funke's insomnia *thirty years later* only the vigilance of Western reason excluding all else (narrative, "play," the poetic) that appears? Probably not; but readers may ask how Funke's project would respond to Heidegger's analysis of the *Gestell* (enframing), or to Lyotard's view that telematic information is, in its global hegemony, obviating narrative or converting it into programming languages. The questioning

always returns, as Funke well knows, to the opening, what method protects it, what opening to protect: what-ought-to-be.

Kirk F. Koerner, *Liberalism and Its Critics*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. hardcover. pp. 396 Reviewed by David C. Snyder, Calvin College.

The political ideology of liberalism is coming under increasing attack these days even though it shows no signs of losing its status as the dominant picture of social life. Nevertheless, criticisms from both the left and the right continue to mount. In this book Koerner defends liberalism against four critics: C. B. Macpherson, Herbert Marcuse, Leo Strauss and Michael Oakeshott. In each case he complains that the critics, whether from the right or the left, misunderstand liberalism and its origins. However, although the book is well researched, I found its argument unconvincing.

First, two minor points. The text is not type set but was produced from typescript provided by the author. While this practice is becoming increasingly common, the mediocre print quality of this book does prove irritating after a while. At least Koerner could have used a computer to produce a nicer camera ready copy. Also, I wonder why Strauss was chosen as one of the two conservative critics of liberalism. Most of Strauss' work was done in the 1950's, and although Straussian analysis of American culture is making a comeback with the popularity of Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*, nevertheless Strauss himself is a rather easy target. His work has been heavily criticized by lots of folks, and popularizers like Bloom, despite his public acclaim, seem not to care for such niceties as sound arguments. I would have preferred that Koerner take on more important critics of liberalism such as, say, Alasdair MacIntyre.

Now to more significant problems. First, Koerner never gives any clear explanation of what he takes liberalism to be or the version he wants to defend. There are several different strands of liberal ideology, from the classical liberalism of Mill and Adam Smith, to the contemporary reform liberalism of Rawls, and to the libertarian liberalism of Nozick. Which of these does Koerner find attractive? The reader is left to guess. It's true that in the last chapter Koerner mentions the distinction between classical and reform liberalism, but he says nothing about the basis for the distinction.

Furthermore, when Koerner does describe liberalism he uses only very general and vague language. Liberalism, he tells, us, "begins and

ends with the ideals of individual human freedom, individual human rights and individual human happiness." (p. 322). In addition, liberalism's present significance derives from a "commitment to individual liberty and individual self-determination" (p. 309). Once again, "liberal ideals and aspirations. . . are governed by the quest for freedom and equality, or in other words, for universal personal autonomy" (p. 3). Unfortunately, these three pleasant-sounding passages do not tell us very much about the view that Koerner wants to defend.

Historically, liberalism is characterized by two dominant features. First, liberal ideology is committed to the idea that the state ought to be neutral between competing conceptions of the good. That is, the state ought to provide the arena in which each of us is free to pursue our own vision of the good as long as we don't harm others in the process. So if one person seeks to maximize his pleasure, another seeks to achieve lasting recognition, and another tries to please God, the liberal says that the state should only provide an arena in which each of us pursues our own good. Both classical and reform liberals remain committed to this myth. At least I see it as a myth. But Koerner never mentions it.

The second element of all forms of liberalism is a commitment to the marketplace as the central component of society. What I mean is, whatever their differences, liberals all agree that the market functions as the key to a free society. Now of course they disagree on how the market should work. Classical liberals think it should be essentially unregulated, where reform liberals think it should be far more regulated. But they all agree on its importance to a free society.

But on many other points liberals disagree with each other. Which version of liberalism is Koerner defending? He fails even to describe what liberalism is, let alone distinguish different types. Thus the reader is left wondering just what Koerner wants to defend.

Another significant problem I found is that at times Koerner's arguments are simply implausible. I will consider just one example.

Against Macpherson's Marxist criticism of the development of liberalism, Koerner's strategy is simple. For each of the alleged liberals that Macpherson attacks, Koerner tries to show either that the view in question is not an example of liberalism (or more accurately, the parts of the view that Macpherson doesn't like aren't truly liberal), or if the view is liberal, that Macpherson's criticisms are wrong. This strategy leads Koerner to do considerable historical work with Hobbes, Locke and so on, with two resulting problems.

First, at times Koerner seem to be unfamiliar with current historical scholarship. Concerning Locke, for example, the picture of him as a classic liberal is quite dated, and few current Locke scholars would call Locke a liberal. Indeed, according to Richard Ashcraft, reading Locke as a Calvinist revolutionary is the new orthodoxy in Locke scholarship. Macpherson can't be faulted here, of course, since his *The Political Theory*

of *Possessive Individualism* was published in 1962. But Koerner seems to agree with Macpherson that Locke is a liberal and to disagree only on the particulars of Macpherson's reading of Locke. The result is that for contemporary readers most of Koerner's argument is simply beside the point.

Even at that, sometimes Koerner's analysis just misses the force of Macpherson's argument. To Macpherson's complaint that Locke justifies unlimited acquisition, Koerner says that Locke was only describing what he saw going on around him, and one can hardly fault Locke for that. But Macpherson's claim is that Locke *justified acquisition as morally legitimate*. Indeed, Macpherson's point is that the justification of acquisition is the goal of Locke's political theory. Now I think Macpherson is dead wrong about that, but Koerner's objection misses the point altogether.

I think Koerner's claim that Hobbes isn't a liberal, as Macpherson thinks he is, is right, but Koerner should have considered the abundant evidence gathered by current scholars that questions Locke's alleged liberalism as well.

Second, too often Koerner just accepts others' criticisms of Macpherson without doing much work himself with Locke's texts. In many places we get a mere summary of others' work.

I won't say anything about Koerner's treatment of Marcuse, Strauss and Oakeshott, except that I found similar problems with each. A discerning reader will find more able defenses of liberalism elsewhere.