

interpretation

A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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Design & Production Martyn Hitchcock

Annual subscription rates individual \$15; institutional \$18; student (3-year limit) \$7.50. There are three issues of INTERPRETATION a year.

Address for correspondence INTERPRETATION, Queens College, Flushing, N.Y. 11367, U.S.A.

Authors submitting manuscripts for publication in INTERPRETATION are requested to follow the *MLA Style Sheet* and to send clear and readable copies of their work.

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Bagehot went so far as to argue that “government by discussion” would rechannel sexual into intellectual energy.

Canavan shows that this defense of free speech first weakened when Mill and his followers optimistically presumed that moral *progress* must result from liberty, and then began to collapse when such writers as Laski and Meiklejohn utterly abandoned the “appeal to Nature and Nature’s God” as progressivism’s optimism receded. “[T]o assert that truth is beyond the reach of reason is the constant temptation of contemporary liberals.” Canavan’s final chapter eloquently summarizes the argument:

Freedom to speak and publish was originally advocated for the services it would render to reason in the pursuit of truth. Now it is defended on the ground that, not only is there no definitive standard by which we may judge what is true, there is not even any standard by which we can distinguish reason in the pursuit of truth from passion in the pursuit of pleasure, or greed in quest of gain, or the *libido dominandi* in its drive for power. But to take this position is to undermine the whole case for the freedom of the mind and its expression in speech and publication.

Nihilism makes a poor shield for right.

One might ask if modern political philosophy bears nihilism within itself from the beginning, in contending that reason is a scout for the passions. Modernity’s ‘rationalism’ may attempt more to make reality than to apprehend it. This question takes one beyond Canavan’s study, which carefully leads us to it, thus providing a cogent introduction to the issues raised by the modern right to freedom of speech.

Philosophical Apprenticeships. By Hans-Georg Gadamer. Trans. Robert R. Sullivan. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985. 205 pp.: \$17.50.)

JOAN STAMBAUGH

The title of this intellectual autobiography should remind us of Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeships*. It is not an *autobiography* in the usual sense, but primarily makes accessible to the reader the entire university atmosphere of twentieth century Germany, including the devastating effects of Nazism and the recovery therefrom. The book’s motto, *de nobis ipsis silemus*, incorporates the author’s characteristic hermeneutical stance of not focusing on himself in a self-reflective Cartesian fashion, but of providing the sensitive optic for the personages and situations with which he came in contact.

There are separate chapters on Paul Natorp, Max Scheler, Martin Heidegger, Rudolf Bultmann, Gerhard Krüger, Richard Kroner, Hans Lipps, Karl Reinhardt, Karl Jaspers, and Karl Löwith; but many other figures, some perhaps less known to English readers but equally important for Gadamer, are discussed in an ingenuous and revealing way. Gadamer leads us through the university

communities of Marburg, Leipzig, Frankfurt and Heidelberg, discussing at first his fellow students and professors and later on his colleagues and friends. We are made aware of his interest and work in Greek philosophy, particularly Plato, and in the poets, most notably Hölderlin, Rilke and Paul Celan.

It is, of course, not possible to discuss all of this rich material in a brief review. We hear about the neo-Kantianism that was a predominant influence during Gadamer's youth in Marburg. We hear about his *Habilitation* with Heidegger, about whose thought he makes many insightful remarks, two of which might be mentioned here.

The term 'turn' refers to a bend—a hairpin or switchback—in the path that goes up a mountain. One does not turn around here; rather, the way itself turns in order to continue going up. Where to? The question is one that cannot be easily answered.

Heidegger was then orienting himself to an intensive interpretation of Nietzsche that would find expression in a two-volume work, the real counterpart of *Being and Time* (p. 51).

There is substantial discussion of Nazism, highlighted by the following pivotal sentences:

That I had failed to see any danger in this pale instrument is easy to understand. It was a widespread conviction in intellectual circles that Hitler in coming to power would deconstruct the nonsense he had used to drum up the movement, and we counted the anti-Semitism as part of this nonsense. We were to learn differently (p. 75).

The descriptions of trying to maintain his university activities under the supervision of the Nazi party border on the surreal. It was not an easy time for anyone. Gadamer's tales are not without humor.

Among Marburg students, it was then said of Krüger and me: With Krüger one learns how everything has come to be exact; with Gadamer one learns how little we know about what exactness is (p. 64).

One gleans insight into what Gadamer thought of the growing influence of contemporary educational methods as familiar to us now as to him then. Thus, anthologies and xeroxing are anathema to him; verbal exams are the only genuine kind; introductory courses should be taught by full professors, not by beginning teachers; one cannot normally speak of "educational influence" at the university level; by then it is too late.

Of the most condensed philosophical interest, of course, are Gadamer's remarks on hermeneutics, scattered throughout the book and systematically put forth in an appended essay "On the Origin of Philosophical Hermeneutics." Early on we are told:

Meanwhile, hermeneutics has become a fashionable term, but this means that it is mostly used as a new hat for old things, especially for a "hermeneutic method" that is not at all new, or even for a nonmethod of divination and enthusiasm, which is as old as the unrequited love for philosophy itself (p. 147).

We are told that hermeneutics has less to learn from the theory of modern science than from old traditions that are worth remembering. There are some very interesting remarks on remembrance and history that indicate a direction differing from that of Heidegger.

Whenever the attempt is made to philosophize, the remembrance of being happens in this way. But nonetheless it seems to me that there is no history of being. Remembrance has no history. There is a growing forgetfulness, but in the same manner there is no such thing as a growing remembrance. . . . Philosophy has no history. The first person to write a history of philosophy that really was a history was also the last: Hegel (p. 187).

Finally, Gadamer calls for a return to the primordial dialogic of the human experience of the world, to the unending dialogue of the soul with itself (and others), which is what thinking is. Hermeneutic philosophy is not an absolute position, but a way of experience.

To appreciate the inimitable mood and charm of this book, one must simply read it. It recaptures an era now forever lost to us.