unwavering consistency; and the result is a criticism of current clichés that leaves hardly anyone unscathed, from Aristotle to modern mathematical logic. The task of logic is to distinguish between what is true and what is false, and for the author the contradiction appears not so much as the prototype of logical falsehood, but lies rather in a combination of true and false (and for this reason truth can be derived from it). The author locates this fusion of truth and falsehood even in modal and dispositional concepts: hypotheses, prognoses and the like are not capable of truth.

Logic is based on relationships in the conceptual pyramid; and concepts are not units, but must be looked upon as having a dual shape, being intensional as well as extensional. To illustrate relationships within the conceptual pyramid the author uses a diagram-language which is supposed to make visible at one and the same time both the intensional and the extensional aspects; and it should be possible to read off on these diagrams all processes of logical reasoning. The application of these diagrams to traditional syllogistic arguments is particularly revealing.

A thoroughly original book, and one that provides food for thought, even where one does not share its author’s views.

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HABERMAS, JÜRGEN

The Philosophical Discourse of the Modern Age. Twelve Lectures
[“Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne. Zwölf Vorlesungen”]

For Max Weber it was still a matter of course to understand the process of rationalization in occidental history as an outcrop of our modern world; and the classical writers of social theory have described the new reflective treatment of tradition and the differentiation of the spheres of life more exactly. In the fifties the “modernization” of societies was presented with neutral detachment, and Arnold Gehlen was able to maintain that rationalization in our “post-history” was proceeding in crystallized forms, but was no longer able to make a creative critical appraisal of its own underlying suppositions. Subversive criticism tried to unmask reason as the will to power and was thus able to proclaim the post-modern age. It is the complicity between these conservative and anarchic forces that Habermas is here opposing, taking the project of modernity as something incomplete that is still waiting for completion.

Modernity as a topic of discourse really evolved in the aesthetic sphere. Schiller and Schlegel took up in Germany the querelle des Anciens et des Modernes. For Baudelaire modernity bore the stamp of the fortuitous and the fleeting as marks of that beauty which in future was to be considered classical.
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Walter Benjamin developed this idea further in order to make up for the disappointed expectations and find a yardstick specific to modernity. Hegel is accepted as the first to see modernity as a problem. Habermas traces the steps with which Hegel tried to understand modernity, only, however, to rebuke the moderns from the standpoint of his understanding of an allegedly absolute knowledge. Since Hegel saw his own problem wrongly, there has been a threefold protest against him. The Hegelians of the left have reopened dialectics for criticism and praxis with an eye to the future: once Lukács saw rationalization as objectivization, the Marxist narrowing-down of praxis to an instrumental reason could once again be rescinded. The neo-conservatives pin their hopes on the rationality of what is (as the Hegelians of the right had once done): but after the experiment of fascism they do it in such a way that they place tradition and individual areas of free activity like art in as position of complementarity to the economy and the state (one example is Joachim Ritter). The young conservatives unmask established reason as a position of power: they take as a “weathercock” the Nietzsche who could dispense with a metaphysical tradition and seek the Dionysian without any taint of Christianity.

Habermas shows how in the dark years of the Second World War Horkheimer and Adorno took over from de Sade and Nietzsche the thesis that all reason was domination, so that the Enlightenment, in wanting to break the power of the myth, must inevitably itself fall victim to myth and power. Habermas sees in this kind of scepticism the project that modernity is faced with if all that remains in Nietzsche is a power that can only be aesthetically evaluated, then all that remains in Adorno is a merely negative dialectic and the deciphering of the mimetic contents of art. Apart from this self-dissolution of historical materialism, Heidegger (Habermas states) followed Nietzsche’s acceptance of the Dionysian, being followed and corrected in turn by Derrida. Bataille then sought in the experience of what is tabooed a way out of the tangle of rationalized economy and bureaucracy; Foucault followed him and at the same time accepted the tradition of criticizing science.

Habermas tries to escape from these cul-de-sacs by means of a theory of communicative reason and at the same time hold on to the differentiations of modernity. But it is debatable whether he really manages to get his opponents into focus. What he says about Heidegger, for instance, merely repeats the clichés of the fifties. If Derrida’s way beyond Heidegger is traced back to a re-acceptance of Jewish mysticism, then the actual results of the phenomenological movement are lost sight of. Since Habermas takes no account of the way Levinas has brought into play the “otherness of the other” and thus brought modern reason to a new state of responsibility, he can no other than interpret Derrida’s philosophizing as a thwarted philosophy of origins and
metaphysics. Conversely, phenomenological philosophy must inevitably accuse the idealizations of communicative reason of being an unclear and outmoded mixture of misunderstood elements of tradition.

Professor Dr. Otto Pöggeler, Bochum

HARTH, DIETRICH and MARTIN RAETHER (Eds.)

Denis Diderot, or the Ambivalence of the Enlightenment. A Series of Lectures Delivered in Heidelberg on the Occasion of the International Diderot Year 1984

["Denis Diderot oder die Ambivalenz der Aufklärung. Heidelberger Vortragsreihe zum Internationalen Diderot-Jahr 1984"]

Diderot, encyclopaedist, novelist, playwright, essayist, art-critic and materialist philosopher – in short, the Enlightenment man par excellence, left behind a multifarious collection of writings that, after first being hailed enthusiastically (Lessing, Goethe, Hegel, Goncourt, Marx), then acrimoniously rejected (Schlegel, Sainte-Beuve, Taine), has in more recent times enjoyed something of a renaissance and a new (that is to say, more balanced) appraisal. The ten authors of the present volume have attempted to approach the phenomenon that is Diderot from various angles, without making any claim to a comprehensive presentation.

From among Diderot's literary production the following are considered: Jacques le Fataliste (the difficult and still unresolved problem of the roles of speaker and narrator) and Le Neveu de Rameau (difficulties of interpreting satire, meaning of the pantomimes, problems of the moral of the piece and its reception, theorist etc.). Attention is also drawn to Diderot as a critic of the theatre, and his influence on Lessing. One contribution is devoted to the Encyclopédie (questions of publication, originals and pirated copies). Of particular interest (because greatly neglected) is Diderot's work as a journalist, especially his work on Baron von Grimm's Correspondance Littéraire (including his art-criticism, the so-called "salons"; cf. the paper entitled L'Originalité du Salon de 1767). Particular mention must be made of the discussion of Diderot's scientific methodology, concerned as it was with matters of particular poignancy in the light of recent experiences (man as the object of experimental research; the clash between materialist philosophy and morality).

The contributions (among them two in French) are of a consistently high standard, both as regards content and language. There is an index of proper names and a register of Diderot's works, but, alas, no systematic bibliography.

Dr. Joachim Thiel, Hannover