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## Book Review

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*Between Kant and Hegel: Lectures on German Idealism*, Dieter Henrich. David S. Pacini, ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003. liv + 341 pp., index, one chart. ISBN 0-674-00773-5, hardcover, \$55.00.

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At the invitation of Stanley Cavell and John Rawls, Dieter Henrich visited Harvard in 1973 and gave a lecture course on German idealism. These lectures, which David Pacini has collected in the present volume, attempt to make the themes of classical German philosophy understandable for an American context—an aim that is part of Henrich’s “long-standing attempt to transform the post-Kantian movement into an acceptable contemporary philosophical perspective” (viii). Henrich is not content to acquiesce in simplistic distinctions between philosophical traditions, but instead attempts to bridge the gap between Anglo-American and Continental philosophy. This is not to say that these lectures integrate linguistic analysis or pragmatism, for instance, into the discussion of Kant and Fichte. Nor did Henrich’s attempt to engender dialogue between the traditions bear much fruit at the time. But as Pacini explains, these lectures comprise an early gesture toward the sort of inter-traditional engagement that has continued throughout Henrich’s work, and which one finds in such thinkers as Michael Dummett, Manfred Frank, Jürgen Habermas, Hilary Putnam, and Richard Rorty.

Henrich’s first three lectures establish the Kantian heritage of German idealism. Kant’s critical philosophy had a major impact on his idealist successors, but these young philosophers did not continue in an orthodox Kantianism; instead, they were intrigued by what they saw as the unexplored and undeveloped possibilities in the first *Critique*. In particular, they were fascinated by the principle of self-consciousness in Kant’s philosophy (43). Kant did not pursue further investigations of the nature of self-consciousness; in his view, it is like the tip of a needle, which cannot support systematic elaboration. Moreover, we do not possess the cognitive resources to develop a comprehensive theory of self-consciousness; such an endeavour would take the philosopher beyond the limits of possible experience. Yet this principle of self-consciousness held forth the allure of the esoteric for Kant’s successors, who did not heed Kant’s restrictions (44).

Henrich also examines the function of freedom as the ‘keystone’ that allows Kant’s system of reason to be a free-standing, self-supporting structure (54). Freedom holds the entire critical philosophy together. However, Kant insists that philosophy can only arrive at this realization at the end of its labors—not at the beginning. Critical philosophy follows the course of an *ascent* to this ultimate principle. By contrast, idealism takes freedom as its point of departure, and follows a deductive *descent* from freedom as its ultimate principle. According to Kant, every philosophy that proceeds in this manner is ‘mysticism’ rather than true philosophy (60-61). Kant identifies this as a

decisive difference between himself and his idealist successors, who nevertheless believed they were spelling out the implications of the critical philosophy.

After outlining this Kantian background, Henrich devotes six lectures to Kant's early critics: First, Henrich presents F.H. Jacobi's argument that the only consistent philosophical position is a Spinozistic determinism—the implication being that philosophy is a self-destructing enterprise. But despite Jacobi's desire to discourage philosophical speculation, he actually initiated further efforts to reconcile Spinozism with Kant's concept of freedom (113). Such a mediation would result in the desired 'Spinozism of freedom,' which was the rallying cry of the younger generation that included Fichte, Schelling, Hölderlin, and Hegel (95). This 'Spinozism of freedom' would allow philosophy to reconcile the Rousseauian/Kantian experience of freedom with an immanentist conception of God "as operating inside of us, independent of external revelation or external demands" (99). Henrich provides an insightful account of the development of this conception of God, tracing its ancestry from Platonism and neo-Platonism, through Stoicism and medieval Jewish mysticism, to Spinoza and his influence on Lessing, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. Henrich's ability to situate the German idealists within the philosophical tradition is one of the strengths of this volume. His location of certain Fichtean themes in Kierkegaard, for instance, is quite helpful.

Second, Henrich examines K.L. Reinhold's criticisms of Kant, and his contribution to the development of idealism. Henrich explains how Kant's system is implicitly multidimensional in structure; that is, it cannot be reduced to a single element, such as sensation or cognition, nor even to a duality of these two elements. Instead, knowledge results from the cooperation of a "plurality of cognitive faculties" that work together as an 'organized totality' (50). According to Kant, one requires a multiplicity of principles to account for knowledge. Reinhold was the first of Kant's critics to argue for a one-dimensional system; Reinhold contends that truly systematic philosophy must begin from a single "basic fact and from the proposition (*Grundsatz*) that describes this fact" (125). Reinhold proposed the structure of representation (*Vorstellung*) as this basic fact, but his peers and successors (and later Reinhold himself) rejected his theory of representation as irredeemably flawed. Nonetheless, Reinhold's proposal regarding the one-dimensionality of systematic philosophy set the agenda for Fichte and Hegel, who sought to find the single principle on which to establish philosophy (127, 129, 131, 140).

Third, Henrich discusses G.E. Schulze, who, along with Salomon Maimon, represents post-Kantian skepticism. Schulze is highly critical of both Reinhold's theory of representation, as well as Kant's account of the foundation of knowledge (147). Schulze seeks to limit philosophy to the description of facts of consciousness, resulting in a sort of philosophical phenomenalism (150-51). In criticizing Kant, Schulze continually insists that philosophy cannot argue back from these facts of consciousness to their causes. Schulze believes this insight will undermine Kant's critical philosophy, since he views transcendental argumentation as an explanatory venture, in search of causes. Schulze's interpretation of Kant is dubious, but it nevertheless forced Kant's successors to ask what Kant's method really involves (151). One young thinker to grapple with this problem was Fichte, who wrote an important review of Schulze's *Aenesidemus*—the work that presents his skeptical conclusions. This review was one of Fichte's first philosophical ventures, and Henrich shows how it raises the central themes and problems that would shape Fichte's work to come. For example, it was through his engagement with Schulze that Fichte discovered his principle of the 'absolute ego' (154).

Furthermore, Schulze's skeptical critique of Kant motivated Fichte to seek a decisive defense of the critical philosophy—a task that would require the developments of the *Science of Knowledge* (*Wissenschaftslehre*) (162).

Henrich's treatment of Fichte takes up the largest portion of the volume. The first few lectures on Fichte discuss his "Own Meditations on Elementary Philosophy," which Fichte drafted in preparation for the *Aenesidemus Review*, and which also set the stage for his 1794/95 *Wissenschaftslehre* (184, 187-88). Henrich then devotes five lectures to the development of Fichte's thought through the three most prominent versions of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Henrich focuses on Fichte's account of the mind in terms of opposition. According to Fichte, the basic structure of consciousness is the opposition between the *I* and the *not-I* (203). After a detailed discussion of this oppositional structure, Henrich shifts his focus to Fichte's claim that the basic feature of consciousness is self-referentiality. In this section, Henrich examines the way in which successive versions of the *Wissenschaftslehre* address the paradoxes of self-consciousness (258).

This discussion of self-consciousness leads to a fascinating account of Fichte's speculative theology, followed by a brief treatment of Hölderlin and two concluding lectures on Hegel. The lecture on Hölderlin examines an early, unpublished piece entitled "Judgment and Being," which challenges Fichte's theory of self-consciousness. Henrich closes by outlining the systematic structure of Hegel's thought, with one lecture charting the developments leading to Hegel's *Science of Logic*, and another examining the importance of negation for Hegel.

However summary these final analyses of Hegel might be, they are nonetheless important for filling out Henrich's survey. But Hegel is important here not because he represents the culmination of the idealist tradition; on the contrary, Henrich wants to challenge the conception that German idealism follows a linear trajectory from Kant to Hegel. As David Pacini remarks in his introduction, partway through the course Henrich proposed that its title—"From Kant to Hegel" be changed to "Between Kant and Hegel" (xvi). The former title implies, to borrow Henrich's words, "that each philosophical position from Kant through Hegel is like a step in a staircase that we ascend as we leave previous steps behind." Instead, Henrich proposes that Kant, Fichte, and Hegel comprise "three comparable and competing positions that cannot be reduced to each other." Hegel is important for filling out Henrich's survey because Henrich wants to "reopen a meaningful contest among all three of them" (9, 300). Part of this meaningful engagement entails that contemporary philosophy continue to reckon with these positions, not simply as historical curiosities, but as live options.

In his introduction Henrich might seem to suggest that Schelling's late philosophy also comprises one of these competing positions; but Henrich chooses to concentrate on Fichte and Hegel, since he believes they are more important (9). This decision is understandable, since one lecture course can scarcely contain everything that is pertinent to this area; it is remarkable that Henrich already manages to cover as much as he does. The obvious disadvantage of the decision to bracket Schelling, however, is that this volume does not cover the significant role that he did play in this intellectual milieu. For this reason, Henrich's volume cannot meet all of one's needs regarding German idealism. But I can hardly offer that observation as a criticism. As a single course, this series of lectures covers an enormous amount of philosophy in remarkable depth. As a book, it provides a first-rate introduction to the themes and figures of this period. As such, I highly

recommend it.

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