

Stephanie Baumann, Marie-Ange Maillet (eds.):
Aufklärung – Hegel – Vormärz: Reisen in die Ideengeschichte
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Aufklärung – Hegel – Vormärz: Reisen in die Ideengeschichte is a Festschrift in honor of the career of Professor Norbert Waszek (Paris VIII). The book consists of 21 articles that can be divided into eight large groups. The first is organized around Hegel and is composed of the following articles: “The Power of Substance and the Power of the Concept” by Angelica Nuzzo, “ ‘Esprit objectif’ et ‘esprit absolu’: Pertinence et usages d’une distinction hégélienne” by Myriam Bienenstock, “Hegel’s Early Philhellenism and the Relational Conception of Personhood” by André Cressoni and Douglas Moggach, “Civil Society and its Discontents” by Stephen Houlgate, and, finally, “Hegels Analyse der Ökonomie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft und der Kolonialismus” by Helmut Schneider. A second part concerns research into the “Scottish Enlightenment.” The articles are represented by “A School of Scottish Studies” by Robert R. Calder and “Smith, Habermas, Hegel” by Richard Gunn. A third group on foundations of the history of ideas is represented by “Thoughts on the Prospect of a Social History of Political Ideas” by Gregory Claeys and “Die Ordnung der Hegelschule(n) oder: Was die Vormärzforschung Norbert Waszek zu verdanken hat” by Ursula Reitemeyer. A fourth block deals with the German Enlightenment and contains the following contributions: “Traduire pour penser par soi-même. Christian Garve et la philosophie de la traduction au siècle des Lumières” by Stefanie Buchenau, “Die Satire als trojanisches Pferd in Religions- und Staatsangelegenheiten. Anmerkungen zu Johann Pezzls Roman Marokkanische Briefe (1784)” by Françoise Knopper and Wolfgang Fink and “Aufklärung in der Peripherie” by Thomas Bremer. A fifth group is organized around a topic very dear to Norbert Waszek, namely research on Heinrich Heine. The articles are “Die ‘pacifike Mission’ Heinrich Heine über



Deutschland und Frankreich" by Karin Füllner, "Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, un (autre) voyageur allemand dans la France des années 1830" by Marie-Ange Maillet, "Heinrich Heines Auseinandersetzungen mit Wolfgang Menzel" by Bernd Füllner, and, finally, "Eugène Rodrigues – saint-simonien, traducteur de Lessing et faleur de religion" by Nina Bodenheimer. The sixth and seventh blocks are represented by individual articles. The theme "Eduard Gans" is the subject of discussion in "Eduard Gans und Leopold (v.) Ranke" by Reinhard Blänkner, and the *Nachmärz* period receives an article about Franz Brentano, "Quelle est la reine des disciplines universitaires? La philosophie ou la science politique?" by Jacques Le Rider. The eighth and final block, whose theme is the 20th century, is composed of "Critique de l'Aufklärung dans la première théorie critique" by Olivier Agard, "Hans Mayers Außenseiter" by Stephanie Baumann, and, finally, "Foresight before Hindsight" by Mark Roseman. The book also includes a list of Norbert Waszek's publications (23 books, more than 160 articles, more than 80 reviews), a beautiful illustration (p. 8) and a photo (p. 464).

As you can see, the articles were written in three different languages, which corresponds to Norbert Waszek's career, which included extensive publications in English, German and French. It could not have been easy to put together a book that would pay tribute to Waszek's wide range of interests, but the eight thematic groups mentioned above provide a fairly rough idea of what has captured the philosopher's attention during his professional career to date.

Obviously, a detailed analysis of each of the articles would require much more space than a review would allow. For this reason, I will turn to two articles on Hegel that discuss the social and economic problems arising from his philosophy – and therefore draw heavily on *The Scottish Enlightenment and Hegel's Account of "Civil Society,"* perhaps Norbert Waszek's most cited work.

Stephen Houlgate, in his article, seeks to respond to commentators who think that Hegel did not offer answers to the problem of poverty, a topic that remains under discussion in *Hegel-Forschung*. According to Houlgate, Hegel offered a clear answer to the dilemmas of civil society that result in poverty, namely, corporations. It is necessary to understand the meaning of Hegel's philosophy in a normative and not merely descriptive sense, which, therefore, nullifies the typically liberal and Marxist criticism according to which the fact that corporations are not present in modern states would, in itself, prove the falsity of Hegel's theory: "Corporations are essential for true freedom, so if they are absent in modern states, that is a reason for criticizing those states, not for discarding the idea of the corporation" (p. 100). Thus, Houlgate understands

Hegel as representing a critical theory of freedom, that is, a standard by which it is possible to judge how different social realities are constituted. The causes of poverty, as described by Houlgate, are the division of labor, economic inequality, and overproduction. However, Hegel's discourse does not consider poverty as *necessary* but rather as the result of the lack of certain institutions, such as corporations, which would be capable of preventing its emergence and expansion. Houlgate then demonstrates how corporations would prevent these causes from manifesting themselves. Furthermore, the author emphasizes that even unemployed people could be part of corporations, to the extent that institutions such as parishes and communities are part of them, so that no one would be properly excluded from them. I think that Houlgate's assessment of Hegel manages to dispel several misunderstandings, especially readings that seek in the problems arising from poverty a kind of direct passage to Marx's thought, as if Hegel had reached an aporia and Marx, in turn, would be the next logical and consistent step. However, I wonder if Houlgate's strongly normative reading does not end up smoothing over the tensions of Hegel's own text. The descriptions Hegel offers seem more powerful than an "ought" could possibly get around (Hegel 2009, 194). Furthermore, when Hegel writes that in the corporation, the help that the poor receive loses its humiliating character (Hegel 2009, 198), but even so it does not follow that poverty finds an end point, but that it becomes honorable or, in other words, does not become something for the rabble (Mann 2017, 172). That corporations play a central role in the social order is not something open to doubt, but that they can overcome the intrinsically disruptive character of civil society does not seem to me to be fully established. Furthermore, the problem of poverty and, even more so, of the rabble would perhaps require an incursion into Hegel's historical texts. Hegel himself suggests links between the dilemmas of civil society (poverty, colonization) and revolutionary processes of social corrosion (Hegel 2020, 1214).

By contrast, Helmut Schneider's article expresses well the difficulties Hegel faces when describing the functioning of civil society. Schneider accurately reconstructs the paragraphs relating to colonization in *Philosophy of Right*, showing that the problem derives from the internal dynamics of capitalism (p. 120). Hegel would remain in the tension between state regulation and Adam Smith's "invisible hand" as a solution to social problems, but, in the end, he would think of the world market and colonization as means of resolving difficulties. The problem is that both solutions are palliative (p. 125), so that the contradictions of civil society are insurmountable (p. 123).

According to Schneider, Hegel's understanding of slavery derives from his studies on Haiti, in which Schneider goes on to discuss more general aspects of colonizing processes, suggesting that Hegel's theory is based on the justification of colonialism. However, Hegel's position on colonies seems to be more nuanced. Hegel's mentions of colonies seem to indicate that he considers colonies to be an economic disadvantage for the metropolises (Hegel 2015a, 757) – following Adam Smith in his discussion of colonies in *The Wealth of Nations* (Smith 2022, 548 – 630). Moreover, he thinks that colonies, in their modern model, imply a loss of rights (Hegel 2015b, 1395), something that is clearly problematic for a philosophy that is based on the notion of freedom. This is not to “absolve” Hegel, but merely to note that he seemed both aware of the dilemmas of nascent capitalist society and of some of its consequences.

These brief considerations on just two texts attest to the quality of the book in honor of Professor Norbert Waszek and how his work remains alive and thought-provoking. It is quite difficult to imagine that future works on Hegel that seek a rigorous philological reconstruction will not have to rely on his research. In this sense, *Aufklärung – Hegel – Vormärz* allows the reader to take an initial look at the importance of Norbert Waszek's work as a whole.

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