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MLJ

Philosophy of German Idealism by Ernst Behler

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The Modern Language Journal, Vol. 71, No. 4 (Winter, 1987), pp. 459-460

Published by: [Wiley](#) on behalf of the [National Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/328503>

Accessed: 09/01/2014 21:22

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hauer, Nietzsche, and Wagner; insightful, if limited, analyses of satire and irony; reflections on suffering and happiness; an assertion of the superiority of moods over principles; occasional commentary on *Buddenbrooks*, *Tonio Kröger*, *Fiorenza* (and material that eventually makes its way, transformed, into the later novels). Mann writes: "I want to say everything—that is the purpose of this book" (p. 312).

The text is in parts embarrassing. Although its complex patterns of thought cannot be reduced to patriotic prejudices, it does contain many nationalist clichés that are nowhere ironized. In numerous respects the work is self-cancelling: it contains an unequivocal argument in favor of ambiguity; an intellectual attempt to establish the superiority of life over intellect; the *a priori* assertion of relativism; an outspoken commitment to noncommitment; and of course the political reflections of a non-political man. The greatest problem of the text—beyond its obviously ideological assertions and its self-admitted "self-contradiction" (p. 191)—is one of content and form: antithetical thought is best preserved in rigorous philosophy or in art: Mann's text is not fully equal to its task.

The translation, which has been available in hardcover since 1983, reads well. One might even call it elegant. A German friend once told me that he preferred to read Kant in English. Not able to work with gender, Kant's translators were forced to separate and thus clarify Kant's lengthy sentences. No need for a German to check out Morris' rendition of Mann: Morris has remained true to the rhythm and syntax of the original. The author's avoidance of oversimplification, his desire to see issues from all sides, is splendidly conveyed—thematically and formally. One might quibble on some of Morris' decisions. Is "intellect" the best choice for "Geist"? And why, if Morris wants to employ this term, does he select "spirit" on page thirty-nine? Nonetheless, there is little that does not satisfy.

The text includes a brief introduction, which focuses on the work's origins and reception rather than its content or the author's anomalous use of such terms as "literature" and "art." Although Morris might have doubled the text by preparing a complete apparatus of footnotes, uninitiated readers will miss numerous allusions. In addition, the reader who knows no

German had better know French; quotations from this language are not translated.

Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man is a book for cultural historians interested in the spirit of the age or the elusive German character, for philosophers interested in the interrelation of art and knowledge, and above all for students who read Thomas Mann in translation. Excerpts might be used for literature classes though one can hardly imagine assigning the entire text, especially since this would mean eliminating some of Mann's superior fictional works. The "Prologue," followed by "Soul-Searching," offers the concisest synthesis of themes.

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Philosophy of German Idealism. Ed. Ernst Behler. German Library 23. New York: Continuum, 1987. Pp. xxii, 284. \$24.50, cloth; \$10.95, paper.

The twenty-third volume of the German Library series contains two selections from Fichte, two from Jacobi, three from Schelling, and "The Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism," a fragment composed by either Schelling or Hegel that calls for the supremacy of aesthetics in the development of a new philosophy.

Written in the wake of Kant, Fichte's *Lectures Concerning the Scholar's Vocation* is a beautiful and sensitive work that develops a social ethics and an assessment of the scholar's vocation by way of the law of self-harmony (or non-contradiction). Its statements are timeless and can be recommended to anyone. The other Fichte selection, *A Crystal Clear Report to the General Public Concerning the Actual Essence of the Newest Philosophy: An Attempt to Force the Reader to Understand*, is less felicitous. Basically a defense of the Fichtean system, it is directed to the reader who is already familiar with the system but doesn't understand it correctly or remains unconvinced. Fichte's *Über den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre* would have offered readers a richer statement of the need for a first principle, while the first and second introductions to the *Wissenschaftslehre* present more insightful summaries.

In his *Open Letter to Fichte* Jacobi attempts to

preserve God's infinitude by making Him wholly other; but this in effect reduces God to a finite level, for whatever has a limit external to itself is finite. *On Faith and Knowledge* is the weakest essay in the volume: here Jacobi paraphrases Hegel's critique of dualistic philosophy without presenting any substantive counter-arguments.

In the introduction to his *Philosophy of Nature* Schelling attempts to overcome both the Kantian thing-in-itself and Fichtean subjectivity. In the last few pages of his *System of Transcendental Idealism* Schelling argues for art as the synthesis of the conscious and the unconscious, the finite and the infinite. Schelling's aesthetics are of interest not only in their own right but also historically: no other pre-20th-century systematic philosopher privileges art the way Schelling does. Finally, in a well-known essay on freedom and evil Schelling makes a case for the ontological and logical priority of unity, without, however, fully working through—as Hegel later does—a detailed differentiation of this unity.

Six translators have collaborated on the volume, and though the translations appear accurate, the English prose, especially in the second Fichte selection, is not always smooth, and in the final piece by Schelling it appears somewhat musty. A major problem is the rendition of Fichte's "Ich" as "I" and "ego" in different texts within the one volume.

The selections are preceded by an insightful but all too brief introduction. Although the volume is mixed, it must be welcomed for its strengths. One can imagine having students read, in various contexts, the first Fichte selection, the short *Systemprogramm*, and the three selections from Schelling. Finally, any effort to revive interest in the basic structures of idealism is to be welcomed in an age where many a thinker denies—without always being aware of alternative positions—the validity of harmony, unity, truth, or a first principle.

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GRAZIANO, CARLO. *Italian Verbs and Essentials of Grammar*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook, 1987. Pp. 239. \$5.95, paper.

A book such as *Italian Verbs and Essentials of*

Grammar has inherent in its nature a two-fold level of appeal. To the student of the language for whom it was designed, it may be received with tempered enthusiasm as a convenient "quick reference," ideal for providing the needed verb form or a concise refresher on relative pronouns. Then we have the long-time speaker of the language, native or near, who is often a teacher and more than often a self-appointed expert in the field. Place a book of this nature in his or her hands and you sound the horn for the hunt to begin. How has the author explained the unexplainable; how has he clarified those subtleties that seemingly defy experts and elude students year after year? This "second-level" reader peruses the work, eager to find a fresh approach or an in-depth presentation yet challenged to locate inadequacies and errors. Errors in a book which purports to be authoritative can be likened to mice in a house. Find one and you know there are more lurking, and thus the hunt resumes until every hiding place has been purged.

Carlo Graziano has prepared a manual which, in terms of the language learner, does its job admirably. In terms of the language teacher, it is far from faultless yet has enough attractive features to be considered a viable reference tool in an intermediate literature or composition course. Unfortunately it lacks fresh approaches to grammar points and directs in-depth presentations to areas of minor importance. Errors pervade, deriving most often from a tendency to generalize from the specific, from misuse of English, and from organizational difficulties.

However, one must consider that it does what it was designed to do. It gives language learners concise rules and examples for Italian verbs and other essential grammar points. Information is easy to locate, and the use of bold-face and italics is effective. Examples of usage are adequate and the approach to vocabulary truly "fresh" and stimulating. Listing vocabulary by category invites us to build conversational activities that will teach these words more meaningfully. Any student seeking only rules without drills to reinforce them will find this book useful.

Clearly the author never intended his book to be a definitive statement on all nuances of Italian grammar, and those who approach it thus should think twice about their expectations. Yet it is those very expectations which