



Project
MUSE[®]

Today's Research. Tomorrow's Inspiration.

and misleading, and the sheer number of such instances appreciably skews the original.

Butler states in the introduction (ix) that he has bracketed all of his interpolations; however, comparison with Rameil's edition proves this not to be the case. Here is a passage from the original followed by Butler's translation: [D]er Ursprung der Logik [ist] kein anderer als der der anderen Wissenschaften: Es kommen in ihrem Bewußtsein Bestimmungen vor, die den Sinnen nicht entnommen sind (4); "The origin of logic is no different from that of any other science. Determinations come forth in the conscious mind that, in logic but not in geometry, have not been extracted from the senses" (2). Apart from the fact that 'vorkommen' ('occur') has been mistranslated as 'come forth', and 'ihrem Bewußtsein' ('their [sc. the sciences'] consciousness') as 'the conscious mind', the insertion of a contrast between logic and geometry lacks any basis in the original. A similar instance occurs on the next page. The original reads: Das Denken sind wir; das Denkende bin ich (5). Butler turns this into "As human beings we are the activation of thinking. I am this very activation" (3). Such unmarked interpolations and transmogrifications make for uncertainty whether, at any given juncture, readers are dealing with a straight representation of the original. This lack of reliability affects the usefulness of Butler's translation in precisely the academic contexts for which he intends it.

Decisions regarding technical terms such as 'Aufhebung' further contribute to a certain eccentricity in the style of the text. For instance, according to Butler (xv), the phrase 'hebt sich im Stoicismus auf' translates literally as 'it raises itself beyond itself into Stoicism up there'. Though linguistic intuitions vary, it is doubtful that the phrase 'raising itself beyond itself into something up there' would re-translate into 'sich aufheben'—sufficient reason to question the validity of such a cumbersome rendering. The translation of 'an sich' as 'upon itself' is a similar artifact of the encounter between Anglophone imagination and German usage. In his defense, Butler claims that "Hegel was greatly influenced by Jacobi's 'prepositional' mode of discourse" (xv). Yet it is unclear how Butler arrives at this claim, given Hegel's explicit rejection of Jacobi's emphasis on prepositions in his 1817 review of Jacobi's *Works*. Putative literalism in rendering the prepositions thus issues in idiosyncrasy rather than authenticity.

In short, the bracketed insertions impede the flow of the text without increasing its clarity, while the frequency of unmarked interpolations and mistranslations, as well as the idiosyncrasy of the technical coinages, limits the value of the book. Its avowed slant toward a controversial interpretation also raises flags about its suitability as an introductory text. Given the intrinsic interest of the original, it is to be regretted that the translator and publisher did not take more care to produce a volume that could have made Hegel's science of logic genuinely "readable and teachable" in English.

BRADY BOWMAN

Pennsylvania State University

Robert B. Talisse. *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy*. Routledge Studies in Continental Philosophy. New York-London: Routledge, 2007. Pp. x + 166. Paper, \$39.95.

In this, his second book, Robert Talisse "attempts to make explicit the pragmatist roots and motivations of the concept of democracy" developed in his 2005 book, *Democracy after Liberalism: Pragmatism and Deliberative Politics* (viii). Inspired by the work of the classical American pragmatist, Charles Sanders Peirce, Talisse defends a substantive, epistemic conception of democracy, which he calls "epistemic perfectionism." Pragmatists, political philosophers, and social epistemologists alike will discover in this book a provocative synthesis of their respective inquiries, which Talisse wields in the service of democratic theory.

According to Talisse, it is unfortunate that John Dewey's philosophy has dominated pragmatist discussions of democracy, for Dewey's theory is "fundamentally misguided and ultimately incoherent when taken as a social ideal for contemporary democratic societies" (28). Talisse objects to Dewey's democratic *theory* because it is premised upon a

“comprehensive moral doctrine” that reasonable persons may reject. But he also objects to Deweyan democratic *practice*, which aims “to coerce people” to live according to the Deweyan democrat’s reasonably rejectable “philosophical commitments” (45). Talisse argues that a Peircean conception of democracy is superior because it countenances “the fact of reasonable pluralism,” by which Talisse means, “the full and proper exercise of human reason, even under optimal conditions, leaves Big Questions *underdetermined*” (36). Peirce’s philosophy can accommodate any number of reasonable philosophical commitments (including Deweyan commitments) without undemocratically coercing people to accept any particular set of commitments.

In chapter one, Talisse challenges a common narrative about the history of American pragmatism, viz. that pragmatism is a particular philosophical movement that “developed” through the work of Peirce, William James, and John Dewey, and that was subsequently corrupted by contemporary writers (notably Richard Rorty) who call themselves pragmatists. But Talisse contends that the writings of Peirce, James, and Dewey exhibit deep philosophical differences that belie any claim to a unified pragmatist tradition. Talisse observes that James and Dewey’s varieties of pragmatism presuppose contentious philosophical doctrines, whereas Peirce’s brand of pragmatism does not. These differences lead Talisse to the provocative conclusion that there is “no pragmatism *per se*,” no “revival” of pragmatism, and hence no need to rescue classical pragmatism from contemporary encroachments and corruptions (21).

In chapter two, Talisse develops his critique of substantive conceptions of democracy. This critique rests upon his endorsement of John Rawls’ claim that a democratic society must respect “the fact of reasonable pluralism.” Most advocates of substantive democracy—Talisse includes both Dewey and Michael Sandel here—fail to accommodate pluralism because they would foist upon all persons a conception of human flourishing that a reasonable person could deny. But if we accept, as Talisse urges, “the core democratic commitment that the exercise of coercive political power is legitimate only if it is justifiable, at least in principle, ‘to every last individual’” (37), then these substantive views are, from the point of view of democracy, internally inconsistent because they are oppressive.

Must we then endorse a Rawlsian proceduralist conception of democracy? Talisse thinks not; and in his third and fourth chapters he constructs and defends his alternative. Chapter three provides a close reading of Peirce’s “The Fixation of Belief” (1877). There, Peirce argues that all responsible epistemic practices presuppose precisely those norms that govern proper inquiry. Carrying Peirce’s epistemological claim into the domain of politics, Talisse argues that Peirce’s “image of a community of inquiry is inherently democratic” (66), and that the “very same” epistemic norms that legitimately govern inquiry “commit us to democratic politics” (67). The norms jointly implicit in inquiry and democratic politics form the basis for Talisse’s “epistemic perfectionism.” The resulting theory is substantive rather than proceduralist in that it prescribes a set of thin epistemic and democratic norms. Chapter four defends the claim that epistemic perfectionism can accommodate reasonable pluralism. Talisse argues that his conception of democracy is based on a view of “human *epistemic* flourishing or *doxastic* responsibility,” which is “consistent with the full range of comprehensive moral, philosophical, and religious doctrines” (86).

In chapter five, Talisse rejects Richard Posner’s pragmatic realism on the grounds that it contains precisely the kinds of “abstract,” “philosophical” commitments that Posner seeks to condemn. Talisse’s discussion of Sidney Hook in chapter six casts Hook in a kinder light than would many contemporary pragmatists. Interpreting Hook’s democratic theory and practice as an illustration of the “shape” that democratic practice takes under the Peircean view, Talisse renders Hook *not* as “a traitor to pragmatism” (115), but as a thinker whose political views—even those recommending that avowed communists ought to be barred from teaching in public schools—issued from a commitment to rational inquiry, not from unpragmatic and irrational ideology.

In the final chapter, Talisse proffers a lesson for contemporary pragmatists. Concerned that pragmatism may be on its way to becoming a “philosophically dead tradition” (137), he

urges pragmatists to engage more fully with their non-pragmatist peers instead of adopting the isolating practice of blaming rival philosophical schools (e.g., analytic philosophy) for the “eclipse” of pragmatism. Only by doing so can pragmatism enter into the democratically constructive space of reasons, and hence maintain a continuing vitality. Moreover, this is what epistemic perfectionism demands of us all.

Dewey’s defenders will resist Talisse’s objections to Deweyan democratic theory and practice. If the philosophical commitments that underwrite Deweyan democracy are true—a possibility that Talisse repeatedly acknowledges—then Dewey’s democratic theory would be in principle justifiable to every person, and hence not incompatible with “the fact of reasonable pluralism.” Moreover, Dewey’s advocates will undoubtedly insist that perniciously coercive and oppressive democratic practices are decidedly un-Deweyan. But Talisse has effectively challenged Deweyans to defend that claim. Finally, Talisse’s case for epistemic pluralism would be stronger if he directly engaged the arguments of evidentialist epistemologists who maintain that reasonable disagreement among evidence-sharing peers is impossible.

PHILIP R. OLSON

Virginia Tech