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Eric S. Nelson (ed.). *Interpreting Dilthey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp.x + 296. £75.00 (hb). ISBN: 978-1107132993

This volume is dedicated to Rudolf Makkreel and his unparalleled contributions to Anglophone Dilthey scholarship. Fittingly, it gathers together a distinguished set of authors noted for their contributions to fields of interest to both Dilthey and Makkreel: hermeneutics, aesthetics, phenomenology, psychology, history, science studies, and Kant studies. The editor's introduction offers, in addition to a biographical and historical sketch, helpful overviews of major themes in Dilthey's work: hermeneutics, theory of science, 'life-philosophy' (*Lebensphilosophie*), and aesthetics. There is little indication of a core organizing principle for the collection as a whole, though the topic of Dilthey's hermeneutics comes close to fitting the bill. Those expecting to find a unified treatment of Dilthey will be dissatisfied. Those who do not harbour such expectations, but instead wish to explore various aspects of his thought, will find much that is of value.

The thirteen essays are divided into two parts: 'Life, Hermeneutics, and Science,' and 'Practical Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Interpretation.' While many of the essays deal with traditional concerns in Dilthey studies, there are also articles on relatively neglected topics, such as Dilthey's ethics, his interest in biological science, and his theory of the novel. And beyond the usual supporting cast—Gadamer, Heidegger, and Ricoeur—there are new interlocutors for Dilthey, such as Santayana, Wittgenstein, and Evan Thompson. This collection should interest not only scholars of Dilthey and of the history of phenomenology and hermeneutics but also those seeking insights from Dilthey for contemporary aesthetics, moral psychology, the philosophy of the life sciences, or philosophy of history.

In a short review, it is of course impossible to do justice to each essay in this volume. I shall focus on three. Michael Forster's 'Dilthey's Importance for Hermeneutics' addresses Dilthey's place in the history of a philological tradition originating in the Reformation and the Renaissance. By linking Dilthey's interest in hermeneutics to the broader history of philology, Forster takes the discussion beyond both Dilthey's work on Schleiermacher and that of his twentieth-century successors. He thus usefully extends the context for understanding Dilthey's theory of interpretation as a properly scientific methodology foundational for the humanities. The essay sounds a valuable cautionary note against a common tendency to read later conceptions of hermeneutics as a philosophy of lived experience back into Dilthey. In 'A Task Most Pressing: Dilthey's Philosophy of the Novel and His Rewriting of Modern Aesthetics,' Kristin Gjesdal offers an original reading of Dilthey's theory of the novel in the context of his status as a philosopher of contemporary culture. Emphasizing the importance of the project in Dilthey's aesthetics, she focuses on his efforts to articulate the cultural and historical significance of the realist movement in the nineteenth-century novel, associated with Dickens, Balzac, Zola, and Ibsen. In Dilthey's analysis of these authors, Gjesdal identifies a non-idealist alternative to classical aesthetics, a 'work-oriented, historical, media- and style-sensitive aesthetic model' (216). The volume closes with Jean Grondin's 'Dilthey's Hermeneutics and Philosophical Hermeneutics,' a critical examination of Dilthey's legacy for twentieth-century Continental philosophy. Like Forster, Grondin recognizes Dilthey's enigmatic place in the history of hermeneutics between an older, technical notion embedded in a particular scholarly discipline and a modern one aiming to turn the theory of interpretation into a general philosophical methodology. In that light, Grondin offers an insightful reply on Dilthey's behalf to Gadamerian and Heideggerian objections. The charge that Dilthey failed to recognize a more expansive sense

of hermeneutics as a philosophy of life, according to Grondin, is ‘in a sense trivial, in another unfair’ (254).

Grondin’s essay opens with a succinct statement of a core hermeneutical conviction, ‘that the reception of a work of the spirit is part of the work itself and its fruitfulness’ (252). This principle courses through the history of Dilthey scholarship. The dominant stream of Dilthey studies has been deeply shaped by his earliest and most influential critics, such as Husserl, Gadamer, and Heidegger, and has bequeathed to Dilthey the ambivalent titles of ‘proto-phenomenologist’ and a ‘classic’ of hermeneutics. This volume largely (though not entirely) remains within that scholarly tradition of reading Dilthey through the lens of subsequent Continental philosophy. In recent decades, however, another avenue of interest in Dilthey has emerged out of a wider interest in nineteenth-century Neo-Kantianism. It has been noted that Dilthey, while publicly disavowing the Neo-Kantian movement, shared many of the concerns and methods of his contemporaries, including Hermann Cohen, Wilhelm Windelband, and Ernst Cassirer. Without denying Dilthey’s significance for twentieth-century Continental philosophy, recent scholarship has recognized Dilthey’s independent interest for the historian of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century philosophy, and especially for the historian of the philosophy of science. Indeed, this is a turn in Dilthey studies to which Makkreel has also made important contributions. Given the present volume’s evident intent to offer a wide-ranging understanding of Dilthey’s works ‘in relation to their historical situation and how they remain relevant to current philosophical issues’ (15), it is somewhat disappointing that it does not engage that project.

Nevertheless, this impressive collection of essays is a welcome addition to the literature on Dilthey. Together with the recent publication of the sixth and final volume of Dilthey’s

Selected Writings in translation from Princeton University Press, it should lend further impetus to Dilthey studies and to the historiography of post-Kantian German philosophy.

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