Johann Friedrich Herbart: Grandfather of Analytic Philosophy by Frederick C. Beiser (review)

Nabeel Hamid

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and historical reflection." Heidegger's political influence is not just a matter of academic debate but is concretely reflected in politics today. For this reason, nuanced and critical reflections on Heidegger's body of work are necessary. Barash's book is exactly the kind of research needed. Barash reveals that Heidegger's presupposition that the *Seinsfrage* "provides an adequate basis for interpreting human historical experience proves particularly problematic . . . and this comes to light above all in its relation to ethico-political considerations." Heidegger's fatalistic history forecloses ethical objections to political injustices, as those injustices are rendered necessary consequences of the forgetting of Being. From this standpoint one could even argue that far-right appropriations of Heidegger's thought are further developments in the history of Being and therefore beyond moral critique. Aside from Heidegger, Barash's book brings to light the danger surrounding the construction of historical narratives. For this reason, this book should be required reading not only for Heidegger scholars but for all scholars engaging with the complicated relationship between history, political theory, and ethics.—Rylie Johnson, *Emory University*

BEISER, Frederick C. *Johann Friedrich Herbart: Grandfather of Analytic Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. xii + 321 pp. Cloth, $85.00—This volume is the newest installment in Frederick Beiser's emerging series of intellectual biographies of nineteenth-century German figures who are relatively little known in the Anglophone world. Following monographs on Hermann Cohen (2018) and David Friedrich Strauß (2020), Beiser's latest subject is Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841), a contemporary of Schelling and Hegel best known in his century as a founder of scientific psychology and an educational theorist. Beiser's motive for presenting Herbart to today's Anglophone readers, however, has to do with neither of those dimensions of his legacy. His claim on Herbart's behalf is bold: that he was the one who "first outlined . . . our modern conception of the purpose and method of philosophy." According to Beiser, Herbart was the first to advance the idea that "philosophy is primarily an analysis of concepts, that it is a second-order logical enterprise that *examines* concepts rather than a first-order empirical discipline (physics, biology) that *uses* them." Thus, he bestows upon Herbart the moniker indicated in the book's subtitle: "If Russell and Frege are the fathers of analytical philosophy, Herbart is its grandfather."

Beiser supports his central genealogical thesis with several specific claims that would draw Herbart into the orbit of contemporary philosophical naturalism: that Herbart conceived philosophy as an examination of the logic of the sciences; that Frege borrowed Herbart's slogan, "reworking of concepts" (*Bearbeitung der Begriffe*) to describe the business of philosophy; that Herbart upheld a sharp fact/value

distinction; and that he formulated a "method of relations" for the analysis of concepts derived strictly from the given. Most importantly, perhaps, given the received story of the origins of analytic philosophy as a reaction to (British) German Idealism, Beiser frames Herbart as an early opponent of the speculative systems of Fichte and Schelling, and as the source of an alternative development of transcendental idealism that anticipated the later neo-Kantian movement.

Whether Herbart's claim to ancestry is convincing remains for his putative descendants to judge. To specialists in the history of nineteenth-century philosophy, Beiser's pitch to analytic philosophers risks appearing reductive. Indeed, a striking feature of Herbart's reception is its ambivalence. During the time when he was widely read, authors as varied in their intellectual orientations as Wilhelm Dilthey, Ernst Mach, and Matthias Jakob Schleiden contended with Herbart as, in turn, a progenitor of psychologism, a pioneer of the application of mathematics to mental phenomena, and a dogmatic scholastic, all before Frege leaned on Herbart to propose conceptual analysis as the distinctive task of philosophy that would save it from irrelevance in the face of the forward march of the positive sciences. Meanwhile, Herbart's most compelling claim to distinction, that he initiated (along with Jakob Friedrich Fries) a naturalistic alternative to the Fichte-Schelling-Hegel school of post-Kantian philosophy, has been defended previously, including in Anglophone scholarship (notably by Gary Hatfield in *The Natural and the Normative*). Beiser's attempt to give Herbart a place in the genealogy of analytic philosophy comes at the inevitable cost of evading some of the tensions in Herbart's work that account for his complex influence.

Beiser's story—told in the lucid, engaging style we have come to expect from him—spans the length of Herbart's life and career. It also provides a clear overview of all major aspects of his teaching—from metaphysics and psychology, to pedagogy, ethics, and aesthetics. The narrative is divided into thirteen chapters. The first four cover Herbart's childhood in Oldenburg, student years in Jena, and his time in Interlaken as private tutor to an aristocratic Swiss family, which proved crucial for his lifelong interest in pedagogical theory. The next three turn to Herbart's first academic post in Göttingen and his decisive break with his teacher, Fichte, which led to his early efforts to formulate an alternative metaphysics and ethics, the latter notably infused with a Romantic idea of aesthetic judgment as the basis of morality. The next five chapters follow Herbart to Königsberg, where he wrote his seminal treatises on scientific psychology and got involved in high-stakes disputes concerning educational reform in Prussia with the likes of Wilhelm von Humboldt and Friedrich Schleiermacher. It is also where Herbart produced his mature system of metaphysics, conceived as "the art of experience properly understood" (*ars experientiam recti intelligendi*), and duly organized in the manner of eighteenth-century German scholastic manuals into distinct parts on ontology and one or more special parts (in this case, synechology and eidology). Beiser's two chapters on psychology and

metaphysics amount to a solid introduction to Herbart's theoretical philosophy, certainly better than anything currently available in English. The final chapter sees Herbart return to Göttingen and contains synopses of his last writings on pedagogy and ethics.

Beiser's rich portrait depicts Herbart as a man chronically dissatisfied with his lot and increasingly alienated from his age. Running alongside intellectual disagreements with Fichte and Schelling is his bitterness at not receiving the recognition he believes is his due. Politically, Herbart is too quietist and conservative in a revolutionary era, defending a contemplative ideal of the university and a monarchist position on government. Defeated by the *Zeitgeist* and having retreated from social and academic life, Herbart dies "withdrawn as a snail." His intellectual fortunes rose posthumously as the backlash to German Idealism grew around mid-century, and for a brief moment in the early-twentieth century he counted among the great philosophers, as Beiser reminds us. Since then, he has faded into virtual oblivion. This fine biography should help to recover Herbart from undeserved neglect.—Nabeel Hamid, *Concordia University*

DERRIDA, Jacques. *Perjury and Pardon, Volume 1*. Translated by David Wills. Edited by Ginette Michaud and Nicholas Cotton. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2022. 368 pp. Cloth, $45.00—This is the translation of a volume in the posthumously published series of Derrida's lecture courses. The most important of these are the early *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History* (1964–65) and *Theory and Practice* (1975–76), no parts of which were published by Derrida. Substantial portions of the first volume of the lectures on *Perjury and Pardon* were published as separate essays, so the main question concerning this book is what it adds to the published portions.

For those readers who are familiar with Derrida's most famous work and are curious about his deconstructive ethics ("ethics beyond ethics") and have not read any of the essays drawn from this book (such as "To Forgive: the Unforgiveable and the Imprescriptible," "Literature in Secret," and "Typewriter Ribbon"), this is a good place to approach the topic. One will find here many of Derrida's classic moves, such as the deconstruction of texts, concepts, and traditions. One will find conditions of possibility that are also conditions of impossibility, concepts that are contaminated from within by their opposites, and appeals to the experience of the impossible and to the distinction between a general and restricted economy.

One will also find here those points that seem to be Derrida's weakest, such as the insistence on the privacy of the mental, a rather wobbly treatment of the separation between intending and causality, and the