

is another question. Cerwonka engages in an important discussion of state geography in denaturalized and historicized terms. Imagined geography plays a central role in the discussion of Australia's ties with Britain and America. 'Geographical anxiety' is an apt term employed here. The presence of the idea of cartography is also a highlight. 'Maps establish the power of a state by writing the identity of the nation on the physical world' (p. 23). But 'mapping' spatial practices also entails a recognition of diversity and the importance of local contextualization – and Cerwonka's book fails in this regard. From native to nation and back to nature, it might be the reflexive social investigators who need rescuing from crises of their own imagining.

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Martin Beck Matustik, *Jurgen Habermas – A Philosophical-Political Profile* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2001)

Where there was tradition, there should critical theory be. This seems, somehow still after all these years, to have been Max Horkheimer's message in the 1930s manifesto of the Frankfurt School. Critical theory, meantime, has grown out and sideways, shown up in all kinds of strange places. Leaving aside the issue whether there ever was anything really like traditional theory, the aura of the idea of Critical Theory is nevertheless still discernible. Via Marx and Lukács back to Kant, the purpose of critique was transcendent. At the end of the 20th century, however, its champions, whether Habermas or Honneth, took up positions that were more clearly immanent. Habermas, in particular, began to look like Rawls. How did all this happen, and why should we care?

Martin Beck Matustik has written a brilliant if idiosyncratic advocacy and critique of Habermas, and it is worth reading if only to revisit and appraise again the extraordinary achievements of Habermas' life and work. Too easily, too readily we forget, perhaps especially if the later trajectory of the project disappoints, how scintillating the (earlier) work of Habermas was. Matustik reestablishes its insight and brilliance, but also the depth of its political stance, often lost in the filter of Anglo-American translation. Here, in this book, we walk not with the author of *Theory of Communicative Competence* but with the theoretical activist, critic, a great deal of whose energy is expended internally to German debate which fails to show up outside. But Matustik's other purpose is to locate Habermas always in his moment; in the beginning, with Nazism, as he turns 16 on 18 June 1945, just after the defeat of Germany. Habermas' silhouette then emerges against two magical dates – 1945 and 1968. There is, of course, more, and this is not a work or an

optic of historicist reduction. As Matustik indicates, the nature of Habermas' achievement is that of an odyssey of the dialectic of enlightenment, which itself indicates the tension between hope and crisis inscribed into European modernity. The contours of this project then include rationality debates, the linguistic-communicative turn, the debates over rights and ethics, recognition and justice, and the communicative theory of democracy. In all this, the transatlantic engagement is crucial; pragmatism and liberalism indicate a different cultural horizon to that anticipated by Horkheimer. But there is more, for Matustik also insists on locating Habermas as a diagnostician of his times, alternating between Habermas as a thinker and the defining experiences of his time, the latter both as recipient and actor. The result, in Matustik's hands, sometimes lurches between theory and life in ways that make you giddy. The result, however, is exciting, possessing of candour and characterized by a sense of voice that is refreshing. So successful is the book that it makes one ashamed if, as in the case of the present reviewer, one has simply forgotten with the passing of time how exciting and fundamental a thinker Habermas has been.

First, the location. As Matustik reminds us, Habermas necessarily has a specific German location. He belongs to the skeptical generation of those who were too young to be Nazis, but old enough to be existentially affected by the events and their subsequent denial. Matustik tells this story with special effect, as he chooses to write its history in present tense, as though it were in real time. This drama then shifts from the postwar 'don't ask/don't tell' to the strident intergenerational conflict of the 1960s. Habermas' first great disappointment is with Heidegger. As his later, strident voice in the *Historians Controversy* shows, Nazism remains a fundamental marker and divider, though Habermas also eschews the anti-oedipal politics of the '68-ers. The younger Habermas, rather, becomes a Marxist, but of a particular kind, too cool for his students, too hot for his own teachers. Adorno might finally be the master, but Marcuse and the young Marx is closer to the spirit. As the fathers become exhausted by world history, Habermas steps up as the radical, and, of course, is bound to disappoint, not least with the infamous crack about left wing fascism which, as Matustik says, is after all a danger real enough, not least in the paths played out by some of the '68-ers into Maoism and terror.

Marcuse, libertarian excesses and all, had of course taken his radicalism to Brandeis and to San Diego in the very moments when American radical thinkers discovered the early Marx and the early works of the Frankfurt School. The reception of the earlier work of Habermas needs to be located in this moment, where the hopes and utopian horizons of critical theory were revived, this time with reference to the student movement. Spurned by his teachers, Habermas completes his doctoral work with the aptly named Marxist professor, Abendroth. The story unfolds clearly, in Matustik's hands, though occasionally it reads like Germanic stenography, a

dossier if not a day book, and often comic to boot, as in the portrayal of the 1964 sociology conference in Berlin, where the plenary guests are Parsons and Adorno. If this moment represents the regrouping of Critical Theory, it also posits a peculiar path, taken later, for Habermas. For if Habermas ends up with Rawls, he also is detained for some good time earlier by Parsons. The controversy over 'left fascism' already, in a sense, aligned Habermas with Parsons, at least, to anticipate, for radicals like Dutschke. The Frankfurt School began to look like cops, at least in the heat and division of the student optic then.

As Matustik says, the '68-ers were the first generation that had the courage (and, one might add, the material comfort) to face their parents and teachers in ways that Habermas' generation could not. The oedipal furies unleashed, of course, turned all shirts into grey, black or brown. The tone of response toward Habermas and his contemporaries was bound to be accusatory, even though they had not been actors or apologists of any consequence. Matustik identifies the issue of revolution, here, as the central symbolic division. Habermas has never been revolutionary, because he has always opposed even the suggestion of violence, as indicated in his occasional differences with Marcuse. For Habermas, the student movements want to go too far; the project ought be democracy, not revolution. Habermas is bound to disappoint, as he becomes more progressively reformist. His turn is less from revolution to reform than from the residual romanticism of his earlier philosophical formation to reason. He compounds the offence against Marxism by shifting away from third worldism, political economy, the labour theory of value and formulae of class struggle. The absent presence here is Hannah Arendt. Perhaps the issue here is that Habermas betrays, takes a stand against, the redemptive stream of the new left. And this, for me, is also where we owe him.

The fundamental unease in Habermas' work remains that indicated by the Holocaust, and the kind of denial that insists into the 1950s that 'we are all democrats here' in the Free Germany. What Matustik tracks here, then, is the shift from 1945 to 1968 viewed as Habermas' own learning process, a small life-narrative that is entirely consonant with his own theoretical curiosities. Systems-theory obviously plugs into this, as Habermas comes to accept that a complex system is no longer open to formulae concerning worker self-management (which, in any case, themselves sidestep questions of democracy). The problem then emerges that, just as Bauman has been turned into an English professor of cultural studies, so has the reception of Habermas turned him into a New England legal philosopher. The latter image is not altogether impertinent, if it is interpreted sensibly. As Alan Ryan observed in the *New York Review of Books* (16 January 2003), the connective figure here, now, would be less Rawls than Dewey.

As for us, in the founding culture of *Thesis Eleven* in Melbourne, 25 years ago, we could only say in honesty that without Habermas, and

Gramsci, there would have been no *Thesis Eleven*. In their distinct ways, they both blew the whistle on Marxism, that it could offer no theory of politics, which meant, explicitly for Habermas, that we had to turn elsewhere, and out of Marxism. For Gramsci, this was another story, and in this our local world was closer to that of Habermas, after fascism, even if irredeemably peripheral. At this distance, he was nevertheless our teacher.

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Steve Redhead, *Paul Virilio: Theorist for an Accelerated Culture* (Edinburgh University Press, 2004)

Surely we all already know Paul Virilio? He has the brand identity needed to stand out in the bustling marketplace that is contemporary social theory. Virilio is the theorist of speed. He is the inventor of 'dromology', the science that poses speed as a defining logic of contemporary life. He is, according to Steve Redhead, the emblematic analyst of our chronically war-stricken and increasingly 'accelerated culture'. New communication technologies operate at nearly the speed of light. With the arrival of the likes of live satellite television, war, in all its varied forms, is now fought in the media, which means that it takes place everywhere and instantly. Geographical space has given way to audio-visual display. And with the erosion of space, out goes movement too. Time and distance have collapsed.

So the story goes. Dromology may be a new word, Virilio's brand may be unusually emphatic and quirky, but the thesis itself is surely a commonplace in contemporary social theory. Is anything more than these few, crude brushstrokes needed? Does Redhead give us pause to tarry a while longer with Virilio? No.

From his base at Manchester Metropolitan University, Redhead is a known player on the visiting scholar circuit, having recently appeared, for example, in Western Australia, both in the university scene and as Chair of the state's Creative Industries Taskforce. Redhead has the website and the long list of closely successive and rapidly forthcoming publications that seem to provoke the jealous ire of more traditional intellectuals. His earlier books on football were slated by the British sociological establishment for lacking 'the rigour demanded by academics', for their 'hyper-solipsistic' habit of self-citation and for promoting a modish descriptiveness in which 'academic writing comes to imitate cultural marketing' (*Sociology*, February 1999; *Sociological Review*, August 1998). And even now, a brazen marketing impulse seems to continue unabated – Edinburgh University Press proudly announces the simultaneous publication of *The Paul Virilio Reader*, edited, of course, by Steve Redhead.