

# **Moral Consciousness And Communicative Action Moral Consciousness And Communicative Action Studies In Contemporary German Social Thought**

This new edition of a well-regarded book provides a concise and exceptionally clear introduction to Habermas's work, from his early writings on the public sphere, through his work on law and the state, to his more recent discussion of science, religion and contemporary Europe. Outhwaite examines all of Habermas's major works and steers a steady course through the many debates to which they have given rise. A major feature of the book is that it provides a detailed critical analysis of Habermas's most important work, *The Theory of Communicative Action*. As well as looking at Habermas's appraisal of figures such as Foucault and Derrida, the book also examines his resolute defence of the Enlightenment project, his work on law and democracy and its implications for the important topic of European integration. This book quickly became established as an authoritative guide to Habermas's work, and this updated new edition will be an invaluable critical introduction for students and scholars across the social sciences and humanities, especially sociology, politics, philosophy and social theory.

This book offers an integrated overview of the themes and discourses of feminism and multiculturalism which inform the 'politics of difference'; an area of burgeoning interest

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in contemporary political theory. Andrea Baumeister introduces the challenge posed by the proponents of diversity to liberalist theorists such as Rawls, Raz and Kymlicka, and outlines their responses to this challenge. While other texts cover either feminism or multiculturalism within 'Identity Politics', no other book brings these strands of thought together, recognising their common themes.

In this important new book, Jürgen Habermas takes up certain fundamental questions of philosophy. While much of his recent work has been concerned with issues of morality and law, in this new work Habermas returns to the traditional philosophical questions of truth, objectivity and reality which were at the centre of his earlier classic book Knowledge and Human Interests. How can the norms that underpin the linguistically structured world in which we live be brought into step with the contingency of the development of socio-cultural forms of life? How can the idea that our world exists independently of our attempts to describe it be reconciled with the insight that we can never reach reality without the mediation of language and that 'bare' reality is therefore unattainable? In Knowledge and Human Interests Habermas answered these questions with reference to a weak naturalism and a transcendental-pragmatic realism. Since then, however, he has developed a formal pragmatic theory which is based on an analysis of speech acts and language use. In this new volume Habermas takes up the philosophical questions of truth, objectivity and reality from the perspective of his linguistically-based pragmatic theory. The final section addresses the limits of

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philosophy and reassesses the relation between theory and practice from a perspective that could be described as 'post-Marxist'. This volume, now available in paperback as well, by one of the world's leading philosophers will be essential reading for students and scholars of philosophy, social theory and the humanities and social sciences generally.

Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action MIT Press

On the occasion of Habermas's 80th birthday, the German publisher Suhrkamp brought out five volumes of Habermas's papers that spanned the full range of his philosophical thought, from the theory of rationality to the critique of metaphysics. For each of these volumes, Habermas wrote an introduction that crystallized, in a remarkably clear and succinct way, his thinking on the key philosophical issues that have preoccupied him throughout his long career. This new book by Polity brings together these five introductions and publishes them in translation for the first time. The resulting volume provides a unique and comprehensive overview of Habermas's philosophy in his own words. In the five chapters that make up this volume, Habermas discusses the concept of communicative action and the grounding of the social sciences in the theory of language; the relationship between rationality and the theory of language; discourse ethics; political theory and problems of democracy and legitimacy; and the critique of reason and the challenge posed by religion in a secular age. The volume includes a substantial introduction by Jean-Marc Durand-Gasselin,

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which offers a synoptic view of the development of Habermas's thought as a whole followed by concise accounts of his contributions in each of the areas mentioned. Together they provide the reader with the necessary background to understand Habermas's distinctive and original contribution to philosophy. Philosophical Introductions will be an indispensable text for students and scholars in philosophy and in the humanities and social sciences generally, as well as anyone interested in the most important developments in philosophy and critical theory today.

Assesses critically the work of Rawls, Walzer, and Habermas and presents a theory of justice that responds to two senses of pluralism.

Some theorists understand the self as constituted by power relations, while others insist upon the self's autonomous capacities for critical reflection and deliberate self-transformation. All too often, these understandings of the self are assumed to be incompatible. Amy Allen, however, argues that the capacity for autonomy is rooted in the very power relations that constitute the self. Her theoretical framework illuminates both aspects of what she calls, following Foucault, the "politics of our selves." It analyzes power in all its depth and complexity, including the complicated phenomenon of subjection, without giving up on the ideal of autonomy. Drawing on original and critical readings of a diverse group of theorists, Allen shows how the self can be both constituted by power and capable of an autonomous self-constitution.

This long-awaited book sets out the implications of Habermas's theory of

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communicative action for moral theory "Discourse ethics" attempts to reconstruct a moral point of view from which normative claims can be impartially judged. The theory of justice it develops replaces Kant's categorical imperative with a procedure of justification based on reasoned agreement among participants in practical discourse. Habermas connects communicative ethics to the theory of social action via an examination of research in the social psychology of moral and interpersonal development. He aims to show that our basic moral intuitions spring from something deeper and more universal than contingent features of our tradition, namely from normative presuppositions of social interaction that belong to the repertoire of competent agents in any society. Jurgen Habermas is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Frankfurt. "Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action is included in the series Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought, edited by Thomas McCarthy.

This book explores the contours of a transformational sociology which seeks to reconsider the horizons of sociological imagination. It questions accepted modernist assumptions such as the equation of society and nation-state, the dualism of individual and society and that of ontology and epistemology. Arguing that contemporary sociology suffers from what Ulrich Beck calls the Nato-like fire power of western sociology, it argues that sociology has to open itself to transcivilizational dialogues and planetary conversations about self, culture and society. The book also challenges

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scholars to go beyond a privileging of the post-traditional telos of modernist sociology and puts forward a foundational interrogation of modernist sociology. It underscores the limitations of established conventions of sociology and considering an alternative sociology based upon Confucian vision and practice of self-transformation. This collection offers a way to go beyond dominant structures of modern sociology and contemporary dominant ways of thinking about and doing sociology helping us cultivate a transdisciplinary sociology.

Debating Humanity explores sociological and philosophical efforts to delineate key features of humanity that identify us as members of the human species. After challenging the normative contradictions of contemporary posthumanism, this book goes back to the foundational debate on humanism between Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger in the 1940s and then re-assesses the implicit and explicit anthropological arguments put forward by seven leading postwar theorists: self-transcendence (Hannah Arendt), adaptation (Talcott Parsons), responsibility (Hans Jonas), language (Jrgen Habermas), strong evaluations (Charles Taylor), reflexivity (Margaret Archer) and reproduction of life (Luc Boltanski). Genuinely interdisciplinary and boldly argued, Daniel Chernilo has crafted a novel philosophical sociology that defends a universalistic principle of humanity as vital to any adequate understanding of social life.

A major contribution to contemporary social theory. Not only does it provide a

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compelling critique of some of the main perspectives in 20th century philosophy and social science, but it also presents a systematic synthesis of the many themse which have preoccupied Habermas for thirty years. --Times Literary Supplement

Here, for the first time in English, is volume one of Jurgen Habermas's long-awaited magnum opus: *The Theory of Communicative Action*. This pathbreaking work is guided by three interrelated concerns: (1) to develop a concept of communicative rationality that is no longer tied to the subjective and individualistic premises of modern social and political theory; (2) to construct a two-level concept of society that integrates the 'lifeworld' and 'system' paradigms; and (3) to sketch out a critical theory of modernity that explains its sociopathologies in a new way. Habermas approaches these tasks through a combination of conceptual analyses, systematic reflections, and critical reconstructions of such predecessors as Marx and Weber, Durkheim and Mead, Horkheimer and Adorno, Schutz and Parsons. *Reason and the Rationalization of Society* develops a sociological theory of action that stresses not its means-ends or teleological aspect, but the need to coordinate action socially via communication. In the introductory chapter Habermas sets out a powerful series of arguments on such foundational issues as cultural and historical relativism, the methodology of *Verstehen*, the inseparability of interpretation from critique. In addition to clarifying the normative foundations of critical social inquiry, this sets the stage for a systematic appropriation of Weber's theory of rationalization and its Marxist reception by Lukacs, Horkheimer and

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Adorno. This is an important book for degree students of philosophy, sociology and related subjects.

Although the continental philosophers Jurgen Habermas and Emmanuel Levinas are both inescapably important to an array of debates in contemporary moral theory, they are rarely assessed in relation to each other. Steven Hendley's study is based on the conviction that beneath the surface there is in fact a remarkable degree of convergence in the two philosophers' work that is usually overlooked. Hendley discovers and explains the complementarity of Levinas's conception of discourse in relation to the Other to Habermas's theory of communication as the basis for recognition of universal moral norms.

Through the works of key figures in ethics since modernity this book charts a shift from dominant fixated, objective moral systems and the dependence on moral authorities such as God, nature and state to universal, formal, fallible, individualistic and/or vulnerable moral systems that ensue from the modern subject's exercise of reason and freedom.

Theory and Practice is one of Habermas's major works and is widely recognized as a classic in contemporary and social and political theory. Through a series of highly original historical studies, Habermas re-examines the relations between philosophy, science and politics. Beginning with the classical doctrine of politics as developed by Aristotle, he traces the changing constellation of theory and practice through the work

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of Machiavelli, More, Hobbes, Hegel and Marx. He argues that, with the development of the modern sciences, politics has become increasingly regarded as a technical discipline concerned with problems of prediction and control. Politics has thus lost its link with the practical cultivation of character, that is, with the praxis of enlightened citizens. Theory and Practices includes a major re-assessment of Marx's work and of the status of Marxism as a form of critique. In an important concluding chapter Habermas examines the role of reason and the prospects for critical theory in our modern scientific civilization.

Introduction by Thomas McCarthy. Philosophy as Stand-In and Interpreter.  
Reconstruction and Interpretation in the Social Sciences. Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification. Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action. Morality and Ethical Life: Does Hegel's Critique of Kant Apply to Discourse Ethics?. Index.

Explores the political implications of Habermas's theory of discourse ethics through a resurrection of its radical potential when applied to participants in decision-making groups. In *How to Build a Better Human*, prominent bioethicist Gregory E. Pence argues if, we are careful and ethical, we can use genetics, biotechnology, and medicine in safe ethical ways for human enhancement. He looks at the innovations and challenges that have occurred since the birth of bioethics almost 50 years ago and considers the ethical implications of the technological advances that are just around the corner.

This collection of four essays and an interview contains Habermas's most recent contributions

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to ethical theory. It expands and clarifies the work on discourse ethics presented in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Here, largely in response to criticisms from contemporary neo-Aristotelians, Habermas underscores the claim of discourse ethics to a preeminent position in contemporary moral philosophy with incisive analyses and refinements of the central concepts of his theory that include important developments in his treatment of practical reason and of the problems of application and motivation. The first essay offers a comprehensive analysis of practical rationality, which establishes a clear demarcation between pragmatic, ethical, and moral questions and a corresponding differentiation between forms of volition and spheres of practical discourse. The centerpiece of the book is a multifaceted defense of the central claims of discourse ethics incorporating masterly critiques of the major competing positions, including those of John Rawls, Bernard Williams, Charles Taylor, Alasdair MacIntyre, Karl-Otto Apel, and Albrecht Wellmer. The middle essays defend the basic intention of universalist moral theory in the face of the claims of the neo-Aristotelian ethics of the good and Horkheimer's skepticism toward reason that led him to embrace a religiously inspired ethic of compassion. An interview with Habermas covering such topics as the genesis of discourse ethics, the precise import of some of its more controversial elements, and its interconnections with the theory of communicative actions concludes this important collection. Jürgen Habermas is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Frankfurt.

Jürgen Habermas is unquestionably one of the foremost philosophers writing today. His notions of communicative action and rationality have exerted a profound influence within philosophy and the social sciences. This volume examines the historical and intellectual contexts out of which Habermas' work emerged, and offers an overview of his main ideas,

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including those in his most recent publications. -- Publisher description.

‘There is no alternative to postmetaphysical thinking’: this statement, made by Jürgen Habermas in 1988, has lost none of its relevance. Postmetaphysical thinking is, in the first place, the historical answer to the crisis of metaphysics following Hegel, when the central metaphysical figures of thought began to totter under the pressure exerted by social developments and by developments within science. As a result, philosophy’s epistemological privilege was shaken to its core, its basic concepts were de-transcendentalized, and the primacy of theory over practice was opened to question. For good reasons, philosophy ‘lost its extraordinary status’, but as a result it also courted new problems. In *Postmetaphysical Thinking II*, the sequel to the 1988 volume that bears the same title (English translation, Polity 1992), Habermas addresses some of these problems. The first section of the book deals with the shift in perspective from metaphysical worldviews to the lifeworld, the unarticulated meanings and assumptions that accompany everyday thought and action in the mode of ‘background knowledge’. Habermas analyses the lifeworld as a ‘space of reasons’ – even where language is not (yet) involved, such as, for example, in gestural communication and rituals. In the second section, the uneasy relationship between religion and postmetaphysical thinking takes centre stage. Habermas picks up where he left off in 1988, when he made the far-sighted observation that ‘philosophy, even in its postmetaphysical form, will be able neither to replace nor to repress religion’, and explores philosophy’s new-found interest in religion, among other topics. The final section includes essays on the role of religion in the political context of a post-secular, liberal society. This volume will be of great interest to students and scholars in philosophy, religion and the social sciences and humanities generally.

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Jurgen Habermas is arguably the world's most influential living philosopher – by introducing ideas such as the public sphere, constitutional patriotism, and the discourse theory of law and democracy, he has transformed modern political philosophy. But since 2001, Habermas's thought has taken an unexpected turn. This book is the first full-length treatment of Habermas's postsecular political philosophy, and critically analyses his new direction of thought. The author places the postsecular turn in the context of Habermas's long-standing commitment to developing a postmetaphysical account of morality, politics and human communication; the tension between secular liberal democracy and religious freedom is real, but there may be losses as well as gains to Habermas's quest to translate the sacred. In this important volume Habermas outlines the views which form the basis of his critical theory of modern societies. The volume comprises five interlocking essays, which together define the contours of his theory of communication and of his substantive account of social change. 'What is Universal Pragmatics?' is the best available statement of Habermas's programme for a theory of communication based on the analysis of speech acts. In the following two essays Habermas draws on the work of Kohlberg and others to develop a distinctive account of moral consciousness and normative structures. 'Toward a Reconstruction of historical Materialism' takes these issues further, offering a wide-ranging reconstruction of Marx's historical materialism understood as a theory of social evolution. The final essay focuses on the question of legitimacy and on the legitimation problems faced by modern states. This book is essential reading for anyone concerned with the key questions of social and political theory today. These critical essays on Jurgen Habermas's major contribution to sociological theory, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, provide an indispensable guide for anyone trying to grasp

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that large, difficult, and important work. The editors' introduction traces the history of the reception of the work and identifies the main themes on which discussion has focused: a concept of communicative rationality; a theory of action based on distinguishing communicative from instrumental reason; a two-level concept of society that integrates lifeworld and system paradigms; and a critical theory of modernity meant to diagnose the sociopathologies of contemporary society. Axel Honneth is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies in Berlin. Hans Joas is Professor of Sociology at the Free University, Berlin. Contributors: Jeffrey Alexander. Johann P. Arnason. Johannes Berger. Gunter Dux. Jurgen Habermas. Hans Joas. Hans-Peter Kruger. Thomas McCarthy. Herbert Schnadelbach. Martin Seel. Charles Taylor.

In this wide-ranging work, now available in paperback, Habermas presents his views on the nature of the social sciences and their distinctive methodology and concerns. He examines, among other things, the traditional division between the natural sciences and the social sciences; the characteristics of social action and the implications of theories of language for social enquiry; and the nature, tasks and limitations of hermeneutics. Habermas' analysis of these and other themes is, as always, rigorous, perceptive and constructive. This brilliant study succeeds in highlighting the distinctive characteristics of the social sciences and in outlining the nature of, and prospects for, critical theory today.

Conceptions of evil have changed dramatically over time, and though humans

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continue to commit acts of cruelty against one another, today we possess a clearer, more moral way of analyzing them. In *Narrating Evil*, María Pía Lara explores what has changed in our understanding of evil, why the transformation matters, and how we can learn from this specific historical development. Drawing on Immanuel Kant's and Hannah Arendt's ideas about reflective judgment, Lara argues that narrative plays a key role in helping societies acknowledge their pasts. Particular stories haunt our consciousness and lead to a kind of examination and dialogue that shape notions of morality. A powerful description of a crime can act as a filter, helping us to draw conclusions about what constitutes a moral wrong, and public debates over these narratives allow us to construct a more accurate picture of historical truth, leading to a better understanding of why such actions are possible. In building her argument, Lara considers Greek tragedies, Shakespeare's depictions of evil, Joseph Conrad's literary metaphors, and movies that portray human cruelty. Turning to such philosophers and writers as Jürgen Habermas, Walter Benjamin, Primo Levi, Giorgio Agamben, and Ariel Dorfman, Lara defines a reflexive relationship between an event, the narrative of the event, and the public reception of the narrative, and she proves that the stories of perpetrators and sufferers are always intertwined. The process of disclosure, debate, and the public fashioning

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of collective judgment are vital methods through which we make sense not only of new forms of cruelty but of past crimes as well. Narrating Evil describes the steps of this process and why they are a crucial part of our attempt to build a different, more just world.

Challenging conventional wisdom on the virtues of a consumer economy, this provocative book explores the nexus between growth and environment sustainability. The miracle of the modern affluent economy is an ever-swelling cornucopia of consumer goods, leading to expanding consumption as the essential underpinning of economic growth in more and more parts of the globe. Douglas Booth contends that expansion in this form amounts to an addiction. Are we as a society hooked on economic growth of a kind that carries with it significant threats to the natural environment? A critical dilemma for the modern economy is that growth is required to prevent the pain of unemployment. As growth continues, the environment declines, but if growth slows, unemployment rises. We seem trapped in a spiraling predicament like that of the addict. This accessible work explores whether getting "unhooked" from growth to meet the needs of the environment is possible. Giving the environment priority over growth may seem to some like a radical idea, yet the author argues that it can be accomplished using marketable emissions allowances, transferable development

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rights, and other tools popular with conventional economists. It can also be achieved by creating more interesting and environmentally friendly urban landscapes less beholden to the automobile. The key problem a less growth-oriented society will face is ensuring that everyone who wants employment can find it. This will require something that many people wish for anyway, a shorter workweek. More leisure, a higher-quality environment, and more attractive cities and towns are the potential rewards of a less consumption-oriented society. Yet powerful economic interests that benefit from a high-growth economy are arrayed against changes in the status quo. Under what circumstances can the power of special interests be overcome in the name of environmental conservation? This is the author's critical final question as he offers a clear path to a sustainable economic and environmental

This book uses John Dewey to articulate discursive practices that would help citizens form better intellectual and moral relationships with a 'liquid' global political environment characterized by flexible accumulation, uneven development, and other phenomenon produced by what Frederic Jameson characterizes increased 'space-time compression.' These practices, derived from Dewey's aesthetic interpretation of thinking and effective classroom practice, form the basis of an 'ethical life' encouraging individuals to build meditative links

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between their particular interests and their more universal implications.

This is Habermas's long awaited work on law, democracy and the modern constitutional state in which he develops his own account of the nature of law and democracy.

This volume analyzes the impact of globalization on the concept of popular sovereignty and rethinks it for the transnational domain. It explores how popular sovereignty has historically determined the form of democratic citizenship and how democratic citizenship and legitimacy can be conceived in the transnational sphere in the absence of a global sovereign order. By inquiring into the new global context of popular sovereignty, the book seeks to better understand the emerging structures of global governance and their potential for democratic legitimacy. Lupel argues: That the challenges of globalization necessitate a rethinking of the concept of popular sovereignty beyond the domain of the nation-state That such a rethinking reveals a tension between the particularism of democratic legitimacy and the universalism of cosmopolitan politics Critical attention to the constitutive processes of global governance must become an integral part of democratic theory in the context of globalization; and a transnational model of popular sovereignty provides the best resources for this purpose. This book will be of interest to students and scholars of globalization,

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democratic theory and international relations theory.

In this book Sharon Krause argues that moral and political deliberation must incorporate passions, even as she insists on the value of impartiality. Her work provides a systematic account of how passions can generate an impartial standpoint that yields binding and compelling conclusions in politics.

This book is an updated and revised edition of *Fundamentals of Legal Argumentation* published in 1999. It discusses new developments that have taken place in the past 15 years in research of legal argumentation, legal justification and legal interpretation, as well as the implications of these new developments for the theory of legal argumentation. Almost every chapter has been revised and updated, and the chapters include discussions of recent studies, major additions on topical issues, new perspectives, and new developments in several theoretical areas. Examples of these additions are discussions of recent developments in such areas as Habermas' theory, MacCormick's theory, Alexy's theory, Artificial Intelligence and law, and the pragma-dialectical theory of legal argumentation. Furthermore it provides an extensive and systematic overview of approaches and studies of legal argumentation in the context of legal justification in various legal systems and countries that have been important for the development of research of legal

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argumentation. The book contains a discussion of influential theories that conceive the law and legal justification as argumentative activity. From different disciplinary and theoretical angles it addresses such topics as the institutional characteristics of the law and the relation between general standards for moral discussions and legal standards such as the Rule of Law. It discusses patterns of legal justification in the context of different types of problems in the application of the law and it describes rules for rational legal discussions. The combination of the sound basis of the first edition and the discussions of new developments make this new edition an up-to-date and comprehensive survey of the various theoretical influences which have informed the study of legal argumentation. It discusses salient backgrounds to this field as well as major approaches and trends in the contemporary research. It surveys the relevant theoretical factors both from various continental law traditions and common law countries.

This book provides a clear and readable overview of the works of today's most influential German philosopher. It analyses the theoretical underpinnings of Habermas's social theory, and its applications in ethics, politics, and law. Finally, it examines how his social and political theory informs his writing on contemporary, political, and social problems.

Fred Dallmayr's work is innovative in its rethinking of some of the central concepts of modern political philosophy, challenging the hegemony of a modern "subjectivity" at the heart of Western liberalism, individualism and rationalism, and articulating alternative voices, claims

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and ideas. His writings productively confound the logocentrism of Western modernity, while providing alternative conceptions of political community that are post-individualist, post-anthropocentric and relational. The editor has focused on work in three key areas: Critical phenomenology and the study of politics The first selections focus on the philosophical roots of Dallmayr's work in two of the most innovative intellectual trends of the twentieth century: phenomenology and critical theory. These chapters outline some of the main arguments advanced by practitioners of phenomenology, particularly "existential phenomenology," as well the guiding ideas of critical theory and critical Marxism, while tracing Dallmayr's debt to thinkers such as Heidegger, Gadamer, Habermas, Adorno and Merleau-Ponty. Cross-cultural theory These readings illustrate Dallmayr's explorations beyond the confines of Western culture, as this phase of his thinking turns toward what is now called cross-cultural or "comparative" political theory. In an approach that maintains its linkage with critical phenomenology, Dallmayr asserts that Western (or European-American) political theory can no longer claim undisputed hegemony; rather it must allow itself to be contested, amplified and corrected through a comparison with non-Western theoretical traditions and initiatives. Cosmopolitanism These selections explore the final phase of Dallmayr's work, in which he applies his insights on cross-cultural studies to the context of global politics, rebutting Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis, and instead arguing for a cosmopolitanism that takes a middle path between both global universalism and restrictive particularism, advocating sustained dialogue and respectful mutual learning between countries and civilizations. An exploration of the theological reception and critique of Habermas' philosophy in the different phases of its engagement with religion.

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Jürgen Habermas is one of the most influential philosophers of our time. His diagnoses of contemporary society and concepts such as the public sphere, communicative rationality, and cosmopolitanism have influenced virtually all academic disciplines, spurred political debates, and shaped intellectual life in Germany and beyond for more than fifty years. In *The Habermas Handbook*, leading Habermas scholars elucidate his thought, providing essential insight into his key concepts, the breadth of his work, and his influence across politics, law, the social sciences, and public life. This volume offers a comprehensive overview and an in-depth analysis of Habermas's work in its entirety. After examining his intellectual biography, it goes on to illuminate the social and intellectual context of Habermasian thought, such as the Frankfurt School, speech-act theory, and contending theories of democracy. The Handbook provides an extensive account of Habermas's texts, ranging from his dissertation on Schelling to his most recent writing about Europe. It illustrates the development of his thought and its frequently controversial reception while elaborating the central ideas of his work. The book also provides a glossary of key terms and concepts, making the complexity of Habermas's thought accessible to a broad readership.

In this book, Richard Amesbury brings recent developments in Anglo-American philosophy into engagement with dominant currents in contemporary European social theory in order to articulate a pragmatic account of moral criticism. Presented in a lively and accessible style that avoids technical jargon, *Morality and Social Criticism* argues that the objectivity of moral discourse can be preserved without recourse to the overweening philosophical ambitions of the Enlightenment.

*Free Public Reason* examines the idea of public justification, stressing its importance but also

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questioning the coherence of the concept itself. Although public justification is employed in the work of theorists such as John Rawls, Jeremy Waldron, Thomas Nagel, and others, it has received little attention on its own as a philosophical concept. In this book Fred D'Agostino shows that the concept is composed of various values, interests, and notions of the good, and that no ranking of these is possible. The notion of public justification itself is thus shown to be contestable. In demonstrating this, D'Agostino undermines many current political theories that rely on this concept. Having broken down the foundations of public justification, D'Agostino then offers an alternative model of how a workable consensus on its meaning might be reached through the interactions of a community of interpreters or delegates at a constitutional convention.

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