

Jurgen Habermas A Philosophical Political Profile

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1991 Joan Nordquist

2018-03-12 Jürgen Habermas In this important book Habermas develops his views on a range of moral and ethical issues. Drawing on his theory of communicative action, Habermas elaborates an original conception of 'discourse ethics', seeking to reconstruct a moral point of view from which normative claims can be impartially judged. 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. Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action confronts directly a variety of difficult and controversial problems which are at the centre of current debates in philosophy and social and political theory.

1985-01 Richard J. Bernstein All of these essays focus on the concept of modernity in the philosophical work of Jürgen Habermas - an ambitious and carefully argued intellectual project that invites, indeed demands, rigorous scrutiny. Following an introductory overview of Habermas's work by Richard Bernstein, Albrecht Wellmer's essay places the philosopher within the tradition of Hegel, Marx, Weber, and Critical Theory. Martin Jay discusses Habermas's views on art and aesthetics, and Joel Whitebook examines his interpretations of Freud and psychoanalysis. Anthony Giddens offers a critical reading of Habermas's major work, "The Theory of Communicative Action. Richard Rorty criticizes the whole thrust of his program by way of a comparison with the work of the French philosopher of postmodernity, Jean-François Lyotard. And Thomas McCarthy concentrates on the question of the selectivity of rationalization processes in the modern age. Habermas himself has three contributions - on Marcuse, on neoconservativism, and a reply to the other essayists. Richard J. Bernstein is T. Wistar Brown Professor of Philosophy at Haverford College. He was editor of the journal "Praxis International, in which these essays recently appeared. "Habermas and Modernity" is included in the series Studies in contemporary German Social Thought, edited by Thomas McCarthy.

2010-02-18 Lasse Thomassen Jürgen Habermas' work ranges across critical theory, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, the philosophy of science, citizenship and democracy, religion and psychoanalysis, forging new paradigms and engaging with other key thinkers. *Habermas: A Guide for the Perplexed* is the ideal starting point for anyone studying Habermas. It follows Habermas's critical and philosophical project through all the stages of its development - the early critical theory, the linguistic turn, communicative action and discourse ethics, the theory of deliberative democracy - building up a complete overview of his work, and offering close and incisive analysis throughout.

2013-01-11 Robert C. Holub The most important intellectual in the Federal Republic of Germany for the past three decades, Habermas has been a seminal contributor to fields ranging from sociology and political science to philosophy and cultural studies. Although he has stood at the centre of concern in his native land, he has been less readily accepted outside Germany, particularly in the humanities. His theoretical work postulates the centrality of communication and understanding, and as such his strategy of debate is marked by a politically informed unity of theory and practice. Holub's book is the first detailed account of the major debates in which Habermas has engaged since the early sixties. It stems from the conviction that his critics have not understood the political strategy behind his various interventions, or the consistency that informs his intellectual activities. Habermas is viewed in dialogue with important philosophical, sociological and political currents in West Germany. Holub demonstrates how Habermas pursues a course that incorporates various aspects of his opponents' positions, while simultaneously defending perceived threats to democracy and open discussion.

2019-05-14 James Gordon Finlayson Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls are perhaps the two most renowned and influential figures in social and political philosophy of the second half of the twentieth century. In the 1990s, they had a famous exchange in the *Journal of Philosophy*. Quarreling over the merits of each other's accounts of the shape and meaning of democracy and legitimacy in a contemporary society, they also revealed how great thinkers working in different traditions read—and misread—one another's work. In this book, James Gordon Finlayson examines the Habermas-Rawls debate in context and considers its wider implications. He traces their dispute from its inception in their earliest works to the 1995 exchange and its aftermath, as well as its legacy in contemporary debates. Finlayson discusses Rawls's Political Liberalism and Habermas's *Between Facts and Norms*, considering them as the essential background to the dispute and using them to lay out their different conceptions of justice, politics, democratic legitimacy, individual rights, and the normative authority of law. He gives a detailed analysis and assessment of their contributions, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their different approaches to political theory, conceptions of democracy, and accounts of religion and public reason, and he reflects on the ongoing significance of the debate. The Habermas-Rawls Debate is an authoritative account of the crucial intersection of two major political theorists and an explication of why their dispute continues to matter.

2005-05-26 James Gordon Finlayson This book gives a clear and readable overview of the philosophical work of Jürgen Habermas, the most influential German philosopher alive today, who has commented widely on subjects such as Marxism, the importance and effectiveness of communication, the reunification of Germany, and the European Union. Gordon Finlayson provides readers with

a clear and readable overview of Habermas's forbiddingly complex philosophy using concrete examples and accessible language. He then goes on to analyse both the theoretical underpinnings of Habermas's social theory, and its more concrete applications in the fields of ethics, politics, and law; and concludes with an examination how Habermas's social and political theory informs his writing on contemporary, political, and social problems.

ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

2001 Martin Beck Matušký This philosophical-political profile offers the first of its kind intellectual reconstruction of HabermasOs defining existential and historical situations, his generational profile and interventions, his impact on as well as the discontents that his life work generates in others. Written as a lively dramatic engagement with major themes of HabermasOs adult life in postwar Germany, the entire study occupies a unique place between the standard genres of a biography and a theoretical commentary on the oeuvre. In this work the reader is taken on a journey with Habermas through the 20th-century intellectual and political history from the defeat of Nazism, to the Cold War restoration of the '50s, the student movement of the '60s, the historical revisions of the '70s and '80s, the hope of the post-Wall era after 1989, all the way to the controversies surrounding the allied wars of intervention against Iraq and Serbia in the 1990s. Both beginning and advanced readers of 20th century socio-political thought gain greater insight into the existential, political, and philosophical influences that proved to be formative of HabermasOs writing and activism in the public sphere. The first part of the study emphasizes the unfolding, linear view of HabermasOs postwar history, punctuated by the major existential and political situations of his young adult life from 1945 to 2000. The second part returns to the same time-span in order to reconstruct HabermasOs mature post-Wall intellectual profile in contrast to the profiles of the preceding generation of 1945 and the later protesting generation of 1968. The third part examines the tremendous Habermas-effect exercised on 20th-century thought and public policy. The concluding chapters discuss critically the lasting place as well as the limits of HabermasOs achievement in contribution to a development of new critical theory. The book is enhanced by an introduction that provides a historical and conceptual background to the major themes discussed, twelve helpful thematic tables and figures, and a glossary of foreign terms.

2018-08-08 Jürgen Habermas 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, 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.

2013-02-10 Martin Beck Matušký The Second Edition Contradictory interpretations have been applied to history-making events that led to the end of the Cold War: Václav Havel, using Kierkegaardian terms, called the demise of totalitarianism in East-Central Europe an "existential revolution" (i.e. an awakening of human responsibility, spirit, and reason), while others hailed it as a victory for the "New World Order." Regardless of one's point of view, however, it is clear that the global landscape has been dramatically altered. Where once the competition between capitalism and communism provided a basis for establishing political- and self-identity, today the destructive forces of nationalist identity and religious and secular fundamentalism are filling the void. Offering the most extensive examination of Habermas's and Kierkegaard's critiques of nationalist identity available, Postnational Identity dramatically confronts the traditional view of existential philosophy as antisocial and uncritical. This book shows how Kierkegaardian theory and practice of radically honest communication allows us to rethink the existential in terms of Habermas's communicative action, and vice versa. As the author explains, the foundations of his work in the critical theory and existential philosophy, brought together in this book, engender two forms of suspicion of the present age. The critical theorist, such as Jürgen Habermas, unmasks the forms in which social and cultural life become systematically distorted by the imperatives of political power and economic gain. The existential critic, like Søren Kierkegaard and Václav Havel, is suspicious of the various ways in which individuals deceive themselves or other people. This study aims to integrate Kierkegaard's and Havel's existential

critique of motives informing human identity formation with Habermas's critique of the colonialization of fragmented, anomic modern life by systems of power and money... The author's argument is that existential critique and social critique complement each other and overcome their respective limitations. One of the first works to treat seriously the existential thought of Havel, the book will hold enormous appeal for students and professionals involved in existential philosophy, critical theory, philosophy, and, more generally, political science, literary theory, communications, and cultural studies.

2001 Martin Beck Matušký This philosophical-political profile offers the first of its kind intellectual reconstruction of Habermas's defining existential and historical situations, his generational profile and interventions, his impact on as well as the discontents that his life work generates in others. Written as a lively dramatic engagement with major themes of Habermas's adult life in postwar Germany, the entire study occupies a unique place between the standard genres of a biography and a theoretical commentary on the oeuvre. In this work the reader is taken on a journey with Habermas through the 20th-century intellectual and political history from the defeat of Nazism, to the Cold War restoration of the '50s, the student movement of the '60s, the historical revisions of the '70s and '80s, the hope of the post-Wall era after 1989, all the way to the controversies surrounding the allied wars of intervention against Iraq and Serbia in the 1990s. Both beginning and advanced readers of 20th century socio-political thought gain greater insight into the existential, political, and philosophical influences that proved to be formative of Habermas's writing and activism in the public sphere. The first part of the study emphasizes the unfolding, linear view of Habermas's postwar history, punctuated by the major existential and political situations of his young adult life from 1945 to 2000. The second part returns to the same time-span in order to reconstruct Habermas's mature post-Wall intellectual profile in contrast to the profiles of the preceding generation of 1945 and the later protesting generation of 1968. The third part examines the tremendous Habermas-effect exercised on 20th-century thought and public policy. The concluding chapters discuss critically the lasting place as well as the limits of Habermas's achievement in contribution to a development of new critical theory. The book is enhanced by an introduction that provides a historical and conceptual background to the major themes discussed, twelve helpful thematic tables.

2003-06-15 Jürgen Habermas The idea for Philosophy in a Time of Terror was born hours after the attacks on 9/11 and was realized just weeks later when Giovanna Borradori sat down with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida in New York City, in separate interviews, to evaluate the significance of the most destructive terrorist act ever perpetrated. This book marks an unprecedented encounter between two of the most influential thinkers of our age as here, for the first time, Habermas and Derrida overcome their mutual antagonism and agree to appear side by side. As the two

philosophers disassemble and reassemble what we think we know about terrorism, they break from the familiar social and political rhetoric increasingly polarized between good and evil. In this process, we watch two of the greatest intellects of the century at work.

2016-09-22 Stefan Müller-Dohm 'Jürgen Habermas', wrote the American philosopher Ronald Dworkin on the occasion of the great European thinker's eightieth birthday, 'is not only the world's most famous living philosopher. Even his fame is famous.' Now, after many years of intensive research and in-depth conversations with contemporaries, colleagues and Habermas himself, Stefan Müller-Dohm presents the first comprehensive biography of one of the most important public intellectuals of our time. From his political and philosophical awakening in West Germany to the formative relationships with Adorno and Horkheimer, Müller-Dohm masterfully traces the major forces that shaped Habermas's intellectual development. He shows how Habermas's life and work were conditioned by the possibilities offered to his generation in the unique circumstances of regained freedom that characterized postwar Germany. And yet Habermas's career is fascinating precisely because it amounts to more than a corpus of scholarly work, however original and influential that may be. For here is someone who continually left the protective space of the university in order to assume the role of a participant in controversial public debates – from the significance of the Holocaust to the future of Europe – and in this way sought to influence the development of social and political life in an arena much broader than the academy. The significance and virtuosity of Habermas's many writings over the years are also fully and expertly documented, ranging from his early work on the public sphere to his more recent writings on communicative action, cosmopolitanism and the postnational condition. What emerges from this biography is a vivid portrait of one of the great public intellectuals of our time – a unique thinker who has made an immense and lasting philosophical contribution but who, when he perceives that society is not living up to its potential for creating free and just conditions for all, becomes one of its most rigorous and persistent critics.

2014-11-05 Jürgen Habermas Make no mistake, the normative authority of the United States of America lies in ruins. Such is the judgment of the most influential thinker in Europe today reflecting on the political repercussions of the war in Iraq. The decision to go to war in Iraq, without the explicit backing of a Security Council Resolution, opened up a deep fissure in the West which continues to divide erstwhile allies and to hinder the attempt to develop a coordinated response to the new threats posed by international terrorism. In this timely and important volume, Jürgen Habermas responds to the dramatic political events of the period since September 11, 2001, and maps out a way to move the political agenda forward, beyond the acrimonious debates that have pitched opponents of the war against the Bush Administration and its coalition of the willing. What is fundamentally at stake, argues

Habermas, is the Kantian project of overcoming the state of nature between states through the constitutionalization of international law. Habermas develops a detailed multidimensional model of transnational and supranational governance inspired by Kantian cosmopolitanism, situates it in the context of the evolution of international law toward a cosmopolitan constitutional order during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and defends it against the new challenge posed by the hegemonic liberal vision underlying the aggressive unilateralism of the current US administration. The Divided West is a major intervention by one of the most highly regarded political thinkers of our time. It will be essential reading for students of sociology, politics, international relations, and international law, and it will be of great interest to anyone concerned with the current and future course of European and international politics.

2015-10-07 Jürgen Habermas 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 legitimization problems faced by modern states. This book is essential reading for anyone concerned with the key questions of social and political theory today.

1998 Jürgen Habermas Ten essays provide an overview of Habermas's political thought and extend his model of deliberative democracy to issues untreated in earlier work.

1998 Joan Nordquist

2014-10-15 Jürgen Habermas Recent developments in biotechnology and genetic research are raising complex ethical questions concerning the legitimate scope and limits of genetic intervention. As we begin to contemplate the possibility of intervening in the human genome to prevent diseases, we cannot help but feel that the human species might soon be able to take its biological evolution in its own hands. 'Playing God' is the metaphor commonly used for this self-transformation of the species, which, it seems, might soon be within our grasp. In this important new book, Jürgen Habermas – the most influential philosopher and social thinker in Germany today – takes up the question of genetic engineering and its ethical implications and subjects it to careful philosophical scrutiny. His analysis is guided by the view that genetic manipulation is bound up with the identity and self-understanding of the species. We cannot

rule out the possibility that knowledge of one's own hereditary factors may prove to be restrictive for the choice of an individual's way of life and may undermine the symmetrical relations between free and equal human beings. In the concluding chapter – which was delivered as a lecture on receiving the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade for 2001 – Habermas broadens the discussion to examine the tension between science and religion in the modern world, a tension which exploded, with such tragic violence, on September 11th.

2014-12-05 Barbara Fultner A rare systematic thinker, Habermas has furthered our understanding of modernity, social interaction and linguistic practice, societal institutions, rationality, morality, the law, globalization, and the role of religion in multicultural societies. He has helped shape discussions of truth, objectivity, normativity, and the relationship between the human and the natural sciences. This volume provides an accessible and comprehensive conceptual map of Habermas' theoretical framework and its key concepts, including the theory of communicative action, discourse ethics, his social-political philosophy and their applications to contemporary issues. It will be an invaluable resource for both novice readers of Habermas and those interested in a more refined understanding of particular aspects of his work.

2014-12-10 Jürgen Habermas In this new collection of lectures and essays Jürgen Habermas engages with a wide range of figures in twentieth-century thought. The book displays once again his ability to capture the essence of a thinker's work, his feeling for the texture of intellectual traditions and his outstanding powers of critical assessment. Habermas has described these essays as 'fragments of a history of contemporary philosophy'. The volume includes explorations of the work of Ernst Cassirer, Karl Jaspers and Gershom Scholem, as well as responses to friends and colleagues such as Michael Thuenissen, Karl-Otto Apel and the writer and film-maker Alexander Kluge. It also includes pieces on the Finnish philosopher Georg Henrik von Wright and the theologian Johann Baptist Metz. This new volume will be an invaluable resource for students and scholars of Habermas and twentieth-century philosophy.

2014-11-06 Jürgen Habermas Two countervailing trends mark the intellectual tenor of our age – the spread of naturalistic worldviews and religious orthodoxies. Advances in biogenetics, brain research, and robotics are clearing the way for the penetration of an objective scientific self-understanding of persons into everyday life. For philosophy, this trend is associated with the challenge of scientific naturalism. At the same time, we are witnessing an unexpected revitalization of religious traditions and the politicization of religious communities across the world. From a philosophical perspective, this revival of religious energies poses the challenge of a fundamentalist critique of the principles underlying the modern West's postmetaphysical understanding of itself. The tension between naturalism and religion is the central theme of this major new book by Jürgen Habermas. On

the one hand he argues for an appropriate naturalistic understanding of cultural evolution that does justice to the normative character of the human mind. On the other hand, he calls for an appropriate interpretation of the secularizing effects of a process of social and cultural rationalization increasingly denounced by the champions of religious orthodoxies as a historical development peculiar to the West. These reflections on the enduring importance of religion and the limits of secularism under conditions of postmetaphysical reason set the scene for an extended treatment the political significance of religious tolerance and for a fresh contribution to current debates on cosmopolitanism and a constitution for international society.

2017-10-24 Hauke Brunkhorst 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.

1998 Jürgen Habermas Since its appearance in English translation in 1996, Jürgen Habermas's *Between Facts and Norms* has become the focus of a productive dialogue between German and Anglo-American legal and political theorists. The present volume contains ten essays that provide an overview of Habermas's political thought since the original appearance of *Between Facts and Norms* in 1992 and extend his model of deliberative democracy in novel ways to issues untreated in the earlier work. Habermas's theory of democracy has at least three features that set it apart from competing positions. First, it combines a concern with questions of normative justification with an empirical analysis of the social conditions necessary for the realization of democratic institutions. Second, at the heart of his model is the assertion of an internal relationship between liberalism and democracy. Finally, Habermas defends a conception of universal human rights that is not only sensitive to cultural differences but also calls for legal and political institutions that facilitate the cultivation of cultural and religious identities

within pluralistic societies. These essays demonstrate the extraordinary power of Habermas's theory of democracy through a further engagement with Rawls's political liberalism and through original contributions to current debates over nationalism, multiculturalism, and the viability of supranational political institutions.

1995-04-28 Stephen K. White 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, including those in his most recent publications. -- Publisher description.

2005-05-26 James Gordon Finlayson 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.

2018-07-10 Jürgen Habermas "At the hands of a minor talent, profiles are often flat, two-dimensional outlines of a thinker's intellectual physiognomy. At the hands of a master like Jürgen Habermas, they can become something far more substantial and profound. With astonishing economy, Habermas sketches his impressions of the giants of recent German thought, several of whom were his personal mentors. For those of his readers accustomed to the demandingly abstract level of his theoretical work, the results will prove a welcome surprise. Without sacrificing any of the rigor and brilliance of those longer studies, he displays a remarkable ability to combine depth with brevity. Philosophical-Political Profiles not only adds a new dimension to our understanding of the intellectual odyssey of Germany's leading contemporary thinker but also provides a series of stunning insights into the thought of the generation that preceded him." Martin Jay, University of California, Berkley "With enormous sensitivity, judiciousness, and critical insight, Habermas engages in dialogue with many of the leading German-trained intellectuals of our time—including Heidegger, Jaspers, Löwith, Bloch, Adorno, Benjamin, Marcuse, Arendt, Gadamer, Scholem, and others. These essays range over

the most central and vital issues of contemporary life. Whether dealing with Jewish mysticism or critiques of modernity, Habermas is always illuminating and incisive. These essays can serve as an excellent introduction to his thinking. They also help to situate his theoretical work by revealing his deepest concerns." Richard Bernstein, The New School for Social Research

1992 Jürgen Habermas Over the last half decade or so, Jürgen Habermas has increasingly employed the interview format, both as a means of presenting his changing views on philosophical topics in an accessible way, and as a means of debating current social and political issues. This new, expanded edition of *Autonomy and Solidarity* includes an additional five interviews in which Habermas discusses such themes as the history and significance of the Frankfurt School, the social and political development of post-war Germany, the moral status of civil disobedience, the implications of the "Historians' Dispute," and the function of national identity in the modern world. Never before published autobiographical material covering Habermas' early years at the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research is followed by an extended philosophical interrogation of his latest thinking on the relations between ethics, morality and law. With an extended introduction by Peter Dews, exploring the status and prospects of Critical Theory in the light of the recent revolutionary transformations in Europe, *Autonomy and Solidarity* should be of interest and value both to newcomers and those already familiar with Habermas' thought.

2015-01-06 Jürgen Habermas This major work retraces the emergence and development of the Bourgeois public sphere - that is, a sphere which was distinct from the state and in which citizens could discuss issues of general interest. In analysing the historical transformations of this sphere, Habermas recovers a concept which is of crucial significance for current debates in social and political theory. Habermas focuses on the liberal notion of the bourgeois public sphere as it emerged in Europe in the early modern period. He examines both the writings of political theorists, including Marx, Mill and de Tocqueville, and the specific institutions and social forms in which the public sphere was realized. This brilliant and influential work has been widely recognized for many years as a classic of contemporary social and political thought, of interest to students and scholars throughout the social sciences and humanities.

2018-05-21 Jürgen Habermas "At the hands of a minor talent, profiles are often flat, two-dimensional outlines of a thinker's intellectual physiognomy. At the hands of a master like Jürgen Habermas, they can become something far more substantial and profound. With astonishing economy, Habermas sketches his impressions of the giants of recent German thought, several of whom were his personal mentors. For those of his readers accustomed to the demandingly abstract level of his theoretical work, the results will prove a welcome surprise. Without sacrificing any of the rigor and brilliance of those longer studies, he displays a remarkable ability to combine depth with brevity. Philosophical-Political Profiles not only adds a new dimension to our understanding of the intellectual odyssey of Germany's leading contemporary thinker but also provides a series of stunning insights into the thought of the generation that preceded him." Martin Jay, University of California, Berkley "With enormous sensitivity, judiciousness, and critical insight, Habermas engages in dialogue with many of the leading German-trained intellectuals of our time—including Heidegger, Jaspers, Löwith, Bloch, Adorno, Benjamin, Marcuse, Arendt, Gadamer, Scholem, and others. These essays range over the most central and vital issues of contemporary life. Whether dealing with Jewish mysticism or critiques of modernity, Habermas is always illuminating and incisive. These essays can serve as an excellent introduction to his thinking. They also help to situate his theoretical work by revealing his deepest concerns." Richard Bernstein, The New School for Social Research

2010-09-27 Matthew G. Specter This book follows postwar Germany's leading philosopher and social thinker, Jürgen Habermas, through four decades of political and constitutional struggle over the shape of liberal democracy in Germany. Habermas's most influential theories - of the public sphere, communicative action, and modernity - were decisively shaped by major West German political events: the failure to de-Nazify the judiciary, the rise of a powerful Constitutional Court, student rebellions in the late 1960s, the changing fortunes of the Social Democratic Party, NATO's decision to station nuclear weapons, and the unexpected collapse of East Germany. In turn, Habermas's writings on state, law, and constitution played a critical role in reorienting German political thought and culture to a progressive liberal-democratic model. Matthew Specter uniquely illuminates the interrelationship between the thinker and his culture.