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Stephen Halliwell (2005)

KAUFMANN, WALTER ARNOLD (1921–1980)

Walter Kaufmann was born in Freiburg, Germany, on July 1, 1921. He emigrated to the United States in 1939, as conditions in Germany became ominous for those of Jewish descent (Kaufmann's father—although not his mother—had converted to Protestantism, with the consequence that Kaufmann had been raised in that faith; but he converted to Judaism in 1933, in an early display of the sensitivity to religious questions that became one of the central features of his intellectual life). He attended Williams College, from which he graduated in 1941, and then went to Harvard, from which he received an MA degree in Philosophy in 1942. After military service in Europe during the Second World War (in capacities that took advantage of his equal facility in German and in English), he returned to Harvard, receiving his PhD in 1947. He joined the Philosophy Department at Princeton University in the fall of that year, which remained his academic base until his untimely death on September 4, 1980, at the age of only 59, from a mysterious illness he apparently contracted while traveling in Egypt and Africa.

Kaufmann played a major role in the introduction of existential philosophy (of Jean-Paul Sartre in particular) and the rehabilitation of G.W.F. Hegel and Friedrich Nietzsche (who had come to be all too closely associated with the Germany of the kaiser and of Adolf Hitler) in the English-speaking world in the decades following the Second World War. As one of the few members of major philosophy departments in those years who had a strong interest in developments in post-Kantian European philosophy, and as a prolific translator as well as interpreter of the writings of some of the most important figures in that tradition, he emerged as its most prominent, visible,

and articulate champion, during the very decades in which the new Britain-based import of analytic philosophy became dominant in the philosophy departments at most major American universities. Much of Kaufmann's career was spent in often heated conflict as an advocate of the continental tradition (as it came to be called) against the newly dominant analytical paradigm that he regarded as a disaster for philosophy, and also as an advocate of those within that tradition (Hegel, Nietzsche, Sartre, and Martin Buber in particular) against the influence and popularity of others within it of whom he had a very low opinion (such as Karl Marx and Martin Heidegger).

Because Kaufmann had a Jewish identity and made no secret of it (even though he also made much of his rejection of Jewish theology), he was ideally positioned to be able to reject the charge of anti-Semitism that had contributed to the widespread hostility to Nietzsche before, during, and after the war years, and to defuse the imputation to Nietzsche of other proto-Nazi sentiments along with it. His association of Nietzsche with Sartrean existentialism was another of his strategies in pursuit of this objective; for, unlike Heidegger, Sartre's anti-Nazi credentials were impeccable, and Sartre himself sought to portray his existentialism as a kind of radical humanism. Kaufmann further presented Nietzsche as a kindred spirit of the heroes of the Enlightenment, and even of Emersonian individualism and later American pragmatism. This interpretation of Nietzsche found a ready reception in a wide and growing audience in the years following the publication of Kaufmann's classic *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* in 1950, which remains one of the best general introductions to Nietzsche's thought written for English-speaking readers.

Moreover, while Kaufmann never published another book-length study of Nietzsche, he exerted an even greater influence upon the reception of Nietzsche in the English-speaking world through his much-needed new translations of (and introductions and notes to) most of Nietzsche's major works over a period of two decades, beginning with his phenomenally popular anthology *The Portable Nietzsche* in 1954, culminating with Nietzsche's *The Gay Science* in 1974, and including the controversial collection of selections from Nietzsche's notebooks from the 1880s published after his death under the title *The Will to Power*, thereby giving that volume a prominence and appearance of legitimacy that many feel it does not deserve. And by passing over the various works Nietzsche published between *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Kaufmann influenced what English-

speaking readers ever since have come to regard as Nietzsche's most important works.

Kaufmann simultaneously attempted to renew interest in Hegel, in a manner intended to liberate Hegel from the moribund tradition of interpretation that had flourished in Britain and America under the banner of idealism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Kaufmann's Hegel was closer to existentialism than he was to that metaphysical idealism, as he tried to show in his *Hegel: A Reinterpretation* (1966); and his Hegel championed a political philosophy that was a major, but sadly forgotten and neglected, alternative to the options upon which attention was focusing in both analytical and Marxist circles at that time. So Kaufmann first published a study of *Hegel's Political Philosophy* (1970), and then a volume of his own essays in this area reflecting his own mix of Hegelian and Nietzschean elements, *Without Guilt and Justice* (1973). He aspired to be taken seriously as a moral, social, and political philosopher; but the failure of these volumes to attract significant attention led him to turn his efforts in other directions.

Kaufmann had followed his early study of Nietzsche and anthology of Nietzsche's writings with two very popular volumes attempting to do the same thing for existential philosophy—his anthology *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (1956), which was everyone's introduction to existentialism for many years, and his collection of essays *From Shakespeare to Existentialism* (1959), which sought to situate existentialism in intimate if not entirely harmonious relation to an intellectual tradition that included the greatest contributions to Western literature and thought. The relationship between existential and tragic thought, literature, and experience held a particular fascination for him, which he explored in his *Tragedy and Philosophy* (1968).

These interests led Kaufmann to attempt to position himself in relation to traditional forms of philosophical and religious thought, first in his combative early *Critique of Religion and Philosophy* (1958), and then in his impassioned attempt to formulate and articulate his own post-traditional secularly religious credo *The Faith of A Heretic* (1960). His attempts to come to terms with religion continued in two volumes published in 1976, a volume of essays on *Existentialism, Religion, and Death*, and a book intended for a wider audience and marking the beginning of his attempt to integrate philosophy and photography, *Religions in Four Dimensions: Existential and Aesthetic, Historical and Comparative*.

This experiment continued in a trilogy published three years later (1979), under the general title *Man's Lot*.

In this three-volume study of the human condition—*Life at the Limits*, *Time Is an Artist*, and *What Is Man?*—Kaufmann revealed himself as a truly gifted photographer with a powerful ability to employ that gift in the service of his attempt to plumb the heights and depths of human reality. That trilogy was followed by another, *Discovering the Mind* (1980–1981), with which his life abruptly ended, and the third volume of which was published following his death.

In each of these three last volumes Kaufmann considered the contributions of three major figures to this discovery: J.W. Von Goethe, Immanuel Kant, and Hegel; Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Buber; and Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler and Carl Jung. This, he believed, was the real philosophy of mind; and it was his hope, through these volumes, to enrich philosophical thinking with respect to the mind by connecting it with this tradition—as he had sought to enrich philosophical thinking with respect to the human condition in the previous trilogy, and to enrich moral, social, and political thought by an infusion into them of Hegelian and Nietzschean ways of thinking.

Kaufmann found it at first frustrating and then deeply distressing that he was not taken seriously by the new analytic-philosophical establishment of his day, other than (by some) as Nietzsche's best translator and most appealing reinterpreter. This made him increasingly estranged from and critical of that establishment and philosophical orientation, and may have prompted his involvement in his last years with the EST human potential movement and his willingness to be associated with the Moon Unification Church's International Conference on the Unity of Sciences in the 1970s.

His later work itself was of a character that could hardly have been more at odds with the aims and paradigms of analytic-philosophical inquiry. Yet he considered himself to be true to the real heart and soul of the Socratic philosophical tradition, and to be its advocate and defender in a time in which he felt academic philosophy had lost its way. He welcomed the opportunity to enter the fray of popular debate as a public intellectual who was more than willing to continue Nietzsche's effort to fight the good fight of disillusioned enlightenment that was neither religious, scientific, nor historically optimistic. He thought that philosophy could and should make a difference in human life, and that that difference should be in the direction of an uncompromisingly secular, post-metaphysical, strongly individualistic, but intensely interpersonal, existential humanism. Had he lived to develop and make a case for that vision of authentic humanity, he might well have attained the

recognition in the philosophical community that escaped him.

See also Continental Philosophy.

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Richard Schacht (2005)

KAUTSKY, KARL (1854–1939)

Karl Kautsky was, with the exception of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the leading theorist of orthodox Marxism before World War I. Born in Prague of Czech and German parentage, Kautsky studied at Vienna and showed much interest in social Darwinism and socialism. As an evolutionist and materialist, he found Marx's combination of dialectical materialism and economic determinism irresistible, and he worked with Engels himself during the 1880s. From 1883 to 1917 Kautsky was the editor of *Die neue Zeit*, the official organ of the German Social Democratic Party and the most influential socialist journal of the day. He edited and published the literary remains of Marx after Engels's death. In 1891 Kautsky wrote the famous first, or theoretical, part of the *Erfurter Programm*, the official policy statement of the German

party. This document established that the greatest socialist party in history should be orthodox Marxist.

Kautsky, more than any other theorist of repute, accepted Marx's method and conclusions as he found them. The natural laws of economic development resulted in certain inevitable contradictions in capitalism that must necessarily lead to its destruction and replacement by socialism. This would occur, Marx and Kautsky held, because competition and technical improvements, together with the availability of surplus labor, would lead to the concentration of capital and the progressive immiserization of the proletariat, as well as the polarization of society into a few monopolists opposed by vast masses of starving workers. Recurrent depressions and economic catastrophes would finally destroy capitalism. Such crises would be caused mainly by the inability of the workers to purchase the products of their labor. The united proletariat, trained by its socialist leaders, would see that only social ownership of the means of production could end the contradiction between capitalism's ability to produce wealth and its inability to distribute that wealth through private ownership. Like Marx and Engels, Kautsky held that religion, philosophy, and ethics are reflections of the substructure of class interest and position and that the state is the puppet of the dominant social class.

Kautsky, the "defender of the faith," fought attempts of fellow socialists to make basic alterations in their Marxian heritage. He led the German Social Democratic Party in its struggle against Eduard Bernstein and the revisionists, who believed that the facts of European capitalism no longer supported his orthodox views and that parliamentary action and pragmatic flexibility could bring extensive and permanent reform. Kautsky was able to maintain the preeminence of orthodox Marxism in party theory, although the revisionists increasingly dominated party tactics and action. In the early years of the twentieth century, Kautsky and the orthodox centrists had increasingly to contend with the radical left wing of the party under Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. This group held strictly to Marx's economic teachings but rejected orthodox political tactics in favor of more immediately revolutionary doctrines. They hoped for more radical positions on questions before parliament and for greater encouragement of spontaneous revolutionary and general strike activity. Kautsky did not believe that the contradictions of capitalism or the class consciousness of the workers were advanced enough for such tactics. He did join the Left in parliament on various crucial ques-