

Handbuch Kulturphilosophie, by Ralf Konersmann (ed.). Stuttgart, Weimar: J.B. Metzler, 2012. Vii + 468 pp., hardbound. 60 Euro. ISBN 978-3-476-02369-8.

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Biblical studies have become a broad and variegated field. While the Bible is still being widely read and interpreted in the church and in various other theological quests, the Bible and its interpretation and theology as a discipline, as a whole, have also increasingly become the domain of cultural studies and employed its methods and insights. In these quests, different and fresh questions are being asked and new answers are given to old questions. It has become increasingly difficult to stay abreast with the diverse developments and, at times, highly complex discourses in these neighbouring disciplines. Therefore, the present handbook is a welcome, although also a demanding, guide.

The Handbuch defines culture as the world of liberated humanity (“Kultur ist die Welt des freigestellten Menschen”, vii). It aims to show that the notion and definition of culture is not a trivial matter. It claims specific relations to reality, which cannot be gained and understood through other foundational concepts like history, nature, world, humanity, or society. The introduction (1–12) by the editor, Ralf Konersmann, defines the task of cultural philosophy (“Kulturphilosophie hat zu zeigen, warum die Fragen der Kultur nicht trivial sind – dass der Kulturbegriff etwas wiegt”, 1) and briefly sketches the history of the discipline. On culture understood as liberated humanity, Konersmann writes:

Das Prädikat der Freigestelltheit ist im doppelten Wortsinn zu verstehen. Zunächst betont es die Preisgegebenheit des Menschen, dem die Geborgenheitsgewissheit zweifelhaft geworden ist, die ihm vordem der Kosmos und die Schöpfung zugesichert hatten. Gleichzeitig und nicht weniger emphatisch betont es ... die Freigelassenheit des Menschen, der sich nun berechtigt weiß, die Welt seinen eigenen Einsichten und Bedürfnissen entsprechend einzurichten ... Die Kulturphilosophie entfaltet sich zwischen den Extremen sei es gnostischer, sei es libertärer

Bestimmungen des Menschen ... Die Kulturphilosophie nimmt den Menschen als das Wesen wahr, das Lebensformen nicht vorfindet und hat, sondern schafft und umschafft, so dass diese, einmal hervorgebracht, sich ihm gegenüber verselbständigen und für sich stehen, ohne doch jemals aufzuhören, mit allem, was sie sind und darstellen, auf ihn als ihren Erzeuger zu verweisen (2).

Konersmann further discusses the legitimacy of culture, various options in terminology, the scope and outline of the Handbuch and closes with an outlook on the present and future tasks and problems of cultural philosophy.

Part one is a survey of thematic concepts. It contains the following essays: Ralf Konersmann, „Kulturphilosophie“ (13–23); Andreas Hetzel, „Kultur und Kulturbegriff“ (23–30); Hartmut Böhme, „Kulturwissenschaft“ (31–39); Rolf Elberfeld, „Interkulturalität“ (39–45) and Hjördis Becker, „Kulturkritik“ (46–53).

Part two summarises and discusses various classical positions in the philosophy of culture. It does so in three subsections: 1. Pre-history until 1999: Thomas Gilbhard writes on Giambattista Vico (55–60); Heinz Thoma on Jean-Jacques Rousseau (60–70); Marion Heinz on Immanuel Kant (70–78); Michael Maurer on Johann Gottfried Herder (78–84); Carsten Zelle on Friedrich Schiller (85–90); Christoph Jamme on Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (90–93); and Andreas Urs Sommer on Friedrich Nietzsche (93–100). Subsection two surveys the leading thinkers in the foundational phase of cultural philosophy (1900–1945). Willfried Geßner writes on Georg Simmel (101–109); Michael Hampe on John Dewey (110–113); Ursula Renz on Ernst Cassirer and Neokantianism (114–119); Isabella Woldt on Cassirer and the influential edition Bibliothek Warburg (119–124); Cornelia Richter on the reception history of the works of Cassirer (125–132); Ludger Heidbrink and Claus Langbehn on Martin Heidegger (133–138); Christian Berntes on Ludwig Wittgenstein (138–143); Rainer Winter on Antonio Gramsci (144–149); and Michael Makropoulos on Walter Benjamin (149–157). The final subsection presents the actualisations of the philosophy of culture since 1945 and contains essays by Ralf Becker on philosophical anthropology (158–167); Gerhard Schweppenhäuser on critical theory (168–177); Heike Kämpf on

Claude Levi-Strauss (177–181); Enno Rudolph on Hans Blumenberg (181–184); Ulrich Johannes Schneider on Michel Foucault (185–188); and Jonas Lüscher and Michael Hampe on Richard Rorty (188–192).

Part three seeks to systematise the transitions posed by architecture (193–199, Werner Oechlin), design (200–206, Kai Buchholz), history (206–211, Achim Landwehr), society (212–217, Dirk Baecker), art (217–223, Marion Lauschke), moral issues (223–227, Birgit Recki), nature (227–233, Kristian Köchy), politics (234–238, Christian Zimmermann), religion (238–224, Michael Moxter; cultural theories of religions as interpretation of meaning, religion as projection, religion as institution, religion and myth, religion and modernity, religion as the substance of culture, substantial and functional theories of religion, religion and art, religio), rhetoric (245–252, Franz-Hubert Rohling), language (252–263, Dirk Westerkamp), technology (264–270, Peter Janich), economics (270–272, Kurt Röttgers), and sciences (273–278, Elisabeth List).

The fourth part examines twenty-five concepts which have become crucial in cultural-philosophical discussions and discourse. Here I follow the list of the German headings: *Bedeutung* (279–287, Christian Krijnen), *Entfremdung* (288–292, Michael Großheim), *Erinnerung* (292–298, Nicolas Pethes), *Fest* (299–303, Michael Maurer), *Form*, *symbolische* (304–312, Nikolai Mühl), *Fremdheit* (313–318, Kurt Röttgers), *Gastlichkeit* (319–324, Burkhard Liebsch), *Geist*, *objektiver* (325–329, Dirk Westerkamp), *Gewalt* (330–333, Rudolf Wansing), *Identität* (334–339, Jürgen Straub), *Kontingenz* (340–346, Michael Makropoulos), *Medium* (347–355, Kurt Röttgers), *Mythos* (356–360, Christoph Jamme), *Natur*, *zweite* (360–365, Norbert Rath), *Raum* (365–371, Stephan Günzel), *Relativismus* (371–375, Matthias Kettner), *Tatsache*, *kulturelle* (375–383, Nikolai Mühl), *Tradition* (384–387, Volker Steenblock), *Tragödie* (388–393, Claudia Benthien), *Unbehagen* (394–397, Ralf Konersmann), *Verstehen* (398–402, Heike Kämpf), *Wahrheit* (402–407, Dirk Westerkamp), *Welt* (408–416, Ernst Wolfgang Orth), *Zeichen* (416–421, Dirk Rustemeyer) and *Zeit* (422–427, Yvonne Förster-Beuthan). A final essay by the editor examines various metaphors used for culture throughout the centuries (429–436,