

considered in the absence of an appreciation of the *Logic's* influence, and, secondly, that its author asserts “a strongly metaphysical account” of the *Philosophy of Right* (p. 7). Smetona’s work makes the positive argument against the mainstream and majority readings of both Hegel’s political thought and his *Logic*. In the former case, his book contradicts Allen Wood’s partitioning of the *Logic* and the *Philosophy of Right* and, in the latter, Robert Pippin’s Kantian reading of Hegel’s *Logic*. As discussed, Smetona’s reading is most competent and extraordinarily loyal to the conceptual framework that distinguishes Hegel’s thought from his liberal as well as his Kantian appropriators. His immanent, exegetical, and historical loyalty to Hegel’s corpus and purpose is valuable in and of itself and beyond censure.

Yet Smetona also rejects his idealism as a “bad argument,” insofar as he claims that Hegel’s ontology takes all things as true or real only as “thought,” and this has immediate implications for the discursive status of the non-metaphysical reading (p. 59). For, in response to Smetona, commentators who embrace the non-metaphysical reading will legitimately ask how such a conclusion in any way inhibits their rehabilitative and pragmatic projects. These readers—such as Zbigniew Pełczyński and Allen Wood—generally accept that there is a metaphysics, but they also hold that it is wrong, and as a result they opt for reassembling a version of Hegel’s political thought in its absence, salvaging Hegel’s politics on modern terms that “we” can accept and which make Hegel practically valuable today, beyond the influences of his dead metaphysics.

From these points of view, Smetona’s loyalty and fidelity to Hegel’s thought seem in fact to add weight to the non-metaphysical strategy: What good does Hegel’s wrongheaded and useless metaphysics do for his politics, and what harm is there, on this basis, in rehabilitating Hegel’s politics on our terms beyond the influences of his logical system even in the face of Hegel’s own admonitions? In defending a position that Hegel is a metaphysician whose metaphysics is inseparable from his politics and simultaneously holding that Hegel’s idealist metaphysics are essentially wrong, Smetona reopens the door to the essential complaints of the non-metaphysical camp concerning Hegel’s political thought. Smetona’s scholarly loyalty and philosophical conscience reconstitutes Hegel’s synthesis of metaphysics and politics and, at the same time, condemns the project to the very obsolescence that motivated the non-metaphysical attempt at rehabilitation in the first place. Again, this in no way ought to cast any doubt on the value and power of Smetona’s reading. Rather, it merely implies that the ironical result of his scholarly rigor is, to a certain extent, discursively self-defeating. Regardless of the merit of Hegel’s metaphysical foundations, a concern which is in and of itself debatable, my own view is that the non-

metaphysical view does not present a viable alternative. This is not merely because it dismisses Hegel’s metaphysics from understandings of his politics. At least as important, it is because all political thought implies metaphysical commitments of one kind or another, and on this matter the non-metaphysical readings are wholly unaccountable.

These concerns aside, *Hegel’s Logical Comprehension of the Modern State* in and of itself provides a penetrating and intimate view of the inner workings and *Logic* that drive Hegel’s political thought. It is the best Hegelian reading of the two works to be offered in quite some time. Smetona’s evocation of the conceptual systematicity of Hegel’s logic and politics is both a substantial contribution to current scholarship and a dissenting lens through which it may yet be transformed.

Politics and Theater in Twentieth-Century Europe: Imagination and Resistance. By Margot Morgan. New York:

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There exists a dearth of writing on twentieth-century theatre’s political and ethical contours. Margot Morgan’s study is therefore a welcome volume, one that seeks to advance a thesis about the nature not only of the relation between politics and art, but also about the ways that modern politics has been able to shape political aesthetics and the relation between culture and politics more broadly. Her book is not only an excellent scholarly treatment of four important twentieth-century playwrights, it is also a plea to reconsider the narrow confines of academic political theory and rethink it from the point of view of an engaged, critical perspective.

Morgan’s approach is rooted in an Arendtian conception of politics, one seen as defined by “intersubjectivity, communication, and the commitment to some form of community” (p. 4). She sees that twentieth-century theatre participates in this conception of the political in that it fosters a sense of dialogue among its audience, thereby encouraging reflection: “theatre differs from other art forms in that it is dialogic in structure—the very form of theatre requires interaction between and among human beings” (p. 4). Theatre therefore has the ability to expand the horizons of experience and perspective of the audience: “What is universal about theatre is its inherently social character, its ability to push its audiences to expand their imaginations” (p. 5). But just as she argues for this essential character of theatre, she also notes that something occurs over the course of the twentieth century to corrupt it. Theatre becomes de-politicized as liberalism comes to create a separation “between our public and our private worlds, relegating culture to the private sphere” (p. 10). As the

separation between the state and civil society became more institutionalized and more naturalized, political themes in theatre evaporated, leaving us with, in the case of Ionesco, an explicitly anti-political theatre. The story of politically engaged theatre in modern times, Morgan contends, follows the trajectory of a disengagement from genuine political concerns.

The main substance of the study is centered on the plays of George Bernard Shaw, Bertolt Brecht, Jean-Paul Sartre and Eugene Ionesco. Each of these playwrights encapsulate Morgan's thesis of de-politicization of theatre, a slow retreat from an engaged, committed form of art to one more personal and more private. Shaw's plays, such as *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *Widowers' Houses*, and *The Philanderer*, called into question dominant aristocratic values that permeated English bourgeois society. His early plays, according to Morgan, "had two interconnected elements; the elucidation of the material causes of the social issue at hand and the critique of the antiquated moral codes that hinder effective measures to be taken to solve the problem" (p. 30). The project of Shaw's writings was to encourage an engaged public discourse that would call into question the conventions and settled opinions of his time. He also sought to offer a sense of optimism through his belief in the progressive breaking down of antiquated moral rules and values. But this vision was put to the test by the experience of World War I, where Shaw's belief in scientific progress, and his belief in progressive public opinion, led him to disillusionment and, ultimately, a loss of faith in politics itself.

Brecht offers a form of theatre based on an explicit method designed for engagement and to cultivate critical consciousness. Brecht sought to devise a style of theatre that was political not by advancing ideological content, but which "focused on revealing the overall structure of capitalism and the agency needed to overcome it" (p. 58). Theatre was a method, not a doctrine; it sought to build solidarity through engaged political critique, not through indoctrination and coercion. During the political upheavals of the 1920s, Brecht's theatrical innovations were meant to participate in the political struggles of his time, weaving themselves into political praxis rather than remaining insulated from the social classes that Brecht saw as pushing toward socialism. But After World War II, and his return to (East) Germany, his plays lost an audience that had the potential to participate in politics. Morgan frames Brecht as the ideal-type for what she views as "the best of what political theatre has to offer," where the relation between performance and audience encourages "political conversations between equals united in a shared project involving creativity, judgment, cooperation, and reflection" (p. 84).

With Sartre, theatre was also a project for engagement and commitment. Whereas Brecht sought to absorb the

audience into an aesthetic experience of praxis in order to cultivate solidarity, Sartre's "theatre of situations" is based on his philosophical thesis that the individual was ensconced in a world he did not make, one where he was confronted with the necessity and responsibility of choice. Each situation presents the subject with a new responsibility and opportunity for choice, and in theatre Sartre was able to bring this ethical dilemma to the public. Morgan sees that this had a decisive political importance in that "real freedom can be found only individually, through the acceptance of responsibility" (p. 107). But Sartre's existentialism also imposed limits on the politics of his theatre. "The lack of community in Sartre's dramas," Morgan argues, "is a symptom of his inability to conceptualize a plural subject—a 'we'—in his philosophy" (p. 112). As a result, Sartrean theatre ultimately fails to epitomize what Morgan sees as an Arendtian principle needed for political theatre: it is unable to encourage the communal interaction, to disclose the subject's relation to others, that is at the core of the connection between theatre and politics.

This problem becomes definitive in Morgan's last figure. In the work of Eugene Ionesco, we are presented with an explicitly anti-political theatre, but one that still has political significance. "In contrast to Shaw, Brecht, and Sartre, Ionesco rejected the notion of politics as a sphere of possibility, cooperation, and community" (p. 119). Instead, his theatre of the absurd was meant to convey the impossibility of cooperation and dialogue. Isolation is our fixed condition; attempts to overcome this state through cooperation and solidarity lead to some form of totalitarianism—the great theme of his play *Rhinoceros*. Ionesco squares the circle of the study: a playwright who rejects the very ideas about the purpose of theatre that Shaw, Brecht, and Sartre saw as central.

Although Morgan makes clear that the de-politicization of Ionesco's art was the result of his pessimism, she does not connect this to her initial thesis that the cause for the separation of art and theatre is rooted in liberalism and its splitting of civil society and state. This intriguing argument is insufficiently developed, which is unfortunate, since it would have given the book a more polemical stance toward mainstream political theory and political culture. Nevertheless, Morgan's book provides us with a reminder that political life and political thought cannot be reduced to technical and professionalized debates. Each playwright, Morgan correctly argues, celebrated the non-conformist; one who was willing to call into question the dominant norms and power relations of the time. With the global spread of mass society and the growing commodification of all forms of art, Morgan's study illuminates the political dimensions of modern theatre, even as it disturbs us by reminding us of what has been lost.