HABERMAS

kenneth baynes

ROUTLEDGE

Habermas

Jürgen Habermas is one of the most important German philosophers and social theorists of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. His work has been compared in scope with Max Weber's, and in philosophical breadth to that of Kant and Hegel.

In this much-needed introduction Kenneth Baynes engages with the full range of Habermas's philosophical work, addressing his early arguments concerning the emergence of the public sphere and his initial attempt to reconstruct a critical theory of society in *Knowledge and Human Interests*. He then examines one of Habermas's most influential works, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, including his controversial account of the rational interpretation of social action. Also covered is Habermas's work on discourse ethics, political and legal theory, as well as his views on the relation between democracy and constitutionalism, and arguments concerning human rights and cosmopolitanism.

The final chapter assesses Habermas's role as a polemical and prominent public intellectual and his criticism of postmodernism in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, in addition to his more recent writings on the relationship between religion and democracy.

Habermas is an invaluable guide to this key figure in contemporary philosophy, and suitable for anyone coming to his work for the first time.

Kenneth Baynes is Professor of Philosophy at Syracuse University, USA. He works primarily in social and political philosophy, with a special focus in critical theory and modern and contemporary German philosophy. He is a co-editor of *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?* and *Discourse and Democracy*, and the author of *The Normative Grounds of Social Criticism: Kant, Rawls and Habermas*.

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Habermas

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Abbreviations

AS	*Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jürgen Habermas*. Edited by P. Dews. London: Verso, 1986.
BFN	*Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996.
BNR	*Between Naturalism and Religion*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008.
CES	*Communication and the Evolution of Society*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979.
DW	*The Divided West*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006.
FK	"Faith and Knowledge" in *The Future of Human Nature*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003.
IO	*The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998.
IS	"Individuation through Socialization: Mead's Theory of Subjectivity," in *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, pp. 149–204.
JA	*Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990
KHI	*Knowledge and Human Interests*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971.
LC	*Legitimation Crisis*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1975.
LSS	*On the Logic of the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988.
MCCA	*Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990.
NC	*The New Conservatism*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989.

OPC	*On the Pragmatics of Communication*. Edited by M. Cooke. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
PDM	*The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985.
PNC	*The Post-National Constellation: Political Essays*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001.
Postscript	"A Postscript to 'Knowledge and Human Interests'," *Philosophy of Social Science* 3 (1973): 157–189.
PPP	*Philosophical-Political Profiles*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983.
PT	*Postmetaphysical Thinking*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992.
QC	"Questions and Counterquestions" in *Habermas and Modernity*. Edited by R. Bernstein. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985.
R1	Reply in *Critical Debates*. Edited by J. Thompson. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982, pp. 219–284.
R2	Reply in *Communicative Action*. Edited by A. Honneth and H. Joas. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991.
R3	Reply in *Habermas and Law*. Edited by M. Rosenfeld and A. Arato. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998.
R4	Reply in *Habermas and Rawls*. Edited by J. G. Finlayson and F. Freyenhagen. New York: Routledge, 2011.
R5	Reply in *Habermas and Religion*. Edited by C. Calhoun, E. Mendieta and J. Van Antwerpen. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013.
STPS	*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
TCA 1 & 2	*The Theory of Communicative Action*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1985/1987.
TJ	*Truth and Justification*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003.
TP	*Theory and Practice*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.
TRS	*Toward a Rational Society*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1970.
TT	*Time of Transitions*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006.

Chronology

1929	Born June 18, in Düsseldorf, Germany.
1944	Enrolls in Hitler Youth; sent to the Western Front in the final months before the end of the war where he serves as a field nurse.
1949–54	Studies at the universities in Göttingen, Zurich, and Bonn; completes his dissertation on Friedrich Schelling in Bonn under the direction of Erich Rothacker in 1954.
1953	Publishes Frankfurt newspaper editorial, "With Heidegger against Heidegger."
1955	Marries Ute Wesselhöft in July.
1956	Becomes a research assistant for Theodor Adorno at the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt; son Tilman is born (the first of three children).
1959	Daughter Rebekka is born.
1961	Completes his *Habilitation* (or second dissertation), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* [English translation (ET), 1989], in Marburg under the direction of Wolfgang Abendroth; appointed Professor of Philosophy in Heidelberg.
1963	*Theory and Practice* [ET, 1971].
1964	Succeeds Max Horkheimer as Professor of Philosophy and Sociology at the Goethe University in Frankfurt.
1967	Daughter Judith is born; student protests for university reform and against the Vietnam War increase and Benno Ohnesorg is killed by police during a demonstration in Berlin.

1968	*Knowledge and Human Interests* [ET, 1971].
1969	*Student Protest and Reform in Higher Education*, a collection of essays on educational reform and the student movement; student occupation of rooms at the Institute in January led Adorno to telephone the police.
1970	Delivers the Gauss lectures at Princeton University—*On the Pragmatics of Social Interaction* [ET, 2001].
1971	Appointed co-director at Max Planck Institute, in Starnberg (near Münich); begins exchange with Niklas Luhmann on implications of a systems-theoretic approach to the study of society.
1973	*Legitimation Crisis* [ET, 1975].
1980	Visiting professor during second (winter) semester at the University of California, Berkeley; receives an honorary degree from the New School for Social Research in New York; awarded the Adorno Prize by the city of Frankfurt.
1981	*The Theory of Communicative Action* [ET, 1984/1987].
1982	Resigns his position in Starnberg and returns to Frankfurt as Professor of Philosophy and Sociology.
1983	*Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* [ET, 1990].
1984	Delivers an address to the Spanish Parliament on the crisis of the welfare state.
1985	*The Philosophical Discourse on Modernity* [ET, 1987].
1986	Beginning of "historian's dispute" which continues into early 1990s; delivers the Tanner Lecture on "Law and Morality" at Harvard University.
1988	*Postmetaphysical Thinking* [ET, 1992].
1989	Fall of the Berlin Wall.
1990	German reunification.
1991	*Justification and Application* [ET, 1993].
1992	*Between Facts and Norms* [ET, 1996].
1994	Mandatory retirement from Goethe University, Frankfurt; begins a ten-year period as a visiting professor at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.
1995	*A Berlin Republic: Writings on Germany* [ET, 1997]; receives the Karl Jaspers Prize in Heidelberg.
1996	*The Inclusion of the Other* [ET, 1998].

1998 *The Postnational Constellation* [ET, 2001]; participates in public debates on cloning and gene technology; conference in Freiburg, Switzerland on "*Knowledge and Human Interests* thirty years later".

1999 *Truth and Justification* [ET, 2003].

2000 Held joint seminar with Derrida in Frankfurt.

2001 *Times of Transition* [ET, 2006] and *The Future of Human Nature* [ET, 2003], which includes "Faith and Knowledge," a lecture given in Frankfurt shortly after 9/11 upon receiving the Peace Prize awarded by the German Booksellers Association.

2002 Lectures in Iran on topic of postsecularism.

2003 Publishes an editorial, co-signed by Derrida, protesting the US invasion of Iraq and calling for strengthened international law and a united Europe.

2004 Awarded the Kyoto Prize, Japan.

2005 *Between Naturalism and Religion* [ET, 2008].

2007 *The Dialectics of Secularization* [ET, 2006]—a dialogue between Habermas and Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI).

2008 *Europe: The Faltering Project* [ET, 2009].

2009 *Philosophical Texts*, a five-volume edition of his philosophical essays and central texts.

2010 *The Crisis of the European Union* [ET, 2012], which also includes the essay, "The Concept of Human Dignity and the Realistic Utopia of Human Rights"; received the Ulysses Medal in Dublin, Ireland.

2012 *Postmetaphysical Thinking II*; conference on "Habermas and Historical Materialism" in Wuppertal; awarded the Heinrich Heine Prize by the city of Wüppertal.

2013 *The Lure of Technocracy*, the twelfth volume of his "shorter political essays" [ET, 2015]; awarded the Erasmus Prize by the city of Amsterdam.

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One

Life and works

Jürgen Habermas is arguably the most widely recognized and influential philosopher of the last half-century. He is often associated with the tradition of critical theory known as the "Frankfurt School"—which also included Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse—but his philosophical contributions extend far beyond that origin in both their content and influence. His work reaches into a number of disciplines beyond philosophy—including sociology, legal and political theory, and cultural and media studies, and no other prominent philosopher has so actively entered into exchange and debate with others—from Adorno, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Michel Foucault to Richard Rorty, Robert Brandom, and John Rawls (to mention only a few). His work also addresses some of the most pressing and difficult philosophical questions—from more abstract topics such as the nature and limits of human knowledge, the relation between agency and social structure, or the impact of modern science and technology on our mundane self-understanding to more immediately practical concerns about the relation between human rights and democracy, the value of toleration and multiculturalism, and the prospects for a "postnational" democracy. Finally, more than any other contemporary philosopher, Habermas has been a highly active public intellectual engaged in a wide range of political and social debates for more than sixty years.

The breadth and scope of his work—not to mention the vast amount—make the task of an introduction especially challenging. Many interesting aspects will have to be omitted or only mentioned briefly. A central aim of this book is to identify and develop in some detail the deeper philosophical perspective and commitments that unify his work, while at the same time giving greater attention to some of the topics on which Habermas has made significant contributions. Of course, even to claim that his work contains an underlying unity might seem controversial as his work has undergone substantial change over the years. Some of his earliest writings were inspired by his study of Heidegger in the early 1950s. These were soon overshadowed by a much longer period in which Marx (and the wider Hegelian–Marxist tradition of critical theory) engaged his thought. The publication of his magnum opus, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, marks another period in his career, one that might be described as more Weberian and in which his conception of social theory initially looks more "traditional" than "critical." Finally, some have discerned a more "liberal" and "Kantian" turn with the publication of *Between Facts and Norms* and works since then. Others have suggested that a similar shift from radicalism to liberalism can be found in his political views as well.[1]

Nonetheless, despite the changes in Habermas's philosophical positions—often directly in response to criticism of his earlier work—there is a remarkable and quite deep continuity to his work. For example, his relatively early engagement with both Heidegger and Marx importantly shaped his general understanding of philosophy and helps to explain his deep pragmatist convictions. More importantly, a career-long engagement with the work of Kant and Hegel has shaped his view that philosophy cannot be replaced by science even though it must remain in a more cooperative relationship with it. Habermas has recently described his position as a form of "Kantian pragmatism" (TJ, 8, 30; Aboulafia et al. 2002, 223). But this particular conception of philosophy can already be found in *Knowledge and Human Interests* where he refers to it as "transcendental pragmatism" and it informs his other work as well. In fact, the present study will make his Kantian pragmatism a guiding theme. Though, as we shall see, Habermas incorporates much from the Hegelian and Marxist critique of transcendental philosophy, he preserves a deep Kantian intuition in his belief that we cannot know reality *an sich* (or in-itself) and that knowledge is limited to the "human standpoint" (Longuenesse). At the same time a transcendental element is found in his belief that philosophy cannot be replaced by one or another of the empirical sciences and that one of its primary tasks involves a distinctive type of reflection on the "conditions of possibility" of our human practices and activities (including scientific activity) (BNR, 27; Hammer 2007).

Like Kant, Habermas maintains that there are *a priori* "world-disclosing" or "world-constituting" features of knowledge and action that cannot directly become the object of empirical inquiry precisely because they constitute conditions of possibility for such inquiry (TJ, 21). He shares this perspective with many other philosophers including, notably, Heidegger and Wittgenstein.[2] What importantly distinguishes his view from some others is his claim that transcendental (or world-disclosing) knowledge is not immune to criticism or revision as a result of "inner-worldly" learning (or knowledge acquired under those world-disclosing conditions) (TJ, 34; PDM, 319–320). In contrast to Kant then (for whom transcendental and empirical knowledge are sharply distinguished) the relation between world-disclosing knowledge and inner-worldly learning is more fluid—even if the former cannot become an explicit object of knowledge they can be altered or modified through cognitive achievements that take place in the world. For this reason one must also allow for the notion of an historical *a priori* (Foucault) or relative *a priori* (Putnam) as well—world-disclosing knowledge can and does change though not obviously at will. Finally, and here his pragmatist commitments are especially visible, Habermas insists on the priority of "knowing how" over "knowing that" or, in different words, on the priority of social practices (or the lifeworld) over any explicit (or theoretical) knowledge about those practices (PT, 43, 49). Robert Brandom refers to this as "fundamental pragmatism" and Habermas shares this view not only with Brandom, but Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Rorty and many others (Brandom 2011, 9).

The distinctive features of Habermas's Kantian pragmatism will thus have to be located in the more specific claims he makes about his version of this fundamental pragmatism. As we shall see in later chapters, these primarily have to do with the various idealizations that Habermas claims are "built into" our social practices: idealizations about an objective world, accountable agents, and demanding validity-claims (for example, about truth and moral rightness) (TJ, 87). These aspects of Habermas's Kantian pragmatism will be discussed in subsequent chapters, especially in Chapter 4 where I explore it in greater detail. At this point, I want to describe another longstanding and broadly Kantian dimension to his work by considering how his central concept of communicative action addresses a perennial topic in philosophy (I). The introduction will then conclude with a brief biographical sketch (II).

I. Communicative action and the "manifest image" of the person

A question that has been at the center of Habermas's thought throughout his career concerns the impact of the rise of modern science on our self-understanding as human beings. At one level, this is especially evident in his early essays where he criticized various attempts to apply the methods and insights of modern science and technology more or less directly within the domain of politics. In what was referred to at the time as the "technocracy thesis" the ambition was to replace the classical conception of politics with its orientation to a notion of the common good and a set of political virtues with a "science of politics" that offered a more somber assessment of human nature and human motivation.[3] Hobbes is an obvious inspiration here; but Joseph Schumpeter and the economic model of democracy are important later influences. It becomes a form of ideology when it is widely accepted as an acceptable way to conduct politics (TRS, chap. 6). Without advocating a simple retention of the classical model, Habermas nevertheless criticized the idea that modern science and technology could simply replace a notion of politics that still held to the idea of citizens deliberating collectively about their common good. The technocracy thesis—in the sense of (generally accepted) rule by a scientifically and technologically informed elite—would mean an end to democracy as it had been previously understood (see Specter 2010, 96). Many of his more occasional writings on politics and educational reform from this period also addressed this theme (see especially TRS; Moses 2007, 207f.).

But the rise of modern science, especially when understood to entail a naturalistic description of the world, also challenged human self-understanding at an even more profound level. In what the American philosopher Wilfrid Sellars described as a "clash" between the "scientific" and the "manifest" image of humans, a naturalistic world view threatens a conception of ourselves as centers of personal experience and agents who are capable of acting on the basis of their deliberative choices (Sellars 1963, 38). It also threatens our self-understanding as accountable or responsible actors. The claim that science is incompatible with this "folk psychological" understanding has many versions depending on the particular science under consideration (from behaviorism to evolutionary psychology to neurophysiology). But they all share the conviction that the "manifest image" or "folk-psychological conception" of the person must be radically revised if not eliminated altogether.

Philosophers have of course adopted a variety of positions on this question. Some have argued that the scientific image is basically correct and must be largely embraced. Others have denied that there is any genuine conflict or tension, either because a "naturalistic" interpretation of modern science can be rejected or because the two images refer to completely distinct subject matters (human agents *qua* rational or noumenal selves are not part of the phenomenal world). Finally, still others have argued that, though there is indeed a deep tension between these two images they can nonetheless be reconciled such that the "manifest image" can still be retained in some form. Habermas, along with many others, belongs within this last group. Although the naturalistic worldview may lead us to redescribe our self-understanding, it cannot completely replace the "manifest image." In the development of his own position, Habermas has been influenced by both Heidegger and Edmund Husserl, both of whom argued that in important ways the scientific image derives from and is fundamentally still dependent upon a prior "lifeworld" that presupposes the manifest image. It is thus not possible for the scientific image to displace the lifeworld with its manifest image without at the same time calling itself into question. This is in fact the core thesis of Husserl's last (unfinished) book, *The Crisis of European Science and Transcendental Phenomenology*.[4]

What is distinctive about Habermas's own argument for the priority of the everyday lifeworld (and so for the ineliminability of the manifest image) is the connection he makes between these ideas and the human capacity for ordinary or everyday linguistic communication. The capacity for rich and meaningful communication is the product of our species's evolutionary development, but it is at the same time what makes us distinct as human beings. As he stated it in his 1965 inaugural lecture in Frankfurt: "The human interest in autonomy and responsibility is not mere fancy for it can be apprehended *a priori*. What raises us out of nature is the only thing whose nature we can know: language. Through its structure autonomy and responsibility are posited for us" (KHI, 314). Though he later conceded that the claim was rather dramatically expressed, he continues to insist on its basic truth (Habermas 2000a). In KHI, which followed his inaugural lecture of the same title, Habermas argued that our capacity for linguistic communication imposes limits on a "naturalistic" description of the world since a scientific description of the world and science itself (as a form of rational inquiry) presupposes the ongoing inquiry of a scientific community (and its reliance on informal linguistic communication) (see Chapter 2). He makes a similar argument in his influential 1968 essay on Hegel's theory of mutual recognition (*Anerkennung*) where Habermas claims that Hegel also drew a basic distinction between "instrumental action" (including science and technology) and "communicative action" (which operates against the background of shared linguistic norms) and insisted that the latter could not be replaced by the former (and so by a thoroughgoing naturalism or naturalistic worldview) (TP, chap. 4).

By the early 1970s in his Gauss Lectures at Princeton University (Habermas 1998a)—and especially in his 1976 essay "What is Universal Pragmatics?" (in CES)—Habermas makes explicit the argumentative strategy that will henceforth frame his work. Drawing especially upon John Searle's *Speech Acts*, Habermas argues that core features of the manifest image of the person are built into the very structure of language use since illocutionary acts—speech acts such as asserting, promising, or requesting, etc.—presuppose that the addressee is "free" to respond to the claims raised in such acts on the basis of her own reasons. When, for example, I sincerely promise to meet someone at the café at noon I tacitly presuppose that she has the capacity to respond. She can acknowledge my promise and make her plans accordingly; but she can also (for any number of reasons) decline from undertaking the commitments that such an acknowledgment would bring about. She might equally question my ability to keep the promise (given my other obligations) or even my sincerity in making it. In any event, in making a promise (or in undertaking any number of other illocutionary acts) the speaker ascribes a normative status to the addressee and, in acknowledging the speech act offer, the addressee also locates herself (and the speaker) within a shared normative structure. It would contradict the very meaning or "illocutionary force" of such speech acts if the capacity of the addressee to respond on the basis of her own reasons were denied.[5] Though this might seem like a quite narrow foothold, it is crucial for Habermas in that the normative structure or status produced by illocutionary acts is importantly distinct from a naturalistic (or scientific) description of the world and cannot be replaced by it. Indeed, the latter presupposes such a normative competence for its own possibility for reflective inquiry and communication. For Habermas, it is this capacity for linguistic communication—for making use of the "rationally bonding/binding force" of illocutionary acts—that undergirds his defense of the manifest image (CES, 63).[6]

The concept of communicative action is unquestionably the most basic concept in Habermas's work. It is, however, a concept that has undergone revision as he struggled to give it shape and, though the basic idea is relatively straightforward, it does have some slightly different connotations in different contexts.[7] At one level, it is Habermas's preferred way to describe the manifest image: it refers to the folk-psychological understanding that humans can respond to and act on the basis of reasons or considered judgments and are not simply propelled by the strongest motive or desire. As importantly, however, the concept of communicative action captures Habermas's conviction that one's status as a person is in an important sense social or intersubjective. The individual capacity to act for reasons is rooted in the normative structure associated with our capacity for linguistic communication as I have just described it—that is, in the shared structure of illocutionary acts. One might say, then, in a manner intended to recall Hegel's master–slave dialectic, that my status as an individual accountable and responsible agent—that is, as "free"—is crucially dependent upon and coeval with my recognition of others as similarly situated (and vice-versa).

Of course, even this intersubjective or "recognitional" understanding is still extremely thin. It is the bare notion of a person or agent as someone who occupies the normative status of accepting or rejecting the claims raised in various types of speech acts. What gives the notion of communicative action more character or depth is Habermas's further claim that such action always occurs within the lifeworld where much more is assumed and taken for granted (TCA 2: 126). Communicative action generally presupposes "thick" contexts and takes place against a background of innumerable shared norms, expectations, and habits that are in play. In fact, it is often only when these shared norms and expectations begin to break down or are called into question that the "rational potential" built into illocutionary acts is more explicitly drawn upon—the demand, that is, to provide reasons for the claims becomes more explicit and depends less upon previously taken-for-granted background certainties. Nonetheless central to Habermas's basic thesis about communicative action is that even in our most mundane or everyday social interactions—as shot through as they also always are with various both unquestioned assumptions and forms of social power and domination—this "manifest image" of humans as accountable and responsible is present or, as he puts it, "counterfactually presupposed." Indeed, the manifest image can, however paradoxically, even be invoked to conceal forms of domination (by falsely ascribing levels of responsibility and/or consent when in fact it is absent at least in that context or in that form). I have in mind more or less straightforward cases of "blaming the victim"; but falsely ascribing responsibility with respect to some sequence of social interaction does not mean that social actors don't at the same time still possess a normative competence in virtue of more general (or more basic) structures of interaction (such as linguistic communication).

This is only a brief and preliminary sketch of Habermas's concept of communicative action. It is, to repeat, closely connected to his own construal of the "manifest image" of the person and his claim that, however real and deep the conflict with a scientific or naturalistic description of the world may be, the latter presupposes the former and so cannot completely displace it—at least not without so radically altering our understanding of ourselves that we cannot coherently (or rationally) imagine what living in that world would be like.[8] As I will suggest in Chapter 4, Habermas's position is at this point quite close to P. F. Strawson's claim in "Freedom and Resentment" that we cannot easily imagine a world in which the practice of praise and blame (and the reactive attitudes on which it is based) are absent (see Strawson 2003; and Habermas's remarks on Strawson in MCCA, 45f.). This is not surprising since, for both Strawson and Habermas, the "manifest image" (with its notion of accountable agency and the practice of praise and blame) is supported and sustained by a complex network of interpersonal relationships or structures of intersubjective recognition that in turn make it possible for us to describe that image as "rational."

As we will see in subsequent chapters, the concept of communicative action plays a central role in all of Habermas's later work. In *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984/1987) he explicitly develops it in conjunction with the notion of the lifeworld in order to provide an alternative to the interpretation of occidental rationalization found in both Max Weber and in Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1987). Modern "rational" societies need not, as a result of the continuous spread of instrumental reason, culminate in an "iron cage" (Weber) or in a "totally administered society" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1987). Rather, the process of social rationalization may so far have been extremely one-sided but it nonetheless contains possibilities for the development of more rational forms of social organization that make use of the resources of communicative action (Chapter 3). The analysis of communicative action is also at the basis of his own constructivist reading of a discourse ethics or, more accurately, discourse morality (Chapter 5) and it figures prominently in *Between Facts and Norms* (1996) and his account of deliberative politics, where the task is to see how a communicative power generated within the free associations of civil society (that is, within institutions of the lifeworld) can be channeled in ways to influence the formal decision-making processes and exercise a rationalizing influence on administrative power (Chapter 6 and 7). Finally, as Habermas argues in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1987), many criticisms of occidental or "western reason" and its instrumentalizing effects are based on a failure to distinguish between the communicative reason connected with communicative action and communicative power and the instrumental and functionalist reason that has often been more visible in the organization of societies (Chapter 8).

II. A brief biographical sketch

Jürgen Habermas was born to Ernst and Grete Habermas in Düsseldorf on June 18, 1929, the second of three children. He was raised in the small town of Gummersbach, about twenty miles east of Cologne where his paternal grandfather had been the head of a small Lutheran seminary. His father, the director of the local Bureau of Trade and Industry, was a career civil servant and joined the National Socialist Party in the early 1930s. Habermas was enrolled in the Hitler Youth at the age of fourteen and at fifteen served as a field nurse for an anti-aircraft brigade in the last months of the war (AS, 74; Wiggershaus 2004, 11). In a later interview he remarked that "the political climate in our family home was probably not unusual for the time. It was marked by a bourgeois adaptation to a political situation with which one did not fully identify, but which one didn't seriously criticize either" (AS, 73). However two separate events from this period had a lasting impact on his subsequent development. First, he describes the tremendous shock he experienced upon learning of the Nazi atrocities and how confronting it became a "fundamental theme of his adult life" (BNR, 17): "Overnight, as it were, the society in which we had led what had seemed to be a halfway normal everyday life and the regime governing it were exposed as pathological and criminal" (BNR, 17). It would be difficult to overestimate how his efforts in "coming to terms with the past" have shaped Habermas's thought. Second, in a much later public lecture Habermas also suggests that his own physical disability—he was born with a cleft palate and had several operations as a child—and the challenges that created for his interaction with other youths may have made him more sensitive to feelings of vulnerability and exclusion (BNR, 13–15).

After completing Gymnasium, Habermas attended a number of universities, including Göttingen, Zürich, and Bonn, where he studied philosophy, history, literature, and psychology. He completed his doctoral thesis, under the direction of Erich Rothacker, in Bonn in 1954 on the German idealist philosopher Friedrich

Schelling. According to Habermas's own report, however, Martin Heidegger was the most important influence on his thought at this time and he later described himself as "a thoroughgoing Heideggerian for three to four years" (AS, 194; BNR, 19). During this period Habermas became active in left-wing politics and, in particular, was a pacifist and opposed to the rearmament of West Germany after the war (AS, 75; Müller-Doohm 2014, 85; Moses 2007, 114). He suggested in a later interview, however, that at this time there was very little connection between his philosophical studies and his political engagement (AS, 76).

Habermas began his career as a freelance journalist and wrote a wide variety of articles, several of which show the influence of Heidegger on his thinking at this time. A longer essay from this period—"The Dialectics of Rationalization" (1954)—anticipates many of the themes in his later work while employing Heideggerian terminology. Already in 1953, however, Habermas publicly criticized Heidegger in an article that caused a stir. The title, "With Heidegger against Heidegger," signals the philosopher's influence even as Habermas expresses his shock and dismay upon learning about the extent of Heidegger's relation to Nazism. What irritated Habermas—to put it mildly—was the fact that Heidegger would allow the publication of his 1935 lectures, which included a clear reference to the "greatness of the movement [National Socialism]," without feeling any need to comment on this fact (see Wolin 1991). The article appeared at a time when Habermas was apparently looking for a more satisfactory integration of his philosophical and political concerns. Habermas's disappointment in Heidegger may also have reflected his growing conviction, perhaps contrary to his initial hopes, that the latter's appeal to the history of Being made his philosophy unsuitable for Habermas's more democratic and egalitarian concerns (Habermas 1991, 196).

Habermas married Ute Wesselhöft (b. June 2, 1930) in 1955 and shortly thereafter they moved to Frankfurt. Through a colleague he met Theodor Adorno (who had read his essay on the dialectic of rationalization) and, in 1956, he was invited to become Adorno's assistant at the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt (AS, 191). One of his initial projects was an empirical study on student attitudes toward politics and Habermas was responsible for writing the long