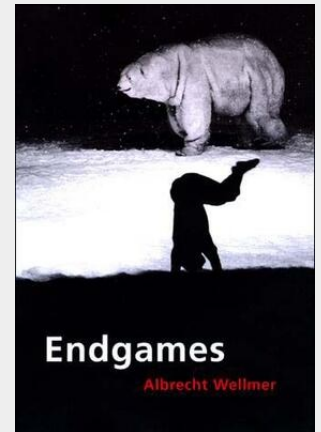


Wellmer

Endgames

The Irreconcilable Nature of Modernity: Essays and Lectures

A common theme of this set of thirteen essays by one of the major figures in contemporary German philosophy is the idea of a postmetaphysical modernity. In his preface Wellmer relates the title of his book, *Endgames*, to this common theme: The historical utopias of the Marxist tradition and the programs of ultimate justification in the Kantian tradition are both endgames within metaphysics, the deconstruction of those utopias and programs of ultimate justification are endgames played with metaphysics, and the game with an end as ultimate telos--the end(s) of history, the end(s) of knowledge, the end(s) of human life--is metaphysics. The title, *Endgames*, finally also refers polemically to postmodernist games with an end of modernity; as opposed to these, Wellmer defends the fragile moral and political substance of the modernity that postmodernists attempt to overcome--and that sense of what needs to be preserved of the modern tradition for a postmetaphysical modernity is what makes his writings unique. In the first of the book's three parts, "Negative and Communicative Freedom," Wellmer focuses on political philosophy, examining in particular the links and tensions between liberal basic rights and modern ideas of democracy. In Part II, "Postmetaphysical Perspectives," he attempts to develop a postmetaphysical perspective on aesthetics and metaphysics (with and against Adorno), on the problem of truth (with and against Richard Rorty, Jürgen Habermas, and Karl-Otto Apel), and on hermeneutics (with and against Hans-Georg Gadamer and Karl-Otto Apel). Part III, "Images of the Times," contains occasional pieces on Ludwig Wittgenstein, the Frankfurt School, Hans Jonas, and architecture. The book closes with an appended critical essay on Hannah Arendt, reflecting the importance of Arendt's political philosophy to Wellmer's work.



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