

Albert Hofstadter, Philosopher, 78

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Professor Albert Hofstadter, professor emeritus of philosophy at Columbia University and the University of California at Santa Cruz, died of a heart attack Thursday at his home in Santa Cruz. He was 78 years old.

Professor Hofstadter was born in Manhattan and taught at Columbia from 1950 to 1967, when he moved to Santa Cruz. After teaching there until 1975, he returned to New York to teach at the New School for Social Research from 1976 to 1978.

Surviving are his wife, Manya; a son, Marc, of Berkeley, Calif.; two brothers, George, of Florida and Robert, of Stanford, Calif., and a sister, Shirley, of Cleveland.

Remarks for the Albert Hofstadter Memorial Session, April 1st. 1989.

[Held at the Porter College House, UCSC]

by

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Albert Hofstadter, who became one of the leading philosophers of the nation, was a New Yorker through and through. He was born there, educated there, and married there, to a New Yorker like himself. After getting his M. A. and Ph.D. at Columbia, he taught and worked at New York University for 18 years and then transferred to Columbia for 16 years more. He spent only brief periods elsewhere, a year at Swarthmore, summers at Santa Barbara and Michigan, and a later year at Stanford. How Dean McHenry persuaded him to come to Santa Cruz is not known, but that year at Stanford, and the fact that his brother is Professor there, may have contributed. In any case, he left Columbia to come here in 1967. He chaired the Board of Studies in Philosophy for 3 years, and was a member of three other boards, History of Consciousness, Art, and Religious Studies. After 9 years here he went back to New York to chair the Graduate Faculty at the New School for Social Research, but only for 2 years; he spent the last eleven years at Santa Cruz.

The breadth of interest that is indicated by his membership of those four Boards of Studies is characteristic; the most unusual - and the great attraction to me - was that in the borderline between Philosophy and Art. His little book on Truth and Art was so popular it went into a paperback. He wrote on "Significance and Artistic Meaning", "The Consciousness and Language of Art", on "The Grounds of Aesthetic Judgment" and on "Hegel's Philosophy of Art", among other things. It was of course this special interest that drew him to Porter College. I cannot speak of his numerous contributions to special areas of Philosophy, — that must be left to experts.

But I got to know him through a quite different interest, that of the organization of Emeritus faculty members. This seems to have been his own enterprise; he set it up as an informal luncheon club, and as it gradually became established, meeting regularly every two months, other such organizations appeared on other U.C. campuses. When it was proposed to unite them into a University-wide organization, Albert was the obvious choice for the first President. This year it holds its first University-wide meetings, and the local organization now has the dignity of its own office. It is sad that his health forced him to retire as local chair, and as statewide President, for obviously it is a development whose time has come.

His characteristic quiet manner, his deep sincerity, his ability to get things done quickly but unobtrusively, and his rapidly awakening scholarly enthusiasm in discussion, will long remain in our memories. Santa Cruz was indeed fortunate to have had his services, and we count ourselves fortunate to have had him as a friend.

Transcribed by Stanley D. Stevens, Secretary/Treasurer, UCSC Emeriti Group from its Archives for the Group's website
11/1/2009: <http://www2.ucsc.edu/emeritigroup/>

Albert Hofstadter (March 28, 1910 – January 26, 1989) was an American philosopher.

Source: Wikipedia

Life and career

Hofstadter taught at Columbia University (1950–67), the University of California at Santa Cruz (1968–75) and the New School for Social Research (1976–78).^[1] He was the elder brother of physicist and Nobel laureate Robert Hofstadter and the uncle of Robert's son, Douglas Hofstadter.

Thoughts on the later Heidegger

As a Heidegger scholar, Hofstadter contends that Heidegger is able to shape and use language in keeping with his basic insight that language is the house of Being, i.e., where humans dwell. "It is by staying with the thinking the language itself does that Heidegger is able to rethink, and thus think anew, the oldest, the perennial and perennially forgotten thoughts."^[2] One of these is the Being of beings in the sense of aletheia. Hofstadter praises Heidegger's project to free human beings from alienated ways of relating to things, "letting us find in it a real dwelling place instead of the cold, sterile hostelry in which we presently find ourselves."^[3]

Major works

Books (authored and edited)

- *Philosophies of Art and Beauty: Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger*. co-edited by Richard Kuhns. Modern Library. 1964.
- *Truth and Art*. Columbia University Press. 1965.
- *Agony and Epitaph: Man, His Art, and His Poetry*. George Braziller. 1970. ISBN 978-0-8076-0544-8.

Translations

- *Heidegger, Martin* (1982). *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. Indiana University Press.
- *Heidegger, Martin* (1971). *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. Harper Collins.

Notes

1. ↑ "Albert Hofstadter, Philosopher, 78", *New York Times*, Jan. 28., 1989
2. ↑ Heidegger, Martin and Albert Hofstadter. "Introduction," *Poetry, Language, Thought*.. New York: Harper Collins, 1971, pg. xvi.
3. ↑ Hofstadter, 1971, pg. xvii.

References

- [Bibliography of articles by Albert Hofstadter at philpapers.org](#)