

Book reviews / Comptes rendus

The Political Economy of Civil Society and Human Rights

GARY B. MADISON

New York & London, Routledge, 1998, 301 p.

Readers acquainted with Gary Madison's writings to date (most notably *Understanding: A Phenomenological-Pragmatic Analysis*, *The Logic of Liberty*, and *The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity: Figures and Themes*) will not be disappointed with *The Political Economy of Civil Society and Human Rights*, an ambitious and wide-ranging investigation of numerous issues of political economy. This book carries forward the hermeneutical-liberal approach to politics Madison presented in the earlier *Logic of Liberty* while shifting focus to the classical liberal notion of civil society and its contemporary implications for issues of democracy, human rights, globalization, the market economy, and related matters. In wake of the Eastern European revolutions of 1989, Madison argues, it is especially pressing at the current time in those nations as in our own both to gain an explicit theoretical understanding of the internal dynamics of civil society as well as to fashion civil institutions in nations presently struggling to overcome the legacy of authoritarianism. The revolutionary events in Eastern Europe that culminated in the collapse of the Berlin Wall signal not only the demise of authoritarian rule but the revival of the idea of civil society — an idea that while of Western origin is also, Madison contends, of universal moral-political legitimacy. The book's principal thesis is that institutions of civil society and liberal democracy are alone able to accommodate demands universally expressed for both economic prosperity and political liberty.

"[T]he concept of civil society," as he writes, "can serve as a crystallizing notion in our current attempts to think a post-1989 or, more generally, a postmodern politics. The concept of civil society, I maintain, is that concept which both designates and defines a certain state of affairs, outside of which those other most prominent concepts in current political discourse, viz., democracy and human rights, are, and must forever remain, totally vacuous" (p. 8).

It is as an exercise in political hermeneutics that Madison takes up the theoretical task of explicating the logic or immanent dynamic of civil society. Having previously spoken of liberal democracy as a comprehensive

philosophy of human being-in-the-world, one that enshrines in its institutions both communicative rationality and the associated virtues of hermeneutic *praxis*, Madison in this text describes civil society as well as displaying in political-economic form the logic of communicative reason. While noting with approval the apparent renaissance that the concept of civil society is presently enjoying, Madison argues that the concept has been largely misconceived by its proponents and critics alike. Civil society is commonly misunderstood as a public domain intermediate between the state and private (particularly family) life rather than, as Madison prefers, in the broader connotation of John Locke. The latter signification regards civil society as a more all-inclusive category roughly interchangeable with "political society" and comprising matters of political, ethical, economic, and cultural import. It designates not a special domain of society but "society organized in a particular way" (p. 36) — i.e., one fashioned in accordance with liberal-democratic principles.

Civil society, he argues, is constituted by three identifiable "orders" of human agency. These are the moral-cultural, the political, and the economic, each of which constitutes a "spontaneous order" in the sense employed by F. A. Hayek and others influenced by the Austrian school of economics. This is a rule-governed order, neither "natural" nor "artificial," which is the spontaneous outcome of human action and intersubjectivity while not a product of express design. Each order is organized around a particular object: truth in the sphere of the moral-cultural (or truths in the plural), justice in the political, and prosperity in the economic. Further, each order possesses relative autonomy while exhibiting subtle and synergetic interrelations with other orders of social *praxis*. While oriented toward distinct ends and constituted by a logic peculiar to each — a logic that Madison investigates in detail — such orders more fundamentally display an immanent dynamic that is animated by communicative reason and the freedom that is its principal condition. As Madison writes: "... no civil society can be said fully to exist where individual agents are not endowed with the freedoms and rights appropriate to each of the three major spheres of human agency. As classical liberals would have said, freedom is indivisible: no one can be genuinely free who is not free culturally, politically, and economically" (p. 37).

This work demonstrates an abiding concern to apply premises of hermeneutical and postmodern philosophy to questions of public policy and political economy. While of classical liberal inspiration, Madison's approach refuses problematic metaphysical and related assumptions common to earlier forms of liberalism in favor of a conception of liberal democracy premised upon a postmetaphysical or postmodern hermeneutics. Communicative reason in particular serves a prominent role for Madison both in fashioning political principles, several of which he views as normative entailments of hermeneutic *praxis*, and in interpreting the structures of social life. In their

combinations and interrelations, the social orders that comprise civil society constitute an interpretive account of social reality broadly conceived. It is thus as an exercise in hermeneutics that Madison approaches questions of human rights, representative democracy, the market economy, and globalization, all of which are presently at the forefront of political discussion in both Western democracies and the various nations around the world currently endeavoring to cast off the remnants of authoritarianism and/or colonialism. Madison argues forcefully and persuasively throughout this text for a conception of political economy that is animated by a concern for equal liberty in the several realms of human agency.

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Posts: Re Addressing the Ethical

DAWNE McCANCE

SUNY Series in Postmodern Culture, State University of New York Press, 1996, 169 p.

This concentrated but lucid book shows that, far from being an evasion of the ethical, deconstruction, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and other postmodern projects are crucially and in an ingenerate way about addressing the ethical. That is, as McCance's title indicates, they are *re* (meaning "about") addressing, as one addresses a letter, and taking into consideration, and speaking to (as one responds to a questioner) the ethical. About re-addressing it, too: about putting it on the agenda of an age that is consciously "after" (*post*) and asking how it is possible to write or to signify not only after modernism but in the wake of a century that by its inability to prevent a cycle of genocidal conflicts appears to have forgotten how to address ethical issues in any credible way.

It is true that the ethical imperatives driving deconstruction were always there for anyone willing to listen for them. When Stephen W. Melville wrote that "Derrida's achievement has been to find a new and necessary way to assert, in detail, that the task of philosophy is criticism" (*Philosophy Beside Itself*), he clearly meant that philosophy has to do with *ethos*, and the critical appraisal thereof, and not only with *logos*. Unfortunately too many professors of philosophy, perhaps following misleading signals about deconstruction sent out by its North American interpreters, have been happy to leave Derrida *et al.* to their colleagues in French, English, and Comparative Literature, assuming that deconstruction and other "French" inventions were just about style and would have nothing to say to real philosophers. But as McCance shows in her introductory chapter, literary theorists have brought their own

kinds of blindness to the institutionalization of the postmodern. McCance shows how critics as different as Linda Hutcheon, Fredric Jameson and Alasdair MacIntyre, in their haste to announce (or denounce) and define for us the arrival of the "postmodern," have ignored the repeated refusals of Derrida, Lyotard, Lacan, Kristeva, and Foucault to associate themselves with "postmodernism" and other "periodizing terms" (2). (The use of scare quotes around terms like "postmodern" and "French" is a feature of McCance's writing, perhaps the inevitable result of her objectives in this book. It is necessary, as McCance persuasively argues, because the habitual misrepresentation of postmodernism as "French" thinkers theorizing "American" culture constitutes a "politics of forgetting," a closing-off of heterogeneity or of *le différend* [131].) North Americans have read into the work of these "French" theorists "a nostalgic rhetoric of impossibility." "According to their North American critics," McCance continues, "what comes *after* postmodernism [...] must be a return to what was *before*: to a subject and a project, to ethics as a discourse of possibility. It's as if 'the ethical,' thought otherwise, were missing altogether from the work of 'the French'" (2). It follows that these critics can set "postmodernism" against, say, feminism, Marxism, or Christianity, as lacking an ethical and a social-political position (17).

McCance's introduction, then, surveys some earlier accounts by North American critics of what they choose to call "contemporary French thought" (Arthur Kroker, quoted, 6), "the French text" (Fredric Jameson, quoted, 14) or "poststructuralist theory and postmodern art" (Linda Hutcheon, quoted, 17). McCance's strategy, rather obviously, is to rend the veil: to show how previous critics have travestied "the French," to vaporize the chimera created by Linda Hutcheon and others (that strange amalgam of poststructuralist theory and postmodern art) and then to lead the reader back, or forward, into a closer, truer encounter with the sources. Readers who want to subvert this strategy can of course go straight to the main text, but the introduction should not be skipped entirely, as it contains the crucial statement of McCance's own (ethical) concern, which is that by beginning with postmodernism already defined and periodized, these critics stifle the impulse for change that they claim to seek: "[T]he periodizing of postmodernism, along with the concern to position things in order and to put a project in place, represents a return to modern subjectivity rather than the possibility for radical change. Linearity replaces an entire system of metaphysical (hierarchical, oppositional) boundaries which, according to 'the French,' must be opened to change" (18).

McCance's first achievement — first because it dominates the chapter on Derrida and also because it is foundational for the entire work — is to demonstrate that the interrogation of (philosophic) language which is the very lifeblood and currency of deconstruction is not mere play but philosophic criticism of a profoundly ethical kind. In his paper, "Of an Apocalyptic Tone

Recently Adopted in Philosophy," Derrida's thesis is that (as McCance puts it) "we cannot not deconstruct." That is, "we cannot not ask ourselves: *Who is writing? To whom? And to send, to destine, to dispatch what? To what address?*" It is not however Derrida but language itself, in its "apocalyptic" structure, that issues this ethical imperative (40). To Derrida's critics, such a claim is scandalous, a call to demystify which is itself mystificatory and irresponsible, but McCance deftly shows how Derrida's grammatological interrogation of language both echoes and differs from the Enlightenment critique which it effectively challenges along with the Kantian ethic of autonomy. The title of the Cerisy paper plays on the title of Kant's essay "Of an Overlordly Tone Recently Adapted in Philosophy." Derrida's critique of this essay shows how it works to "privilege philosophy as an order of homogeneity" (26), establishing the discourse of philosophy as a pure discourse uncontaminated by "personification and the body" (quoted, 31). The *inadmissible* of Kant's moral philosophy, that from which philosophical discourse must be protected, is "Isis," a figure that McCance glosses as (among other things) "prototype of woman," "feminine secrecy," and "emasculatation of the logos." The moral law, in the Kantian scheme, is to be placed over not the person but "the body of (as) woman" (31). Here as in all deconstructive analysis by asking what a discourse excludes, what it cannot accommodate, the critic performs the ethically vital task of showing what (or who) pays the price of that discourse.

Lyotard's critique of the liberal concept of justice based on the principle of individual autonomy is the focus of chapter 2. Autonomy, in the liberal model, means that one is oneself "the author of the law that one pays heed to" (Lyotard, quoted, 50). Thus McCance shows how, to Lyotard, liberal justice necessarily posits a subject or "transcendental" self that can be understood as the author of law as well as its subject. Addressor and addressee are assumed to exist in a realm of "conformity," a "rule of the Same." In our time, the events that Lyotard, following Adorno, refers to by the synecdoche "Auschwitz" were the suspension of this conformity of addressor (author of law) and addressee (subject of law): there was in "Auschwitz" no consent, no linkage between the ones decreeing death and the ones who died. "Auschwitz" revealed the modern subject or *Selbst* as a "transcendental illusion": "It becomes necessary 'after Auschwitz' [...] to find a principle for linking otherwise than in conformity with modernity's I-you rule of the Same" (53).

Questions of sexuality and gender predominate in the next two chapters, on Lacan and Kristeva. Previous commentators on Lacan have erred, McCance argues, by failing to realize that what matters most to (and in) Lacan is the nonrepresentable, located in the unconscious. Lacan does not deliver an ethics, then. He can not do so, if only because, to him, the signifier, language, "signifies" other than what it says (83). But Lacan's work has an ethical *effect*

in the way it dramatizes the unconscious (86). Lacan, McCance shows, "comes to locate the subject of ethics not in the realm of law or conscious reason [...] but in the field of unconscious *jouissance*" (74). For Lacan, the signifying subject's limitation is that, in its quest for the imaginary unity of identity it turns away from heterogeneity or difference. Analysis, to Lacan, thus qualifies as an "ethical" activity primarily because "it endeavors to break the circular return of phallic identity by having the analysand come to realize that when s/he addresses the analyst as a subject of certainty, it is the Other that s/he is addressing" (77).

Because the subject is constantly *en procès* (both "in process" and "on trial"), the question of ethics cannot be raised without simultaneously questioning the status of the subject, including the undecidability of sexual identity. Starting from a distrust of the signifier as deep as Lacan's, Kristeva's interrogation of the ethical leads her to the position that (as McCance has it) "A textual practice is ethical when it is ambivalent [...]. Only when it *both* posits *and* pluralizes, pulverizes, 'musicates' meaning does the text fulfill its ethical function" (95). Kristeva's own signifying practice exemplifies the ethical function of such writing, which knows what it is "after." Her destabilizing textual practices, such as the use of double columns and boldface inserts in "Stabat Mater," are one instance; at a different level, there is Kristeva's rejection of feminisms that either "dream of a distinct place for women," outside linear patriarchal history, or that ground themselves on the ontology and morality of patriarchy "with its conscious subject and his proprietary rights" (100-01). In "Women's Time," Kristeva imagines a third kind of feminism, which will subvert the modern version of the social contract — "an accord among equals (equal men)" — and resist the "violent separation of sameness from difference," which for Kristeva, as (one might add) for Lyotard, has been the oppressive, murderous price of subjectivity and the social contract under modernism (101).

Finally, the chapter on Foucault argues that his many-sided career was always driven by ethical curiosity, not in the sense of "seek[ing] to assimilate what it is proper for one to know," but in the sense of a curiosity "which enables one to get free of oneself" (Foucault, quoted, 127). Continuing in her agenda of freeing "French" thinkers from the misrepresentations of previous interpreters, principally, in Foucault's case, Hayden White, McCance makes a strong case that "Foucault is not an apostle of doom — although some of his critics are" (121). Aware as Kristeva and Lyotard were of the intolerable price of the humanist and modernist "identity," Foucault saw the vocation of writing as an opening to difference, "a chance 'to think otherwise, to do something else, to become other than what one is'" (129). When power is understood, as Foucault understood it, as deeply implicated in both knowledge and pleasure, an author is in danger of colluding with it the moment s/he settles within the boundaries of the modernist subject and what

it "knows." So the notorious inconsistencies and discontinuities of Foucault's work can be seen as the textual enactment of an ethic of resistance, which is "catachretic" in that it "works down" from what it is assumed we can know: "[T]he knower's straying afield of himself" [...] is Foucault's autograph. And it would be this catachretic signature [...] that makes Foucault's work important for ethics" (127).

Posts is not the final word on ethical issues raised in postmodernism, and of course it does not attempt a "history" of "postmodern thought." Such a thing would be problematic, in any case; and the reader who wants to learn about *Tel Quel*, Lévinas' rejection of those questions of ontology which had preoccupied Heidegger and Sartre, or Sartre's postMarxist discovery (in the course of writing *Critique of Dialectical Reason*) that history is after all not essential to humankind, will have to look elsewhere. Despite these necessary limitations on her topic, McCance has written a superbly well-crafted, well-focused study that should quickly establish itself as the best introduction to the ethical challenges of French postmodern thought.

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Praise of Theory: Speeches and Essays

HANS-GEORG GADAMER

Translated by Chris Dawson, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998, 185 p.

Praise of Theory is Chris Dawson's translation of *Lob der Theorie: Reden und Aufsätze*, published in 1983 by Suhrkamp (Frankfurt am Main). The volume contains eleven essays written by Gadamer during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and are organized around such themes as theory and practice, language and reason, science and practical philosophy, and related topics. Among the several volumes of collected essays by Gadamer that have appeared in English in recent years, *Praise of Theory* is among the more notable collections, and undoubtedly finds Gadamer at his most engaging.

The title essay takes up the issue of theory and practice in philosophy, and pursues further a line of argument earlier advanced in *Truth and Method* and *Reason in the Age of Science*. Recalling the Greek connotation of theory (*theoria*) as simultaneously observation and participation, Gadamer regards theory as fundamentally a mode of comportment that exceeds scientific and utilitarian instrumentality. "[T]heory is not in the first instance a behavior whereby we control an object or put it at our disposal by explaining it" (p. 32), but is in the first place concerned with goods that are held in common. While ultimately practical in aim, theory is not properly reduced to the order

of applied science or technique, but assumes the form of participation in a common reality. Gadamer recounts how in modern times theoretical investigation came increasingly to bow to the requirements of scientific and utilitarian rationality in the form of "applied" research, while theory in its "pure" form assumed something of a defensive posture. The "unity" of theory and practice brought about in modernity, then, more closely approximates subordination of theoretical inquiry to utilitarian practice and technique than the more dialectical unity favored by hermeneutics — one whereby practice strives for explicit hermeneutic articulation while theory, as Aristotle maintained, is itself a form of *praxis*. Gadamer demonstrates the inadequacy of regarding theory and practice in oppositional terms while noting the deficiency of practical activity devoid of theoretical reflection.

Other essays in this volume find Gadamer not only in the familiar role of philosophical historian, but that of social critic as well. Such texts as "The Ideal of Practical Philosophy" and "Science as an Instrument of Enlightenment," for instance, not only repeat familiar Gadamerian themes but "apply" these, as it were, to questions of politics, ethics, and technology. To the question of whether at present there remains anything about which we continue to stand in need of "enlightenment," Gadamer offers an affirmative reply, yet it is less religious dogma or political ideology that generates this imperative than "our prepossession with the technological dream and our obsession with emancipatory utopia" (p. 79). It is the latter, Gadamer writes, "that represent the prejudices of our time and from which reflection, as the courage to think, needs to free us" (p. 79). In an age of science in which the possible quickly becomes the indispensable, human consciousness is characteristically transformed in the image of technology itself as values of efficiency, adaptation, and administration displace the values and capacities of social reason.

What this entails in particular for the eighteenth century liberal notion of tolerance, and what the contemporary meaning of this notion might be, are questions that Gadamer takes up in "The Idea of Tolerance 1782-1982." A virtue that in the eighteenth century carried a primarily religious connotation, tolerance, as Gadamer observes, has moved beyond the orbit of Christian sectarianism to include dialogue between the world religions and atheism. At the same time, tolerance has become once again "the rarest of all virtues" (p. 100) since its underlying conditions are no longer satisfactorily met. In Gadamer's words, "the basic presupposition of all tolerance — namely, our being ruled by self-evident common convictions that shape our social life — is precisely what is really missing" (p. 91) in an age of science-technology. The imperative toward technical rationality and bureaucratization creates a dangerous absence of orientation, particularly among the young, driving many toward self-alienation and intolerance. Under such conditions, it is not the power of a particular class or group that most significantly threatens human

freedom, but the dominance of science-technology itself and its imperatives of efficiency and functionality. This "anonymous domination that governs all" (p. 96) relieves those within modern culture of individual reason primarily by means of mass media and information politics and the belief compulsion that accompanies these. The fashioning of public opinion and attenuation of individual judgment that results creates a condition in which "in the end nobody has power and everybody is in service" (p. 96).

This short volume includes an unnecessary twenty-four page introduction by Chris Dawson and an equally needless eight page foreword by Joel Weinsheimer, editor of *Yale Studies in Hermeneutics*. Both pieces are unremarkable, and readers are well advised to pass over them. The literature on hermeneutics is now replete with introductory texts of this kind. Those wishing to gain acquaintance with Gadamer's work for the first time would be better to read David E. Linge's introduction to *Philosophical Hermeneutics* or several other introductory texts that have appeared over the last three decades. With these exceptions, *Praise of Theory* is a valuable and accessible collection of texts which will be required reading for students of hermeneutics.

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***A Nietzschean and Foucaultian Critique of Psychology:
Psychology and Nihilism: A genealogical critique of the
computational model of mind***

FRED J. EVANS

Albany, SUNY Press, 1993

Critiques of psychology are and have been legion throughout its relatively short life as an institutionalized discipline. In fact, it has been frequently noted in recent years that psychology is in a "crisis" even though such claims go back to Karl Bühler's (1929) well known book or even to the very founding of the discipline in the closing decades of the nineteenth-century. Typically the crisis is purported to be one of unity, the self-proclaimed science of psychology was and remains a plethora of positions which rarely, if ever, lend themselves to a single scientific view on the terms of the logical empiricist notion of the unity of science. For many who, like me, are not self-proclaimed "scientists" on this view, this cacophony is exactly as it should be and, if Fred Evans has his way, that is how it will remain.

Evans takes on the current core of psychology — cognitivism — by adopting what he calls a "genealogical psychology." This is the "evaluative interpretation of discursive positions" that includes the identification and

evaluation of the "voice" of that discourse (207). A voice is akin to Bakhtin's notion of utterance, the central element of language. "Utterances are the basic elements of the discursive positions or voices that make up a dialogue" (191). One immediate consequence is that meaning is always constituted in a dialogue or in an interplay of voices. There is no univocal identity to discover since utterances point endlessly to new revisions of themselves. On this dialogical view, linguistic agency belongs to "voices, which are always more than their enunciators and less than social discourse" (195). The voices exist as discursive positions which also identify the enunciators. Simultaneously, as enunciators, we are always capable of maintaining or resisting discursive positions in the fabric of social life.

Evans, however, only presents his conceptions of genealogical psychology and the interplay of voices in the closing chapters of his book. The bulk of the book works its way towards this position by a powerful and sustained critique of cognitive psychology. In fact, the first eight chapters develop a genealogical psychology of cognitivism, a psychology that seeks not consensus but the continuation of a dialogue that was in danger of hardening into a single, oracular voice. In all of the critical literature in psychology there has rarely been such a damning statement of the technocratic rationality that lies behind the enterprises of cognitive psychology and cognitive science and serves as the "operative goal of the society and individuals that they presumably serve" (213). If the book consisted only of the critique it would already have served the community of critical psychologists well.

Unlike more conventional critiques of cognitive psychology from within the discipline or without (typically from philosophy), Evans is concerned to show how the enterprise is not only incoherent and circular from within but that it stands as the culmination of Western nihilism. For Evans, the computational model of mind is "the culmination of immaculate perception and domination-observation, of what we shall refer to as the *analytic observer or analytic perspective* [...] we shall show that the self constructed by cognitive psychology is a 'proto-technocrat' and the formalization and universalization of the 'last man'" (49-50).

Evans's genealogical critique, is a Nietzschean and Foucaultian reading of the development of the computational model of mind, equating the emergence of technologies of mind with the transformation of the Enlightenment ideals into an administrative, technocratic, passive nihilism. Although supplanting behaviorism, cognitive psychology formalized and mechanized reason. Technocratic rationality was defined precisely around Turing's notion of an "effective procedure" and the eventual mechanization and instantiation of these procedures in the computer. On Turing's account any rational behavior is an effective procedure or capable of being characterized by an algorithm and such procedures can be imitated by a Turing machine of which the computer is an example. On these grounds Evans argues that cognitive

psychology is an advance over behaviorism in a "perverse manner." Behaviorism left us with a mind which it did not acknowledge but could also not encapsulate within its theories and programs. Cognitivism is formulated on computational rules and legislates "in advance what features of the world can count as inputs to the system and what objectives can count as the goals of such a system" (70-71). The system is strictly administrative and removed from the world, however, making "cognitive psychology's humanism" a "ruse or strategy for completing the implicit program of behaviorism, that is, for establishing the hegemony of technocratic rationality" (71).

Evans is not content however to critique the technocratic rationality of cognitive psychology but demonstrates that the philosophy of science which supports this enterprise is itself a variant of the received view of logical empiricism. Moreover, this methodology, while providing cognitive psychology with a "neutral" and "objective" basis, already presupposes what cognitive psychology has purportedly discovered, namely the "privileged status of the analytic observer." On Evans's account there are two circularities in cognitive psychology: "the greater circularity of first defining science in terms of one's psychological theory and then claiming that this science is an *independent* source of verification for one's theory, and the 'lesser circle' of designing experiments that artifactually produce the behavior they are supposed to discover" (99).

Evans's critique proceeds from an internal and methodological analysis of particular programs in cognitive psychology to the broader social and historical problems inherent in the attempts to discipline the body and make it adaptable to a world in which it is required to become part of an administrative society and live within the real of new information technologies. What makes this analysis so compelling is its completeness. While there have been multiple critiques of cognitive psychology and cognitive science more generally that argue against its inherent disciplinary functions, few critics have tackled the literature from inside as well. It is these sections of the book that are most dense and perhaps less interesting for the non-psychologist. Evans chose several theorists from cognitive psychology, most notably Johnson-Laird, and shows how, on their own arguments, their cognitive systems simply do not allow one to understand either the simplest of sentences or the operations of metaphors in everyday discursive practices.

In short, Evans argues that the widespread acceptance of the computer model of mind is due to three factors: the prevalence of analytic discourse, the hegemony of a technocratic rationality fostered by a technocratic elite, and cognitivism's intrinsic Nietzschean notion of the passive nihilism of the "last man."

Cognitive psychologists should read this book, if only to understand their own failures. Nevertheless cognitive psychology is not a monolithic

enterprise — it too consists of competing voices attempting to scramble to the top of the pyramid that is scientific prestige. Evans is aware of this of course but his choice of examples are already severely dated. This in no way diminishes the power of his argument for by simple extrapolation, much of what he says about Johnson-Laird is still relevant and true for present-day cognitivists. Nevertheless, because of the fluidity of key notions in cognitive psychology (e.g., representation, cognition, consciousness) what is accepted one year has been turned over the next. For example, in response to various critiques of what John Haugeland has now termed “Good Old Fashioned Artificial Intelligence,” psychologists have not only turned to connectionism (or parallel distributed processing models) but have argued that perhaps the mind is not encapsulated and disembodied after all. Instead, mind is seen as a form of activity and meaning is understood as a form of “situated action” (Bem & Keijzer, 1993). Apparently, recognizing body and world simultaneously has led some to believe that cognitive psychology can be given a new lease on life, even if that lease comes with the attempt to import into cognitivism what it cannot, on a strict computational account, support. In this sense then, Evans’s book is both dated yet, at the same time, it will no doubt be a crucial work in the literature which has been critical of the cognitive enterprise and to which a few cognitivists have responded.

Whereas the timeliness of the examples do not detract from the argument, what does is Evans’s conflation of the pretense of cognitive psychology to be a technocratic rationality with its limited achievements. What has and will change us is our immersion in an information society, driven by rapid changes in knowledge networks and the continual eradication of boundaries between the academy and the world of the corporation. Cognitivism champions this movement and on this count Evans is correct to argue that it adheres to a technocratic rationality. But when cognitivism fails in, for instance, capturing accurately the cognitive processes of workers, administrators, the public, and so on, the world’s technocrats do not stand by and admire the marvels of cognitive models of mind. Indeed, cognitive psychology must continually adapt to the world of informatics in order to succeed. Evans is too quick to identify cognitive psychology with this technocratic landscape rather than understanding it as a response. He might have been more nuanced or perhaps asked a more reflexive question. Cognitive psychologists, like many social scientists attempting to make it in the marketplace of ideas, must continually fight a rearguard as well as a promotional battle. With critics like Evans and Dreyfus (1993) nipping at their heels, the cognitivists are forever adjusting their theories to counter the worst of their academic enemies. At the same time, they must gloss over their worst problems to sell their wares. When they face the world (and their world can include non-cognitivist colleagues in the academy, granting agencies, publishers, and so on) as spokespersons, they present a unified and powerful science. This is the one Evans saw and has

rightly critiqued. On his own account of genealogical psychology, the wave of discourse (cognitivism) “carries the risk of dissolution into ‘Babel’” but is also “part of the community’s diachronic movement toward unity” and “embodies nihilistic or oracular tendencies” (209). This much, at least, counts for cognitive psychology as well as his own genealogical psychology. By crediting cognitive psychology with more influence than it might possibly have, Evans was able to motivate a powerful critique. The critique itself however dictates that he be less impressed with the status of this self-proclaimed science.

Finally, not all cognitive models have been solely or simply influenced by the analogy of the computer or the impressive logic of the Turing machine. As Gigerenzer has noted, psychology in the US has frequently relied on an implicit “tools-to-theories heuristic” (e.g., Gigerenzer et al., 1989). By this he means that the development of some new techniques and tools which have their origins outside psychology are converted into theories of cognition once they have become familiar objects or analytic strategies. Although the computer is one familiar case of this heuristic, other cognitive models in psychology have been cobbled together out of modern developments in statistics. Once these statistics became familiar as a tool for analyzing experimental results they were institutionalized and became, after a time, a model for rationality itself in, for example, various theories of perception, judgment, and decision-making. Although Evans would be correct if he were to claim (as I am assuming he would) that these theories also adhere to a technocratic rationality, their attraction for psychologists is not a function of any computational logic they might have but is the outcome precisely of the already familiar statistical models which support these theories.

Like other critics who hail from the discipline itself and have adopted a Bakhtinian alternative (e.g., Shotter, 1993), Evans reminds us that entire traditions for understanding people in their everyday worlds (as opposed to predicting their activities in special institutional circumstances) have been neglected in our psychologies. In reminding us, he revives the possibility of recovering these traditions for our own discursive positions, for entering into conversations with those who have tried to find a place for psychology outside the realm of a strictly natural science model. By showing us how such a psychology might be conducted, Evans breaks through the nihilism which still holds the mainstream of psychology in thrall. Such a careful work deserves a careful reading.

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From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth Century Thought

KARL LÖWITH

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Originally published in 1941 in German under the title, *Von Hegel bis Nietzsche*, this is a reissue of the 1964 translation of what is probably Löwith's greatest work. Added to this reissue is a foreword by "an old friend and colleague of Karl Löwith" (1989-1973), Hans-Georg Gadamer.¹ What is missing in this reprint — and for whatever reason, it is struck out of the 1964 issue as well — is the author's own dedication of his book to the memory of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). That omission is regrettable, not least because Löwith's dedication calls to mind that both he and Husserl had been effectively excluded from any meaningful participation in German affairs, academic and otherwise (both of them were Jewish). Such was the political landscape in which this book was written, and for which it was in part written to explain.²

The (missing) dedication also has a way of calling to mind the Heidegger connection: I mean Heidegger's betrayal of Husserl; his historicist phenomenology over against Husserl's decidedly ahistoricist approach (even in the late *Crisis of European Sciences* 1935); the profound influence that

Heidegger exercised on the young Karl Löwith; Löwith's gradual but final abandonment of historicism, Heideggerian or otherwise; and, finally, some of the harsh things that Löwith later had to say about the "eschatology" of his one-time mentor and associate. In view of the controversy that has surrounded Heidegger's connection with Nazism, and about what significance this connection, however brief, should have for the interpretation of his philosophy as a whole, the writings of Löwith (especially this one) warrant that much more attention. Anyway, these were the unhappy events, political and philosophical, which must have surely influenced Löwith's reading of the intellectual history of the nineteenth century. In fact, he goes out of his way to say as much in the 1939 "Preface": "[T]he tree may be known only by its fruits, the father by his son. The twentieth century has clarified and made explicable the actual events of the nineteenth" (xvi).

What is this tree? Who is this father? Which events were those? What is this book, which touches on many topics, *basically* about?³ It is held together by this one question. What relation obtains between *being* and *time*? Or roughly, when will the "fully real," i.e., what is of utmost significance, appear? Today or tomorrow? Löwith marshals the profoundly different answers to this one question, starting with Hegel's and ending with Nietzsche's. Today, according to Hegel, for whom history has come to an end. Tomorrow, according to the "Young Hegelians". Today, according to Kierkegaard (hence his notion of the "moment"). And today, according to Nietzsche (with his notion of the "eternal return"). There is yet another way to answer this question. This is Goethe's answer, and it is the answer that Löwith appropriates as his own. The answer is neither "today" nor "tomorrow," but "always." The question of "what is," so far as it is asked with the expectation that the answer is to be found somewhere in the workings of history itself, is for Goethe simply the wrong question to ask.

The "parousia," according to Goethe (and Löwith) has always been with us. Goethe's poetic and scientific reverence for the here-and-now, for the concreteness of things, down to the last detail, predisposed him to see at work in history not the "cunning of reason" but, rather, an intricate web of so many natural forces and accidents.⁴ In a letter to Schiller (1802), in reference to the supposedly great deeds of Napoleon, he writes: "What one can observe on the whole is a tremendous view of streams and rivers which, with natural necessity, rush together from many heights and valleys; at last they cause the overflowing of a great river and an inundation in which both perish, those who foresaw it and those who had no inkling of it. In this tremendous empirical process you see nothing but nature and nothing of that which we philosophers would so much like to call freedom."⁵ Goethe was not taken up with the question of "world history," because precisely in the root sense of that word, he *was* a "historian." In the Greek, Löwith notes, "*historein* means 'to inquire after something', or 'to investigate something', and by

report and description to give information about what has been inquired after and investigated." "Ever since Hegel," he goes on to say, "world history, in contrast to *historia*, seems to be precisely what one has *not* seen and experienced, inquired after and investigated for himself" (213).

What, then, about Goethe's contemporary, Hegel? And *why* do they differ so profoundly over the question of "what is"? As Löwith explains, the answer goes something like this: "What is," according to Hegel, is revealed not as an emanation of visible reality but, rather, as the history of the world and as spirit. Accordingly, the classical notions of chance and fate, and the importance of the role of the everyday details of human affairs, are all but marginalized.⁶ As Hegel understands history, the early deaths of Alexander and Caesar, or the length of Cleopatra's nose are merely fortuitous things that have exercised no decisive influence upon the final outcome of history. This marginalization, if not dismissal, of the role that the concrete and the contingent *incontestably* play in the course of history is in fact, says Löwith, a symptom of a "pseudotheological schematization of history . . . it does not correspond at all to visible reality" (219). Herein lay the superiority of Goethe's insight into "what is," according to Löwith. The question of the whence and the whereto of history did not trouble him. Unlike Hegel, he was a "genuine pagan." His way of seeing the world around him was not bound to an eschatology and hence, according to Löwith, to a *Christian* horizon. That he stood outside this horizon, and that he did so without having *to try to*, made Goethe an exception among thinkers in the nineteenth century (and maybe this century, too). As Gadamer puts it in the "Foreword," Löwith's own "plea for nature allowed him to share in Goethe's dissatisfaction with history — and that concerned particularly the history of salvation, as his famous book, *Meaning in History* [1949], makes clear" (xii).

It is Goethe, then, who comes across as the hero of the book (in the first of the two parts at any rate). But in the end, things are not so clear. In the end, he plays a more ambivalent role. In fact, in the second part (entitled "The History of the Bourgeois-Christian World") he almost drops out of the story. This is a key problem for the reader who would like to know just where the author takes his final stand, in this work as well as in the later work, *Meaning in History*. This change of his status in the text may be the result of a structural flaw, but it is more likely a reflection of Löwith's own indecision as to which road he would have us travel. The one road, of course, is Goethe's. The other, apparently, is the road of Christianity, or something like it. In the second part, and especially in the closing pages, the author does write from a theological perspective. The last line of the book could have been written by one of the early "inventors" of history, Augustine himself: "For how should the Christian pilgrimage *in hoc saeculo* ever become homeless in the land where it has never been at home?"

Which road, then, does Löwith wish to travel? Of classicism or Christianity? Of fate or providence? Of scepticism or faith? It might be suggested that these two heritages can be brought together to forge an alliance, albeit an uneasy one. But *philosophically*, at least according to Löwith, the prospect of such an alliance is highly doubtful. The fact that Hegel's system held together for so brief a time testifies to how doubtful just such a project really is. And *culturally* the desirable thing to do would be to leave every last trace of Christianity behind. At least that appears to be the position that Löwith takes in his comparison of Goethe's *amor fati* to Nietzsche's.

"True to the earth" that he so wanted to be, Nietzsche still required a superhuman effort to love and will his fate. And how very un-pagan of him. His *amor fati* — an affirmation of the *nunc stans* — was for him still the "hardest to bear."⁷ In other words, he remained unsettled by his own conclusion, namely, that the only lesson which history teaches is to "be hard." Try as he did, then, Nietzsche still fell short of transcending a concept of time on which historicism, and nihilism, is founded. "Of course" history manifests no meaning. But the fact that the very thought of this should have even troubled Nietzsche, according to Löwith, reveals that, in spite of his own *contra Christianos*, he was still marked by a Christian conscience. In spite of himself, Nietzsche still philosophized within the framework of eschatological thinking, if only because he philosophized *against* it.

Not so with Goethe, who, says Löwith, had neither the wish to reconcile classicism with Christianity, as did Hegel, nor even the need to oppose it against Christianity, as did Nietzsche. Goethe was the "more genuine pagan;" his "god," unlike Nietzsche's, "had no need to oppose the other, because by his positive nature he was disinclined to any such denial" (179). It is for this reason that Löwith ranks Goethe's *amor fati* above Nietzsche's. Fair enough — but given this, should not Löwith himself, in spite of his own occasional lapses into theology, *look forward* to a post-Christian world? After all, in such a world, in a "genuinely pagan world," would not the misguided question about the "ground of history," about measuring "what is" in reference to history, cease to be of cultural significance?

Can a culture's *idée fixe*, in this case of historicism, be deconstructed merely by tracing its origin and genealogy? Might not the application of the method of discrediting an idea, in this case the idea of historicism, by way of a study of the "history of ideas" — a method that Löwith himself applies — be itself fundamentally historicist in spirit? At any rate, is it possible to "un-reinvent" the invention of the idea of historicism? Is it possible to do this even if its theological source — the "tree" or the "father," as Löwith might say — has since become a thing of the past? Moreover, what would *crowd out* this deepest prejudice of all: the idea that history is the measure of all

things, the standard of worth, or the lack of it, of every speech, decision, revelation, deed, headline, footnote, book, and review?

Löwith would have us return to nature. But what is *that*? Nature as manifested to us (and certainly to Nietzsche) as that which no longer culturally reveals itself as a mysterious and recurring order, or as the "primary phenomena," as it revealed itself to Goethe, and perhaps, for that matter, to the Greeks? What we see, self-consciously, is rather "nature" in inverted commas, a product of our own "pressing upon becoming the character of being." Nature is "nature" according to the "world-view" of a given society or individual (e.g., according to Aristotle, Newton, Goethe, the industrialists, Darwin, the Druids, and latter day tree-huggers). That is how we seem to *look at* the way we look at "nature." Perhaps there is good reason to renounce history as the measure of all things, and to opt instead for nature. But then in what spirit should we speak about the possibility of such a cultural change of heart? As a change of our "commitment," say, to a more "greener" *world-view*? Any well-intentioned call for a change of a "world-view," or "paradigm," or belief structure," or what have you, surely runs the risk of philosophical insincerity. To talk about the need to foster an ahistoricist and naturalist *world-view* is hardly to outflank historicism. On the contrary, the very use of the vocabulary of "world-views" simply reintroduces historicism by the back door.

One final question: Should Löwith, rather than lament the rise of bourgeois existence (as he does in the second part of his book), not welcome such a way of life instead? Should he not, on his own grounds, endorse a political existence according to which the individual is *not* called upon to be a "unified whole?" This is not an unreasonable question to put to Löwith. After all, what has historically often been at the heart of eschatological thinking, and has propelled it to commit heroic but questionable deeds, is the *immoderate* hope for the elimination of the "inauthentic," "selfish," and "fragmented" existence of the individual, and for the reconciliation of the individual and the citizen.

To fine-tune the point, let me say [1993] something about the most recent and much derided eschatologist, Francis Fukuyama (*The End of History and the Last Man* [1992]). Fukuyama has come up with a best seller's claim that history with a big H has come to an end. (The claim is especially remarkable for those of us who were not told beforehand that it even began.) Now that history has been consummated, he goes on to say (and this is the part for those who like their sermons dark) there has emerged, alas, the "last man." Of course, this is in obvious reference to Nietzsche's "last man" who is, among other things, that flabby, complacent, and liberal creature. That is Fukuyama's story. But perhaps his story should be told the other way around, and like this: To the extent that a culture is willing to make allowances for bourgeois existence, it is the very *idea* of history with a big H that comes to an end. It

is the "triumph" of bourgeois existence, and the belief that everyone has a right to be "inauthentic," that help disarm the view that history has some particular place to go. Whether bourgeois existence is something to be desired, this, one hopes, is something we can decide for ourselves, individually. But as for Löwith, perhaps he *should* desire it.

Notes

- 1 For a better account of his one-time fellow student and colleague, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Apprenticeships*, trans. Robert R. Sullivan, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1985, p. 169-75.
- 2 The "Preface" is dated 1939. Löwith was at that time teaching in Japan, and then, with Japan's entry into the war, he taught in the United States. The book was originally published in Zurich (Europa Verlag, 1941), but was not, I suspect, issued in Germany at that time, let alone "originally published in Germany," as the title-page of the 1991 reprint indicates.
- 3 There are a number of quite different perspectives that one can take on this text, and of course mine is not the only one. I refer the reader to a sample of perceptive readings of Löwith's text: Hanna Hafkesbrink in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 1941-42, p. 257-59; Leo Strauss in his work, *What is Political Philosophy and Other Studies*, Illinois, Free Press, 1959, p. 268-70; George Lichtheim, "The German Ideology," in *The New Statesman*, April 23, 1965, p. 648-650 (a critique of Löwith's conservatism); and Berthold P. Riesterer, *Karl Löwith's View of History: A Critical Appraisal of Historicism*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1969, Chapter III.
- 4 There seems to be some similarity between Goethe's ahistoricist view of history and Tolstoy's "naturalistic-fatalistic" view of history. See Isaiah Berlin's analysis of Tolstoy's understanding of history in his *The Hedgehog and the Fox, an Essay on Tolstoy's View of History*, New York, Mentor Books, 1957.
- 5 Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications in the Philosophy of history*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1949, p. 53.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 220-22.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 145.

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