what Western philosophers who speak English refer to as truths, that is, beliefs, assertions, claims, propositions, and the like? But a careful study of that whole history may discover that there is only a continuity of translation and not a single and immutable element to which all can be reduced in some respect. All that being said, I strongly recommend a careful reading of Lynch’s book. I think his theory is true and I think he thinks that as well, yet these two thoughts may not amount to the same thing. Fortunately, according to his theory, that need not spell trouble.

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*Poetics of Imagining: Modern to Post-modern*
RICHARD KEARNEY

From the letters of Kabbalah to the art of Andy Warhol, images have continued to play a central role in human life. Communications technology has made the image even more powerful as a tool for communication and interpretation. This increase in power makes it increasingly imperative to develop ethical criteria for the imagination. Richard Kearney’s philosophy is a response to that imperative.

Kearney has provided a new and revised edition of *Poetics of Imagining*, published originally by Harper Collins (1991) and Routledge (1993). The new edition features an additional chapter on Heidegger and an epilogue on narrative and ethics. The Heidegger chapter, largely a development of an appendix in Kearney’s *The Wake of Imagination* (1988), provides an analysis of Heidegger’s work as “an indispensable step in the development of continental theories of imagination” (preface). The epilogue incorporates new developments in Kearney’s thought concerning the “ethical challenge” faced by postmodern philosophy, in the light of feminist theory and the philosophy of Emmanuel Lévinas. Overall, the book expands on a project adumbrated in *The Wake of Imagination* and traces the developing role of the imagination in philosophy from pre-modern through modern to postmodern times. *Poetics of Imagining* offers a detailed account of the final stage of this development. (The other stages are already developed in *The Wake of Imagination* and *Poetics of Modernity* [1995]).

Kearney describes poetics as “an exploration of the human powers to make a world in which we may poetically dwell” (8-9). In particular, poetics is concerned with the power to imagine new ways of understanding self and world. Kearney finds traces of poetics in two divergent branches of
phenomenology. The first branch, beginning with Husserl and ending with Heidegger and Sartre, gives priority to consciousness as the original source for meaning. Though the imagination is given priority as a power to determine new meaning, it remains within the power of consciousness, or in the case of Sartre’s philosophy, is identical to it. The second, more critical, branch of phenomenology stresses an independence of the image from consciousness. Such images as oneiric images (Bachelard), works of art (Merleau-Ponty) and narratives (Ricoeur) follow a logic of their own that is not imposed on them by consciousness. These images are used by consciousness to make sense of itself and its world. This allows for the possibility that images reveal to consciousness something new about itself or the way that it interprets reality. Rather than mirroring an original intention, the poetic image opens consciousness to novel possibilities of interpretation and critique.

The critical moment of the poetic imagination is reduced to a play of signifiers in postmodern philosophy. Most notably in the writings of Barthes, Baudrillard, Lyotard and others, the image has become so independent of consciousness, that it ceases to offer any criticism. Reduced to a mere copy in a game of imitation, the postmodern image at best distracts us from ethics, and at worst eliminates ethics altogether. But in the concluding chapter, “Vive l’imagination!,” Kearney assures us that ethics is still possible. Accountability and critique can be restored if the imagination assumes the three forms of utopic, testimonial, and empathic critique. The first form, borrowed from Ricoeur, promotes the dissemination of poetic images and utopic dreams as alternative possibilities for existence (226-7). The second form of critique involves a restriction on poetics so that it will continue to distinguish between fact and fiction, between what was actually committed and revisionist history. By taking note of testimonies and real-life narratives, individuals are able to remember past wrongs and live up to promises in the future (228-30; see also Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy, ed. Richard Kearney and Mark Dooly [1999]). Finally, borrowing from Lévinas, Kristeva and others, Kearney claims that the imagination must allow for the Other to be seen as “otherwise” (233) than the image, as a real presence that haunts the image and escapes representation. Kearney argues that we respond to the Other by means of empathy and respect. Combined, the three forms of critique allow the postmodern imagination to remain alive as a response to the ethical imperative.

In the new epilogue, Kearney brings together the three kinds of critique into a single “ethical challenge” for the postmodern imagination. In particular, Kearney stresses the role of testimony that forces individuals to respond to the Other. Kearney explains: “By recounting the story of one’s life in response to the other’s question — who are you? — the narrative self constitutes itself as a perduring identity over time, capable of sustaining commitments and
pledges to the other than self” (247). Not only must the subject face up to its own testimony of errors; it must also must listen to the testimony of the Other, being affected by the Other’s story in empathy and love. Drawing from Kristeva and Nussbaum, Kearney suggests an ethics of empathy and compassion to combat the current postmodern ethics of disinterested play.

*Poetics of Imagining* is a rich resource for the philosophy of imagination and postmodern philosophy. It also provides an excellent summary of Kearney’s philosophy in general. Kearney admits that the book in its present form is a “tentative work in progress towards a resolution that will — given the enigmatic and unfathomable nature of imagining — never be reached” (preface). The book, for instance, provides only an outline of ethics, and remains silent on matters such as political justice and the body. But the book is a model of the imagination at work, exposing itself to correction and remaining open to the Other. *Poetics of Imagining* brilliantly combines the thought of Kearney into a single volume, making it essential reading for postmodern ethics and cultural studies.

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*The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*
JÜRGEN HABERMAS
Eds. Ciaran Cronin and Pablo De Greiff

In this collection of essays written after 1992’s *Between Facts and Norms*, Jürgen Habermas identifies himself with the neo-Kantian universalist faction of Anglo-American political philosophy. This orientation must constantly be recalled in light of the fact that his explicit aim is to set forth a system in which otherness and diversity are preserved against the unifying mechanisms of Rawlsian and communitarian democracies. Such a project would seem to align closely with contemporary continental philosophy’s attempt to think difference and otherness without reducing them to unity. Yet, by situating himself within the Anglo-American tradition, excluding the philosophy of difference, and conceiving otherness under the rubric of a universal system, Habermas privileges the unity and universality that he claims to challenge.

Habermas argues that his discursive proceduralism, unlike other Anglo-American political systems, contains the tools for incorporating multiculturalism and pluralism within a universalistic system. Yet, he does not