

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