on overall media content, i.e., "the avoidance of 'controversial' subjects, banal program formats, stereotyping of audience segements, {and} ownership concentration in media industries." The authors also point to "the reduction in rationál appeals" and the increasing use of "persuasive" communication techniques in marketing, politics, corporate "image-building," and other domains of public discourse.

These are all significant issues concerning advertising and democracy. Unfortunately, however, Leiss, Kline and Jhally offer few suggestions about "what is to be done," and frequently reproduce industry legitimating discourses about advertising, while neglecting to document and criticize the massive amounts of wealth squandered every year on commercial advertising. They also avoid some of the more radical critiques of advertising of Adorno, Horkheimer, Baudrillard, and others, and generally present a liberal, Social Democratic perspective on advertising (though Jhally adopts a rather orthodox Marxian theoretical approach in his own book, he avoids taking any distinct political stance toward advertising and the consumer society). Although the authors of SCA quite correctly "suggest that it is time to change the focus of attention from advertising practice to the set of institutional relationships through which advertising is tied to the social issues that concern us most," they do not adequately develop this insight and suggest what institutional relationships must be examined and changed.

Admittedly, this is a difficult task and one that necessarily involves radical proposals. But, given the thoroughness of the analysis presented and its insightful integration of advertising practice into the historically developing institutional context, it is disappointing to find so few suggestions. Twelve pages of conclusion simply does not do justice to the importance of the topic and issues.Yet both *Social Communication in Advertising* and *Codes of Advertising,* offer a wealth of insights into modern advertising practice and the diverse and dispersed literature that surrounds this most controversial institution. They are, therefore, essential texts for anyone involved in critical media studies and contain aspects essential for developing critical theories of contemporary capitalist societies.

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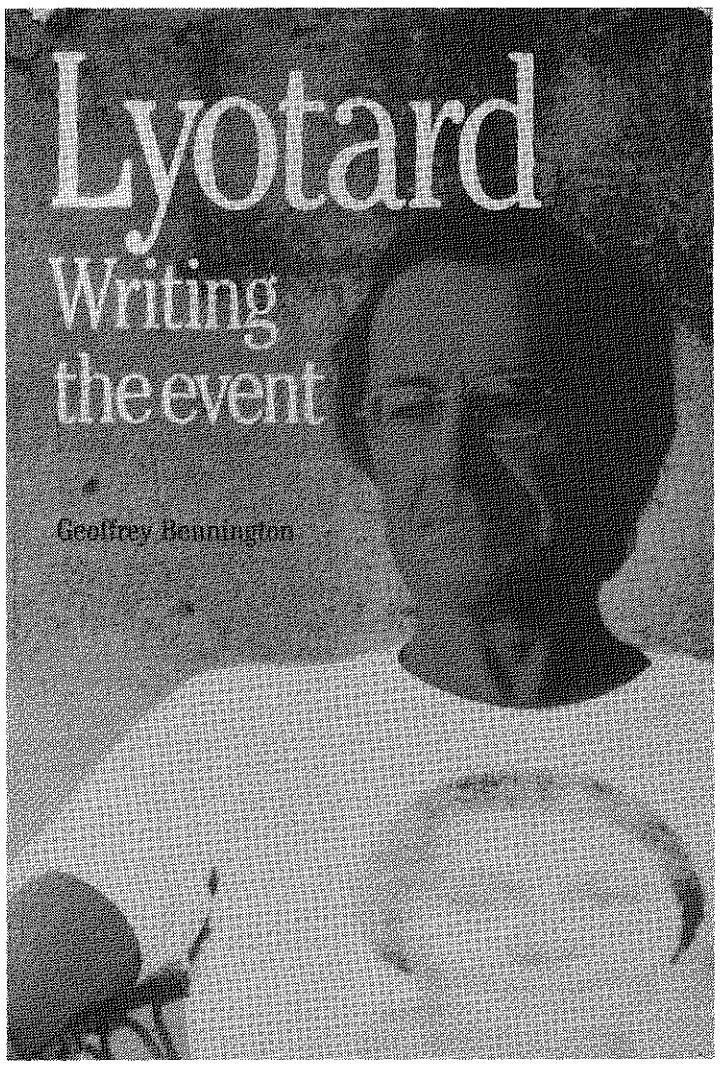

Lyotard, Writing the event
by **Geoffrey Bennington**
New York: Columbia University Press, 1988

Peregrinations: Law, Form, Event
by **Jean-François Lyotard**
New York: Columbia University Press, 1988

Lyotard - photo by Gianfranco Baruchello

As a translator of major poststructuralist works into English, Geoffrey Bennington is perhaps best known for his joint translation (with Brian Massumi) of Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*; one might equally know Bennington from his partial translations of Lyotard and critical articles in such academic journals as *Paragraph* and *The Oxford Literary Review,* among others. As Bennington remarks in the opening lines of *Lyotard, Writing the event,* "Lyotard is without question best known in the English-speaking world as the author of *The Postmodern Condition.*" And inasmuch as something called the English-speaking world "knows" Lyotard through his notorious *Report,* it cannot be said to know him very well, a situation to some extent rectified by Bennington's book.

What makes Lyotard's *œuvre* so difficult to re-present and reduce to the requirements of an introduction (theoretical summary, academic rigour, dividing and conquering the text along various lines) is simply that it is a collection of events: it resists the introduction *qua* narration which conserves, anticipates and maintains the main arguments.

Lyotard, Writing the event "introduces" three of Lyotard's major philosophical works: *Libidinal Economy* (1974), *Discourse, figure* (1971), and *Le Différend* (1984), in that order. Clearly, we are not given a historical survey of Lyotard's long career in politics and philosophy, nor does Bennington for a moment believe that he has presented Lyotard's works without lacunae, even important ones.

The major virtue of *Lyotard, Writing the event* is that it takes us along the central but not well-trodden pathways of what Lyotard has called his "real" books in a way which is modest, careful and at times meticulous (especially with respect to the section on *Le Différend*), and it does so with attention to Lyotard's other writings, including the *Report.* Bennington, then, will undoubtedly find an appreciative audience in those who are poised to enter (or have already entered and found themselves wandering unattended) the world of poststructuralism and the growth industry of Lyotard's studies.

I have spent some time with the "introduction" for several reasons. It is one thing to be aware of the limits and problems of introductions in general, but another less straightforward matter to entertain the idea that the writing subjected to an introduction resists and possibly eludes just that sort of attempt to domesticate it. While I have the slippery *Libidinal Economy* in mind here, the concern expressed also pertains to authors other than Lyotard.

The introduction is a sort of prosthetic device that helps the reader stand up before texts which are disabling and alienating; it is like a cane, an artificial limb and even an implant, depending upon the degree to which one relies on it to support

one's understanding of a certain author. The introduction is at odds with a kind of writing which is tumultuous, a writing which barely acknowledges that it has readers. For instance, with respect to *Libidinal Economy*, Lyotard remarks that even its rare readers disliked it, adding "thank God there were few."

The problem is not that such writing is incondensable, thus precluding any sort of synoptic approach. The question is whether or not an introduction can address the matter of its cutting against the grain of the texts which its treats while gathering and communicating their so-called "tenets", "contentions", etc. To extend the text is to engage in a mimetic libidinal writing, an anti-theoretical, discursive form of following along the mobile cathectic intensities as they have their run of a voluminous libidinal skin.

But what other choice does the author of an introduction have? One cannot rely on partial translations. After all, we should not complain too loudly, too quickly about the way in which Bennington unravels and questions the centres of power of *Libidinal Economy*: the paradoxical (immobile and spinning) bar of disjunction (an imaginary object) engenders the indescribable libidinal band, from which the bar is also derived; the libidinal band is neither an object of desire nor even an object, neither a lost referent like Jean Baudrillard's "symbolic exchange" nor an ontological ground.

While Bennington has us think of the bar of disjunction in terms of what separates the inside from the outside or the subject from the object, we might also think of it in terms of the signifier/signified relation. When Lyotard sends his bar on its way spinning and buzzing like a mad hummingbird, it no longer disjoins or, to use other words, everything flows together over the band which is nothing less than the flow of largely anonymous libidinal impulses. Lyotard is in one sense getting off a joke at the expense of Jacques Lacan with the spinning bar. A bar that doesn't maintain differences allows all of the algorithms which Lacan constructed out of the sign's bar of difference to collapse into an undifferentiated heap.

Bennington thinks that the libidinal band is "too ontological" and "inevitably proclaimed as good, as lost." Despite these criticisms, Bennington has a reclamation project in mind: save *Libidinal Economy* from its own drift. Thus, we read: "much of what is advanced in that book can be saved from itself. The base project of the book, that of describing and situating *dispositifs* [set-ups], and that of seeking out the possibility of *singularities* and *events*, is never repudiated by Lyotard, and is in his view fundamental to the task of philosophy." Lyotard's "evil book" (his own admission) is saved by the event.

In the second essay of *Peregrinations*, "Touches," Lyotard calls "an event the face to face with nothingness." "Actual events," those kernels of nothingness, are often hidden under everyday occurrences, wrapped in pre-texts of what Lyotard calls "what they happen to be." Events are singular occurrences, they just happen, as it were: *that* they happen is more basic than *what* has happened. Sensitivity and attentiveness to an event is likened to Paul Cézanne's reception of what he called the "small sensations" before Montagne Saint Victoire and Immanuel Kant's reflective judgement, insofar as one must respond to a case without recourse to a criterion under which the case may be subsumed: "in order to take on this attitude you have to impoverish your mind, clean it out as much as possible, so that you make it incapable of anticipating the meaning... the secret... lies in the power to be able to endure occurrences as 'directly' as possible." The recipe for this hybrid philosophical attitude is complicated: a little bit of phenomenology, some Kant, a word from Freud about how to listen to the discourse of the patient, the brushstrokes of *Mont Sainte-Victoire*...

In treating the event as the "fundamental drive in all Lyotard's work" and finding in *Discourse, figure* explicit confirmation of that drive, Bennington describes the book as "something of a collection of events." Although Bennington admits that his approach to *Discourse, figure* is "severely selective," it is also a struggle for coherence against the figure which disrupts discourse with the *violence of an event*, thereby foiling any attempt to introduce it by keeping it at arm's length, as one might keep an "object" of knowledge. As Bennington follows along and explains some of the ways in which Lyotard deconstructs the opposition between discourse (reading, surface, signification, opposition) and figure (seeing, depth, *sens*, difference) it is made evident that discourse also inhabits and disrupts the space of the figure. For instance, Bennington's detailed treatment of "Le travail du rêve ne pense pas" (The dream-work does not think), an essay in *Discourse, figure* which quotes Freud's description of the final process of the dream-work, secondary revision, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, brings out well what is at stake in the "originary *complication* of discourse and figure." Lyotard's assault on Lacan's reading of the unconscious on the model of language points to the insistence of discourse in figure and *vice versa* in Freud that Lacan could not see because of his desire to find the operations of language in the dream-work. Lacan, then, overlooked the elementary import of figurability.

For all of the trouble that *Discourse, figure* caused him, Bennington's treatment of it exhibits a healthy tension between the habit of an academic orthodoxy and the need to comport oneself in such a way as to receive the events which are the text.

Might we take *Peregrinations* to be an introduction which does not entail an imbroglio? No. *Peregrinations* is barely a book and only an introduction in the most feeble sense of the word (although it is advertised as an "ideal introduction"), which is to say that it is the record of three short oral addresses given as The Wellek Library Lectures at the University of California, Irvine, and a translation of an essay from 1982, "Pierre Souyri: Le Marxisme qui n'a pas fini."

Lyotard's Wellek Lectures — "Clouds," "Touches," and "Gaps" — are anamneses of his work which concern the passage of thoughts (clouds) which are not our own as well as our attempts to enter into them as we peregrinate with them: "Imagine the sky as a desert full of innumerable cumulus clouds slipping by and metamorphosing themselves, and into whose flood your thinking can or rather must fall and make contact with this or that unexpected aspect." To touch is to make "loving contact" with what a cloud of thought brings forth and in the flash of that accedence develop one's own signature, as Cézanne before the Montagne Sainte Victoire. The gap between two phrases or sentences is the condition, says Lyotard, of the appearance of a phrase through which the gap may be grasped (being ungraspable in itself). The gap is the site in which phrases of different regimes (ostensives, prescriptives, etc.) are linked together by different genres (philosophy, science, etc.).

The addresses in *Peregrinations* are highly metaphorical and personal and as such stand in stark contrast to *Lyotard, Writing the event*. The essay concerning Lyotard's *différend* with Pierre Souyri, however, while intensely personal and reflective, articulates the theme which Lyotard develops in *Le Différend*, although in that latter work it is presented in an analytical manner perfused with quasi-legal terminology.

In *Le Différend*, Lyotard explains that "as opposed to a litigation, a *différend* would be a case of conflict between two parties (at least) which could not equitably be decided for lack of a rule of judgement applicable to both argumentations." Imagine that a stretch of wilderness is being defended by an ecophilosopher against a developer. The plaintiff, presenting the case for preservation, appears before a panel of scientists, lawyers, civil servants, etc. During the presentation of the case it becomes clear that the plaintiff cannot provide the sort of evidence which the panelists wish to hear.

Why is this the case? The argument for preservation is based on regard for natural beauty, the wonder of non-human being, and the injurious effects of having non-human being which one identifies with (to the point of encompassing it into a concept of self) razed by the bulldozers of the developer. The panelists ask for hard data: evidence of the negative impact of development on certain habitats, the costs of such losses, tangible benefits of non-development, etc. The plaintiff cannot give herself over to the language of the panel because in so doing she adopts the very terms of reference which one wishes to overcome; yet, in not adopting that language, the panel treats the case as mere poetry, mysticism or worse. The plaintiff has no way to state the case and suffers a wrong which, as Lyotard defines it, is "a damage accompanied by the loss of the means to prove the damage." And there is more. The victim of the *différend* attempts to explain to the panel that she has been wronged. The panel replies: yes, such has happened, but it was not a wrong because you bear witness to it before us; or no, no such thing has occurred, you have no evi-

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Like our ecophilosopher, Lyotard found that the *différend* with his friend and comrade Souyri over the ability of Marxism to provide a revolutionary critique of the contemporary world and orient intervention in that world forced him into a "sentence universe" (every sentence presents the four poles of sender, addressee, referent and meaning) in which he could only give up his position: "[Marxism] thus presented itself not as one party in a suit, but as the judge, as the science in possession of objectivity, thereby placing the other in the position of stupor or stupidity in which I found myself... a point of view... incapable of making itself understood, unless it borrowed the dominant idiom — that is, unless it betrayed itself." Still, this *différend* revealed to Lyotard "what in Marxism cannot be objected to": there is one of several incommensurable discourses which seeks to transcribe all the others. That discourse is "capital, bureaucracy" and it is not enough to philosophize about it because "one must also destroy it." But even this admission does not make the *différend* demonstrable. However, it is out of such cruel silence that new idioms emerge, those which enable *différends* to be expressed. It is the task of philosophy and politics to find such idioms.

The main lines of argument in *Le Différend* yield easily to Bennington's introductory "summary and critique," showing themselves as aspects of a "philosophy of sentences," although even such close attention to them in no way reaches the depths of Lyotard's text, running and roaming as it does through the history of philosophy from little known Greek rhetors to modern revisionist historians. Bennington compensates by producing abundant quotations and "quotations" between quotations (from Lyotard and others) marked by a stationary bar of difference. What is more, two "patchworks" consisting of several pages of quotations (primarily from Lyotard) link the book's chapters like textual cartilage perforated by libidinal runs to nowhere in particular.

Le Différend begins with an "ironic summary," as Bennington puts it, entitled "Fiche de Lecture" which, Lyotard muses, "allow[s] the reader to 'talk about the book', if the fantasy so takes him, without having read it." Bennington offers his book as an act of resistance against "its commercial *raison d'être*" as a sort of "Modern Masters" introduction-summary which gains one time in examination rooms and at cocktail parties by enabling one to speak, as Lyotard put it, without having read the books under discussion. Even this review, twice removed from Lyotard's "real books," might gain one some time in a chat about Bennington's book, in which case it stands as a degenerate source of knowledge about Lyotard.

The very fact of Bennington's book, however, despite his assurances, aggravates the question of the relation between the introducer and the introduced. And that discomfort is entirely appropriate.

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Ciencia propia y colonialismo intelectual. Nuevos Rumbos.
by **Orlando Fals Borda**
Bogota, Colombia: Carlos Valencia, editores, 1988.

Science and Intellectual Colonialism. New Directions, is the most recent edition of a volume published for the first time in 1970, and again in 1973, both times with several printings. The book is a collection of essays written by Orlando Fals Borda, a Colombian historical sociologist who has had an intense, long-term involvement with *campesinos* in rural areas of his own country, and whose work is known internationally.

In this volume, the author presents reflections on his earlier work, as well as his current views on sociological issues that, although pertaining primarily to social research in Latin America, also constitute a challenge for social scientists elsewhere. When the book first appeared, it was received as a radical rejection of Euro-American social thought by the Latin American community of scholars. In this light, it is interesting to note that the work has not been translated into other languages, nor (to the best of my knowledge) has it been published elsewhere. The title translation is my own, and might perhaps be more faithful to the original if it read "independent" or "autonomous" science and intellectual colonialism.

Fals Borda's prestige has grown throughout Latin America for his original contribution to a new perspective in sociology, which can be paralleled to that of Anthony Giddens (*New Rules of Sociological Method*), while arising in very different sociopolitical contexts, an important fact indeed. Fals Borda's thought was born in the midst of various developmentalist schools that have dominated Latin American sociological inquiry. This fact underscores his importance as theorist and practitioner on the continent, and has recently earned him further recognition in the position of President of the Latin American Council for Adult Education (CEAAL). While some researchers might claim that Fals Borda is on the "Border/lines" of social science, others obviously recognize his place in the leadership of an alternative sociology of/for Latin America. This is one of the reasons why this selection of his work seems so appropriate as an introduction to his thinking. Indeed, it would provide excellent translation material.

The essays are organized into three parts. The first, "Crisis and Compromise," consists of six works dating from 1969 to 1970. This section refers to two important historical events within which the role of science and technology in development was called to question. These were, initially, the IX International Congress of rural sociology in Enschede, followed by the IX Congress of Latin American Sociology held in Mexico City in 1969. In these encounters a diagnosis was made of the sociological crisis in the region and the need for new approaches in the social sciences clearly identified. This process of reflection gave rise to the initial challenge to the collective "sociological imagination" of researchers, to find new, innovative solutions to longstanding, pervasive sociological problems.

The second part of the book, "Reflections of Transition," consists of two essays dated 1972 and 1974, in which the author looks back to the first publication of his work and reflects upon the changes that have already become apparent within the human sciences, over the ten years since the first edition appeared. One of these changes is the possibility of questioning both "objectivity" and "neutrality" on the part of social researchers in general another is the recognition of the political value of social research. Starting from this rather liberating stance, Fals Borda urges fellow social scientists to move in the direction of a unification - or synthesis - of research and agency. That is to say, given the recognition of the political dimension of research activities, it is now possible for research agents to consciously steer their work towards serving the broadest of interests.

The third part, "Lived experience and knowledge," is composed of four essays, written from 1980 to 1987. They constitute a reflection about the meaning and the position of science within society, with an emphasis on the production of knowledge and the relationship between knowledge and power. In a Foucauldian fashion, politics and epistemology are brought together to explain the birth of participatory action research, a new integrative method proposed by this author, amidst the renewed awakening of social movements throughout the world. The connection between the production of knowledge and its uses seems more clearly identified within these movements.

As indicated above, the work encompasses the development of the author's