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Review Of "The Limits Of Pragmatism" By C. G. Prado

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what would be the possibilities of a feminism that appropriates the Foucaultian notion of discourse or Wittig's view of language as a material reality. In my view, that position would understand discourse as a *site* in which institutional power gains its articulation and legitimacy. A woman-centered feminist philosophy might well prove less desirable than one that decenters that very category, exposing the power-relations that constitute and reify categories of identity in order to conceal and legitimate their own operation.

Andrea Nye's text is an erudite and compelling work that will engage philosophers familiar with feminist theory and those who would like to become familiar. Her knowledge of the philosophy of language across the continental divide is impressive, detailed, and politically focussed. This is a work that deserves serious attention.

Judith Butler

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C. G. Prado

The Limits of Pragmatism.

Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press
1989. Pp. ix+191.

US\$ 39.95 (cloth: ISBN 0-391-03455-3);

US\$ 15.00 (paper: ISBN 0-391-03456-1).

The Limits of Pragmatism is a lucid, patient, and somewhat academic description and assessment of Richard Rorty's particular version of pragmatism, as it has been articulated principally in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* and *Consequences of Pragmatism*. Prado's description of this version of pragmatism rightly centers on Rorty's rejection of Platonic correspondism, the view that truths are sentences or thoughts that accurately reflect piecemeal facts. According to Rorty, the rejection of Platonic correspondism, based on arguments elaborated notably by Davidson, Gadamer, Wittgenstein, and Dewey, among others, further entails the rejection of all theorizing about truth and all philosophical, non-innocuous versions of realism. Truth is established consensually, and the real things there are are whatever things we ordinarily talk about rather than philosophically in-

vented atoms or facts or forms or substances. As a result, philosophy's pretensions to have master access to the nature of reality are deflated. Philosophy has no special subject matter, and there is no special, demarcatable kind of writing properly called philosophy. Irony and pervasive suspicion of claims to metaphysical and moral expertise are appropriate attitudes to adopt toward texts of putative high seriousness.

Prado accepts Rorty's rejection of Platonic correspondism, but he is concerned to resist the further conclusions Rorty draws from this rejection. In order to sustain these further conclusions, Prado argues, Rorty would have to show (1) that Platonic correspondism underlies all philosophy, (2) that Platonic correspondism does not underlie our ordinary uses of 'true', and (3) that Platonic correspondism is incoherent. Against Rorty, Prado notes that Davidson has elaborated a systematic metaphysics that does not depend on Platonic correspondism, so that (1) is false. As Davidson has further shown, a non-Platonic, non-piecemeal version of correspondism underlies our ordinary uses of 'true', for we do sometimes rightly wonder whether the claims to which we consent in fact capture how things are. Science, in particular, has built into its procedures for achieving transconsensual validation by introducing new and better theories that are grounded in replicable experiments. Contrary to what Rorty's position requires, philosophy is not readily demarcatable and clearly epiphenomenal in relation to the rest of culture. Rorty's root mistake is to have conflated epistemic foundationalism and the demand for certainty, which ought to be rejected, with all versions of realism and objectivism, where minimal versions of these doctrines can be defended. Since 'we are unwilling to equate the dismantling of Platonic correspondism with the destruction of the very idea of truth as determined by the world' (82), and since 'it makes sense to wonder if our beliefs are true independently of intralinguistic considerations' (81), 'Davidson seems to emerge the hero of the piece' (78), and systematic philosophy can go on seeking 'retrospective objectivity' (viii) in his style.

As view about possible metaphysical stances, these conclusions are well elaborated and sound. It is less clear, however, that they deflate Rorty's wider claims about the role of philosophy in culture. First, if the kind of objectivity that is attainable is always retrospective, then it seems right to attack the pretensions of philosophy to guide inquiries and activities. Second, while Prado rightly criticizes Rorty's misbegotten demarcation of philosophy from the rest of culture, he

fails to see that it is equally difficult so to demarcate science and to hold that its results are grounded in the natures of things. It is true that the scientific theories we accept must survive testing by replicable experiments. But why do we choose to construct some artificial experimental situations rather than others, and what assurance do we have that our particular fairly narrow range of experimentations gets more than some fairly narrow range of reality right? It is unclear, Rorty might well argue, that whatever validity science thus achieves is significantly transconsensual. Against Rorty, one might hope for philosophy still to court the transcendental so as to move beyond mere chat and consensual validity but also still to accept the ordinary as the real. (Stanley Cavell's recent efforts to marry Emersonian transcendentalism to ordinary language philosophy in a kind of critical activity move in this direction.) But this sort of response to Rorty, moving beyond the dominant self-images of philosophy and science, is one that Prado does not take up.

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Andy F. Sanders
*Michael Polanyi's Post-Critical
Epistemology.*
Amsterdam: Rodopi 1988. Pp iv+295.
US \$45.00. ISBN 90-6203-000-0.

Michael Polanyi's thought has had, at best, a shadowy influence within contemporary analytical philosophy. The reasons for the minimal attention are not hard to locate. Because Polanyi only turned to philosophy at age 55 after a distinguished career as a physical chemist and (secondarily) a social scientist, his explication of philosophical points is loosely related to the prevailing philosophical discourse. His terminology is idiosyncratic. But most damning of all, his central claim that all knowing involves a personal component was made at a time when philosophers of science were still seeking to establish an objective foundation for knowledge.

In the years since the publication of Polanyi's *magnum opus*, *Personal Knowledge* (1958), the philosophical world has slowly come around to embrace many of Polanyi's claims. Yet his thought has not yet generally been accorded the respect it is due. Andy F. Sanders' fine book indicates that the period of neglect among analytical philosophers is finally coming to an end. Sanders provides a service to Polanyi scholars by the way he clarifies Polanyi's thought and reformulates his jargon so that engagement with the broader philosophical community is encouraged. But analytical thinkers are equally well served, for now the power of the Polanyian perspective is made accessible to them.

Because Polanyi has a tendency to use such terms as 'logic' and 'demonstration' in a loose, informal way, Sanders concentrates on tightening up Polanyi's arguments concerning epistemology. His special concern is to defend the cogency of Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing. In his first four chapters, Sanders focuses on Polanyi's understanding of belief, assertion, truth, and reality. He shows that Polanyi's thought tends to work in a 'mind to words' direction. Personal knowledge is to be understood as an example of what Grice calls utterer's meaning. Word and sentence meaning are not seen as independent fields; a full analysis of personal knowledge shows word and sentence meaning to be dependent on utterer's meaning.

Perhaps the most illuminating interpretative ploy used by Sanders is his correlation of the tacit dimension with Searle's exposition of illocutionary force and intentionality. One parallel he suggests is this: 'There is a relation of representation between intentional states and the entities, if there are any, represented by them. It is the same relation, I suggest, which holds between the various elements of the tacit component and the content of the sentence to which they are attached' (63). Unfortunately, the parallelism seems to break down because Sanders claims that Searle understands the entities towards which intentional states are directed as being 'ordinary objects in the world,' a relationship of denotation, whereas Polanyian tacit components are *integrated* to form the *meaning* of a sentence, a relationship (insofar as the linguistic particulars are concerned) of connotation.

More helpful is the correlation of the tacit component with Searle's notion of the Background of Intentional Networks (174). The Background consists of fundamental stances, attitudes, and capacities which are not representational or intentional in character but which provide the enabling conditions for the operation of intentional states.