

has not experienced the association in experience' Also, two of the headings from Figure 7.2 (228) have inexplicably found their way onto the bottom of p. 227. More annoying still is the meagre index, which is not quite three pages in length. Dewey there appears under the alias 'Dewey' in the entry for externalism, and T.H. Huxley, though he is quoted on p. 69, does not appear at all.

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James Robert Goetsch, Jr.

Vico's Axioms: the Geometry of the Human World.

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1995.

Pp. xiv + 173.

US\$25.00. ISBN 0-300-06272-9.

James Goetsch's *Vico's Axioms* is an attempt to rearticulate the basic frames in which Vico's work can be understood. The primary goal of the book is to make sense of Vico's often obtuse style and apparent contradictions, something that many commentators have explained away rather than openly dealt with. Goetsch contends that Vico is consistent, and that his writings are well-organized, but only if he is approached through the eyes of a classical humanist.

Vico was clearly not a Cartesian thinker; there are few people who claim that he was. But Goetsch's argument goes further. He claims that, while accepting Vico's attack on the Cartesian method, most commentators do not realize that they are nonetheless reading Vico with Cartesian expectations. These expectations include a particular way of ordering and justifying knowledge, a particular relationship to the past and a particular style of writing. Rather than understanding Vico as a sometimes confusing writer, Goetsch argues that it is necessary to understand the organization of Vico's writing as a heroic narrative seeking to recover the past.

Goetsch covers many of the common themes in Vico's work, such as the sterility of the Cartesian world-view, the importance of the maker's knowledge of the things that are made, the irreducible tension between reason and feeling, and the importance of rhetoric and human community for Vico's account of science. These themes are connected back to Vico's general image of knowledge, which exists within a combination of medieval epistemology and Vico's recovery of earlier (and the first) thinkers.

One of the things that Vico recovers is Aristotle — not the Aristotle of the Schoolmen, but one who embraced 'all the faculties of reasoning', and the interplay of reason and emotion in discourse (77, 79). This reconstruction of Aristotle connects to Vico's account of the new science, which must deal with the complete person and not simply a disconnected and sterilized part.

In the end, Vico comes off as a typical (by medieval standards), if worthy humanist thinker facing an increasingly Cartesian world. He is one who uses medieval memory systems such as emblem books to characterize human knowledge. Goetsch connects this conclusion to the claim that 'Vico's axioms ultimately structure a geometry of melancholy' (xiv), by which he means that on Vico's account, the richness of wisdom 'slowly runs down and bleaches itself bare-bones white' (138). Even while recognizing the sterility of the Cartesian concept, its eventual dominance is seen as inevitable and, as Goetsch notes, 'to become a partisan of nostalgia is self-defeating' (138). At best, it is still possible to strike a balance between reason and feeling, between reflection and sense. But this can only happen in a heroic recapturing of a lost history.

Vico's Axioms exists well within the current literature on Vico and early modern humanism. Perhaps this is true to a fault. The book, which is barely 100 pages, has too many long quotes, often from contemporary secondary sources. In the end, however, one wonders what Goetsch himself has to offer the reader, except an organized recollection of things that have already been said. At the same time, given Vico's own approach to knowledge as memory and reconstruction, this strategy may be intentional. However, the books that Goetsch draws upon are not that old.

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Explaining an Eclipse:

Aristotle's Posterior Analytics 2.1-10.

Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1996.

Pp. ix + 170.

US\$37.50. ISBN 0-472-10596-5.

Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* is perhaps the most demanding and frustrating treatise in the extant *corpus* of the Stagirite's works. The principal difficulty is its epigraphic quality. Sometimes a mere phrase stands elliptically for a huge theoretical construct. There are hardly any examples to illustrate this construct. Ordinary words are given various technical senses and little