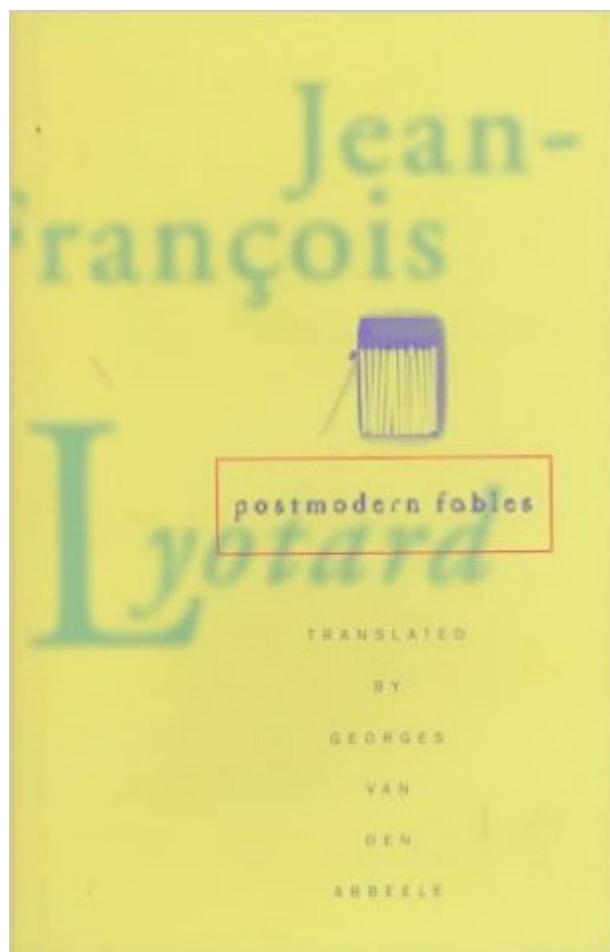


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Postmodern Fables



Synopsis

This latest offering from one of the founding figures of postmodernism is a collection of fifteen "fables" that ask, in the words of Jean-Francois Lyotard, "how to live, and why?" Here, Lyotard provides a mixture of anarchistic irreverence and sober philosophical reflection on a wide range of topics with attention to issues of justice and ethics, aesthetics and judgment. Acerbic, critical, relentlessly ironic, continually burning bridges and burning rubber, always high risk and always in high gear, Postmodern Fables throws down the gauntlet to any and all who idealize comfort. In sections titled "Verbiages", "System Fantasies", and "Concealments", Lyotard unravels and reconfigures idealist notions of subjects as various and fascinating as the French Revolution, the Holocaust, the reception of French theory in the Anglo-American world, the events of May 1968, the Gulf War, academic travelers as intellectual tourists, the collapse of communism, and his own work in the context of others'. An exciting addition to the oeuvre of this major thinker, Postmodern Fables is a series of self-reflective and intellectually daring essays that speaks to the contemporary American reader in thought-provoking and undoubtedly controversial ways.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jean-FranÃ§ois Lyotard (1924-1998) was a French philosopher, sociologist, and literary theorist, best known as a pioneer of Postmodernism. He was co-founder of the International College of Philosophy with Jacques Derrida, FranÃ§ois ChÃ¢telet, and Gilles Deleuze. He also wrote Post-modern Explained for Children: Correspondence, 1982-85, The Lyotard Reader, etc. He wrote

in the Preface to this 1993 book, "Today, life is fast. It vaporizes morals. Futility suits the postmodern, for words as well as things. But that doesn't keep us from asking questions: how to live, and why? The answers are deferred. As they always are, of course. But this time, there is a semblance of knowing: that life is going every which way. But do we know this? We represent it to ourselves rather. Every which way of life is flaunted, exhibited, enjoyed for the love of variety. The moral of all morals would be that of 'aesthetic' pleasure. Here, then, are fifteen notes on postmodern aestheticization. And against it! You're not done living because you chalk it up to artifice." He states, "God, man, is dissolved through the effects of criticism. The negation at work within question and argument turns back on itself. Nihilism cannot remain an object for thought or a theme, it affects the dialectical mode that was the nerve of philosophical discourse. Nothingness requires its inscription by thought not as a product of its critical argument but as a style of its reflexive writing..."

Jean-François Lyotard (1924-1998) was a French philosopher, sociologist, and literary theorist, best known as a pioneer of Postmodernism. He was co-founder of the International College of Philosophy with Jacques Derrida, François Châtelet, and Gilles Deleuze. He also wrote Post-modern Explained for Children: Correspondence, 1982-85, The Lyotard Reader, etc. The Preface to the French edition of this book explains, "We have collected some letters by the author that take up the issue of postmodernity. Obtaining [Lyotard's] consent to their publication was not without its difficulties. We argued that it could help to clear him of certain accusations... his main objection was the naïf naïveté of these texts addressed to children; that, if they were published, their deceptive, pedagogical clarity would do nothing to life the quality of a controversy that was already confused enough. And, he added, he was too far from being clear about the question himself to venture a pronouncement on a hazy intuition." The translator explains in his Foreword, "In these pages Lyotard approaches the postmodern as a way of maintaining the possibility of thought 'happening'---in philosophy, art, literature, and politics; of thought proceeding when it has lost faith in its capacity to repair the crimes of the past by guiding the present toward the end of the realization of ideas... the promise of the French title to 'explain to children' ... is surely ironic and not to be taken literally."

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