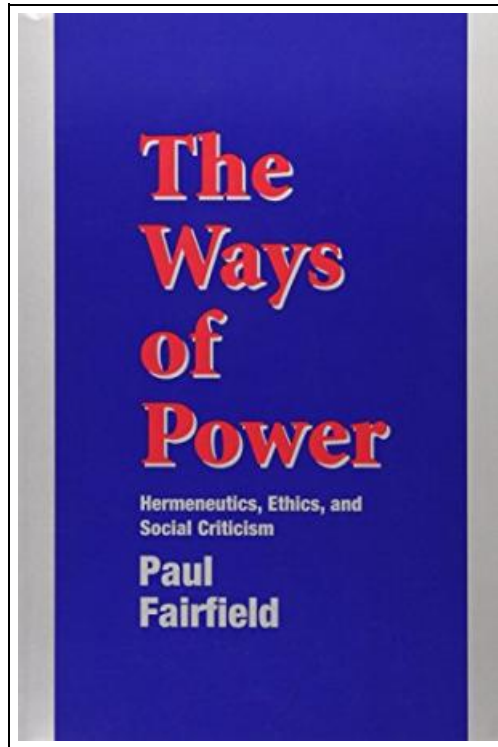


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THE WAYS OF POWER: HERMENEUTICS, ETHICS AND SOCIAL CRITICISM (PAPERBACK)

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Duquesne University Press, United States, 2004. Paperback. Condition: New. Revised ed.. Language: English . Brand New Book. he Ways of Power advances a hermeneutical conception of ethics, one oriented particularly toward questions of power and the critique of power in the aftermath of foundationalism. Bringing into mutual interrogation such disparate traditions as hermeneutics, liberalism, critical theory and postmodernism, and such figures as Gadamer, Ricoeur, Habermas, Foucault, Nietzsche, and Aristotle, Fairfield argues that the principal question of ethics is no longer how to ground practices and judgments on a secure epistemological foundation. Rather, what is of importance is how normative discourses rooted in tradition and invested with power may adopt a critical posture toward these same conditions without generating an impossible circularity. Fairfield asserts that the practice of social criticism is ultimately inseparable from that of hermeneutic interpretation; critique is a matter of perceiving and understanding contexts of moral action in light of principles. In taking this view, Fairfield defends hermeneutics in particular, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics against the charge leveled at it by critical theorists in particular, Jurgen Habermas that hermeneutical philosophy's emphasis on historicity and finitude demonstrates an absence of critical perspective in reflecting upon tradition and the power operative within tradition. With this objection in mind, Fairfield embarks upon his project to formulate a hermeneutical ethics. Ethical criticism, he maintains, belongs to the universal practice that is the struggle for illumination and self-understanding, a practice ubiquitous in human existence and central to the task of fashioning a just order. The Ways of Power is unique in bringing together a myriad of philosophical voices and perspectives, not to continue a quest for moral certainty and objective grounds which is so often sought in contemporary society, but which Fairfield insists must be given up but to take seriously the...

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