Dead in America

Jacques Derrida, *Without Alibi*, edited, translated and with an introduction by Peggy Kamuf, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2002. 304 pp., £37.95 hb., £17.95 pb., 0 8047 4400 6 hb., 0 8047 4411 4 pb.

There is a mordant untimeliness to this new collection of translations of Derrida's occasional pieces. The dateline of Kamuf's introduction is June 2001, yet Derrida's themes, especially those of sovereignty, cruelty and resistance, the structure of the lie and the aporias of self-deception glow with the *Nachtraglichkeit* of the event, as Derrida might put it, of September of that year. Kamuf's own prefatory remarks share this oracular quality: '"United States" is the effective or practical name for the theologico-political myth we call sovereignty: it names the conjunction of forces sufficient, for the moment, to enforce the myth of its own absolute, if theologically buttressed sovereignty'. Subsequent events in Afghanistan and elsewhere have cashed out that myth as real. But Derrida's reflections on sovereignty aim constantly at the aporetic, at the impossibility that is the ground of the 'event worthy of the name'. 'Only the impossible can arrive', he says as he criticizes the idea of the performative which would merely repeat. 'If what arrives belongs to the horizon of the possible, or even of a possible performance … it does not happen in the full sense of the word.' This thought is a return to his earlier *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, where he says 'Without the ordeal of the aporetic there would only be programs or causalities … and no decision would ever take place.' However, having invoked the spectre of a sovereign decision here, a few pages later he revokes it: 'To those who are waiting for me to take a position so they can reach a decision [*arrêter leur jugement*], I say "Good luck."' The call for a deconstruction of sovereignty is accompanied by the persistence of its phantasm, and the phantasm may well be the only being of sovereignty as such. A certain frustration and disappointment are never far away.

The book itself, in keeping with its insistent Ur-Derridean motifs of divisibility, non-originality and non-self-identity, is a composite, heteroclite and heterochronic object, whose editorial production was prompted by the 'strong continuities' that Kamuf noted in the first four essays whilst she was translating '*Le Parjure*'. Derrida himself suggested the addition of the piece on psychoanalysis. The joint responsibility for the final text leads to a certain literary uxoriousness, as Derrida hymns Kamuf's selection and engagement: 'She … reads me better, down to the unconscious, than I will ever read myself.' In so reading him, she produces 'the book of an American thinker about the United States'. Greater love hath no philosopher than he should lay down his book for his translator.

The final product comprises, first, 'History of the Lie' from 1994, a piece given to a conference commemorating Reiner Schurmann's death, at the New School in New York. Derrida takes issue here with Arendt's notion of the lie and the possibility of self-deception, and in doing so settles scores with accusations that he (and others) had failed to insist on the responsibility of the French state for complicity in the Holocaust. This is followed by 'Typewriter Ribbon', from 1998, which engages once more with Augustine, Rousseau and de Man, and with issues of confession and mechanical reproduction. Both these pieces have been published in other collections. Then we have '*Le Parjure*', a reading of the novel of the same name by Henri Thomas, which concerns the apparent perjury of a Belgian theoretician domiciled (illegally, it transpires) in the USA, and clearly collides with the history of the 'De Man affair' (indeed, Derrida implies that it was de Man who suggested he read the novel). Here Derrida again proves to be a consummate reader, developing the literary figure of *anacoluthon* into a discussion of complicity and betrayal. 'The University without Condition' is a defence of a 'right to say everything', 'an unconditional independence' thought against the idea of sovereignty and against a certain '*mondialisation*', developed in an address at Stanford in 1999. The university is the public space of 'a principle of resistance … a force of resistance – and of dissidence'. Finally, in 'Psychoanalysis Searches the States of its Soul: The Impossible Beyond of a Sovereign Cruelty (Address to the States General of Psychoanalysis)', an address to the eponymous convocation at the Sorbonne in 2000, Derrida returns again to questions he limned in 'To Speculate – on Freud' in *The Postcard: From Socrates to Freud*, posing the possibility of a 'beyond of the beyond' of

the pleasure principle, a beyond of the death drive, which would link to the idea, inchoately developed in Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, of a drive to sovereign mastery. But it is also a critique of the performativity of sovereignty, a critique that repeats the deconstruction of the constative/performative duality set out in 'Typewriter Ribbon'. This address is echoed in the introductory 'Provocation' where Derrida approvingly cites Kamuf's claim that 'the essential trait of this book … [is] the trait of sovereignty'. There is thus a certain insistence, a certain repetition of figures, tropes and problematics, as Derrida might say, and a return once more to psychoanalysis, a recurrent locus of investigation in Derrida's work.

If the juddering repetition of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* provides, on Derrida's reading, a mimesis of the very repetition compulsion it seeks to identify, then the repetitive circling of certain notions – sovereignty and violence, resistance and responsibility – provide the perimeter and parameters of Derrida's political thinking from his reflections on Benjamin and the law in *Force of Law* to the pieces here. The return to psychoanalysis privileges just that text that Derrida has shown to be privileged within Freud's *œuvre – Beyond the Pleasure Principle* – inasmuch as it is the site of the emergence of the death drive, the drive that unbinds. In *Resistances* Derrida brought analysis close to deconstruction, showing how the archaeological principle (ana-) was always doomed to failure and that lysis, or rather the philolytic principle, invariably opposed any pretension to origin or indivisibility. The death drive is close to the formal principle of deconstruction: 'If, in an absurd hypothesis, there were … a sole thesis of Deconstruction, it would pose divisibility: divisibility as difference.' In *Archive Fever*, the death drive is the foundation of the archive: the critique of Lacan hinges on the divisibility of the letter, but also on the rereading of Lacan's reading of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Indeed, as early as 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', Freud's 'economy of death' is almost analogous to *différance*: not quite deconstruction as psychoanalysis, but perhaps the death drive as psychoanalysis homologous with deconstruction.

But psychoanalysis 'as such does not produce or procure any ethics, any law any politics' (an offhand dismissal of a whole Lacanian problematic). It undermines the sovereignty of the subject and must be taken into account, but can never provide a programme. The thought here is that psychoanalysis as positive knowledge insists on abolishing the space of heterogeneity, the space of decision: its undermining of sovereignty, of notions of the free, self-identical subject, always threatens to reinscribe what remains after this undermining into 'an economy of the possible', thus reducing 'ethics, even law and politics to this economy'. The subject is reclaimed for a different mastery, the drive for mastery (*Bemächtigungstrieb*). Derrida hesitates here on the source of violence, vacillating between aggression as the consequence of the redirection of the death drive, as in the discussion of *Why War?*, Freud's exchange of letters with Einstein, and aggression as a function of the more primordial drive for mastery, which he associates with a will to domination and with the performative power that institutes 'the whole order of what Lacan calls the symbolic'. The death drive thus drifts towards a principle of 'benign' negativity, whilst the performative dimension underlain by the *Bemächtigungstrieb* becomes the principle of iterative possibility, hence the closure of a certain impossibility, which functions as the place of the ethical, heterogeneity and decision. Eros and Thanatos become the pillars of the constative knowledge of psychoanalysis; the Mastery drive is the underpinning of the performative institution; and separated from each by a constitutive hiatus lies the 'free responsibility that can never be deduced from a single act of knowledge'.

If the sovereignty of the subject is dissolved by psychoanalysis (by the unbinding of the death drive), then its deconstruction has compromising effects for 'the axiomatics of responsibility'. If the model of the auto-determining intentionality of the conscious subject is no longer apposite, then 'the most stable foundations of morality, law and politics' are compromised, especially the particulars of human rights. These consequences are equally traumatic at the level of the nation-state, the specular other of the subject. In this case, Derrida speaks of 'deconstruction and combat at one level' and 'support' at another. Sovereignty can be resistance. This dual difficulty requires a different problematic, that of divided or limited sovereignty, but this immediately runs into the difficulty that sovereignty is undivided or it is not, not to speak of the operation of *force majeure* justified on the grounds of the limited sovereignty of the victim. The attempted solution, the division of the division itself 'a frontier limit divides only by partitioning, sharing itself: it is shared only by dividing itself', seems singularly opaque. In the essay on the university, Derrida is more prudent: 'An immense problem. How can one dissociate democracy from citizenship, from the nation state and from the theological idea of sovereignty, even from the sovereignty of the people?' It links this with an interrogation of juridical performatives,

among which we must include the notion of rights and novel concepts 'transformative of the geopolitical field' such as 'crimes against humanity'. Insistently, Derrida claims the necessity for the deconstruction of unconditional sovereignty 'the heritage of a barely secularized theology', even as he acknowledges that in its most visible case its value 'is everywhere today in thorough decomposition', and with it the concepts of subject, citizen, freedom, responsibility, the people, and so on.

Sovereignty is founded on violence and claims the right of violence against those over whom it exercises power. The metonym for this is the death penalty, and suddenly Derrida brings his two sets of concerns together in a startling provocation: in the USA, we have a power that is inflexible in regard to national sovereignty and maintains the death penalty, whereas the states of Europe have abolished the death penalty and have begun to question the nation-state, putting it into an 'unprecedented crisis'. But it is the hidden enthymeme which is truly scandalous: the Europe that has begun its slow solvent work on ideas of national sovereignty, perhaps moving beyond its constitutive cruelty, is marked as the 'birthplace of psychoanalysis', whereas 'Freud is dead in America', as Roudinesco says. Is psychoanalysis then necessary? Is it the key to the death of sovereignty at the level of the state?

It is an unanswered question, like many raised by the thought in these essays. Always moving on, always elsewhere, Derrida always has an alibi for not saying what he wants to say: 'it would take too long', 'for lack of time', 'I hasten to my conclusion in a … telegraphic fashion'. It is reminiscent of the Lacan of the seminars. Perhaps Derrida needs now to settle accounts with psychoanalysis, to do the justice to Freud for which he commends and criticizes Foucault.

Philip Derbyshire

Quiet despair

Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2002. xi + 328 pp., £18.95 hb., 0 691 10276 7.

This is a crepuscular book, written in a sombre mood. It offers a defence of two virtues which Williams associates with truth: namely, 'Sincerity' and 'Accuracy'. These virtues in Williams's opinion need to be defended against the raising tide of deniers within the context of humanities departments in universities. Williams's characterization of his opponents is not altogether clear. Initially, he writes that deniers are those who deny the importance or existence of truth or of other things usually associated with it that are standardly taken to be significant. However, this initial description cannot be exactly right since, as I show below and Williams himself acknowledges, it matters not to Williams's arguments if there is no property (minimal or robust) that is shared by all and only those beliefs, sentences or propositions that are true.

The real point of contention between Williams and those whom he calls 'deniers' does not concern truth; it concerns virtue. More precisely, the dispute is over which intellectual virtues must, in these troubled times, be cultivated in order to foster the kinds of institutions and communities conducive to the welfare of human beings. Williams does not make it explicit that this is the main aim of the book, but once the book is read in this manner it becomes apparent why the villain of the story, the main denier, is Richard Rorty. Williams believes that hope for a better future lies with the cultivation of some of the virtues of the scholar – patience with the facts and transparency in expressing one's views – together with an acute sense of the importance of historical understanding. Rorty has often emphasized the importance of a different set of character traits. He praises the liberal ironist who dismisses old vocabularies, especially the vocabulary of truth, in favour of new ones.

It would be unhelpful, however, to read the debate between Williams and Rorty as a disagreement as to whether we need to keep or ditch the word 'truth'. Williams's main argument, which takes the form of a vindicatory genealogy, attempts to establish that sincerity and accuracy are valuable for their own sake; which is to say, they are intrinsically valuable. And one can hold this view whilst denying the existence of (the property) truth. It might seem odd that one can without contradiction deny that there is such a thing as truth, and also attribute value to some dispositions

because their cultivation improves our chances of believing what is true and denying what is false. But there is no contradiction here; one can value getting things right (attempting to believe that *p* only if *p*) without believing that there is anything all accurate beliefs have in common. Williams is aware of this point. Hence, he claims that literally truth 'is not the sort of thing that can have a value'. Elsewhere, he also adds that he is only concerned with 'certain human attitudes toward the truth'. And, whatever truth might be for Williams, it is not constituted by our attitudes. Thinking that something is true does not make it so.

Williams does believe that truth is a robust property, a property with a metaphysical nature which does explanatory philosophical work. For instance, he thinks that it helps in the articulation of a philosophical account of meaning and belief. However, in this book Williams does not really explain or defend these views, presumably because his main thesis is quite independent of them. Thus, Williams's disagreement with Rorty, at least as presented in this book, cannot be understood as being centred around the question of whether truth exists. One also hopes that it is not simply about whether we ought to use the word 'truth', since, if it were, the disagreement could easily become rather empty. This is why I think the debate is best read as one about which virtues we should care about and foster, in education, for example.

Incidentally, on the matter of education Williams's attack seems to me to be off-target. He describes our times as 'a season when, in the humanities the sun is low in the sky'. Williams thinks that the cause of the decline of the humanities in universities is the growing influence within academic circles of the views of deniers, like Rorty or so-called postmodernist lit-crit types. He thinks that these views have pernicious effects because they undermine the authority of ideas, and, by failing to acknowledge even the most basic everyday truths, contribute to the alienation of the humanities from the rest of society.

It seems very unlikely that these phenomena lie at the root of the problem. First, the so-called rest of society seems to be more attracted to the outlandish views of individuals who fit the category of deniers than to the opinions of the methodical pursuers of common sense – witness the presence of one of Baudrillard's books in *Matrix Reloaded*. Second, as exemplified by the recent pronouncements by the British Minister of Education about public funding of academia, the main current threat to the humanities comes from utilitarian conceptions of education, which measure the value of teaching almost exclusively in terms of the material wealth it contributes to producing. This is clearly not something that Rorty or other deniers advocate.

As mentioned above, the argumentative core of the book is constituted by a vindicatory genealogy of the virtues of sincerity and accuracy. Yet these are not the only intellectual virtues whose cultivation makes us better at getting things right. Humility would seem to be as important. Without it we might fail to be aware that, no matter how careful we have been, our point of view could always be mistaken. In particular, intellectual humility is required if we are to make sense of viewpoints very different from our own, since in order to understand them one must find it at least conceivable that one's own views are mistaken. It is surprising that Williams never mentions this virtue despite his concern with making sense of lives very different from our own.

Besides his far-too-narrow characterization of the intellectual virtues, Williams's employment of genealogical accounts to vindicate them is also unusual. He takes such accounts to be exemplified by classic social contract arguments like Locke's. These arguments are philosophical thought experiments which involve imagining a fictitious state of nature. The point of these arguments, Williams suggests, is to show that, because of their instrumental value, some dispositions, institutions, or social practices are nearly necessary for any human society to develop and flourish. A genealogical argument is also judged vindicatory if those who accept it do not find that their confidence in the value of the dispositions, practices and institutions in question is thereby undermined.

This is an unusual take on the method of genealogy, since Williams is not primarily concerned with historical accounts of the development of concepts, institutions or virtues. He does supplement his state of nature arguments for sincerity and accuracy with historical accounts of how sincerity was transformed in the eighteenth century into authenticity and of how the nature of accuracy changed with the development of an objective conception of the past. But these historical excursions do not bear the real weight of Williams's argument, which rests on the shoulders of the abstract state of nature thought experiment.

In a nutshell, Williams claims that any group of human beings whatsoever needs to pool information, and that this is best achieved by a division of epistemic labour. In turn, this phenomenon requires that individuals foster in themselves and in others the dispositions to be accurate and sincere. These dispositions are essential if we are to trust what others tell us, because if they lack sincerity they are likely to mislead

us, and if they are inaccurate they are unlikely to have reliable information to offer. Consequently, sincerity and accuracy are at the very least instrumentally valuable. Williams concedes that even deniers would agree with him on this point. But he thinks that they do not follow him in claiming further that these virtues are intrinsically valuable. As a consequence he believes that their position is inherently unstable.

Williams's argument for the intrinsic value of the virtues of sincerity and accuracy takes a rather peculiar form. It is a story about how in any society, whose members already have the dispositions of sincerity and accuracy, prudentially rational indi-viduals will eventually come to believe that these traits of character are valuable for their own sake. The reason why this attitude will emerge is that it is instrumentally valuable for any society to believe that the virtues associated with truth are intrinsically valuable.

There is much that is of interest in this argument, although in my opinion it ultimately fails. The argument offers an example of how a naturalist, non-reductivist, account of normative facts could be produced. Williams writes that it is sufficient for something to *have* intrinsic value that it is necessary for basic human needs that human beings *treat* it as intrinsically valuable, and that they can *coherently believe* it to have this feature. In other words, if human beings find it necessary to believe that something is valuable for its own sake, and they can coherently sustain the belief that it is (given their other beliefs), then that thing *is* valuable for its own sake. It thus becomes apparent that Williams's genealogical arguments have a constructive purpose. They attempt to institute norms by establishing their validity in terms of two conditions: (1) the instrumental rationality of the belief that the norm exists, and (2) the ability of this belief to survive reflection.

Williams's argument for the intrinsic value of sincerity and accuracy does not, in my opinion, satisfy this second condition. Rather, the argument undermines our belief in the value of those virtues. Suppose that you do value sincerity and accuracy for their own sake. Suppose also that you believe Williams's argument that the reason why it makes sense to value these traits of character for their own sake is that it is expedient to believe that they are intrinsically valuable. It would then seem that your previous commitment to accuracy and sincerity would compel you to admit that you only have reasons to think that it is convenient to believe in the value of accuracy and sincerity, but that you have no further reason to think also that they actually *are* intrinsically valuable. Hence, the position advocated by Williams is inherently unstable: if you sincerely believe in sincerity, then you must stop believing in it once you accept Williams's constructive argument in its favour. In this respect, Williams does not seem to be in a much better position than his opponents.

Reading the final two chapters of the book one has the impression that Williams himself sensed that his vindication of the virtues of truth might be unstable. His genealogical arguments are meant to show that a commitment to sincerity and accuracy does not on reflection turn against itself to undermine the worthiness of those intellectual virtues. Yet Williams concludes the book on a strikingly pessimistic note, which would be out of place if he were confident of the success of his own genealogical arguments. Instead, he acknowledges that the 'hope that a truthful story on a large enough scale will not cause despair' is just that, a hope. Hence, he appears to fear that the virtues of truth might ultimately be among the victims of the epistemology of suspicion which they have themselves helped to create. Still, perhaps such quiet despair is more realistic than the brash optimism of the liberal ironist.

Alessandra Tanesini

Gilles or Noam?

Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, Palgrave Macmillan, London and New York, 2002. 274 pp., £45.00 hb., 1 4039 0036 1.

Inspired by what is arguably one of Deleuze's most enduring and illuminating notions, that of the problem, Lecercle's thesis is that language is simultaneously a privileged medium through which to reconstruct the originality of Deleuze's philosophical project and a manner of elucidating its internal fault lines and displacements. In the process of bolstering this thesis, Lecercle offers us something like the ideal-type of the commentary: a remarkably comprehensive and commendably lucid account of what he rightly calls Deleuze's 'part theories' of language, ranging from the thesis of the incorporeality of sense to the programme of a general semiotics in the collaborations with Guattari. Moreover, sensitive to the shifting motivations of Deleuze's philosophy, he demonstrates that the theme of language is arguably the crucial factor in assessing both Deleuze's complex relationship to structuralism and his possible contributions to a literary aesthetics (this last being the chief desideratum for Lecercle himself).

Interestingly, where Deleuze is characteristically allusive and often elliptical in his treatments of linguistic theories and literary texts, mining them for their formulas (Bartleby's 'I would prefer not to') rather than for their internal dynamics or cultural repercussions, Lecercle applies his considerable technical and terminological know-how to making the former's approach to language explicit. This is both one of the strengths of the book and something like a performative disavowal of its own basic platform. One is struck by the divergence in styles of thought between the commentator and his object. Lecercle's detailed treatment of the internal articulations and the myriad operators of linguistic usage – on show in particular in his clever 'interludes', where rigorous eclecticism replaces addenda to the Deleuzean corpus, or in his detailed reading of the *incipit* of the *Anti-Oedipus* – shows an ability to think inside sentences, to unfold the speculative content that permeates literary creativity, which, I would argue, is very much alien to Deleuze (and, incidentally, rather reminiscent of the essays of the American novelist W.H. Gass).

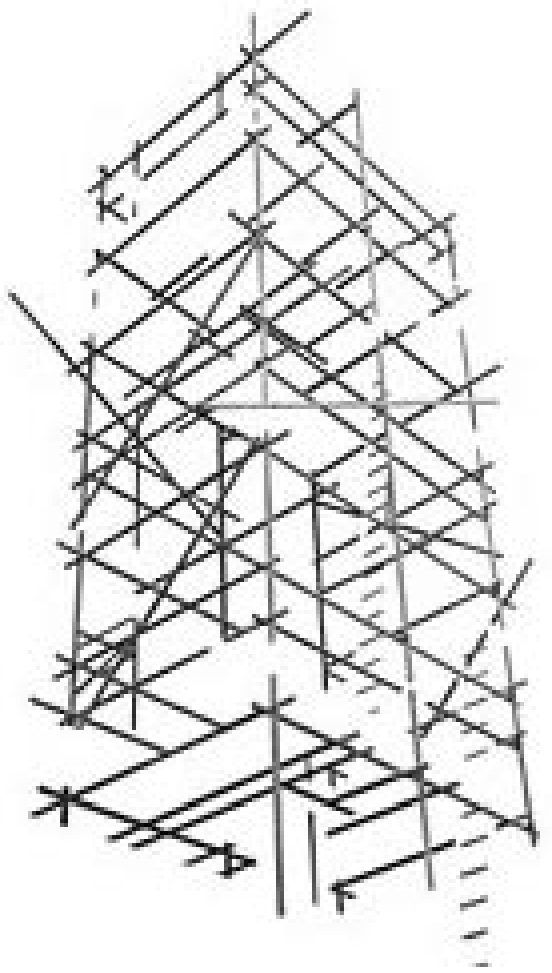
Lecercle's felicitously heterodox 'applications' of Deleuzean notions to literary texts, which have the immense virtue of eschewing the bane of secondary literature, that of watered-down paraphrase, seek to give philosophical rights of citizenship to a motley fauna of literary concepts (antimetabole, anaphora, antanaclasis, anapaestis, hypotax, paratax, zeugma, paronomasia, etc.). Alternatively, Deleuze's work most often disregards the conceptual tools immanent to a pre-constituted domain (e.g. tropes in the analysis of rhetoric and textual construction), preferring to this the extraction of novel concepts, which are ultimately intra-philosophical and need not bear any resemblance to those employed by the practitioners in question, be they linguists or cinematographers, biologists or political theorists. In the end, one feels that Deleuze's preference for literature over linguistics, the sources and style of which are amply traced by Lecercle, is predicated on the greater ease of a free extraction of concepts, and is founded on a rather romantic notion of creativity, whereby the ordinary creativity of linguistic utterance (of the kind tirelessly advocated by Chomsky) is demoted in favour of the extraordinary, impersonal and ontological creativity of the arts. Lecercle's twist on this preference, summarized in the formula 'philosophy is the natural metalanguage of literature, and literature of philosophy', strikes me as far too tidy: it is only to the extent that literature enacts Deleuze's vitalist ontology of creativity that it demands philosophical capture, but there is no sense in which Deleuze is promoting a philosophy *of* literature, of the kind that would wish to serve as the matrix for a potentially infinite collection of 'readings'.

Throughout the book, the method of the *correlation*, which involves the creation of two antagonistic and asymmetrical series, matched term by term, is enlisted in the gigantomachy between the Deleuzean hero, the poet-philosopher of subversive agrammaticality, and the Chomskyan bogeyman, the state linguist of binary arborescence in search of binding universal constants. In line with Deleuze and Guattari's own 'Postulates of Linguistics' in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Lecercle stages a battle between two models of formalization or abstraction: a mathematizable positing of deep universals and a descriptive diagrammatic or cartographic study of variations. Loosely resurrecting Lakatos's terminology, he tells us that we are faced with the struggle between two research programmes on language.

Despite the persuasive advocacy of Lecercle, however, it is difficult to shake off the impression that Deleuze's relative indifference to the sort of analysis performed by Lecercle reveals the glad tidings of a Deleuzean research programme as a dead letter. After all, the genre of formalization and abstraction proposed here, a diagrammatic method in the last instance indifferent to any regional ontologies whatsoever, is precisely aimed at denying the existence of an individualizable object domain that would undergird such a programme in the first place. What's more, since Lecercle's *parti pris* is with literature (both its creation and its analysis) and the very dream of a 'nomad science' (or of *scientific* progress in the field of linguistic pragmatics) is given short shrift, it becomes unclear what research (as opposed to philosophical conceptualization or literary invention) this programme may be up to. Though at one point Lecercle feebly tries to convince us that Deleuze might be the sort of social constructivist (read unreconstructed idealist) for whom all phenomena are linguistically constituted, there isn't actually any way to maintain the specificity of language, disciplinary or otherwise, in a Deleuzean framework, especially once the structuralist project of the *Logic of Sense*, and its concept of static genesis, are supplanted by the logic of assemblage of the works with Guattari – a passage that Lecercle himself navigates with considerable pedagogical flair. Even when it comes to the supposedly radical creativity of artistic uses of language, the continuum of variations or plane of consistency that allegedly emerges from the flight from linguistic constants is precisely not itself of the order of language, as borne out by Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of vocalization in the works of Luciano Berio and by their general penchant for synaesthetic experiences.

The famous body without organs is built, amongst other things, on the expulsion of the organ of language. And it is really here – rather than in the interesting juxtaposition of models of science and formalization, and even less in the risible notion that Chomskyan linguistics is to the 'right' of an emancipatory Deleuzean philosophy of literature (how one can be an anarcho-syndicalist *and* a state philosopher is beyond this reviewer) – that the crux of the polemical confrontation lies. The fundamental 'naturalist' tenet that lies behind Chomsky's programme (as well as a number of competing approaches to language) has been succinctly stated by the Italian philosopher Franco Lo Piparo, in his recent work *Aristotele e il linguaggio*: 'Men do not *use* language, they *live* language. Language is not a tool, but rather the species-specific activity of natural organs.' All of Deleuze's approach is negatively determined by a systematic or transcendental opposition to any such thesis. Philosophical anti-humanism may generalize the category of language to cover all semiotic phenomena (as in the vulgar image of structuralism attacked by Lecercle) or extend that of the sign to pervade the entire ontology of relations (as in Deleuze's neo-vitalism), but it cannot abdicate on its opposition to the notion of a species-specific capacity that would be binding on philosophical reflection and formalization.

Recalling the problems left pending in Chomsky's notorious 1971 debate with Michel Foucault, we should note that this decision on human nature resonates with questions of political justice, equality and action,



predictable. Recursively applying the method of the problem to Lecercle's own work – and, in turn, to Deleuze's – we could say that both are driven by a systematic disavowal of both the problem of human nature (and the biological specificity of the capacity for language) and of political decision (and the existence of a determinate and perhaps even autonomous domain for transformative collective practice). Recasting Deleuze's problem of language in this light can make us sensitive to what remains attractive and profoundly consistent in his opposition to both *math-*

esis universalis and naturalism (the two pillars of the Chomskyan line); it can also locate a far richer ground on which to pose the delicate (and perhaps ultimately undecidable) question of the political significance of these disputes. Whilst Lecercle has provided us with a strong case for taking Deleuze's literary experimentalism, his political anti-humanism and his semiologic of the assemblage as a coherent constellation (as well as with a non-Deleuzean demonstration of how to philosophize *within* the sentence), he has, in the polemical staging of this supposed programme, and emulating one of the least attractive of Deleuze's rhetorical habits, sunk to attacking his rival on the basis of an entirely nebulous and ultimately dishonest notion of political domination. Lecercle's Chomsky is very much like Deleuze's Hegel, an enemy cut to size that bears little resemblance to the thinker with whom he shares a proper name.

To argue, on the basis of no evidence whatsoever, that (Chomskyan) linguistics is 'part of the ideological structure of capitalism' is the kind of grandiloquent statement that does the author no favours, not least because Deleuze's concept of language is supposed to have supplanted both structure and ideology. Is it not time that this genre of rhetoric be left behind, lest we end up waxing deliriously on the deep political urgency of the struggle between the Deleuzean's 'crowned anarchy' and the linguist's 'democracy of corpus'? (At a pre-theoretical level, one could maliciously observe that a Deleuzean vocabulary, suitably decontextualized, is far more consonant with the exploitative nomadism of today's finance capitalism than Chomsky's essentially ahistorical speaking subject.) Then the very serious issues brought up in this work can be approached with the rigour they deserve. This involves recasting the problem in terms of an opposition between, on the one hand, a view of language founded on the natural and universal possession of a *capacity*, or 'language faculty', and, on the other, one which dissolves language in the construction of a continuum of creative variations, on the basis of an ontology of univocity. Whoever chooses to undertake this task will arguably have to forgo recourse to the non-dialectical method of the correlation (simply opposing the two projects term by term) and bear in mind, amongst other things, that Chomsky is a philosopher of ubiquitous or non-extraordinary creativity and Deleuze one of the few contemporary thinkers to have resurrected Kant's theory of the faculties.

Lecercle has provided us with a detailed and combative defence of the Deleuzean (or rather, Deleuzo-Guattarian) project, but many of the problems generated in this important book will only be adequately confronted once the intersection of language, (anti-)naturalism and politics is approached in its own right as an object of systematic inquiry. This might mean leaving behind the image of the assembly line that graces this volume's cover, and envisioning what happens to politics (and to the very transformations in our modes of production – whether material, immaterial or literary) when language is no longer cast as a tool; when it becomes the privileged site for a renewed conceptualization of a generic human capacity for thought and action.

Alberto Toscano

Secondhand self

Dieter Freundlieb, *Dieter Henrich and Contemporary Philosophy: The Return to Subjectivity*, Ashgate, Aldershot and Burlington, 2003. ix + 195 pp., £40.00 hb., 0 7546 1344 5.

The interest in subjectivity as a fundamental principle of philosophy, and of cultural theory more broadly, has for some time now been recovering from the radical scepticism towards it that crystallized in the influential anti-humanism of the 1960s and 1970s. An epoch of subjectless thought – which this anti-humanism often dates from the late nineteenth century and the work of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud – has run into an accumulation of objections and countermoves. Increasingly, it has been argued that ontological systems or processes (whether of nature, history or language) cannot simply eradicate or marginalize questions of subjectivity, either with respect to the conscious or experiential access to these modes of explanation, or in the isomorphism between these systems or processes and the structure of subjectivity itself.

Equally, there has been a growing interest in subjectivity as an alternative to the reductive and constrictive explanation of cultural and political identity in terms of various forms of social or natural determinism, on the one hand, and various forms of ideology, on the other. Broadly speaking, therefore, there appears to have been an intellectual shift in the status of subjectivity: from an ideological illusion of modern (post-Cartesian) thought, it has begun to regain legitimacy as an irreducible structuring principle of human ontology as well as political agency. Furthermore, while this shift has often been conceived as an intensified scepticism towards claims to truth, some aspects of this resurgence have proposed the

return to subjectivity as the revival of a more emphatic or metaphysical claim to truth.

It is within this context that Dieter Henrich has emerged with a compelling claim to contemporary significance, despite what at first sight appears to be a discreetly academic and historiographic oeuvre. Since the late 1960s, he has produced an extensive and ambitious reappraisal of the project of classical German philosophy, which, more or less explicitly, attempts to demonstrate the unsurpassed need for, and value of, the conception of subjectivity that emerges, at first problematically with Kant, and which is then developed by the highly inventive complex of post-Kantian German philosophy. This has given Henrich a major status in contemporary German philosophy and a growing reputation internationally. Freundlieb's book is the first monograph on Henrich to be published in English. It is a dutiful introduction, which reviews his works and their reception extensively. As a critical examination, it concentrates on Henrich's reception by the mainstream of post-analytic philosophy and his confrontation with Habermas, arguing in support of Henrich in both cases. The book thereby restricts itself to adjudicating on existing exchanges or responses and there is little in the way of new connections, confrontations or developments. Consequently, despite the high profile of some of these exchanges, the significance of Henrich's work for broader intellectual interests in subjectivity is scarcely addressed.

Freundlieb identifies three principal aspects of Henrich's project. The first is his extensive historical studies and the methodological proposals developed for them. Henrich's historiography has concentrated on the period of German philosophy from Kant through to Hegel. Since 1985 he has been involved in the so-called Jena-Projekt, a collective research project into both the major and minor philosophers associated with the explosion of intellectual activity at the University of Jena in the period 1789–95. The recent growth of interest in this period, particularly around early German Romanticism, has done much to raise Henrich's profile outside Germany. These historical studies have generated a number of historiological proposals. One is that research into the history of philosophy should be oriented towards the constellations in which a particular philosopher's position or oeuvre stands, a method Henrich terms *Konstellationsforschung*. Thus, rather than approaching a philosophy from outside of its context or purely in its own terms, it is analysed in terms of the space of thought (*Denkraum*) that determines it. The idea here is to reveal the determinations that actually and decisively constitute a philosophy as a historical form, without extraneously subjecting it to purportedly objective 'historical determinations' that were not actually historically determining. This reveals an analytical method that foregrounds the determining arguments that motivate an author (an *argumentanalytische Methode*), even where these arguments are with what appear to be minor philosophers or minor philosophical problems. Unfortunately, Freundlieb does not examine this aspect of Henrich's work in any depth, despite its critical significance for certain currents of Anglophone philosophy that are not practised in – indeed are largely indifferent to – historiographic considerations. And Freundlieb is himself indifferent to the radical and ambitious historiographic proposals that have come from elsewhere, particularly Walter Benjamin, which seem to be broached explicitly by Henrich's appeal to the concept of constellations.

The second and most extensively developed aspect of Henrich's project that Freundlieb reviews is the project of an anti-naturalistic metaphysics, based on the recovery of the concept of subjectivity as a form of self-consciousness or speculative thinking that emerges with Kant and becomes explicit in post-Kantian thought, first in Fichte and then through the early German Romantics. This is the vital outcome of Henrich's historical studies and the heart of his argument with contemporary philosophy. The contention is that Kant's account of the constitution of subjectivity inaugurates a new speculative conception of metaphysics, which is not adequately understood as self-reflection and is not reducible to naturalistic or objectivistic forms of explanation. Self-reflection is inappropriate in so far as it renders consciousness as a self that reflects on itself as if it were an object, since this presupposes or leaves unexplained why the self would recognize itself as that object in the first place. Self-reflection does not explain self-consciousness, but presupposes it. Self-consciousness is therefore revealed to involve a non-objectivizing or pre-cognitive sense of self that structures our knowledge of our self and of the world.

It is the consequences of this problem that motivate the immediate context of post-Kantian philosophy and which, according to Henrich, attain an unsurpassed degree of sophistication with the early German Romantics and their attention to a pre- or non-cognitive 'feeling' or presupposition in self-consciousness. This initiates a philosophy of subjectivity according to which self-consciousness exposes the self's presupposition of a constitutive ground, which is not constituted by the self (as if the self were the first principle

of a foundational philosophy, to which Fichte still clung), but which self-consciousness reveals as its own medium of constitution. It is the nature of this constitution that leads to the Romantics' preoccupation with the experience of art as that which is not reducible to what the self can objectify. Much of Freundlieb's book is given over to reviewing and elaborating Henrich's confrontation with various forms of naturalism or objectivism within analytical and post-analytical philosophy, and tracing a trajectory of growing critical acceptance for Henrich's concerns. However, despite Freundlieb's commitment to Henrich's attention to the pre-cognitive constitution of subjectivity, he scarcely touches on the aesthetic and artistic consequences of this project, even though these are decisive for Henrich, as for the Romantics.

The third aspect of Henrich's project that Freundlieb addresses is the attempt to recover philosophy as a mode of existential orientation – that is, which answers the need to lead a 'conscious life' within the problematic conditions of modernity. Here the problem and task are to orientate oneself in a finite world when faced with competing world-views. This is a task Henrich derives from Kant's dialectical resolution of the need for metaphysics and the unity of reason. Self-consciousness is conceived as that which inherently engages in this orientation, in so far as it is the attempt to unify the world in one's apprehension of it – which constitutes one's own sense of one's self – that thereby constitutes one's relation to the world, despite the awareness that this unification of the world is only problematically adequate to resolving the competing senses or accounts of what the world is. This underpins Henrich's dispute with Habermas, which Freundlieb reconstructs.

Habermas proposes, against Henrich, as against Adorno, the overcoming of a subjective or speculative conception of metaphysics with the paradigm shift into a linguistically based theory of communicative action, which dissolves the philosophical question of totality, or the world, into a highly constrained and purely sceptical form of interpretation. But since, for Henrich, self-consciousness is not exhausted linguistically, this paradigm shift does not solve the problem. It merely suppresses it and therefore suppresses philosophy as existential orientation, resulting in the unconvincing linguistic rationalism that Henrich, along with many others, has diagnosed in Habermas's and Apel's discourse ethics. Unfortunately, the implications and historical significance of this critique are not really developed by Freundlieb. He makes repeated allusions to what would be a fascinating elaboration of Henrich's conception of existential orientation in relation to Merleau-Ponty's conception of an embodied self, but these remain allusions. It would also have been interesting to consider the consequences of Henrich's critique of Habermas for the revaluation of the first generation of Frankfurt Critical Theory.

In effect, then, Freundlieb's introduction to Henrich is a welcome publication, but also, despite its various scholarly merits, limited in its scope and critical rendering of what it insists is a crucial philosophical endeavour. Moreover, there is an awkward mismatch between Freundlieb's mode of presentation and the ultimate

topic of his book. Freundlieb's profession of Henrich as central to an attempt to release philosophy from its academicism remains almost completely circumscribed by a quasi-journalistic reporting of proposals and counter-proposals that typifies the most tedious brand of academicism. In a book on subjectivity and the liminally cognitive constitution of self-consciousness and existential orientation, it is depressingly ironic that Freundlieb reports on this phenomenon only at second or third hand, and exclusively through the medium of professional philosophers and journal articles. He thereby effectively renders subjectivity through forms of objectification that tend to reify it, covering over its irreducibility to self-reflection. We are constantly referred to existential or aesthetic renderings of self-consciousness, without ever achieving it. Subjectivity becomes something we are encouraged to contemplate only in the reflections of others.

Stewart Martin

Absolute criticism

Timothy Bewes, *Reification, or the Anxiety of Late Capitalism*, Verso, London and New York, 2002. 224 pp., £40.00 hb., £17.00 pb., 1 85984 685 8 hb., 1 85984 456 1 pb.

Perhaps no modern philosopher has suffered greater critical neglect in recent years than Georg Lukács. After a near-feverish period of reception in the Anglophone world in the late 1960s and early 1970s in which it was all but obligatory for a social theorist to settle accounts with Lukácsian concepts before proceeding, his thought has seemingly been overtaken by a host of more sophisticated critical discourses – from French anti-humanism (Althusser, Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, and Derrida) to the 'post-dialectical' social theory of Apel and Habermas, Giddens and Beck. It is for this reason that Timothy Bewes's *Reification, or the Anxiety of Late Capitalism* is such a welcome addition to the current literature – to my knowledge the first full-length study of Lukács's thought to appear in the Anglophone world since the publication of Andrew Feenburg's *Lukács and Marx and the Origins of Critical Social Theory* in 1983.

That said, it is perhaps misleading to characterize Bewes's work as a full-length study of Lukács. The work is ostensibly concerned with the career of a single concept – Lukács' concept of reification. It sets out to prove the concept's continuing theoretical fecundity in the face of claims, from a variety of sources – post-structuralism, postmodernism, post-colonialism, etc. – of its obsolescence. It does this by drawing out hidden nuances in the concept. Reification is the process by which a social relation between people comes to appear as the objective characteristic of a thing, thereby acquiring autonomy so strictly rational and all-embracing that its origin – the social relation between people – comes to be concealed. Reification – reified social reality – thus refers to the way that the social world appears once it is extrapolated from the process by which social relations are produced and reproduced. As such Lukács's theory stands in direct relation to its predecessors, Marx's concept of commodity fetishism and Weber's concept of rationalization.

The paradigmatic form of a reified social reality is, of course, the capitalist free market in which social relations between private producers appear as the property of a thing (its value in exchange) and the fluctuations of this on the market. This reified form of the object presents the basis for a thoroughgoing rationalization – the systematic exploration of economic laws to enable prediction and control – that buries the social origin of the object under a thick patina.

As Bewes is well aware, the scope of Lukács's concept of reification exceeds that of Marx's. Similar processes of abstraction are observable in other aspects of social existence and the concept can illuminate other (non-class-based) forms of social domination such as the experience of racial minorities, women and the colonized. Bewes goes to some length, for example, to point out that Lukács's concept of reification is wholly consistent with post-colonial theory, at certain junctures giving parallel readings of Lukács and Fanon on reification. In fact, one could say that the central strategy of the book is to show how Lukács's concept can 'hold its own' with more contemporary and fashionable critical concepts drawn from post-colonial and deconstructive theory.

Bewes argues, compellingly, that Lukács's concept has a reflexive dimension; that the concept anticipates its own obsolescence by refusing to exempt itself from its own critique. Built into the critique of modern social relations as reified, in other words, is the possibility or inevitability of the ossification and reification of the critique itself. In this respect the concept emerges as a *non plus ultra*, to all intents and purposes, 'un-deconstructable'. If the critique of reification must itself be on its guard against becom-

ing reified, vigilance takes the form of a demand for critical theory constantly to renew itself.

In drawing out the reflexive aspect of the concept of reification, Bewes considerably lessens the gap between Lukács's cultural theory and Adorno's negative dialectics – for if it is contradiction 'all the way down' this inevitably entails that the *standpoint* from which the reified social world is criticized is not itself free from the tendencies it seeks to identify and critique. The critique of the social world as reified, in other words, is itself, tendentially, a piece of reification. This is the source of the characteristic double gesture of negative dialectics that seeks to criticize whilst simultaneously drawing attention to its own implicatedness in that which it seeks to criticize.

Reification for Bewes is always simultaneously 'anxiety towards reification', and it is the inability to get beyond or assuage this anxiety that represents the essential difference between modern secular critical discourses and Trinitarian metaphysics. Secular critical discourses such as deconstruction or post-colonial theory remain ensnared in subject–object dualism – in a sleepless critical vigilance without transcendence or repose. Critique gives rise to anxiety and self-critique and the process is without end. The root cause of this is the self-assertion of humanity in the place of God and the substitution of the self–other relation for the absolute relation between humanity and God. In this regard, Bewes's 'anxiety towards reification' becomes synonymous with alienation. In modern society people are alienated principally because they have substituted themselves for God and thereby denied themselves the possibility of reconciliation that lies in the absolute relation alone.

The obvious difficulty with Bewes's position is that dialectical theories such as Lukács's and Adorno's, with their triadic structures and their categories of mediation, are lumped together with traditional Christian metaphysics and opposed to secular, critical discourses. What this approach precludes is the possibility of a secular dialectical theory with genuine reconciliatory power. Arguably, however, this is precisely what one finds in Lukács and Adorno – that is to say, an attempt to recover a concept of reconciliation for modernity.

The problem with interpreting modernity as the self-assertion of humanity in the place of God – as the writings of Heidegger, Arendt and other philosophers that subscribe to this view demonstrate – is that one constantly runs the risk of lapsing into an anti-modernism of the very kind that Bewes is concerned to guard against. Moreover, in the case of Lukács there appears little basis for attributing this view to him. The standpoint of the proletariat does indeed represent a point of mediation or 'middle' from which the contradictory present is transformed. But rather than being prefigured by Christian metaphysics, as Bewes maintains, this proceeds as a praxical making of history and is presented as the *culmination* of the anthropocentric tradition from Descartes through to Kant rather than the abnegation of it. Furthermore, rather than this praxical making of the future out of the present representing a mastery of history through the denial of historical contingency (much in the way that Descartes masters reality by denying contingency), Lukács appears to insist on it: 'The nature of history', he writes in *History and Class Consciousness*, 'is precisely that every definition degenerates into an illusion: *history is the history of the unceasing overthrow of the objective forms that shape the life of man*.'

The necessary corollary of this is that a post-revolutionary society, for Lukács, is anything but the entry into a realm of universal freedom that Bewes's metaphysical interpretation would seem to imply. This is confirmed by his remark that

> The substantive truths of historical materialism are of the same type as were the truths of classical economics in Marx's view: they are truths within a particular social order and system of production. As such, but only as such, the claim to validity is absolute. But this does not preclude the emergence of societies in which by virtue of their different structures other categories and other systems of truth prevail.

The point could be put thus: if the concepts and categories of a dialectical social theory have no validity beyond their application to modern society and even then only retrospectively, there appears little basis for supposing a post-revolutionary society to be one in which social relations are wholly transparent.

The immediate objection to this is that history – 'the uninterrupted outpouring of what is qualitatively new'[3] – has been transformed into a *thing in itself* and whilst this is not the 'impenetrable datum' that Lukács criticizes in Kant and Fichte, it does at least seem to preclude the kind of emphatic transcendence and reconciliation that Bewes wants to hold on to. But this seems the inevitable consequence of adopting a finite (anthropocentric) standpoint. We can talk about transcending the alienation of human beings in modern society and the assuaging of reification-induced anxiety but not about transcending and assuaging alienation and anxiety *as such*. To go beyond this would surely be to lose the finite standpoint and blur the distinction

between philosophy and theology. For a dialectical social theory the task is to recover from religion a sense of reconciliation and repose – subject–object identity – that does not claim to exhaust the object (history). As Lukács demonstrates in the 'Reification' essay, the consequence of shutting off the 'uninterrupted outpouring' is the reification of the object – the transformation of history into a thing-in-itself inaccessible to reason in principle – and the inevitable reification of theory as it ossifies into a dead philosophical system.

For this reason I do not see how Bewes can hold together two important cruces of his argument: on the one hand, the reflexive and critical character of the concept of reification, which seems to lead in the direction of an unstinting critical vigilance, and, on the other, an avowedly metaphysical reading of the Hegelian–Marxian tradition that insists on an emphatic – that is, once and for all time – reconciliation of subject and object. This said, Bewes has written a stimulating book that will divide its readership and reanimate debates on the status of the absolute in social theory – debates that have largely lain dormant since the reception of Gillian Rose's *Hegel contra Sociology* in the early 1980s.

Timothy Hall

At last

Manuel DeLanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, Transversals: New Directions in Philosophy, Continuum, London and New York, 2002. 256 pp., £55.00 hb., £15.99 pb., 0 8264 5622 7 hb., 0 8264 5623 5 pb.

Manuel DeLanda's book is part of a series with noble intentions: prioritizing innovation over doctrinal readings, and engagement with contemporary concerns over institutionalized minutiae. Deleuze is the overriding spur, although Bergson, Derrida and Guattari are prominent elsewhere. DeLanda is a brave choice for inclusion in such a series, because he has presented a work radically different in its concerns from most Deleuze scholarship at present. He prepares us for this in the introduction. Regarding Deleuze's contributions to philosophies of cinema, painting and literature, and his exploration of the nature and genesis of subjectivity and language, DeLanda tells us: 'For better or worse, these are the subjects that have captured the attention of most readers of Deleuze, so it will come as a surprise that I will have nothing to say about them.' What DeLanda presents us with is a distilled and modified Deleuze focused on how Deleuze's ontology can be applied for a realist philosopher of science. The result is a long overdue engagement of Deleuze with mathematics and science. For although Deleuze has often been embraced by biological concerns (which also figure strongly here), it is far rarer to see him integrated into that precious tradition within Continental thought engaged with mathematics and physics, excepting of course the question of time (Chapter 3), which has been ably dealt with often.

One of the most important figures in this field is Bernhard Riemann: important for Deleuze, but also before him for Bergson and Husserl. The whole book swings on the genius of Riemann, as the ubiquitous Deleuzean conception is a Riemannian one, that of the multiplicity or manifold, the conception of variable dimensions without a higher dimension extrinsically defining unity. This dovetails with Deleuze's offensive against essentialist conceptual tyranny: morphogenesis in opposition to hylemorphism. The other key philosopher for the concept of the virtual, both at the beginning and the close of the book, is Henri Poincaré, who discovered the topological features of two-dimensional manifolds – singularities – influencing the behaviour of trajectories and hence the physical system by acting as attractors, representing a system's tendencies. Poincaré exerted a powerful influence on Bertrand Russell, and both were significant for Deleuze. DeLanda takes his audience to be non-Deleuze-savvy analytical philosophers of science and scientists. His philosophical allies are Nancy Cartwright and Ian Hacking. DeLanda is at pains to show that Deleuze's ontology relies on an emphasis on the mathematical and the physical, and Evariste Galois is of equal importance to Riemann and Poincaré. This is a book engaging with the generating forces of *Difference and Repetition*, and the citation of Poincaré is not out of any sympathy with the rest of his philosophy (and the later citing of Alan Garfinkel still less so). DeLanda's is a particularly strong kind of realism, and philosophers are drawn on piecemeal, case by case, for a realist ontology.

For DeLanda Deleuze's originality is characterized by comparison to state space ontologies proposed by analytical philosophers. In his discussion of state space in Chapter 1, he moves through a discussion of modal logic, attempting to see if multiplicities submit to modal categories, or whether an altogether new conceptualization is necessary. Here we tread more familiar ground, since the nature of Deleuze's logic is often addressed (by John Rajchman for one), but

this analysis maintains an independence from the literature. It is less interested in understanding Deleuze as a whole (barring the excellent appendix: *Deleuze's Words*) and more focused on working through the mathematical concepts and intellectual history (e.g. Morris Kline). DeLanda certainly does not give analytic philosophy an easy ride, though; he accuses the state space philosophers of ignoring the topological innovations of Poincaré, and in Chapter 4 he tackles the deductive-nomological approach in analytic philosophy of science.

Multiplicities are structured by differential relations and the singularities which engender unfolding levels, and these two parts of the virtual are accompanied by the intensive, which DeLanda discusses in Chapter 2. In order to develop his analysis he uses a form of biological explanation known as population thinking, enabling a demonstration of the intensive process of individuation as a multiplicity. The biologist Arthur Winfree appears for the first time here, as does Gerald Edelman, to suggest that quantitative in exactitude is characteristic of a complex topological thinking, as opposed to a lack of rigour. Also discussed are Stuart Kauffman and Walter Fontana, as examples of a small minority, who, in contradiction to the bulk of studies on singularities, are studying the other force of the intensive process, affects, leading to some real insight on functional integration. DeLanda's reference to Deleuze's affects is a point of some interest, as he promises to rectify one day his neglect of the question of lived experience, with a theory of perception that does not involve mediating conceptual structures but what are called 'affordances' – a term taken from James Gibson within the context of a theory of ecological interactions. This is of major importance with regard to the question of time, which is the subject of Chapter 3.

DeLanda sets up the conflicting interpretations of time within physics, the reversibility of time at the microscopic level for classical and relativistic physics, and the asymmetry between past and future on the macroscopic scale of thermodynamics, integrated in Ludwig Boltzmann's statistical mechanics. He moves on to Bergson's renowned attack on the time of classical physics from which Deleuze's own conception of temporality evolved. For DeLanda, Deleuze's conception of temporality is a great advance from this simply opposed conflict: 'a pure becoming must be characterized by a *parallelism without any trace of sequentiality, or even directionality*.' He shows this by submitting time to the same intricate scientific, mathematical analysis to which space is subjected in Chapter 2. The conceptual tools which DeLanda traces in Chapter 1 are then set to work on his three main problems, the last of which is the laws of physics (which 'lie' through generalizing), which he sets up by damning the use of the abstract totality term 'science' as not befitting a flat ontology. This book provides a lean Deleuzean ontology for the physical sciences.

Andrew Aitken