The zero of real conflict

Monique David-Ménard, *Deleuze et la psychanalyse: L'altercation*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 2005. 186 pp., €22.00 pb., 2 13 055081 9.

As its subtitle indicates, this book stages an 'altercation' between Deleuze and psychoanalysis. The psychoanalysis in question is that of Freud and Lacan. Monique David-Ménard's first book, *L'hystérique entre Freud et Lacan: corps et langage en psychanalyse* (1983; translated as *Hysteria from Freud to Lacan: Body and Language in Psychoanalysis*, Cornell University Press, 1989), re-examined Freud's and Lacan's ideas about psychosexual drives in the light of ancient and modern philosophical thought about the body. Her 1990 book *La folie dans la raison pure: Kant lecteur de Swedenborg* (1990; translation forthcoming, SUNY Press) reversed the relationship between psychoanalysis and philosophy, investigating the 'horror', mingled with attraction, felt by Kant upon reading Swedenborg's *Celestial Mysteries*. David-Ménard claims that it was Kant's encounter with the theoretical 'delirium' of Swedenborg's speculative metaphysics that led him to perceive a delirium in the Leibnizian idealism to which he subscribed at that point, and to seek a way out of the deadlock of rationalism and empiricism in a new critical philosophy.

In *Deleuze et la psychanalyse*, philosophy and psychoanalysis meet again, and the manifest 'altercation' between Deleuze and (Lacanian) psychoanalysis implicates or enfolds the 'real' altercation – the 'real conflict', to use David-Ménard's terms: the quarrel between philosophy and psychoanalysis themselves, with David-Ménard conducting a dispute with Deleuze over his attempts, notably in *Difference and Repetition* and later in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, at a mediation in this ongoing altercation. The book gives an elegant and informative account of Deleuze's main psychoanalytic ideas, as well as serving as a further chapter in a distinctive and profound attempt to map the boundaries between philosophy and psychoanalysis.

The guiding problem, as stated in the first chapter, '*Clinique et philosophie*', concerns the conflict between two opposing ways of conceiving the nature of human desire: in terms of lack and negativity or as productive and positive. David-Ménard situates Deleuze and Guattari's critique of the use of the concepts of lack and negativity in Lacanian psychoanalysis in the wider context of Deleuze's philosophical critique of the concept of negativity in general. 'Before taking the form of a critique of psychoanalysis, the thought of Deleuze took the shape of a critique of negativity in Hegel.' As the book proceeds, a meditation on the theme of negativity in psychoanalysis and philosophy unfolds, culminating in a final chapter, 'Kant and the Negative', which may at first sight appear out of place in a book on Deleuze and psychoanalysis, but whose inclusion is justified by the trajectory of the book, as well as by a clear impulse to cut through the more mystificatory, abstract conceptions of negativity and the 'void' that prevail in contemporary Lacanian theory, and to determine more precisely their nature and scope. Mediating not just between Deleuze and Lacanian psychoanalysis, but between philosophy and psychoanalysis in general, David-Ménard attempts to avoid taking sides in the conflict of interpretations by invoking the 'critical' path of identifying the source of the conflict and 'objectivating' the dimensions of the problem. She claims that the key text in the modern philosophy of negativity is Kant's 1763 *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy*, which, as well as providing a fundamentally new conception of the relation of negation and reality (one which, David-Ménard suggests, is a key condition of Kant's critical epistemological break), provides a means for learning 'how to think sadness' without 'overcharging' thought with abstract and potentially illusory ideas about negativity. This Kantian approach to negation, she argues convincingly, is consistent with Deleuze's best ideas.

The psychoanalyst has to deal with multiple manifestations of apparent negativity: resistance, repression, guilt, denial, and in general with '*ce qui cloche*' – whatever does not 'function' or 'work' in human sexual relationships. The aim of psychoanalytic practice is to find a register for the *inadequacy* of objects of desire in relation to sexual 'satisfaction'. But in the process of thinking through the logic of negation involved in this inadequacy, David-Ménard argues, psychoanalytic theory tends to 'transform inadequation into a lack, into something impossible, a particular which escapes the universal which claims to structure

it'. This tendency in psychoanalysis reaches its head in 'the Lacanian solution', which conceives inadequation 'in the sexual relation as the inscription of something impossible', and consequently ends up overlooking 'the subtleties of the drive [*les subtilités du pulsionnel*]'. 'From Plato to Lacan', the message is the same: when you desire, you are in a position of lack. 'You can hope for nothing more than discharges of energy. You will pursue an impossible Jouissance.'

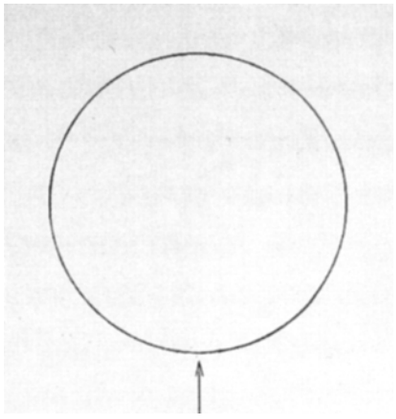
Giving a subtle and qualified affirmation of Deleuze's critique of this tendency in Lacanianism, David-Ménard proceeds to employ Deleuze's thought to 'defend an epistemology of inadequation', against both a 'logic' and an 'ontology' of negation. Deleuze's basic philosophical task, according to David-Ménard, was to identify the 'metaphysical errors' involved in the use of the concept of negativity in Hegelian and post-Hegelian thought, including in the thought of Lacan, and to re-ground the apparent ontological significance of negation in a philosophy of difference and repetition. Here he is Kantian, and is accordingly focused on transcendental issues of temporal synthesis. In the 'decisive chapter' on repetition in *Difference and Repetition*, to which David-Ménard devotes some luminous pages at the centre of the book, Deleuze 'shows how the work of the negative – lack in being, conflicts, oppositions, contradictions – masks the impact of repetition'. Beneath the local activity of repression, there is a trajectory of 'biopsychic individuation', articulated first in the development of habit and memory as syntheses of time, and then in the desexualizing processes of thought. Deleuze emphasizes the ambiguity of repetition in psychoanalysis: that it can be both destructive and inventive. But, according to David-Ménard, he succeeds in showing how 'each conflict, every contradiction is a misrecognition of an inventive repetition' weaved by 'the living, desiring and thinking being'. She observes that for much of the late 1960s, Deleuze can be found defending the necessity of the Lacanian phallic function. Nevertheless, she stresses that the Deleuzean phallus always remains a 'problem', both in itself and for the child, and is not presented as a necessary *solution* to desire's impasses. It is one among a number of special 'problems' that occupy the unconscious mind: lacks proper to need, questions about sexual identity, and problems to do with discovering the point of thinking itself. David-Ménard is particularly illuminating when discussing how the application of Deleuze's complex theory of repetition generates increased possibilities for intervention within the transference situations involved in the psychoanalytic therapy of both neurosis and psychosis.

In the latter part of the book David-Ménard claims that, in his later focus on art and creative 'becoming', Deleuze abandons this fruitful line of enquiry, and in works co-authored with Guattari such as *A Thousand Plateaus* and *What is Philosophy?* ends up affirming a 'philosophy of the infinite', where philosophy, art and science become privileged forms of 'becoming' (or 'development' – *devenir*) at the expense of desire in general. David-Ménard's resistance to the later Deleuze's plunge into a 'philosophy of the infinite' echoes that of Serge Leclaire in his polemic with Deleuze. In a 1972 roundtable with Deleuze and Guattari, Leclaire contended that the analysis of the social and cosmic aspects of desire must nevertheless proceed through 'that narrow pass that the *object* constitutes', in the here and now. David-Ménard's contention that 'Deleuze's polemic against the Freudian and Lacanian idea of desire as lacking its object misrecognizes that the important thing, in the function of the object, is to permit the death drives to appear' pursues a similar line. For David-Ménard, as for Leclaire, the 'object' must be understood as a fundamental screen for the projection of the movement of the death drive. Although the Deleuze of *Difference and Repetition* has an account of an 'object = x' that circulates through difference and repetition, Leclaire believed that the object had disappeared in the theory of fluxes of the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project.

One of this book's major contributions is towards a rethinking of the concept of negativity in philosophy and psychoanalysis. In his second *Seminar*, Lacan had engaged in a discussion on the concept of negation in Hegel and Freud with the Hegel scholar Jean Hyppolite. While the latter refused to be drawn on the internal connections between 'negation' and the death drive, Lacan clearly wanted to relate them somehow. His speculations on negation in this seminar provide one of the stimuli for the application to Lacanian psychoanalysis of logical and mathematical ideas about negation and zero, in the 1960s, by Jacques-Alain Miller and Alain Badiou in the journal *Cahiers pour l'analyse*. In the final section of the book, David-Ménard returns to Kant's theory of negation in order to ground fundamental psychoanalytic ideas about negation. She puts into question Deleuze's characterization of Freud in *Difference and Repetition* (repeated in a seminar on Leibniz in 1980) as 'on the side of an Hegelian post-Kantianism – in other words, of an unconscious of opposition', as opposed to the 'differential unconscious' of Leibniz and Fechner. Deleuze's concept of 'opposition' misses the significance and novelty of Kant's notion of *real opposition* or *real*

conflict, making it a mere anticipation of Hegelian contradiction. In doing so, he misses an opportunity to rethink the primary relation of thought to the 'Real' that the Lacanians of the *Cahiers* were trying to think with their application of Frege's conception of the distinction between the number one and zero to the problematic of primal repression and the constitution of the unconscious.

In his 1925 article on 'Negation', Freud had shown how the act of negation already involves a primary affirmation. When a patient says to the analyst, 'You will think that this woman of my dreams is my mother, but it is precisely not that', an affirmation is already implicitly made that can be exploited by the analyst in the subsequent interventions. As David-Ménard puts it, 'in mentioning negatively the content of his idea, the patient returns to a primary exclusion', replaying an original negation. The act of judgement itself constitutes a 'negation of the primary magical abolition' of reality, since it allows the thing to be negated to be included in the space of the symbolic order. Through this negation, the subject is now capable of creating and thinking through opposites; determination becomes possible. The analyst, David-Ménard notes, can take advantage of these opposites to provide exit routes from inappropriate identifications.



But how is this logic of primary exclusion to be conceived? In his courses on logic, Kant gave the *indefinite judgment* primacy in his definition of negation. David-Ménard appeals to J.N. Findlay's account of Kant's distinction between two types of negation in his *Kant and the Transcendental Object*: the negation of 'the kind which simply cancels or eliminates a thought-determination' should be distinguished from the kind 'which makes a vaguely 'infinite' reference to all others, uncancelled possibilities (the Soul, for example, belongs to the infinite remainder class of not-mortal things)'. To say that the soul is 'not mortal' puts the soul into 'an infinite remainder class of not-mortal things'. To negate, therefore, is not just a way of logically determining the content of a concept, but more fundamentally is also to open up an infinite ideal space.

The reason David-Ménard suggests that Kant's 1763 *Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy* is a turning point in Kant's move to critical philosophy is that its claim for the *reality* of negative magnitudes – for the reality of debts, deprivation and suffering – and its conception of a 'world-whole' based on the principle of an equilibrium of forces – allowed Kant to generate the framework necessary for a theory of the conditions of objective reality. Kant's transcendental idealism, David-Ménard argues, as well as his conceptions about temporal synthesis, emerge as a reaction to an encounter with the 'delirium' of Swedenborgian and Leibnizian idealism. Left to itself, rationalism or the exercise of 'pure reason' leads to baroque madness. Kant's task is therefore to 'redefine philosophy as the science of the limits of human reason'. Dialectical conflicts (the antinomies of pure reason) must be related back to 'real conflicts'.

Kant's first notion of real conflict (as David-Ménard also argues in her essay 'Sexual Alterity and the Alterity of the Real for Thought', in *Angelaki*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2003) 'introduces a negative magnitude that is distinct from either an ontological negation or a logical contradiction, [and which] allows us to understand how real objects are formed in knowledge'. The zero of indifference and the zero of equilibrium are different in kind. In logical contradiction, one thing cancels another because their concepts are incompatible. To affirm and deny something at the same time leads to an immediate cancellation of the thought of the thing. The product of a logical negation is what David-Ménard notes that tradition calls a *nihil negativum*. In a *real opposition*, by contrast, the cancellation concerns the state of another quantity of reality, and 'the consequence is *something*' (take two forces of equal quantity acting upon each other – they are really opposed, but the result is *rest*, which is not nothing). When a boat travels thirty miles from east to west, and then thirty miles back from west to east, 'the understanding determines the algebraic sum of the distance travelled as a "= 0".' This zero, nevertheless, is not a mere non-being; nor is it the result of a contradiction (where 'the consequence of the logical contradiction' is 'nothing at all'). The zero is the result of a real movement of forces. In sum, logical opposition involves an affirmation being negated, while real conflict involves two or more positivities or affirmations cancelling each other out. The result, zero, may appear to be the same in each case, but the zero of real conflict might in fact be the outcome of the equilibrium of immense forces – that is, something more than a *nihil negativum*.

To confuse the two processes will inevitably lead to a misunderstanding of the nature and sources of real conflict. Is displeasure, Kant asks, merely a deprivation of pleasure, or is it the result of a real conflict between positive forces (and therefore what Kant calls a 'negative pleasure)'? Kant distinguishes between 'evils of lack' (*mala defectus*) and 'evils of deprivation' (*mala privationis*). 'Evils of deprivation', he says,

> presuppose that there are positive grounds which cancel the good for which there really exists another ground. Such evils of deprivation are *negative goods*. These latter evils are greater than the former. Not giving is, relatively to someone in need, an evil; but taking from, extorting from, stealing from, are relatively to someone in need, far greater evils. *Taking from* is a *negative giving* to. (*Attempt to Introduce Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy*, Ak. 2:182)

Deprivation, debts and suffering are all caused by real conflict. Debts can be seen as 'negative credits', or credits can be seen as 'negative debts', according to one's perspective: whichever is the case, however, 'the reality of my fortune is determined by the composition of these magnitudes'.

Kant's idea of a difference in kind between logical contradiction and real opposition was essential for his development of the question of the synthetic *a priori*. In his early work, the principle of 'real' rather than 'logical' determination (the principle of determining ground, Kant's version of Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason) was that of real opposition of forces, which could be determined according to a 'world-whole', or 'generally established harmony'. In the 'Table of the Concept of Nothing' included in the section on the 'Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection' in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant elaborates on how the concept of nothing can have a number of different meanings: it can be an empty concept without an object, an empty object of a concept, an empty intuition without an object, and an empty object without a concept. In the critical project, therefore, the Kantian zero is elaborated *a priori* into a fourfold determination. Now if, as Kant argues in the 'Anticipations of Perception', 'an object is only determined by the understanding as real insofar as a degree of intensity characterises the intuition of its materiality', then perhaps, David-Ménard argues, his early ideas about 'the zero of real conflict' can still provide the matrix for thinking through the most elementary transcendental relationship of thought and the 'real'.

The case of '0' underlies a property that Kant does not yet make explicit but that will be of major importance in the future development of his philosophy: when the algebraist writes '= 0', and through that determines the reality of a state, rather than its non-being, it seems clear that his thought is distinct from that which it permits him to conceive: the zero as example of negative magnitude is both *for* thought and *through* thought. If, in his theory of negative magnitudes, Kant privileges the '0', is that not because it is a matter first of all of distinguishing thought from what it conceives as real? The theory of the conflict called 'real' will be Kant's first approach to what he will later call empirical realism.

Although it is not explicitly made clear, this primary transcendental zero can be related to Lévi-Strauss's notion of *mana* as the 'zero symbol' that guarantees the relationship between signifier and signified, and to Lacan's notion of the phallus as a 'pure signifier'. The critical project, David-Ménard suggests, is clandestinely inaugurated by this generation of zero, which provides 'the first Kantian formulation of the difference between thought and its object'. Referring to Gilles Châtelet's ideas in *Les enjeux du mobile* (1993) about a conception of zero that 'permits one not only to comprehend zero as a 'milieu', as the product of the neutralization of +A by –A, but to open zero into two branches', she argues that the Kantian theory of zero can provide a 'transcendental determination of the limit' that allows for the generation of the Real on the basis of zero, and which allows one to globally yet concretely determine the intensive and dynamic basis of real conflict. Correspondingly, when thought gets caught up in 'dialectical conflicts', particularly when reasoning about the 'world-whole', it loses hold of 'the reality of the objects about which it reasons'.

One problem with this suggestion, however, is that Deleuze and Guattari note in *Anti-Oedipus* that 'the Kantian theory according to which intensive quantities fill up, to varying degrees, a *matter without void*, is profoundly schizoid'. Perhaps this helps explain Deleuze and Guattari's interest in the schizoid spaces of film, theatre and psychodrama, where the processes of transference and interpretation become mediated by a range of spatiotemporal 'dramatizations'. Nevertheless, David-Ménard's suggestions about grounding transcendental philosophy in such a theory of the 'real conflict' of intensities certainly appear to be compatible with Deleuze's earlier philosophy of difference and repetition. This, for David-Ménard, is the path that leads to a possible finitist appropriation of the message of the Spinozist infinite: that a sad passion when understood is no longer a sad passion, and can be transformed into an object of affirmation in a real conflict.

Christian Kerslake

A disjunctive unconscious

Christian Kerslake, *Deleuze and the Unconscious*, Continuum, London and New York, 2007. 246 pp., £60.00 hb., 978 0 82648 488 8.

Christian Kerslake's well-researched book sets out to demonstrate that the major lines of enquiry in Deleuze's thought are inscribed in a tradition of philosophies of instinct, as opposed to intelligence. This tradition connects Bergson with Leibniz and Jung – one of the explicit sources of Deleuze's early works. That these authors drew upon esoteric and Hermetic thought is well known, and Deleuze's work is marked by references to such 'non-standard' texts, while remaining, nevertheless, a genuine philosophy of life and intuition. The somnambulist theory of instinct is the empirical touchstone common to both the occultists and Bergson, who redefined the relations between consciousness, movement and memory. Arguing that duration does not follow the norms of intelligence but is nonetheless conscious, very early in his work Bergson came to conceive of intuition not as an occult power, but as a thinking of sympathy, aesthetic sensibility and creation.

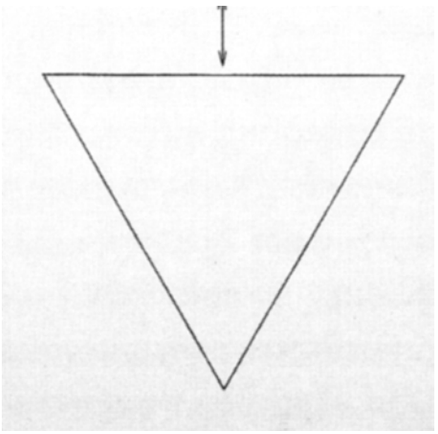
Deleuze takes up these themes by linking them, in some of his early works (1961), to a Jungian fantasy: 'Deleuze began his career with one foot in the esoteric tradition' and he drew upon symbolist traditions, Kerslake argues, but he was rescued from occultism by Bergson, who freed us from animism by redefining consciousness as a limitation on memory by the sensory-motor apparatus ('the brain is a valve for consciousness'). Deleuze and Guattari's theory of becoming, Deleuzean vitalism, and a growing emphasis on a philosophy of creation fully inscribe Deleuze within a coherent tradition that connects Leibniz and Jung while passing through Kant's philosophy of symbolism.

One of the consequences of this reading of Deleuze is, of course, that his encounter with the themes of psychoanalysis has no importance in his thought as a whole. The only moment where Deleuze seems truly to take an interest in Freud and his successors occurs in *Difference and Repetition*, when he relates sexuality to what, following Kant, he calls 'the problematic'. However, since the Freudian concept of drive is narrow and unable to account for psychosis, this debate does not last and is quickly taken over by the relationship between the philosophy of intensities and Jungian thought on symbolism.

In this first glance at Christian Kerslake's painstaking analyses, we are struck by the coherence of the perspective that he outlines. More than a perspective, in fact, what is at issue here are the coordinates of a theoretical universe. Thus it is well worth taking up some of the decisive arguments of his text step by step, starting with diverse sources synthesized by Deleuze's philosophy. The work is entitled *Deleuze and the Unconscious* and it is indeed concerned with a theory of the relationships between consciousness and the unconscious. These terms are not opposed as two natures of psychic processes but are initially related in a philosophy of instinct. Since Cuvier in the eighteenth century, a tradition of biologists and philosophers has conceived of animal instinct as a somnambulist activity that pursues a sort of dream or vision. In the collection of texts *Instincts and Institutions* that Deleuze put together and prefaced at the behest of Georges Canguilhem in 1953, considerable space is given to Cuvier, Fabre, and to the Bergson of *Creative Evolution*. For these thinkers the unconscious, before being defined as memory, is an active dream allowing animals, possessed by images and constant sensations, to act as somnambulists in their surroundings: unconsciousness and clairvoyance are equivalent ways of characterizing, here, processes that do without all that which, in consciousness, has to do with choices based on lack of information. If Cuvier provides the concept, then Fabre gives the example on which this 'particular line of thought' is founded. The *Ammophila hirsuta* wasp hunts caterpillars to feed its larvae, but since the latter do not like corpses the wasp paralyses its prey and offers it to them living and immobile. Fabre describes how the wasp immobilizes the main locomotive centres of the caterpillar by a series of complex and precise operations. What is remarkable is that the animal touches only certain ganglia (nine, to be precise), as if it knew that stinging others would cause death rather than paralysis. This complex and built-in behaviour explains Fabre's opposition to Darwin: such an unconscious action affirms the fixity of species. Species cannot be transformed by small variations. When Bergson makes the *Ammophila* wasp a touchstone of this 'divinatory sympathy' that runs through nature, he links it to his re-evaluation of the role of consciousness: in the instinctual act representation is blocked by action, and the idea is realized so perfectly

in the act that there is no room for reflection. Thus by definition consciousness only comes about when the indistinction between act and thought comes undone: consciousness, the faculty of choosing between several possibles that is born from this dissociation, is therefore inadequate to its object, for if it were adequate it would not have to choose or be attentive. Deleuze and Guattari will take up and transform this example in *A Thousand Plateaus* in their analysis of the wasp and the orchid, an analysis that gives instinct a function that cannot be situated in an adaptive perspective: the relationship between the wasp and the orchid does not produce anything, not even an activity to protect the larvae, but it does rest upon an instinctive choice freed from all organic functionality.

Above all, however, what Kerslake retains when he insists on the importance of Deleuze's early works – the 1953 anthology but also a 1963 article, 'From Sacher-Masoch to Masochism', published recently in *Angelaki* (2004) – is a synthesis between a Hermetic Neoplatonic tradition, the occultism of this divinatory theory of instinct, and Jung's thought on the Anima and Animus. There is an immediate identification of the wasp with the vulnerability of its victim and this paradoxical sympathy runs through animality and even what will be called the becoming-animal of man in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980). Furthermore, beginning with Mesmer and continuing throughout the nineteenth century, this theory of instinct was linked to the practice of hypnosis: instinct is a natural somnambulism and hypnosis an artificial somnambulism, induced by the mesmerist magnetizer from 'animal magnetism'.



In truth, in the synthesis brought about by Kerslake between all of these sources of Deleuzean thought we can identify a hesitation between two distinct paths. Sometimes Deleuze appears as a disciple of a hermetic tradition, via the conjunction he establishes between the masochist Idea of a suprasensible sensuality and the philosophy of instinct. At other times, on the contrary, Kerslake argues that Deleuze's predominant reference to Bergson serves to transform this occultist moment into a philosophy of living temporality and intuition, one that is capable of inscribing itself within a philosophy of duration that breaks with hermeticism and within the psychopathology of dissociation developed by Janet, Wundt and Bergson. To outline the divinatory theory of instinct Kerslake draws first on *Creative Evolution*, published long after *An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* and also after *Matter and Memory*. It is easy to see what connects Deleuze's reading of *Creative Evolution* to his original interest in instinct, in the anthology *Instincts and Institutions*. However in *Difference and Repetition* it is especially the concepts of duration and memory that retain Deleuze's attention. This transition is only possible through the psychology of dissociation: consciousness, it will be recalled, only appears when the unity of act and instinctive thought is broken, and it is therefore dissociated from its object. In this sense, the notion of dissociation links the instinctive animal and the human animal whose representations are by definition inadequate to their objects. Yet this dissociation only becomes conceptually graspable in an analysis of time.

Since the moment of this transformation from animal to human animal cannot be the object of experience, this is a matter of speculation. Bergson's insistence on the illusion of the finality of conscious acts as well as on the illusion of *déjà vu* constitutes the true conceptual introduction to the distinction between duration and time in the *Essay*, and between memory and the function of the present in *Matter and Memory*.

The main thrust of Kerslake's work should now be apparent: Deleuze paid attention to Bergson's divinatory conception of instinct before he even wrote *Difference and Repetition*. He then gave a more rationalist version of instinct and desire by taking up Bergson's philosophy of time. Here too, however, Deleuze appears as a synthesizing figure in two ways: the philosophy of time outlined in 1968 in *Difference and Repetition* thinks Bergson and Kant together, which seems paradoxical at first since Bergson opposed the Kantian analysis of time with his concept of duration. According to Kerslake, Deleuze transforms the analysis of duration into a transcendental philosophy of the syntheses of time. The concept of repetition brings about this unnatural connection between Bergson and Kant. It is true that *Difference and Repetition* reads Kant differently than Bergson did: what interests Deleuze is the text on the three syntheses of time that Kant cut out from the second edition of the *First Critique*. More particularly, Deleuze is interested in the passive syntheses of apprehension and repetition, in which no

consciousness of recognition can unify the intrinsic diversity of the experience of time. These syntheses are compatible with the Bergsonian concept of duration and with the distinction between the two memories: one that slips into the demands of the present and another that unfolds in the virtuality of pure memory. From the standpoint of the forms of repetition Deleuze is thus able to establish the continuity between life and desire, as he does so magnificently in *Difference and Repetition*. Kerslake's reading, which begins from instinct, is here 'illuminating', indeed.

However, for Kerslake the conjunction between Bergson and Kant is decisive in still another way, one which organizes the rest of the book: by returning to the Kant of the three syntheses of time, Deleuze also returns to the Kantian philosophy of the symbol and of aesthetic Ideas. For these Ideas there is no (temporal) schema that would make up their nature; instead they open onto a world of analogical references that might be thought of as close to Jungian symbols and to the virtuality of the unconscious for Jung. Since no concept can unite all the directions that are sketched between the symbol and the multiplicity of themes that it symbolizes, it is clear that aesthetic thought is not the prisoner of consciousness or representation. Aesthetic Ideas that are, in this sense, unconscious, can thus be brought closer either to Bergson's artistic instinct and creative intuition, or to Schelling's aesthetic philosophy. Here, as well, *Deleuze and the Unconscious* draws a line of force [*ligne de force*], one that moves from Kantian symbolism to symbolist philosophies by passing through Bergson's virtual memory. Kerslake never explicitly says that the journey among symbols that exceeds all conscious memory (and therefore all merely empirical subjectivity) opens on to the virtual of memory, the virtual that would be the appropriate temporal modality for the Kantian transcendental imagination that operates by forming symbols. Nevertheless, the sequence of textual and erudite references does suggest this connection. Freed from the discipline of transcendental schematism, is the Time of aesthetic Ideas, the virtuality of memory, which would not have the regressive character of a return to the past but would display (like the Nietzschean Eternal Return) the creativity of that which is to-come [*la créativité de l'à-venir*]?

If 'Bergson with Kant' summarizes the relationship between philosophy of life and analysis of desire in Deleuze, then 'Kant with Jung' summarizes another transformation of occultist traditions that is at work in Deleuze's thought: the transformation of symbolism. In reality, only this latter transformation sheds light on the title of the book, since for Kerslake the unconscious is above all the experience that can tolerate losing the bearings of representation in the dynamism of symbols. This is also why he devotes a close examination to the relationship, within a symbol, between the symbolizer and the symbolized by showing that the relationship is precisely unconscious. It is not within the power of consciousness.

Regarding this relationship between a symbol and what it symbolizes, precisely, we should turn now to the insistent polemic that winds its way throughout the book against Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, and against sexuality in the Freudian sense.

Kerslake suggests that

1. Deleuze's relationship to Freud is only a brief moment in his work and in the final analysis it's hard to understand why Deleuze needed Freud at the time of *Difference and Repetition*.
2. Jung's theory of symbolism is much more interesting than Freud's treatment of symbols, precisely because it connects in a more satisfying conceptual way to the critique of the notion of consciousness.

The lengthy and interesting chapter on Jungian symbolism begins with an overview of the complex relationship between Jung and Freud from 1905 to 1909. The explicit theme of the disagreement between them concerned the importance of sexuality. In the synthesis Kerslake constructs between Jung, Kant, Bergson, Janet, Boehme, Shelling, the somnambulist theory of instinct and schizoanalysis, he admits that Jung did not truly understand Kant, his theory of the syntheses of time, or his theory of aesthetic ideas and the transcendental imagination. However, the relation between the opening on to the world of symbols in its ecstatic function, on the one hand, and the representations of which a conscious subject is capable, on the other, is at the centre of what Kant called the problematic. Kerslake links the opening of an intellectual space that a problem represents with aesthetic Ideas that evoke relations and correspondences whose unity cannot be encapsulated by a concept constitutive of an object. Thus the problematic for Kant would have the same status as Jungian symbols: they break up the unity of representation and subjective consciousness.

The theme of the critique of the subject in Deleuze and Guattari would therefore be in line with the theory of symbols and psychosis according to Jung. Psychosis is conceived by Jung as an anachronism, as a return to the myth of a universe governed by a 'Mother-right' that History would have abolished. Matriarchy – which

Deleuze praises in his readings of Masoch – may still let itself be heard in the myth of Demeter, but it undergoes a crisis in the myth of the Amazons. To allow a psychotic to explore these mythical secrets would allow him or her to experience a 'rebirth', a theoretico-clinical term that, for Jung, is consonant with the Nietzschean Eternal Return and with the dissolution of individual identity in the Eleusinian Mysteries or in the theatre. When he develops this point, Kerslake marvels that Deleuze could situate himself under Jung's sphere of influence and in the rehabilitation of the mythic unconscious. If psychosis is above all, for Jung, an anachronism, it is because immersion in the world of symbols and their transformations allows us to give meaning to the idea that our lives are primarily based on a 'mythical reality principle' that goes beyond the Freudian 'pleasure principle' and whose magical force we must be able to appreciate and use. The opening on to the problematic and the opening on to myth go hand in hand.

At the decisive point of his critique of Freud, made in his own name this time rather than that of Deleuze, Kerslake relies upon a reading of Roland Dalbiez. In his work on dreams, Freud certainly discussed the two processes of displacement and condensation; however, Freud seems to have privileged displacement since he had a causal conception of the symbol – the symbolized is the cause of which the symbol is the effect, and the latter displaces and drives away the former. By contrast, Jung was able to develop the process of condensation in his theory of symbolism, which was more open-ended, like Kantian Ideas, and for which problems were more important than solutions. For Jung, Freud is mistaken to reduce the symbolic image to memory components or underlying instinctual processes; on the contrary, the symbolic unconscious is creative and amplificatory.

Having arrived at this point, although very precise on certain aspects of the conflict between Freud and Jung, Kerslake does not account well enough for several factors. In particular, he argues that Freud only had a conception of symbolism that was less rooted in oedipal sexual references during the years he was most influenced by Jung (especially in the 1908 revisions to *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*). After 1909 Freud would not open the analysis of sexuality to problems that were insoluble in oedipal terms. Yet it appears that Kerslake grants Jung too much importance in this matter. For a text such as 'The Decline of the Oedipus Complex', of 1923, turns the difference of the sexes into an insoluble problem whose formulation underpins sexuality and is more important than the improvised solutions that adolescents hastily bring to bear on the fact that there is no essential determination of the masculine and the feminine. Freud even writes that there is a phallic phase because the difference between the sexes remains unthinkable.

Kerslake's Freud is thus a simplified Freud. In the first place, Kerslake only retains from the debates between Jung and Freud the fact that Freud reduced psychosis to the repression of homosexuality, since Schreber took himself to be the wife of God. However, Freud also argued in 1915 that delirium is an attempt at recovery after a catastrophe that has disturbed all stable relationships between words and things. Thus he compares delirium to the philosophical reconstruction of these relationships. Is this not much more interesting? Furthermore, Freud fails to recognize that external, actual [*actuels*] and indeterminate factors such as symbols could transform psychotic experience. Should we not therefore compare Freud's Other with Jung's indeterminate Other? For this theme of alterity does not begin with Lacan; it was already present in Freud in 1895. What do 'exterior' and 'actual' mean for Jung and Freud?

Strictly speaking, there is no 'centre' in Deleuze's thought since his genius is in the lines of flight and in the deviations to which he subjects the themes that he appears to borrow. Christian Kerslake's book is both brilliant and erudite, but it nonetheless establishes a slightly undivided coherence, or a synthetic perspective that is no longer disjunctive. A disjunctive synthesis is a connection in which the heterogeneity of the terms that cling together and make new thinking possible does not disappear in the connection. It is certainly true that Deleuze had an important relationship to Jung and to a symbolist tradition. But he reinterprets this tradition with Freud even though he 'works badly' in this conjunction, and with Kant whose theory of the symbol was never symbolist. What Deleuze retains from Kant are again moments of disjunction: the philosopher of schematism and of the categorical *a priori* is also the one who shows that the transcendental imagination, in the sublime, has precisely no model – the faculties that make use of its resources do not go together, they split apart while they are set against each other, and it is from this synthesis of the heterogeneous that the most vivid creations are produced. A book on Deleuze cannot reduce him to his sources, but can show how it is from their mutual inadequations that a thought, like a desire, is invented.

Monique David-Ménard
translated by Justin Izzo

Trial of the imagination

Sylvère Lotringer and Christian Marazzi, eds, *Autonomia: Post-Political Politics*, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles, 2007. xvi + 314 pp., £16.95 hb., 978 1 58435 053 8.

This collection has the dubious honour of not once, but twice, being published after the fact. Its original magazine appearance, in 1980, came just after hundreds of arrests and the crushing of what was already a loose, if potent, mixture of theorists, artists, activists, workers and non-workers that made up 'autonomia' in its broadest sense. Its republication, in hardback with a new introduction and 1979 diary extracts from Sylvère Lotringer, appears at a time when the parliamentary Italian Left has suffered a resounding defeat and Fascist salutes are once again permitted on the steps of Rome's town hall.

Both times, too, the publication of the collection by Semiotext(e) has been an anomaly among the primarily French countercultural roster presided over by Lotringer. It is a political exception, too, to the primarily theoretical and literary texts that make up Semiotext(e)'s role in the importing of French theory to the Anglo-American world. The 1970s' 'Italian exception' – that combination of extraordinarily prescient analyses of the shifts in work combined with widespread militant opposition both to the state and to the institutional Left – has long since melded, theoretically and practically, into a series of concepts that often drift unattached from their original context: immaterial labour, social worker, refusal of work, exodus. The post-Seattle anti-globalization movement, and Negri's improbable rise as its best-selling voice with *Empire*, retroactively obscures the development from workerism to autonomism in the history of the extra-parliamentary Italian Left, leaving us with an affirmationist melange of Franco-Italian concepts that attempt to talk in the broadest possible terms about tendencies in global capital and a multitude that somehow ontologically opposes capital at the same time as it constitutes it.

The recent attempt to link the concept of immaterial labour to that of art (see the 'Art and Immaterial Labour' Dossier in *RP* 149) further indicates the almost total break between theory and praxis. Where Franco Berardi ('Bifo') once spoke of the revolutionary movement in Italy as being 'unquestionably the richest and most meaningful within the capitalist West' (in 'Anatomy of Autonomy', included here), he now speaks of activism as evidence of 'the male depression of late modernity', as if pessimistically proving Paolo Virno's point that 'the post-Fordist productive process … demonstrates the connection between its own patterns of operation and the sentiments of disenchantment' (see 'The Ambivalence of Disenchantment', published in 1996's *Radical Thought in Italy*, edited by Virno and Michael Hardt, a useful, if politically melancholy, counterpart to the Semiotext(e) collection).

What is striking about the documents in *Autonomia* is their geographical and conjunctural specificity, however, and the concrete nature of the struggles they register and promote. The potentially misleading 'post-political politics' of the subtitle is very different from the more recent claim by Lazzarato that 'there is no politics of politics'. In the earlier claim, it is 'the political', understood as a historical and institutional fact, and not as really existing struggle, that is itself the problem. As Christian Marazzi puts it in 'The Return of Politics' here: 'side by side with the crisis of the political, we have an increased politicization of people, a different way of "making politics".' By contrast, for Lazzarato in his later incarnation, the claim that 'there is no politics of politics' is an admission that it is no longer possible to separate out aesthetic, political and economic practices, as all have fused into a 'single assemblage'. The struggles of autonomia have apparently been flattened out into a monism of inaction.

In place of traditional models of political antagonism and union-based demands, the Semiotext(e) collection demonstrates the attempt on the part of the autonomist thinkers to understand a new 'social subject': the autonomous movements and expressions of a class increasingly defined less by its classical exploitation in factory labour than by its ambiguous blurring of the lines between productive and unproductive labour, and between legality and illegality. The innovative elements of autonomia were among the first to see that the so-called 'marginals' and non-traditional candidates for militant political organization – students, the unemployed, women – were in fact the social basis for new forms of resistance, of neo-proletarian producers of value beyond measure, of the 'marginality at the centre', as one autonomist slogan had it. The anomalous situation of Italy as a relatively 'young' and extremely well educated country, with its political

tensions raised to fever pitch some years after the revolts of '68, alongside speedy industrialization, mass internal migration and serious north–south disparities, meant that the changing conditions of work and play were dramatized on the grand stage, becoming a pressing concern for the capitalist state and radical political movements alike. Nonetheless, militants of autonomia were careful not to overplay the specificity of the Italian case, pointing for instance to the influence of American struggles and their theorization by the Johnson–Forest Tendency as well as to radical critical theorists like Hans-Jürgen Krahl in Germany or the French Situationist International. As Hardt would later put it, in place of Marx's notion of revolutionary thought as comprising German philosophy, English economics and French politics, the autonomists drew instead on French philosophy, US economics and Italian politics.

Yet what were these specifically Italian politics? In the face of the Italian state's 'strategy of tension', the fear-mongering, misattributed terrorist attacks, and the abrupt attempts to introduce flexibility into the working life of many, practices of mass illegality were widespread during the 1970s – the unilateral reduction of bills and sabotage in the workplace, in particular. There is indeed something both joyous and invigoratingly concrete in the idea of paying only what you thought was just for rent, bills and food, particularly in a period of high inflation. Early forays into the creative and political use of mass media, Bologna's Radio Alice for example, were central to the autonomist ambitions, both in form and in content. If autonomia can be said to remain alive today, it is in the productive use of mass media (particularly the Internet) by those who share some of its ambitions (see generation-online, multitudes and aut-op-sy in particular). Indeed, Guattari's piece in the collection, 'The Proliferation of Margins', reads as nothing but a paean to new media: 'the technological evolution … meets a collective aspiration for a new means of expression'.

Although the collection is immensely varied, from prison poetry and cartoons to photos of murdered activists and manifestos by autonomists and defenders of Red Brigade actions alike, two major themes can be said to emerge from the Semiotext(e) collection: the refusal of work, and the disputed role of violence. Against some of the more puritanical and Stakhanovite tendencies of communism (including most of Britain's own), the first theme, the 'refusal of work', comprises not only the forms of sabotage and subversion practised by many on the non-institutional Left during the 1970s, but a radical questioning of the moral demand to be a socially useful producer. This leads to an analysis of the changing forms and sources of 'value', especially in terms of the exploitation of basic human capacities (language, communication, affect) in what Tronti dubbed the 'social factory'. The refusal of work can be seen as comprising a new class unity outside the factory, a 'political recomposition' of class no longer tethered to the dyad labour/union. For all its flaws, the unconditional demand for a right to income, for a political wage, against the reproduction of capitalist cycles of profit and investment, is a serious challenge to any thinking of welfare, work and population. Questioning the link between production and value reconfigures the very definition of what it is to be human, and of what it is to perform any activity whatsoever.

It is no coincidence, then, that some of the most interesting current work currently being pursued by those included in the Semiotext(e) collection centres around notions of, for example, language and virtuosity (Virno), the role of dyslexia in neoliberalism (Marazzi), and the role of belief and desire in invention and cooperation (Lazzarato). The autonomia movement originally came to the realization that subjectivation was obliged to spread itself across the entire social field, and that exploitation was no longer simply that which took place at work. This was further understood as the primacy of resistance over exploitation and domination, which explains much of Hardt and Negri's later optimism with regard to the reserves of political potential latent in the global workforce.

Perhaps the most insightful piece with regard to the class composition of the 'new social subject' is Sergio Bologna's 'The Tribe of Moles', which describes how

> Classes have tended to lose their 'objective' characteristics and become defined in terms of political subjectivity. But in this process the major force of redefinition has come from below: in the continuous reproduction and invention of systems of counter-culture and struggle in the sphere of everyday living, which has become ever more 'illegal'.

This 'from below' is the key to the force of these texts, trying not to fit workers and non-workers into preconstituted roles, but trying to analyse where the source and nature of resistance might emerge. The major tragedy of the autonomist project is the way in which capital seems so much more adept at harnessing the fluidity of class composition, and its ability to construct new subjectivities. As Virno writes, twenty years after the Semiotext(e) pieces, in an essay entitled 'Do You Remember Counterrevolution?': 'Counterrevolution

… actively makes its own "new order," forging new mentalities, cultural habits, tastes, and customs – in short, a new common sense.'

The second major theme of the collection, the role of violence, is obviously to be understood in large part as a reflection on the actual violence then happening in Italy – the state's use of propaganda, persecution, infiltration and false accusations of terrorism directed against the Left, which would ultimately culminate in the Left's destruction following the arrest and trials of so many in 1979 and 1980; the differences in the strategic use of violence between the autonomists and the Red Brigades, and so on. Yet the general questions raised by the use of violence as a revolutionary tactic remain open here. As 'I Volsci', a hard fraction of the autonomist movement based in Rome, put it in 'Violence of the State': 'If democracy has not yet been fully realized, if it is still as much a utopia as communism, then why is its present form nurtured by violence?'

Negri, too, in an interview conducted from prison, posits the open-ended nature of the question concerning violence: '*Autonomy* does not promise violence, but undergoes it.' Breaking with ineffectual outbursts of violence against the state is something the anti-globalization movement, in particular, has yet to overcome, although, as the Semiotext(e) collection makes clear, there are no easy answers to this problem. As Steve Wright has observed: 'many of *operaismo*'s exponents seemed prepared to sacrifice their previous commitment to the study of the problem of class composition for a chance to "seize the moment".' The destruction of autonomia by the vengeful hand of the state revealed that, however perceptive their insights were into the changing circumstances of work and resistance, a militant movement without serious organization is as precarious as the status of the workers and non-workers who comprise it. The tentative debates around Leninism that take place in some of the texts here perhaps hold the key to answering the questions this raises, one way or the other, though they continue to be under-explored both here and elsewhere.

Bifo, in 'Anatomy of an Autonomy', describes the spectacularized process of the courtroom as a symbolic 'trial of the imagination': the media condemnation and the fictionalized linking of autonomia thinkers to the murder of Aldo Moro. Between the state-bound oppositional antagonism of the Red Brigades, on the one hand, and the repressive, violent Italian state, on the other, that imprisoned so many leftists for so long, we should perhaps return again to this 'trial of the imagination'. It is here we might pick up where the *Autonomia* collection leaves off, with a sober reflection on the changed circumstances of work, class and resistance today.

Nina Power

Hypothetical opponents

Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman, eds, *Material Feminisms*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2008. 434 pp., £39.00 hb., £13.99 pb., 978 0 253 34978 1 hb., 978 0 253 21946 6 pb.

Since the early 1990s, there has been a notable resurgence of interest within feminist studies in the body and in questions of materiality. This has given rise to various 'new materialisms' and to a 'corporeal feminism' that has produced diverse engagements with biology, technoculture and other contiguous fields of enquiry. A number of key feminist thinkers have been grappling with the question of the material, and, most pressingly, the relationship between the material and the discursive. Names that spring to mind include Elizabeth Grosz, Susan Bordo and Donna Haraway (all three of whom are represented in this collection), Judith Butler (contentiously, some would say, in *Bodies That Matter*), Rosi Braidotti, Anne Fausto-Sterling, Moira Gatens, Anne Cranny-Francis, Anne Balsamo, Margrit Shildrick and Janet Price, and even, in her own way, Judith Halberstam. A recent issue of *Radical Philosophy* (*RP* 145) included two searching and timely rereadings of earlier (French) materialist feminisms by Alison Stone and Stella Sandford contributing to such debates.

This collection, then, is inserting itself into a line of enquiry already begun and arguably gaining in force, but lacking perhaps the cohesion and purpose of a movement. Yet, in their introduction to *Material Feminisms*, Alaimo and Hekman seem unwilling to acknowledge the extent to which they are following, rather than inaugurating, a trend. Indeed, they claim that 'the guiding rule of procedure for most contemporary feminisms requires that one distance oneself as much as possible from the tainted realm of materiality by taking refuge within culture, discourse, and language' (assuming, therefore, that culture, discourse and language are *not* material) and argue that this 'linguistic turn' has led to 'an impasse' in feminist theory.

The blame for this linguistic/discursive turn (they run the two things together) is laid at the door of those familiar shady figures, the 'postmoderns', and the anonymity of this description permits a certain reductiveness in the way that those responsible for the impasse are characterized. Witness the following statements: 'postmoderns are very uncomfortable with the concept of the real or the material'; 'postmoderns have turned to the discursive pole as the exclusive source of the constitution of nature, society, and reality'; the postmoderns have 'rejected' reality and 'embraced' language. The only 'postmodern' who is mentioned by name is, predictably, Judith Butler, and the editors aver that she 'is frequently criticized for her "loss" of the material, specifically the materiality of the body', although they give no examples of this criticism (and notably distance themselves from it in the way that they actually frame this assertion). In fact, Butler's work receives little sustained analysis in the course of the collection, and where this does occur it is in the more favourable terms put forward by Claire Colebrook and Vicki Kirby's essays. For example, in 'On Not Becoming Man' Colebrook recognizes that, 'far from being simply discursive or linguistic, Butler's critique of an appeal to life before mediation, recognition, performance, or system follows from post-structuralism's critique of the language paradigm', and she implies that others have been too erroneously preoccupied with 'the scandal of Butler's linguisticism'.

Nevertheless, Alaimo and Hekman lament the fact that, 'although there has been a tremendous outpouring of scholarship on "the body" in the last twenty years, nearly all of the work in this area has been confined to the analysis of discourses *about* the body.' It's not clear what they're positing as a viable alternative to this. Surely any analysis of the body is going to be, to some extent, an analysis of discourses around the body? To think otherwise is to think that the body can be apprehended and *written about* (i.e. apprehended within/by a discursive medium) in its very materiality, pre-discursively, as it were; that the body *in itself* can be grasped. It is this impossibility of prediscursive apprehension that Butler asserts – which does not amount to a denial or rejection of the materiality of the body (far from it). Yet they maintain that 'the discursive realm is nearly always constituted so as to foreclose attention to lived, material bodies and evolving corporeal practices.'

They similarly pit themselves against 'cultural relativism' – another 'impasse' for feminism to negotiate – but, again, their definition of cultural relativism is a shaky one: 'Cultural relativism entails that all ethical positions are equal, that we cannot make any cross-cultural judgements.' To say that ethical positions are

relative is not the same as saying that all are equal; it is also to insist (quite sensibly) upon a knowledge of different cultural contexts and belief systems before attempting to impose a judgement which might be either anachronistic or imperialistic. It is not thereby to refrain from judgement altogether. Furthermore, it is not at all clear (and no evidence is adduced here) that we are indeed caught in an impasse such as they mention but do not describe. The implication is that the impasse of cultural relativism is yet more fallout from the pernicious dogma of the 'postmodern'. If my own language tends towards the hyperbolic here, this is because such language is in evidence both in the introduction and in the essays written by the editors – with Hekman, for example, opining that 'feminists in particular and critical theorists in general are facing a theoretical and practical crisis.'

What such language reveals is that this collection is very clearly pitched as a manifesto. Note the following: 'Karen Barad has argued that we must "construct a ballast" against the tendency in feminism to define theory as unconstrained play. This collection is intended to be a key element of that construction.' Hekman's own contribution to the collection is entitled 'Constructing the Ballast'. It's difficult to know, however, exactly who they have in mind, from the realm of *feminist* theory, who *does* see theory as 'unconstrained play' (and they don't give examples). Their thesis is constructed in opposition to an 'other' within feminist theory, a postmodern, material-world-denying, 'playful' dilettante who, it seems to me, is largely hypothetical. In doing this they seek to emphasize the seriousness and originality of their own project – rather than its continuity with other recent attempts to negotiate a tricky path between the material and the discursive – but they then risk a pendulum swing so far in the other direction that any reference to discourse or signification is effectively vetoed. Alaimo and Hekman make significant efforts to deny that this is what they are doing, claiming that they aim to 'build on rather than abandon the lessons learned in the linguistic turn', and that their ultimate goal is 'a deconstruction of the material/discursive dichotomy that retains both elements without privileging either.' But this is precisely what the most interesting work of the last fifteen years – including that of Butler and Grosz – has sought to do. Whilst they acknowledge this work, they still seem intent on describing the collection as a departure, or a new beginning (and the back cover blurb makes fulsome promises of 'an entirely new way for philosophers to conceive of the question of materiality').

The 'Material Feminism' which Alaimo and Hekman espouse is painstakingly differentiated from Materialist Feminism, Marxist Feminism, the 'New Materialism' (with which it overlaps but is not isomorphic) and even Corporeal Feminism (which feeds into but is only part of their brand of Material Feminism). It emerges, they write, 'primarily from corporeal feminism, environmental feminism, and science studies', and it is these areas that the book attempts to bring together in its three main sections, respectively titled: Material Theory, Material World, Material Bodies.

Among the more interesting essays in the first section, Elizabeth Grosz argues for the uses of Darwinian evolutionary theory for feminism and the need, more generally, for an account of biology and its relationship to culture. The Darwin that emerges from her account is, at first glance, difficult to recognize, characterized by 'indetermination' and preoccupied with questions of 'difference' and 'becoming'. As she claims, 'Darwin offers an account of the *genesis of the new* from the play of repetition and difference within the old'. Evolution, as Grosz portrays it, 'is a

fundamentally open-ended system that pushes toward a future with no real direction, no promise of any particular result, no guarantee of progress or improvement, but with every indication of inherent proliferation and transformation'. And, according to her argument, evolutionary theory should be as applicable to 'cultural phenomena such as languages, technologies, and social practices' as it is to nature. This is its value for feminism, as it offers, Grosz claims: models of self-overcoming and transformation; an orientation towards an unknown future combined with an emphasis on 'processes rather than ends'; a deconstruction of the natural/social and biological/cultural binaries; an elucidation of the 'entwinement of relations of sexual and racial difference'; a 'systematic openness' which constitutes a route between the determinism of science and the indeterminacies of the humanities; and a non-dialectical and non-empiricist model of history. Such arguments require more substantiation than they receive here but, typically of Grosz's work, this is a challenging and rigorous intervention in current debates; also typically (of her recent work, at least) it adopts a markedly Deleuzean language in an attempt to move beyond what she sees as the limitations of semiotic analysis. In fact, the essay is a reprint of the first chapter of a collection of her essays, *Time Travels* (2005) (that isn't acknowledged here) and it reads better in the wider context of Grosz's continuing engagement with questions of time, space and evolution in both *Time Travels* and *The Nick of Time* (2004). As a stand-alone essay it raises more questions than it can possibly hope to answer.

Claire Colebrook also nods towards Deleuzean ideas of emergence and becoming in her interrogation of the 'new vitalism', and, like others in the collection, she endorses the turn towards scientific and evolutionary discourses and away from social constructionist models, announcing that 'we do appear to be at the threshold of a new wave'. Colebrook's piece is dizzyingly wide-ranging (including some discussion of Bergson, Husserl, Daniel Dennett, Descartes, Hegel, Marx, Butler, Foucault and Grosz), but only begins to assert its own argument concerning the 'potentiality of nonrealization' at the very end; its route up to this point is rather a meandering one and the political potential of her redefined vitalism remains to be mined. She is, incidentally, the only contributor to mention materialism of a Marxist kind.

Donna Haraway appears as part of the theoretical framework of Susan Hekman's essay and – along with Latour, Grosz and Elizabeth A. Wilson – is one of the collection's recurrent positive role models. (Hekman laments the ultimate 'failure' of Haraway's project 'to define a feminist discourse of materialism' and sees Latour's take on empiricism, combined with a return to ontology as the way to reinvigorate such a project). Haraway's own essay (another reprint, this time acknowledged) is an anecdotal but engaging piece which, with utopian zeal, continues the enterprise of asserting the interconnectedness of nature and culture, the human and the animal (not least the queerness of ducks). If the end result is rather incoherent, this is perhaps unsurprising given that the essay is billed as a 'meditation on three works' – on Darwin, human–animal relations, and an SF novel by Naomi Mitchison.

Overall, this allegation of incoherence might stand as a comment on the collection as a whole, despite the promise of various individual contributions (particularly Grosz's, Kirby's, Colebrook's and Wilson's). The 'feminisms' of the title hint at something expansive, interdisciplinary and multiplicitous, but it is sometimes difficult to gauge what conceptual or political common ground exists between evolutionary theory, disability studies, environmental feminism, the 'realness' of race, technoculture, 'toxic bodies', the politics of antidepressant use, Chicana feminism, the phenomenology of Alzheimer's, and the fallout of Hurricane Katrina (all represented here), beyond the frequent invocations to move beyond the limitations of social constructionism and concede the 'materiality of the social'. If 'matter' emerges here as something undeniably more complex and compelling than previous accounts of it might have led us to believe, then 'feminism' remains oddly opaque, unformed and – in certain of the essays – almost forgotten.

Kaye Mitchell

The man who never wanted to be Sartre

Pierre Bourdieu, *Political Interventions: Social Science and Political Action*, trans. David Fernbach, Verso, London and New York, 2008. 398 pp., £65.00 hb., £19.99 pb., 978 1 84467 190 2 hb., 978 1 84467 189 2 pb.

For a long time, it was difficult to identify Pierre Bourdieu with the classic image of the committed French intellectual. He rarely signed petitions or open letters to the press and was not often seen on street demonstrations. His initial work, which quickly estab-

lished his reputation, was on the slippery borderline between sociology and anthropology and developed some intriguing, if not always entirely convincing, analogies between the social structures and cultural dispositions of the Kabyles of the Aurès mountains of Algeria and the peasants of his home area in south-western France. Bourdieu did his military service as a lieutenant in Algeria and then taught at the University of Algiers for two years. Algeria remained an abiding concern but, whilst some of the early texts collected here indicate his sympathy for the Algerian cause, he was not one of the signatories of the Manifesto of the 121 in 1960, which called for the recognition of French soldiers' right to disobey orders, or even to desert from an army engaged in such an unjust colonial war. The political Bourdieu was slow to emerge and did not really come onto the scene until the 1980s. In 1993, he remarked that he had never wanted to meet Sartre, 'at least on those demos that were captured in a thousand photos, with Foucault at the megaphone … I didn't want to be part of that, for anything in the world.'

First published in French in 2002, the year of Bourdieu's death, *Political Interventions* helps to correct the widespread impression that he was a mandarin (as well as the builder of a considerable academic empire), providing a much broader picture of a complex man. Some of the material is published here for the first time, including Bourdieu's contributions to the endless debates about educational reform that took place after May '68, which have been exhumed from the archives of the Collège de France. Other pieces – petitions, open letters and public statements, and interviews – are reprinted, together with extracts from his published works. Most of the themes will be familiar to any reader of Bourdieu, and, whilst the picture that emerges is broader, it cannot be said to be radically new.

The Bourdieu of the 1960s may not have been a street-fighter, but his work certainly carried a political message, especially where the sociology of education and culture was concerned. Co-written with Passeron and first published in 1964, *The Inheritors* remains a classic. The book is an assault on the cherished belief that the French educational system is a meritocracy based upon equality of opportunity, even though the statistics prove otherwise. It is not a young person's innate ability that gives them ready access to higher education, let alone to the elitist *Grandes écoles* that pave the way for a lucrative career, often in some state apparatus. It is, rather, a mastery of cultural codes and the acquisition of the baggage that Bourdieu terms cultural or symbolic capital. Such capital is accumulated through a familiarization with a lingua franca that is not taught by schools and colleges. The children of families who visit galleries, listen to serious music, or go to the theatre are the true beneficiaries of what claims to be an egalitarian system because they are fluent in this lingua franca. The educational system thus serves to reproduce inequalities rather than to eradicate them. The argument is probably irrefutable (of course any sixth-former in a run-down comprehensive can *apply* for admission to the Oxbridge college of her choice…). However, its implications are forbidding. Bourdieu and Passeron are very dismissive about 'cultural free will', arguing that all 'choices' are always-already determined. The gloomy note of Jansenism becomes more pronounced in Bourdieu's voluminous writings on the cultural field: any choice or expression of individual taste is merely a signifier of an aspiration to difference and a bid for distinction. As his great sociological rival Alain Touraine has always argued, there is little room for individual creativity in Bourdieu's bleak system. An acquaintance in Paris once expressed a more immediate criticism: 'I'm originally from a poor working-class background and I love classical music. Bourdieu keeps telling me I can't. I think he means I shouldn't. Or mustn't.' If every expression of taste is a claim to social distinction, it is difficult to see how there can be *any* meaningful aesthetics. Indeed, a rather heavy-handed Marxism is never far away from this picture of the cultural field, in which economics is the final determinant.

Bourdieu liked to define sociology as a martial art, and he is capable of using it to deliver some nasty blows. He is waspish about media-friendly figures such as Alain Finkielkraut and similar 'sub-philosophers': 'semi-scholars, not very cultivated'. Philosophers in general are viewed as 'the most stubborn defenders of intellectual narcissism' and are castigated for their belief in the 'intrinsic superiority of philosophical language over ordinary language'. Comments such as those on Finkielkraut are of course typical of the polemical 'debates' that so often take place in the French press, and a reminder that Parisian intellectual life can be very bad-tempered. The subtext suggests, however, that something more serious is at stake here – that Bourdieu is making a bid for hegemony on the part of sociology that will oust philosophy from its position at the top of the educational hierarchy. A sociological critique is, it is claimed, the only thing that can grasp the 'presuppositions inscribed in institutionalized philosophy'. The ghost of some old quarrels appears to re-emerge here: sociology is to philosophy as science is to ideology…

Bourdieu begins to emerge as a much more openly (and classic) political figure in the 1980s, and in somewhat unexpected circumstances. In December 1981, a state of emergency was declared in Poland. Bourdieu, Foucault and others responded to the French government's statement that this was an 'internal Polish affair' by issuing a statement accusing it of being more concerned with its Communist allies than with Polish freedom. Whilst the anger was genuine, and the sentiments no doubt admirable, the statement gives the impression that the signatories were, as happens so often, living the present in terms of a past. The situation in Poland was likened to 1936 in Spain (a Socialist government confronted with a military putsch) and 1956 (a Socialist government confronted with the repression in Hungary). This imagery has more to do with mythic memories than political realities. Poland's situation was grim, but there was no civil war and there were no Russian tanks on the streets.

After 1981, Bourdieu became much more visible, in more sense than one, and his increasingly vocal politics involved him in some paradoxical situations. In 1982, he was elected to a Chair at the Collège de France, an institution that awards no qualifications and has no student body. Anyone is free to attend its lectures and seminars, but the demographics of Bourdieu's audience must have been only too predictable. Foucault was caught in a similar trap; he may well have theorized the need for 'specific intellectuals', but he spoke in very universal terms. And Bourdieu now became a new 'Foucault with a megaphone'. From the 1980s onwards, he denounced globalization and neoliberalism, spoke out in support of gay rights, and bravely defended the cause of Algerian intellectuals at a time when the ability to read and write seemed enough to warrant a death sentence from fundamentalists. Like Foucault, Bourdieu suffered the classic fate of the French intellectual and thus became the Sartre he never wanted to be.

Bourdieu's political apotheosis came in the winter of 1995, when public-sector strikes were called to resist government plans to 'reform' the railways and, worse still, the pension and retirement schemes of some workers in certain public-sector categories. Transport strikes brought France, and especially Paris, to a chaotic standstill. Bourdieu supported the strikers, and spoke at mass meetings, including the huge demonstration at the Gare de Lyon on 12 December. The issue was, he claimed, the 'defence of the social gains of a section of workers, and through this, of a whole civilization embodied and guaranteed by the welfare state'. It did not feel quite like that to me as I spent hours walking to the library and back every day through crowds of Parisians trekking to and from work; it felt like a classic defence of the corporate interests of a (relatively) privileged few. No redistribution of wealth was on the agenda, and this was not a new Popular Front.

Bourdieu was a vocal proponent of the democratization of the university system, even though his own studies of the 'inheritors' appear to demonstrate the near-impossibility of such projects. But in 1990, he argued that the reforms that were being proposed – including the pre-entry selection that has always been anathema to student organizations – were a disguised form of 'privatization' that would 'Americanize' and 'marketize' the universities. He even seems to have opposed the broadening of the curriculum and the teaching of 'vague skills' in the name of 'disciplinary knowledge'. What, he asked in 2000, 'will become, for example, of people with a degree in scriptwriting?' Leaving aside the possibility that they might become professional scriptwriters, the answer is surely that, given the state of the job market and the devaluation that makes first degrees from French universities almost worthless, one can only suggest that they will be as well placed as those with a disciplinary knowledge of sociology.

It has never been easy to read Bourdieu in English, mainly because he always insisted that translations of his books had to be as literal as possible, failing to see that the long, multi-clause sentences permitted by French syntax and rhetoric all too often become almost impenetrable labyrinths in English. Sadly, David Fernbach has obviously opted to obey Bourdieu's wishes, and has added some new literalisms of his own. There are, for instance, references to mysterious 'disfavoured classes' [*classes défavorisées*]. *Défavorisée* is in fact merely the current French euphemism for 'working-class', or simply 'poor', meaning those who are one rung higher up the ladder than the 'excluded' [*exclu*s]. One feels a certain unease when a distinguished sociologist uses such clichés, but 'disfavoured' simply produces a feeling of bewilderment. Certain editorial failings increase the bewilderment. For a reader without a very good grasp of the minutiae of French political history, and an almost elephantine memory for the names of politicians and ministers, the lengthy discussions of educational reforms are dense indeed. Much more contextualization and annotation would have made things a lot easier, and made this a much more useful book.

David Macey

A stuffed owl

Espen Hammer, ed., *German Idealism: Contemporary Perspectives*, Routledge, London and New York, 2007. 339 pp., £65.00 hb., £18.99 pb., 978 0 415 37304 3 hb., 978 0 415 37305 0 pb.

The title of this collection suggests a survey of current approaches to German Idealism. However, the contents page reveals that the category of the 'contemporary' serves here to generalize what is in fact a narrow band of issues, the preoccupations of a particular, albeit largely dominant, group. It turns out that 'contemporary' should thus be understood in this context to designate (with one exception) various anglophone approaches to German Idealism motivated by problems thrown up by prevalent forms of philosophical naturalism and scientific realism, and, in its most extended use, to encompass the exasperated responses of philosophers nominally working in the same area who fail to identify with those concerns.

What is sought in these affirmative returns to Idealism is the compatibility of a certain mechanistic naturalism with the specifically human sphere of forming and applying concepts, of normative commitment. Terry Pinkard's essay gives a useful account of the parameters of the reconstructive project common to many of the contributors; it is useful, also, for its explicit articulation of the political commitments inherent in that endeavour. Pinkard proposes a Hegelian completion of the Kantian concept of autonomy that has the merit of preserving the virtues of the latter's accord with 'the most basic commitments of liberalism', whilst dissolving its structural inconsistencies. Strongly metaphysical Kantian interpretations of autonomy are said to suffer a common weakness with classical liberal claims in that the repressed insufficiency of both to sustain foundational principles of *absolute* independence tend towards illiberal zealotry and irrational unpleasantness. Metaphysically deflationary readings of Kant alone cannot solve this problem. Their 'thinness' must be augmented, Pinkard insists, with a Hegelian conception of what, after Pippin, has become known as the 'sociality of reason'. Thus, a 'Kantian' process of normative rational justification, elliptically construed as 'reflective endorsement', is perfected by a Hegelian apprehension of reason's historical emergence from an intersubjective ground. For Pinkard, this is to grasp 'dialectically' the double dependence of free individuals upon the recognition of other likewise constituted individuals and the institutionally structured 'form of life' in which all are suspended, namely, 'limited constitutional government, some kind of market society with legal protection and property rights'.

Broadly two kinds of response to these moves are recorded. Frederick Beiser writes with barely suppressed irritation from the standpoint of interpretative scholarship. He charges (post-)analytic approaches, correctly it seems to me, with a fundamental confusion of philosophy and scholarship that delivers neither, but rather 'a monster: scholarship distorted by philosophy, philosophy obscured by history'. Beiser offers a fair, if at times tetchy, appraisal of wrong-headed attempts to purge German Idealism of metaphysics. Fred Rush voices a similar complaint regarding the inadequacy of recent 'Kantian' Post-Kantian Hegel interpretations. Deprived of a teleological ground, such non-metaphysical readings must content themselves with reason's 'sociality' – altogether insufficient, he suggests, to license the *progressive* communal rationality to which they are also committed. This latter calls for a fuller structural elaboration of reason's *historicity* than a non-metaphysical construal of Hegel can supply. Moreover, the status conferred upon reflective rationality by such deflationary interpretations conflicts with Hegel's own mediation of autonomy and social cohesion, the achievement of which is precisely to eliminate as corrosive a 'decisional relation' to values. Pushing this point further, Rush's criticism bites most deeply on the liberal suppositions that support the readings of Pinkard, Pippin et al. His argument exposes Pinkard's putative dialectic of freedom and dependence to be simply antinomical. Agents must be construed both as social products and as agents in any meaningful sense only when not so constrained. It is a hallmark of liberal theories, Rush suggests, that they fail to take their own conditions of theorizing fully into account, a failure that binds them to contradiction.

Sebastian Gardiner, meanwhile, argues from the threat posed by naturalism upon what he calls our 'value interests' to the somewhat startling conclusion that we should not only read German Idealism as metaphysical but that we should also *be* Idealists of that kind. Neither moderate naturalism nor Idealism under its non-metaphysical construal, he contends, offers sufficient resources to defend against the reductionist's claim that normative self-consciousness's separation

from nature holds only at the level of description. Despite the procedural stringency of its unfolding, the force of argument derives largely from the austere limits imposed by Gardiner on the consideration of alternative possibilities to strong naturalism, in combination with an apparently unexamined motivating commitment to safeguard commonsensical intuitions – an endorsement of Idealism that is just the obverse of its earlier positivist rejection, and, as such, one suspects, also vulnerable to the line of criticism pursued by Rush in the case of deflationary readings.

Either positively or negatively, the great majority of these essays are determined by a post-Strawsonian impulse to secure the satisfactory completion of a Kantian project that, among its adherents, attracts approval but, for various internal reasons, cannot be fully endorsed. And this is, therefore, also to say that what purports to be an array of approaches to German Idealism amounts, for the most part, to a preoccupation with Hegel in so far as he presents a means to that Kantian end. Reflecting on Andrew Bowie's essay, editor Espen Hammer notes its Adornian caution that we be alert to the continuity of idealist and instrumental reason: 'if that is the case', he observes, 'then perhaps the bourgeois optimism implicit in the rationalist vision or reason-giving that we find in much of the current renaissance of German Idealism needs to be tempered and a more radical critique of reason be brought back to the table'. This seems a fair comment, but why not collect together in a book some essays that do that, or contribute to the long-standing, although here largely ignored, tradition of seeking to retrieve something of vital importance from Hegel *despite* his dogmatic monism? Perhaps, with caution, we might say that this volume holds symptomological value as a reflection, if not of the state of the field as such, then of the ascendancy of the post-analytic approach over it. Even that value, however, must be limited by acknowledgement of the normative effect produced by surveys of this type in entrenching further that which they hold merely to report. Under current professional conditions there may well be 'reasons' why it is ill advised simply to ignore the predominant transposition of Wittgenstein onto Hegel, in favour of approaches that promise greater productive potential. Acting on the imperative to accommodate the prevalent, however, not only displaces institutionally marginal approaches but tends towards their elimination. This is regrettable for all kinds of reasons, not least among these that it is far from clear that what is urgently required are further philosophical justifications for liberalism.

Peter Kapos