

Fecundity is a relation whereby I become responsible not only for another person, but rather responsible also for his responsibilities. The parent is liable for the child's action and duties, but the child is not similarly liable for the parents. But not only a child, also a student. And not only a student, but, indeed, anyone I might meet. But the parent/child relation is one in which we can see this multiplication of *my* responsibilities most clearly.

Let us turn then from fecundity to maternity itself, to the maternal body. Can we extend from the maternal body to the teacher and the student? Can we extend to an ethics of bearing any other? It all hides in that word '*comme*', 'like'. We want to retain that embodied passivity and profundity of pregnancy, but no longer exclude the non-mothering women, the men, the children, and so on. Perhaps a simile is actually a stronger means of holding on to the difference with its specificity *and* to the reaching beyond the ordinary sense. Stronger than metaphor because the simile veers towards allegory and moves away from the underlying unity of meanings and referents. Levinas' simile then helps us to see how the specificity of maternity and of the maternal body can permit a generalizing for ethics. And Katz' book helps us see the rich philosophical intersection of both her own specificities and those of Levinas.

Notes

1. Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics" in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 320–321.
2. *Ibid.*, 152.

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John Protevi, *Political Physics: Deleuze, Derrida, and the Body Politic* (London and New York: Athlone Press, 2001), x + 245 pp. ISBN 0-485-00426-7 (cloth), US \$125.00, ISBN 0-485-00619-7 (paper), US \$29.95.

Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), x + 214 pp. ISBN 0-748-61839-2 (paper), US \$29.50.

Shortly after Gilles Deleuze's death in November 1995, Jean-François Lyotard published a brief memorial text in the Parisian newspaper *Liberation*

(7 November 1995, p. 36), which was entitled, appropriately enough, “Il était la bibliothèque de Babel” – “He Was the Library of Babel.” Almost in passing, and with characteristic modesty, Lyotard intimated that, in his eyes at least, the two greatest philosophers of his own generation, in France, were Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida. The comment was a revealing one, if only because Lyotard presented it as a presumed and evident fact. In the English-speaking world, to be sure, the reception of French philosophy had followed its own course, due to the vagaries of academic trends and the timing of translations. But on both fronts, the relation between Derrida and Deleuze has remained an open and largely unresolved question. Although they shared many concerns (difference, repetition and iteration, memory, time, the event, etc.), Derrida and Deleuze nonetheless seemed to be strangely separated by deep-seated differences. Even in the academic world, Derrideans and Deleuzians (if we can here speak of “schools”) tend to belong to separate camps, and rarely speak to each other – not out of animosity, but because they occupy seemingly impossible worlds. Derrida himself, in his own memorial text in the same issue of *Liberation*, wrote wistfully of “all these differences that still today I don’t know how to name or situate,” “the unsettling, very unsettling experience – so unsettling – of a proximity or a near total affinity in the ‘theses’ – if one may say this – through too too evident distances in what I would call, for want of anything better, ‘gesture,’ ‘strategy,’ ‘manner’: of writing, of speaking, perhaps of reading. . . .” Lyotard, for his part, seems to have managed to be influenced by both thinkers, initially by Deleuze, in *Libidinal Economy* (which he would later call his “evil book”), and then Derrida, before finally producing his own highly original philosophical position (*The Differend*).

In this context, John Protevi’s career has followed an intriguing trajectory through the tangle of contemporary continental philosophy – a trajectory marked by a decisive shift in orientation from Derrida to Deleuze. The books under review here each seem to record significant (and inventive) shifts in the direction of his thought. Protevi’s first book, *Time and Exteriority: Aristotle, Heidegger, Derrida* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1994), proposed a rereading, from an avowedly Derridean perspective (of an “economy of exteriority”), of the philosophies of time found in Aristotle and Heidegger. By the time we reach *Deleuze and Geophilosophy* [DG] (2004), Derrida has been almost completely left behind in favor of Deleuze. In the decade between these two books, Protevi published two liminal volumes that exist “between” Derrida and Deleuze, so to speak, and that reveal some of the thinking that produced this shift. First came *Political Physics* [PP] (2001), and then *Between Deleuze and Derrida* [BDD] (London and New York: Continuum, 2003), a

collection of essays (including one by this reviewer) that Protevi co-edited with Paul Patton. Although Derrida and Deleuze have each been widely studied, the latter volume was, surprisingly, one of the first attempts to examine the relation between their respective works.

The “Introduction” to *Political Physics* [PP] provides a key to some of the shifts in Protevi’s work. As the title indicates, the book sets out to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the Derridean and Deleuzian approaches to the question of the “body politic,” in all its registers – reaching both above and below the level of the “individual” (PP 3, 199). In his groundbreaking 1962 study, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (trans. Hugh Tomlinson, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 40), Deleuze had written that “every relationship of forces constitutes a body – whether it is chemical, biological, social, or political.” Protevi’s project in *Political Physics* can be read as an elaboration of Deleuze’s claim, perhaps already tilting the balance in favor of Deleuze. Like Deleuze, Protevi approaches the familiar concept of the body politic, not as a juridical or legal notion but, quite literally, as a physical notion, thereby pointing to a more complex relation between philosophy, on the one hand, and politics and physics, on the other, than has hitherto been conceived. “The constitution of physical, chemical, biological, and social bodies can be thought politically (in terms of the law of their ordering of force relations), while the constitution of political bodies can be thought physically, chemically, biologically, or socially (in terms of the forces involved in their ordering of laws)” (PP 3).

The innovation of Protevi’s work, however, is to introduce into his analyses the resources provided by contemporary *complexity theory*. Protevi argues that complexity theory has two important philosophical implications: negatively, it implies a critique of hylomorphism; positively, it implies a notion of “material self-ordering.” Hylomorphism is the doctrine that the process of production is the result of an imposition of a transcendent form (morphe) upon an immanent matter (hyle), an order imposed upon chaos, like a mold imposed on a mass of clay. The counter-concept to hylomorphism, derived from complexity theory, is the concept of “material self-ordering” (PP 9). Complexity theory is the study of the immanent self-organizing capacities of “open” systems (those through which matter and energy flow), in which properties and becomings emerge from within the system itself, that is, from the singularities and traits of its material conditions (DG16-17).

Political Physics is divided into two parts, with complexity theory providing a kind of hinge between the two. The first part (which includes essays previously published between 1993 and 1997) is devoted to Derridean readings of the “forceful body politic” in Husserl and Hegel, and analyses of “the gift

of life” and the various discursive economies surrounding AIDS. The second part turns to more Deleuze-inspired readings of “the political physics of the body politic” (PP 115) that are found in four canonical philosophers: Plato on masters and slaves, Aristotle’s philosophy of natural generation, Kant on violence, Heidegger’s thinking on the theme of “leisure.” Throughout, however, one senses Protevi’s oscillation between Derrida and Deleuze – or more generally, between what one might call a “post-phenomenological” tradition and a “post-structuralist historical libidinal materialism” (PP 199). Protevi wholeheartedly links up his own critique of hylomorphism (derived from Gilbert Simondon’s work) with Derrida’s more general critique of the “metaphysics of presence.” And at a methodological level, he has nothing but praise for Derrida’s “reading techniques, [and] his scrupulous attention to detail” (PP 6). Yet Protevi immediately points to Derrida’s limitations with regards to the questions of materiality and self-organization. On the one hand, “for Derrida, ‘matter’ is a concept to be read in metaphysical texts (as that which is resistant to form), or more precisely a marker or trace within metaphysics of a ‘radical alterity’ that cannot be conceptualized” (PP 6). For this reason, on the other hand, Derrida remains unable to engage the positive notion of material self-ordering as productive of the real: “While Derrida implicitly critiques the Husserlian production of meaning as a hylomorphic imposition of conceptual form on the stratum of sense, there is no counterpart to the notion of material self-ordering in his work . . . [He] has no resources, as do Deleuze and Guattari, for elaborating the principles of an empirical research project into the material production of forceful bodies politic” (PP 9, 62).

In *Political Physics*, Protevi still attempts to maintain a kind of complementarity between Derrida and Deleuze, “combining Derrida’s slow reading and Deleuze’s conceptual creativity” (PP 11). At one point, Protevi argues that Derrida works in a “*top-down*” manner, deconstructing the “claims of bodies politic to natural and simple identity,” while Deleuze works in a “*bottom-up*” manner: “starting with a virtual differential field, [he] investigates the triggers and patterns of the production of bodies politic, and thus offers avenues for pragmatic intervention and experimental production of immanent and democratic bodies politic” (PP 5). In his contribution to *Between Deleuze and Derrida* (an interesting essay entitled “Love”), Protevi summarizes this mutual reading by suggesting that “perhaps we can fit Derrida and Deleuze together by treating deconstruction as a propaedeutic which disabuses one of metaphysical illusions in order to free one for material experimentation” (BDD 192).

By the time *Deleuze and Geophilosophy* appears, however, the transformation seems to be complete: Derrida is scarcely even mentioned, and even the

vaunted method of close reading (now termed “the textual trap”) has gone by the wayside (DG 8). *Deleuze and Geophilosophy* presents a full-blown (and even “systematic”) interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari’s “geophilosophy” from the viewpoint of complexity theory – an approach that was pioneered in the work of Brian Massumi (*User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*) and Manuel DeLanda (*Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*) (DG 6). The book was co-written with the geographer Mark A. Bonta, and has a decidedly practical and interdisciplinary focus, aimed at an audience far beyond philosophy. The blurb rightly notes that the book will be of interest to scholars “working in disciplines at the intersections of culture, nature, space, and history,” including anthropology, art and architecture theory, communication studies, geography, Marxism and historical materialism, philosophy, postcolonial theory, urban studies.

The bulk of the book is made up of a 120-page glossary of “Deleuzoguattarian Geophilosophy” that provides succinct yet comprehensive analyses of almost all the concepts that populate Deleuze and Guattari’s co-authored books, from the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia – Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) – to *What is Philosophy?* (1991). The entries range from extended analyses of technical terms (“intensity,” “axiomatic,” “smooth space”) to a series of discussions of various types of “place” (“forest,” “steppe,” “town,” “polar ice,” “cosmos,” “earth,” “air,” “sea”) to brief references to significant philosophical influences (Bergson, Braudel, Clastres, Simondon, Messiaen). In a sense, these entries are a continuation and expansion of the glossary that Deleuze and Guattari themselves provide at the conclusion of *A Thousand Plateaus*, now reinterpreted in the vocabulary of complexity theory: emergence, strange attractors, basins of attraction, phase space, self-organization, bifurcations, symmetry-breaking cascades. The entries are written in a clear and accessible style, with frequent cross-referencing. More importantly, perhaps, the entries include numerous references to the original texts, allowing readers to utilize the glossary as a genuine guide through the often daunting pages of Deleuze and Guattari’s works. For this reason, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy* will remain an indispensable reference tool to readers of Deleuze and Guattari far into the future. The book concludes with a fascinating case study, drawn from the work of Mark Bonta, which analyzes land use issues in the Olancho province of Honduras from a Deleuzoguattarian perspective. It clearly demonstrates the usefulness of Deleuze and Guattari’s “geophilosophical” concepts in disciplines far from philosophy, and their relevance in moving “Toward a Geography of Complex Spaces” (the title of an introductory chapter).

If *Political Physics* problematizes the relation between Derrida and Deleuze, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy* highlights the relation between Deleuze and complexity theory, and thereby problematizes the more general relation between philosophy and science. For instance, why privilege complexity theory? At one level, the answer is clear, since themes such as emergence and self-organization clearly dovetail with Deleuze's interests in creation and production ("the conditions of the new"). Yet Deleuze himself notoriously drew on numerous scientific domains – from embryology and geology to the differential calculus – and Protevi himself, if only in passing, refers to the need to take into account other recent developments, such as recombinant genetics, cognitive science, and fractal geometry (PP 2, 7). At times, moreover, the language of complexity theory gets intermingled with that of chaos theory, which, as Protevi and Bonta note (DG 192n2), are not identical, though closely related. Chaos theory tells us that simple systems can exhibit complex behavior, whereas complexity theory tells us that complex systems can exhibit simple "emergent" behavior. Chaos theory arose from the theory of differential relations that Deleuze discusses in *Difference and Repetition*, and it thus has an obvious relation to his work. Complexity theory, at the moment, remains more controversial and speculative. Protevi speaks of Deleuze and Guattari's "engagement with complexity theory" (PP 6, 115), but apart from occasional references to Prigogine, the extent of that engagement seemed limited, if only because complexity theory in its infancy when Deleuze and Guattari were writing. It might be more accurate to say that they "anticipated," in their philosophical writings, certain themes that would later come to the fore in complexity theory.

What then is the significance and value of translating Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical vocabulary into the terminology of complexity theory? Is it merely to demonstrate the fact of this anticipatory effect? Does complexity theory provide a more adequate vocabulary? Or is there simply a relation of mutual resonance or illumination between the two? Protevi and Bonta are fully aware of these various ways of seeing the relation between philosophy and science, which are already present in Deleuze's writings. In his solo works, such as *Difference and Repetition*, "Deleuze strives to present a basic ontology or metaphysics adequate to contemporary physics and mathematics" (DG 12), while in *What is Philosophy?*, science and philosophy are presented as complementary creations ("science deals with properties of constituted things, while philosophy deals with the constitution of events," DG 31). In *Deleuze and Geophilosophy*, Protevi and Bonta do not resolve these tensions so much as work within them, which testifies not only to the complexity of the domains they are dealing with but also the multiple avenues of research that are

being opened up by their work. The trajectory of Protevi's research remains one of the most promising in contemporary thought, and *Political Physics* and *Deleuze and Geophilosophy* are essential reading for anyone interested in the future directions of contemporary continental philosophy.

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