*Philosophy’s Artful Conversation*D. N. RodowickCambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015; hardback, 336 pp., $39.95; ISBN 978-0-674-41667-3.*Philosophy’s Artful Conversation* draws on Gilles Deleuze, Stanley Cavell, and the later writing by Ludwig Wittgenstein to defend a “philosophy of the humanities.” Both because film studies is historically a site of contention and theoretical upheaval and because Rodowick accepts Cavell’s idea that (at least in the American context) film is philosophy made ordinary, bringing philosophical questions of skepticism and perfectionism into filmgoers’ lives inescapably, it makes sense to build this vision for the humanities out of writing on film. Although presented as a monograph with a single argumentative strand, the book may be more profitably read as three partly distinct works: an examination of the boundaries of theory and philosophy that doubles as a defense of a “philosophy of the humanities,” an interpretation of Deleuze’s work on film that intriguingly prioritizes *What Is Philosophy?*, and an interpretation of Cavell that argues that his epistemological and ontological questions are subsumed under ethics in a way that pairs well with Deleuze’s emphasis on immanence.When read as a single monograph, the long discussions of Wittgenstein, Deleuze, and Cavell appear too digressive, not contributing clearly enough toward the central argument. In *Elegy for Theory*, the book that clears the way for this one by writing a selective history of film theory that emphasizes ruptures and differences, the long digressions served that book’s purpose of undermining unintentionally Whiggish histories of film theory that unwittingly present too narrow definitions of theory. In *Philosophy’s Artful Conversation*, the long discussions of Wittgenstein, Deleuze, and Cavell may dissuade the reader that Rodowick has his stated goal clearly enough in mind. Thus I recommend breaking apart *Philosophy’s Artful Conversation*’s three primary strands (a defense of a philosophy of the humanities, Deleuze interpretation, and Cavell interpretation) and focusing on whichever is most useful for the reader. I particularly recommend chapters 14-22 on Cavell, which are fresh, suggestive, and useful for considering how and why to teach Cavell in a course on film theory or philosophy of film. Like all great writing, Rodowick’s discussion of Cavell makes me want to read more, think more, teach more. Rodowick has written about Deleuze in greater detail elsewhere, but the wide-ranging and unifying discussion of Cavell is very welcome; it may be the most useful aspect of the book for those who teach film theory and philosophy of film and for those looking to establish common ground between philosophy and cognate disciplines in the humanities.In general, this book will be much more useful to teachers and advanced graduate students than to undergraduates. It may aid instructors (including professors and advanced graduate students) in how to think about their jobs, their research projects, and especially how and if to teach Deleuze and Cavell, more than it is likely to resonate with those first learning about theory, philosophy, and debates about disciplinary and methodological boundaries. It is primarily for those already invested in and at least somewhat knowledgeable about the contested questions.For those interested in the book’s stated concern with a “philosophy of the humanities,” I recommend beginning with the final chapter, in which Rodowick imagines a critical interlocutor posing questions that lead him to delineate more precisely what he has and hasn’t sought, argued, and accomplished. From there, go back to the preface, chapters 1-5, chapter 8, and chapters 12-14. These contain the clearest through-line of an argument. Rodowick’s fundamental commitment, variously stated, is that “to claim to know is always to value certain ways of knowing” (306). This is what interests him in Wittgenstein, Charles Taylor, Richard Rorty, Deleuze, Cavell, and others. In particular, Rodowick argues that Deleuze and Cavell, despite their divergent approaches, their nonintersecting histories, and their apparent prioritizing of metaphysical and epistemological problems, in fact share a commitment to subsuming metaphysical and epistemological problems under ethics. Thus, they exemplify the prioritization of ethics that is central to his idea of a philosophy of the humanities. Rodowick’s central argument begins with an initial look at theory and especially “good theory,” which is Rodowick’s name for the cognitivist turn initiated by David Bordwell’s historical poetics and Bordwell and Carroll’s *Post-Theory*. Calling their work “good theory” is partly ironic (it is good according to them, not others; for his part, Rodowick accepts that some of it is very useful) and partly polemic (they would not characterize their own work as “theory”). The alleged universality and “methodological monism” (19) of “good theory” are what raise it to the level of theory. As theory, its fatal flaw is its “insistence that causal accounts are the whole of reason or rationality” (33). He sees in their work a disturbing scientism that rules out all other claims to knowledge. Put differently, Rodowick’s primary complaints are that cognitivism, “good theory,” analytic philosophy, scientism, “analytical philosophy of science”—the target shifts as he writes, sometimes too broad, sometimes too narrow—fail to recognize that by adopting the scientific model of explanation (which is characterized as empirical, monistic, and aimed at certainty) they (a) fail to recognize their own limitations and (b) fail to appreciate that there can be no epistemology without ethical valuation. A philosophy of the humanities is needed because it is self-critical (responding to the first problem) and it prioritizes ethics (responding to the second).Rodowick’s vision of a philosophy of the humanities is thus already limited in a certain way; not any philosophical position is open. A philosophy of the humanities prioritizes ethics (by which he usually means a choice of how to live, but which must also mean which knowledge claims are valued). It is formulated in opposition to both theory and science, including science-like claims to certainty that occur in the humanities. Rodowick never addresses the possibility that science may be methodologically plural or that many scientists do not see themselves as engaged in tasks that secure certainty. His history of philosophy, which lays philosophy’s alleged obsession with certainty at Descartes’ door, is more caricature than history. (The historical work in *Elegy for Theory* is much stronger, as is the brief history of perfectionism that he borrows from Cavell.) Rodowick’s argument assumes too much to convince any opponent that a philosophy of the humanities (in his sense) is needed. For instance, he doesn’t defend his claim that there can be no knowledge without ethical evaluations. (He doesn’t, to take one example, discuss the possibility of normative principles within epistemology that are not ethical.) Perhaps this is why the extended discussions of Wittgenstein, Deleuze, and Cavell exist. If he sways the reader, it is by interpreting and explicating philosophical exemplars that can serve as models for how to satisfy the reader’s questions of how to live that hold off the disciplinary creep of scientism and obsession with certainty that so bother Rodowick (and perhaps the reader). The book’s value, therefore, is not primarily in arguing convincingly for how to reconcile the incorporation of brain science and empirical social science into the humanities with the classical questions of how one ought to live. Rather, its value is its usefulness for those already interested in understanding Deleuze or Cavell and for those who share an interest in reflecting on the current place of humanistic inquiry within one’s life and work.Timothy Yenter, Department of Philosophy and Religion, Bryant Hall, The University of Mississippi, P.O. Box 1848, University, MS 38677-1848; tpyenter@olemiss.edu