

○ BOOK REVIEW OF PATTON AND PROTEVI'S *BETWEEN DELEUZE AND DERRIDA*

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This is a book review of *Between Deleuze and Derrida*, edited by Paul Patton and John Protevi (Continuum Books, London, 2003. ISBN: 0-8264-5973-0).

Many people have noted the remarkable affinities, despite apparently deep disagreements, between the thought of Gilles Deleuze (hereafter GD) and Jacques Derrida (hereafter JD). This collection of essays examines the tensions and similarities between their views and uses those tensions as points of entry into deeper analyses of a wide range of topics on which both philosophers have written. These eleven articles take various approaches to these topics, and this results in interesting overlaps that nicely elucidate nuances and complexities in the thought of each philosopher, as well as their intellectual relationship.

In the first article, 'Future Politics', co-editor Patton explores the tension between the absolute and the conditional, or between the pure event and history, in the thought of both JD and GD, in relation to the 'opening towards the future' (21). Patton gives special attention to the themes of forgiveness and becoming. The second contribution, 'Living a Time Out of Joint', from Tamsin Lorraine, considers the relation between time (as an 'unrepresentable totality' (44)) and ethics, and the importance of the 'virtual past'. Again the importance of the connection between justice and the future appears. In the third essay, 'Deleuze and Derrida, Immanence and Transcendence: Two Directions in Recent French Thought', Daniel W Smith traces the 'trajectories' of immanence (predominant in GD) and transcendence (predominant in JD) in regard to the themes of subjectivity, ontology, and epistemology. Smith details important consequences for difference/*différance*, the possibility of negative theology, and the analysis of desire.

Chapter 4 is 'The Beginnings of Thought: The Fundamental Experience in Derrida and Deleuze', by Leonard Lawlor. This essay focuses upon the importance of the simulacrum and the rejection of any origin for both philosophers, and how that plays out in their understandings of sense and nonsense. Here the body and the voice play important roles, in the encounter with death. The following contribution, 'Ontology and Logography: The Pharmacy, Plato and the Simulacrum', by Eric Alliez, also pursues the theme of the simulacrum in relation to GD's and JD's respective critiques of Plato, with attention to the importance of the name and of reference. The articles by Lawlor and Alliez quite nicely complement one another. In the sixth essay, 'Algebras, Geometries, and Topologies of the Fold: Deleuze, Derrida and Quasi-Mathematical Thinking (with Leibniz and Mallarmé)', Arkady Plotnitsky explores interesting and suggestive distinctions between 'quasi-mathematical' elements in JD's 'algebraic' and GD's 'geometrical' and 'topological' thought. Plotnitsky gives special attention to the importance of the fold and the manifold. The seventh article is 'The Philosopher and the Writer: A Question of Style', by Gregg Lambert. Lambert attends to the important theme/metaphor of writing, and the related question of style, which is distinguished by linguistic economies of either 'boom' (GD) or 'crash' (JD) (130) – again, an intriguing and provocative set of images.

In chapter 8, 'Active Habits and Passive Events or Bartleby', Branka Arsić uses JD's and GD's respective readings of Melville's story to examine the differences and relations between their

views in regard to the subject and the event. Here distinctions appear between the 'Body without Organs' (GD, following Artaud) and the 'beyond' (JD), as two versions of the 'between' (148–149). The following essay, 'Beyond Hermeneutics, Deleuze, Derrida and Contemporary Theory', by Jeffrey T. Nealon, situates the thought of GD and JD within an 'anti-hermeneutic climate', defined by a 'swerve' around signification (160) – a move from the traditional question of 'what does the text mean?' to 'what does the text do?' – or perhaps better, 'how is the text used?' The question of the relation between resistance and theory becomes crucial. Alphonso Lingis's article, 'Language and Persecution', is a refreshingly concrete break from the theoretical abstractions that predominate in the other essays. Lingis addresses the relation between language and meaning, two forms of the subject, and the significance of the face. The final essay, by co-editor Protevi, 'Love', offers yet another intriguing and valuable distinction, between JD's aporias of love and 'love as endurance of aporia' (186), in contrast to GD's daunting but unavoidable concepts of the Body without Organs and 'becoming-woman'.

Despite the variety of topics and approaches, and the occasional penchant for bombastic titles, there is a strong and perhaps not surprising coherence among the articles. Nevertheless, the overlaps and redundancies, perhaps inevitable in a collection of this sort, help to clarify some rather subtle and often difficult distinctions. Numerous important thinkers lurk in the background (and sometimes the foreground) of many of the contributions: especially Plato, Nietzsche, Spinoza, Husserl, and Heidegger. None of the essays addresses specific religions or biblical texts directly, but many of the topics addressed will nevertheless be of interest to biblical scholars and others in related fields. Given the great interest in JD in recent biblical studies, and the almost complete lack of interest in GD so far, these articles suggest some intriguing questions. Does some residual theological interest among biblical scholars find JD's 'transcendental' approach to questions of text and context more comfortable than GD's 'immanent' one? Is the more radically engaged, overtly political style of GD (especially in his writing collaborations with the psychoanalyst, Félix Guattari) more ideologically threatening to biblical studies than the more contemplative, almost mystical style of JD? I am hopeful that *Between Deleuze and Derrida* will encourage biblical scholars, many of whom are already at least somewhat conversant with Derrida's ideas and approaches to texts, to look now toward Deleuze (and Guattari) for the rich possibilities that he (and they) offer to the reading of biblical texts.

The essays are not easy reading, and they do demand at least some acquaintance with the work of either JD or GD. The one thing I found myself wishing for most was a detailed discussion, itself a close reading of some text, that laid out the interpretative consequences of the differences (or *différences*) between the respective views and resultant 'hermeneutics' (or perhaps I should simply say reading styles, since neither of them practices hermeneutics in the traditional sense) of GD and JD. To be sure, there are in this book numerous extended discussions of specific texts that each of the philosophers has discussed at one point or another (most notably in Arsi's essay). However, there is also a strong proclivity in these articles (with the striking exception of Lingis's contribution) to focus the discussion primarily on abstract (transcendental?) distinctions and avoid more practical (immanent?) ones, as secondary discussions of each of these philosophers almost inevitably tend to do. This is contrary, I would suggest, to the practice and to the thought of both GD and JD.

In addition to a helpful introduction by the two co-editors, there is a valuable combined volume bibliography, and an index of subjects and names. Unfortunately, little direct attention

is paid to Guattari, Deleuze's collaborator on several important projects, including both *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. When Guattari is mentioned, it is often parenthetically, or as though there is no real distinction to be made between Deleuze writing alone and Deleuze writing with Guattari. If there is a slight preference given in these essays to Deleuze as opposed to Derrida, this is not necessarily a flaw, and it probably reflects a partiality on the part of the contributors toward the materialism and 'immanence' of GD's views. In any case, this is an excellent book, and it should be of considerable value to biblical scholars, as well as to theologians, philosophers of religion, and ethicists, and anyone else interested in either Deleuze or Derrida.