the dissolution of a democratically elected political party on the grounds that its agenda was anti-democratic? Or, in doing so, did it wrongfully license states' violation of their citizens' right to political participation?

All in all, this book provides a fascinating survey of a range of issues concerning the tensions between extreme speech and democracy. There is no doubt that it will be a valuable resource for scholars working in this area, and well as providing a stimulus to their further thought.

Simon Thompson
Department of History,
Philosophy and Politics,
University of the West of England, UK

Reflections on time and politics

Nathan Widder

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This book marks a significant stage in Widder's ongoing development of the philosophical bases of a pluralist political theory. Whereas his previous book *Genealogies of Difference* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002) unearthed subtle and often subterranean lineages of philosophical thought regarding difference with a view to showing how the all-too-easy appeal to this concept must be both more subtle and, once more subtle, becomes more demanding than we often assume, this book casts the same critical and constructive light on the notion of time. Widder is concerned that contemporary pluralists of various persuasions tend to assume uncritically that time is a form of movement. In particular, he has in his sights those contemporary heirs of Bergson who privilege an image of time as flowing and continuous movement. Widder claims that this image is 'analytically incomplete and inconsistent with respect to the principal philosophical sources inspiring this move' (p. 3). As such, those who employ this image of a

continuously flowing time in the service of creativity and affirmation fail to see the real 'promise' that a fully articulated philosophy of time has for contemporary political theory. For that promise to be fulfilled, argues Widder, time must be treated as a 'static structure or synthesis that *ungrounds* movement, including the movement of time' (p. 4). In defending this claim he aligns his work with that of Deleuze and, in this respect, the book can be read as a corrective to certain Deleuzian tendencies within political theory that make the 'easy association' between Bergson and Deleuze on the basis that 'time's flow is their shared ultimate concern' (p. 3). Bringing out Deleuze's debt to Nietzsche rather than Bergson, in this regard, Widder stresses that 'time and things existing in it are structured discontinuously, so that what "returns" is never identity or sameness, but only difference and divergence' (p. 7). As the fourth 'reflection' makes clear, however, this break with Bergson is carried out so as to renew Bergson's project of removing abstraction from our account of time precisely by reinstating the importance of discontinuity, the 'irrational cut', that Deleuze inherits from Nietzsche (a gesture Widder elegantly establishes against the alternative dialectical renewal of Bergson proposed by Bachelard).

This renewal of the discontinuous nature of time would be enough to constitute the book's contribution to contemporary debates, not least because it counters a current tendency towards mysticism in the reception of poststructuralist political theory from critics and supporters alike. But Widder is not content to rest here. He holds firm to the (Deleuzian) argument that identity is merely epiphenomenal not on the basis of time's continuous flow but rather on that of time's structural ungrounding. In the series of reflections that make up the middle of the book, Widder develops this claim through careful engagements with the Freudian and post-Freudian tradition, notably Klein and Lacan. By 'careful' here I mean that his interpretations avoid the polemics that have marked the Deleuze-inspired treatment of these thinkers, opting instead to read the thinkers on their own terms with a view to finding important connections between the psychoanalytical and poststructuralist traditions as well as excavating the real problems that nonetheless persist. The interpretation of Lacan, particularly in reflection 7, is exemplary in this regard. As with his treatment of Deleuze's relation to Bergson, Widder patiently reconstructs Lacan's account of desire so as to specify the break that Deleuze enacts, without the need for unproductive tirades.

In the microphysics of temporal discontinuity laid out in the opening reflections, Widder also finds the resources for a micropolitics that can challenge 'old and defunct perspectives', including those within poststructuralist political theory that cling on to the strategic necessity of identity-politics (p. 12). Part of what is at stake in this manoeuvre, however, is the meaning of 'politics' and questions remain regarding the strictly political nature of

the claims he makes about micropolitics. On the one hand, Widder's appeal to micropolitics may seem to privilege the critique of 'the categories of standard politics' (p. 181) without necessarily offering a positive account of a politics of creativity and innovation. On the other hand, and to the extent that there are positive claims made regarding the political importance of a time out of joint, these claims focus on the possibility of ethical forms of life, where the 'condition of this ethical affirmation is that the "I", the ego, must be taken far less seriously' (p. 99). In this respect, one of the questions that has haunted poststructuralism since its inception continues to haunt Widder's work: is there really (an affirmative) poststructuralist political theory?

That said, one cannot deny the importance of Widder's contribution because he has shown more clearly than most that what is at stake, at least in part, is not the continuous flow of time but time's discontinuous structure (as the 'deeper' condition for the ungrounding of any claim to identity). That this marks an important contribution has already been recognised by parts of the philosophical community concerned with the relationship between time, identity and creativity; witness the excellent review forum, including a reply by Widder, in the journal *Parrhesia* (no. 9, 2010). It is also time for contemporary political theorists to grasp what is at stake in the claim that what moves or changes 'in time' (and what political phenomenon does not?) is always out of joint with itself.

Iain MacKenzie
School of Politics and International Relations,
University of Kent, UK