

***The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, by Gilles Deleuze. Tr. Tom Conley. London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. 168 pp + xx. ISBN 0-8166-1601-9. \$39.95 hb, \$14.95 pb.**

Reviewed by Catherine Wilson, University of Alberta

In this fascinating but sometimes baffling book, the reader engages with a series of conditionals like the following: "If [the psychiatrist] Clérimbault manifests a delirium, it is because he discovers the tiny hallucinatory perceptions of ether addicts in the folds of clothing" (p.38). "If Leibniz's principles [of identity and sufficient reason] appear to us as cries, it is because each one signals the presence of a class of beings that are themselves crying and draw attention to themselves by these cries..." (p. 44). Deleuze's study is concerned with Leibniz and with leibnizianism; with the Baroque considered as a historical period and with the baroque considered as a persistent impulse in architecture, decoration, and in human thinking and system construction. Baroque and baroque are explorations, in his view, of *curvilinearity*, and Deleuze explores Leibniz's use of mathematical analogies from topology, projective geometry and the calculus. But his attention in the book is mainly fixed on two Leibnizian images. The first image is that of the two-storied house, typically represented in baroque painting by an angelic realm in the upper half of the picture hovering above the human realm. In Leibniz's writings, this translates into the world of matter (a seething, frothing, turbulent, unconscious mass of tiny beings) and the world of intelligent, self-conscious spirits on the upper level. The second image is that of the fold, which appears in the pleats and draperies of Baroque costume, sculpture, and interior decoration, and which reappears in Leibniz's mind-as-folded curtain, in his enveloped organisms, preformed under folds, and in the continuum, from whose recesses ever more numbers or particles can be pulled out. In clothing, waves, the brain, pleats of all sorts, surface disappears into interior. Deconstruction! But is it philosophy? Yes! Though Deleuze pulls his comparison-objects out of every corner of contemporary French culture, they are never arbitrary, and the book is focused clearly on its subject.

Here are three reasons to buy it and read it in addition to its charm: (1) It contains several valuable discussions of traditional problems in new terms: e.g., Leibniz's elusive notion of freedom, which Deleuze tries to explain in terms of the notion of "amplitude"; and the problem of why there are bodies at all—why a "separate" monadology is needed together with a theory of animated matter.

Deleuze shows that the answer to the question whether the two Leibnizian “worlds” (phenomenal and intelligible) stand in any kind of relation to each other is the same as the answer to the question how the Baroque heaven-and-earth are related to each other. They are both picturable in one picture (theory); co-present, but still different non-interacting “worlds.” (2) It shows how the timelessness of leibnizianism does not reside in any endorsable theses, but in Leibniz’s consummate expression of the baroque — multiplicity, excess, vertigo, ecstasy, scenography. (3) A scholarly and frequently illuminating book, it nevertheless offers an alternative to the biographical-contextual approach in historical studies as surely as it does to the analytical hunt for consistency and inconsistency. The translator Tom Conley’s insistence in his introduction on the importance of “geophilosophy” struck this reviewer as slightly strained, but he is to be roundly thanked for making this work available to English readers.

***Leibniz et la méthode de la science*, by François Duchesneau. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993, 413pp., 258FF pbk.**

**Reviewed by Murray Miles,
Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario**

This is a very impressive piece of philosophical scholarship, in the best tradition of French-language studies in the history of philosophy and science in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Its theme is Leibniz’s philosophy of science, which, François Duchesneau contends, is at bottom a doctrine of method in the seventeenth-century manner of Descartes. Leibniz’s philosophy of science, however, is as antithetical to the principles of Cartesian science as to those of the “experimental philosophers,” from Boyle and Hooke to Locke and Newton. If Leibnizian *science* was all but eclipsed by the powerful legacy of Newton and his followers, Leibniz’s *philosophy of science*, Duchesneau argues, has a special relevance for contemporary discussions of the respective roles of theory and observation, the status of theoretical entities, and the logical structure of scientific theories.

The first sub-section of Chapter One is devoted to the evolution of Leibniz’s conception of a *science générale*, the place within it of a *mathesis universalis*, and the place of both within a demonstratively structured encyclopedia of human knowledge. While covering in far briefer compass much of the same material as