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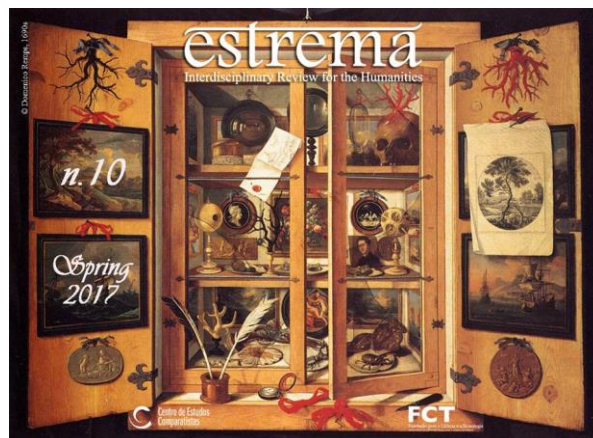
Revista Interdisciplinar de Humanidades

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Interdisciplinary Review for the Humanities

Para citar esta recensão / To cite this review:

Moura, Pedro. 2017. Review of *Dark Deleuze*, by Andrew Culp. *estrema: Revista Interdisciplinar de Humanidades* 10: 176-181.



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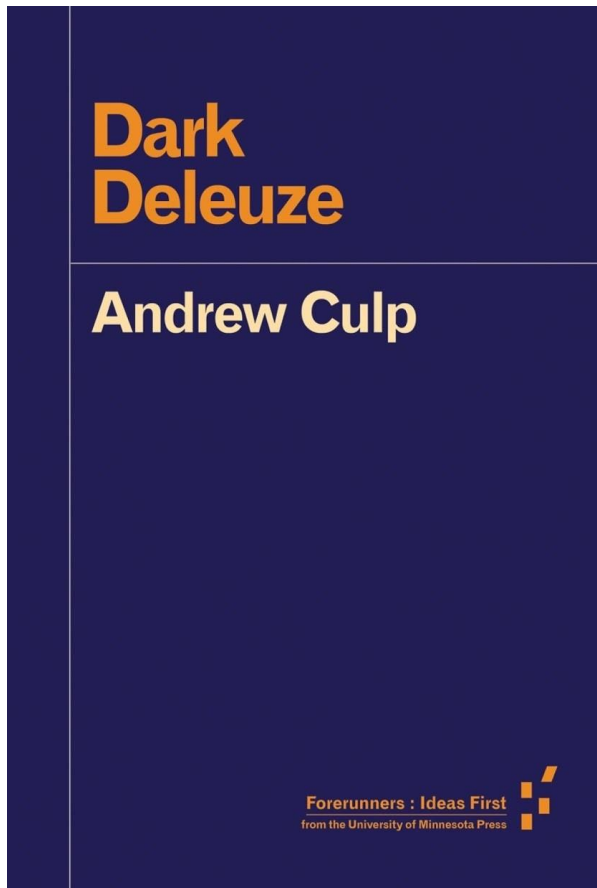
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**Culp, Andrew, *Dark Deleuze*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2016, 80 pp., ISBN 9781517901332 Paperback \$ 7.95.**

*Abbreviations.* Introduction. The Extinction of Being. Advancing toward Nothing. Breakdown, Destruction, Ruin. The Call of the Outside. Conclusion. *Acknowledgments. Bibliography.*

Pedro Moura<sup>1</sup>

Nowadays, it seems that there's a Deleuze for every season, as a number of disciplines and study areas have transformed Deleuze's concepts as useful and even "happy" tools to unlock the powers of connectivity, the



molecularization of agency, and a new trust into the very nature of human identity. In the developed world, the very existence of digital activism and subjectivization seems to validate many of the French philosopher's ideas. Decentralization becomes a buzzword that goes up to eleven when colored by "rhizome," and while it

seems to cash in an explanatory power from its apparently uncentralized

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structure, it actually loses efficiency when presenting an alternative to “business as usual.” The number of books about Deleuze, either attempting systematizations and applications or constructing specific disciplinary “Deleuzian” foci is staggering. And, to a certain extent, domestication of his work abounds, courtesy of canonicity and even his *becoming-Major*. Andrew Culp, in this very short but incisive book, is clear about his goal. Following the philosopher’s own advice about what books should do, and as a sorely needed antidote to the turning of Deleuze into “prophetic guruism or punctual agitprop” (7), Culp brings the “announcement of the death of this world [through which] I propose critiques of connectivity and positivity, a theory of contraries, the exercise of intolerance, and the conspiracy of communism” (66).

Divided into four chapters, the book seems to present a free-style, and even free-flowing, outing throughout Deleuze’s output, less from his earlier, historical books on (then) unintegrated philosophers than from his more theoretical, post-art, post-1980 titles, later work and the paramount, politicized collaborations with Guattari. On the one hand, one cannot really expect a systematic structure to be imposed on a philosopher who did not follow a systematic view of his own work, and whose “phases” were quite distinct and not always coalesced into a continuous perspective but rather resulted in an ever-shifting, ongoing, processual construction. On the other hand however, there is a notion of outward extension in Culp’s book, starting from issues related to individual subjectivity to the collectivity and finally an utter outside, a total alternative to the logic of late capitalist societies, a stoppage to the very productivistic forces that have turned

“earth” into “land”, “activities” into “labor” and “objects” into “capital”. Culp believes that Deleuze did not go as far as he could (or should?), and seeing that he failed “to cultivate a hatred for this world” (13), *Dark Deleuze* brings back negativity as a force. Although one could argue that Culp’s precise target of such hatred never gains a very precise contour (is it Governments, activist groups, internet-based click-solidarity, the unrelenting co-opting power of capitalism, the complicity of the “responsible consumer”?), it is the movement of the thought itself that is cultivated in order to be able to think of a true, radical alternative. Nothing less but the end of this world (cross-reading it with D. Haraway’s recent *Staying With the Trouble: Making Kin with the Chthulucene* would probably produce sharp results).

Culp wants us to return to a wilder, almost unknowable, and alien Deleuze. (An alien, according to Culp, comes from an absolute outside; it is not familiar in any way). Not something easily assimilable, understandable and, even worse, *applicable* willy-nilly. Culp wants us to be reminded of “the antiphenomenology of Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism, which is explicitly nonhuman, prepersonal, and asubjective” (37).

Let us be reminded of Deleuze’s own metaphor about painting and writing, which he seemingly got from Gérard Fromanger, which turns the Romantic idea of the original blank page or canvas on its head: painting and writing are described as starting with a black page, filled with everything that came before; one then proceeds to take away everything unneeded from it. Culp’s unrelenting “negative” terms - “the extinction of being,” “conspirational communism,” “the “nothing,” “breakdown, destruction,

ruin,” “asymmetry,” and “the outside” - clean up Deleuze’s cluttered reception history of the last decades in order to rediscover a figure that is a pristine, cutting and hard weapon against the present state of affairs, seen as “inevitable” by the power structures. It is a deeply moving political booklet, passionate even, which follows no preconceived ideas of how to start such discussions, as when he writes that “no matter how perfect, democracy always relies on a transcendent sovereign judgment backed by the threat of force” (42). In a time when “tolerance,” “representative democracy,” and “choice” open up the path to openly racist, misogynist, ethnocentric, nativist, and culturally xenophobic discourses from several sectors (both elected officials and so-called “system outsiders”), it is time to scratch the surface of “‘democratic’ Deleuzes [which] are the inventions of his commentators” and “render his Marxism in darker terms than Rancière” (42). This is an era in which the incorporeality, facelessness and atomization of political power turns any singular grassroots action into an almost empty threat. Where the “dominant feelings today... are expressed as vulnerability in the pervasiveness of trauma, as a constant low-level distress, and through a generalization of contingency” (49).

How to respond then? To that effect, Culp uses Deleuze’s own examples, such as Black Panther George Jackson or Hakim Bey’s notions of the Temporary Autonomous Zones as ideas that keep the revolution line of thought active, that is to say, *revolutionary* proper, and not as a new setting of conditions that may, or *will*, be eventually co-opted by all-consuming capitalism.

The author himself acknowledges in his conclusion that the book

may be “too condensed”, “quick” and even “perverse” (65) but such is the imperative of a “negative project.” Despite its conciseness, *Dark Deleuze* is an intense, attentive reading not only of Deleuze himself but also of his reception, both academic and popular (especially in the Anglophone circles), and while it may be associated with other works being presently done on Deleuze, its radical manifesto-like quality gives it a riveting urgency. Perhaps more suited to readers familiar with this very reception and discussions, it is nevertheless an inviting book for a broader audience.

*Dark Deleuze* belongs to the newly minted Forerunners: Ideas First collection from UMP, which publishes texts from the fringes of academic discourse, as much of the material gathered in Culp’s book was indeed first published in his own blog. One could even say, in Deleuzian terms, that this is a *minor* discourse. Nevertheless, in spite of this (or *because* of this), *Dark Deleuze* offers an inviting, stimulating and fresh ground to broach its discussion points.

**Andrew Culp** is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Emerging Media and Communication at the University of Texas, Dallas. He is interested in the afterlives of media technologies born out of the anti-globalization movement. He serves on the General Board of the Cultural Studies Association. His work has appeared in numerous venues, including *Radical Philosophy*, *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *parallax*, and *boundary 2* online.