

bill ross in memorium

ashley woodward

It is with a mixture of pleasure and pain that we present in this issue a text by Bill Ross, ‘Order and Complexity,’ which is an excerpt from his book *Order and the Virtual: The Philosophy and Science of Deleuzian Cosmology* (Edinburgh University Press, June 2024). Pleasure in seeing the publication of this profound work on Deleuze and science, which manages to masterfully chart original territory in the saturated field of Deleuze studies, and to significantly advance our understanding of this most important of philosophers. Pain that it is also the last substantial work we will see from him.

Bill Ross (1964-2022) was not directly involved with *Parrhesia*, but worked

with a number of its editors, past and present (Arne De Boever, Jon Roffe, and Ashley Woodward) on the translation series *Groundworks*, published by Rowman & Littlefield. An extract from his co-translation of Michel Serres's *The Birth of Physics* from this series, along with an introduction written by him, was published in *Parrhesia* issue 27. It is therefore fitting that we pay tribute in these pages to the friend and colleague we have lost far too soon.

Thanks are due to David Webb and Robin Durie for selecting the text, and to Bill's literary executrix Kerry Gorrill and Carol MacDonald at Edinburgh University Press for granting permission for this publication.

Bill completed a PhD in philosophy at Staffordshire University, where he more recently taught on the MA in the Philosophy of Nature, Information, and Technology. In an earlier phase of his life, he was managing editor of the independent publisher Clinamen, which specialised in continental philosophy, especially in its connections with the natural sciences.

I only met Bill in person on a handful of occasions, but the warmth, generosity, and intellectual companionship he extended me made this unimportant. It was with sadness that I learned of his passing, regret that I will never enjoy his company again, and also the distinct feeling that the world is the poorer that it will not get to see more of his great philosophical potential come to fruition.

In a text he sent me shortly before his unexpected passing ('Serres and Lyotard: Global Society, Immortality and Informatics,' forthcoming in a special issue of *Angelaki*), Bill recounts a Woody Allen joke

in which his friends console him; 'stop obsessing about death; you'll never die, you'll always live on in your work,' to which he replies, 'I don't want to live on in my work, I want to live on in an apartment in the upper east side.'

Immersed in the demands of academic employment, I didn't manage to read this until after I heard he was gone, which gave the levity intended here quite a

different tone. It seems appropriate to quote. Although it is a meagre second-best, and little consolation, our intention here in publishing his work is, of course, that he will live on in it.