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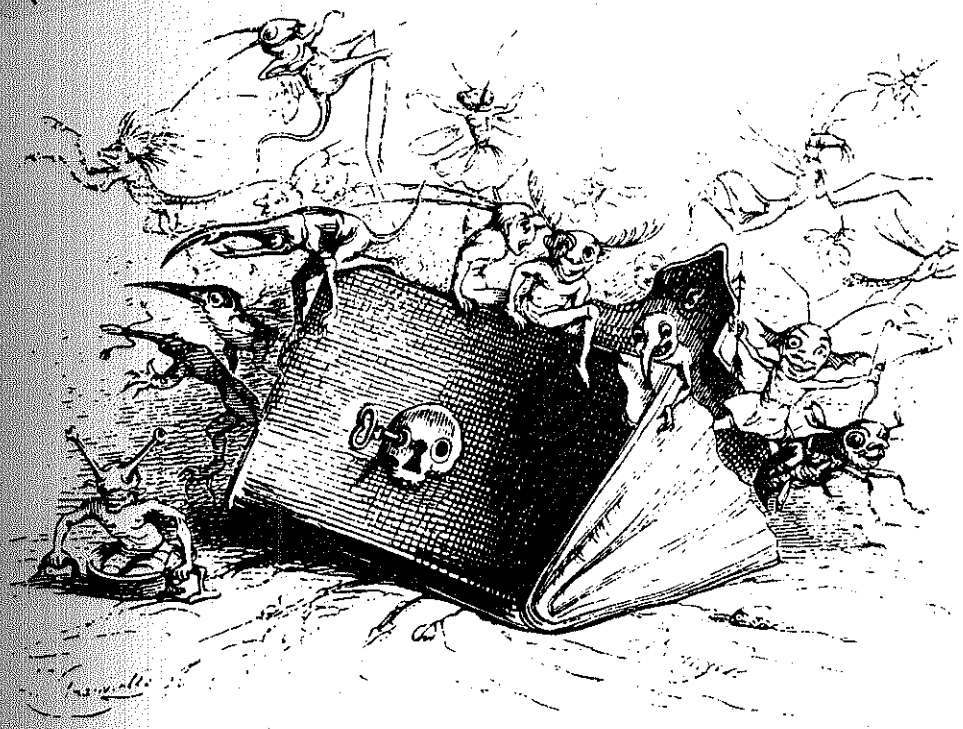
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RESPONSIBILITIES OF DECONSTRUCTION

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Edited by Jonathon Dronsfield & Nick Midgley

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Edited by Jonathon Dronsfield & Nick Midgley

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Perhaps or Maybe

Jacques Derrida with Alexander Garcia Düttmann

A discussion organised by the Talks Department of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, which took place at the Royal Institute of British Architects on 8 March 1996

AGD:
I would like to start with three different passages from one of Jacques' latest books, *Politiques de l'amitié*, all of which have to do with texts by Nietzsche, specifically *Beyond Good & Evil*, and are taken from an analysis of the perhaps and what a certain dangerous perhaps might mean in Nietzsche. I will try to provide my own translations: 'Ce qui va venir *peut-être*, ce n'est pas seulement ceci ou cela, c'est enfin la pensée du *peut-être*, le *peut-être* même.'[1] 'That which may *perhaps* happen, that which may *perhaps* come, is not only this or that thing, it is the thought of the *perhaps*, the *perhaps* itself.' Second: 'Or la pensée du "peut-être" engage peut-être la seule pensée possible de l'événement.' [*loc cit*] 'Perhaps the thought of the "perhaps" opens up the only possible thought of the event.' And the third quote: 'Il n'est pas de catégorie plus juste pour l'avenir que celle du "peut-être".' [*loc cit*] 'No category is more appropriate to the coming of the future than the category of the "perhaps".' My first question is very simple, why do you think this category of the perhaps is or may be such a decisive category to think the coming of the future and of the event?

JD:
Perhaps the choice of title for this event, *Perhaps or Maybe*, perhaps or maybe this choice had to do with this situation, that is, the necessity for me to address such an audience in English, improvising without knowing in advance what is going to happen. I think it appropriate for a discussion under this title to be almost totally improvised, just to see what may happen, in relation to this language and the fact that I speak a foreign language. Coming here in a cab with Geoff Bennington and Alex we discussed the possible impossible translations of the (second) sentence (above) in which the word *engage* appears. We had some difficulties in translating this word. I told my friends that I was intimidated by this occasion, which is supposed to be a happening, something unpredictable for me. Now, imagine that in order to produce a happening, and to escape the difficulty, from the beginning I would say, 'well, this word *engage* is totally untranslatable. It implies "involves" or "opens up" or "commits" or "pledges", it cannot be translated into English, so let's stop it, let's end the session here.' Then perhaps we

would leave, and perhaps that might be a good unpredictable event. But I am not courageous enough to do this. As you already realise, the indeterminacy of this title *Perhaps or maybe* opens up the space for a question on language. In French we have only one word, *peut-être*, in German, in Nietzsche's texts, it is always *vielleicht*. Why do you have two words in English? That is the question I wanted to ask. The hypothesis I hand over to you is that with maybe you have a relation to the future, to possibility, to something possible which may occur or not occur, which nevertheless includes a reference to being - 'it may be or not' - and with this reference to being you have a number of philosophical, ethical, and political consequences (perhaps we'll come back to these). Whereas in perhaps or perchance the reference to the event, to what happens, is more obvious. And then we would have to address the question of what an event means, what the happening of an event means in terms of perhaps rather than maybe. So, in trying to answer Alex's question, what I try to show in *Politics of Friendship* is that the category of perhaps is perhaps the best category to refer to what remains to come.

I would distinguish between the future and what is to come. The future means something which will be or shall be or should be, which will be present tomorrow. When I define a future I define something which will happen, which is supposed to happen, but in order to be, tomorrow or after tomorrow, present as such. The essence of the future is an essential relation to being, to being present. 'It will be present in a moment', 'It will be present tonight or tomorrow or in the next millennium', but in the form of the present. Whereas the event as such, that is, what is to come [*à-venir*, *venire*], does not necessarily come under the form of something present, is not something which would fall under the ontological category of being present. One of the reasons I insist on or grant some privilege to the modality of perhaps in reference to the 'to come' - and the example which comes back again and again in my texts is democracy to come, which doesn't mean that there will be true democracy present tomorrow but that democracy is in its structure to do with the promise, with the 'to come' - is because, in order to refer to an event to come *as* an event, a happening to come, I must not know or predict or be certain that it will happen. If I anticipate this event as a future, if I know that it will necessarily happen, if I interpret it as an effect of a cause, then, unfolding such a programme, I simply erase the eventness of the event; I anticipate and predict, and by anticipating and by predicting I cancel the eventness of the event. So, in order for me to relate to what could come or even what should come in the form of an event, I must suspend any knowledge, any present certainty about what is to come. The modality of the maybe is in fact the modality of any relation to what remains to come.

Diogenes reports a sentence attributed to Aristotle, one which has been quoted again and again, by Montaigne, by Kant, by Blanchot and others, it is almost a proverb, 'Oh my friends, there is no friend'. Nietzsche, in *Human, All Too Human*, reverses the sentence in a provocative and paradoxical fashion, as an exchange between a dying sage and a madman: ' "Perhaps the happy moment of joy will come one day where everyone will say

'Friends, there are no friends'", says the dying sage. "Enemies, there are no enemies" cries the living madman that I am.'[2] Now, I try to draw a number of consequences from Nietzsche's transformation of Aristotle's sentence, but I insist first of all on the perhaps, the *vielleicht* which opens Nietzsche's statement; then I refer to another text by Nietzsche, to *Beyond Good and Evil*; in the first part of this book, called "On the prejudices of philosophers", Nietzsche asks 'Who is willing to concern himself with such dangerous perhaps's? For that we have to await the arrival of a new species of philosopher, one which possesses tastes and inclinations opposite to and different from those of its predecessors, philosophers of the dangerous perhaps in every sense. And, to speak in all seriousness, I see such new philosophers arriving.'[3] What does Nietzsche mean by this? Earlier in the text he insists on the fact that traditional metaphysicians could not tolerate the perhaps, or were constantly rejecting the perhaps as a category or modality of empiricism, of relativism, as a way of taking contingency seriously, or aleatory logic, as opposed to necessity, to truth, to knowledge, and so on and so forth. In fact there are a number of such examples where great philosophers, such as Hegel for instance, are very ironic towards philosophers interested in the perhaps or maybe, defining them as empiricists, or philosophers devoted to opinion rather than science, to contingency rather than necessity. By taking interest in the perhaps Nietzsche wanted to criticise, to deconstruct, to destroy or reject the greatest tradition in philosophy. What he says in this passage is that traditional metaphysicians could not tolerate either the contingency of the aleatory, or the opposition of value: the fact that the true could be false, the false could be true, with no dialectical solution. It's a way of replacing the logic of necessity, the logic of dialectics, with a relationship to the future, to what is coming, to what could come to us under the modality of the maybe.

Now, if we take seriously the experience of the maybe, we realise that in any experience of what remains to come there is a surprise. Who knows what will happen in a moment? For instance, what I don't know is whether someone in the audience will stand up and interrupt the discussion. Something terrible may happen: but that's the condition for something to happen. For something to happen we have to await the surprise, we have to wait for something which cannot be waited for, cannot be expected. It's a way of expecting without being expectant, waiting not only without knowing what we are waiting for but without waiting. For the moment I would like to define in relation to the perhaps what in *Politics of Friendship* and in *Spectres of Marx* I call the messianic, messianicity without messianism. In what one usually understands under the term messianism, in Judaism, in Christianity, in Islam, the Messiah is expected, could come any time, so we wait for the Messiah without knowing when or where he will come. But, in messianism classically or conventionally interpreted, the Messiah is nevertheless announced, he is already determined so to speak. What I call messianicity without messianism refers to the promise of something or someone to come in such a way that does not anticipate at all what or who will come, when or where. An absolute openness

to what is coming. And which in fact is not only untrue to religious messianisms but is deviant from what in Husserlian phenomenology and in Heidegger's thinking is defined as the horizon of expectation; that is, even if we don't know what is coming to us, nevertheless there is a background or an horizon from or against which the determined figure of the event comes. Whereas in what I call messianicity it is this very horizon which is lacking; I am not even prepared to be surprised, I am not even expecting, I am not even waiting for what is coming. And that's the condition for the coming of what is coming. Last week, in the seminar I am currently giving on hospitality, I was quoting a text from the Bible, 'Malachi', in which the prophet Elijah is sent by God. You know that in Jewish families a place is kept free for Elijah, we never know whether Elijah will come or not come, if and when he will come; perhaps he will come one day, perhaps he will come that night, and in the manner of hospitality we keep a seat for him at the table. God addresses the Jewish people and says 'Well, I sent Elijah to you and he will announce the coming of the Messiah.' Elijah is not the Messiah, nevertheless he is announced, he is already named and sent by God. So however pre-messianic he may be, Elijah has already a determined figure. We can know who we are waiting for. But what I mean by messianicity is not only pre-messianic, it is also pre-Elijah, it must remain totally open. But I am unhappy with this 'open', it may have the connotation of the horizon, in the sense of being open to what may come or not. But I am not even open to *that*, *that* may happen at any moment, and even though I am obsessed with that I am not even prepared for the coming of that. Again, the modality of the perhaps might be, perhaps, the most useful modality to phrase what I am describing. Perhaps. And that's the condition for an event. Unless the event is so surprising that I am not even prepared for the surprise, it is not an event. It is the same with the other; the otherness of the other, the experience of the otherness of the other implies that the other may come when I am totally unprepared: that is the condition of the other remaining other. Otherness and death are of course the main examples or figures of this 'to come' under the modality of the maybe.

Let's return to the grammar. Maybe is an adverb, it is not a verb, it is not a noun, maybe is a small word, an adverb which does not make a sentence. Usually, when we propose a title, we use a noun or a sentence. A title for a conference usually contains a noun. We could have named this session 'The event' or 'What is an event?' or 'What is the other?' and so on and so forth. While naming it - without naming it - *Perhaps or maybe*, we left everything suspended without really knowing what the subject was. That's what I mean - to experience the maybe we don't know what the subject is. Let's take the example of the other. If I am absolutely sure, no matter how undetermined he or she may be, that the other is a subject, then their surprise is under control: as a subject with a name or an identity the subject is identical with him or herself and, no matter how surprising they may be, if a human subject their surprise will be under control to some extent. Whereas the alterity I am referring to under the modality of maybe is perhaps radically inhuman, radically non-subjective, a non-subject. A subject is an identity with a

permanent substratum, and normally in philosophy we distinguish between the subject as substance and its attributes as accidental, but to a subject as such nothing happens. Or, if something happens, it is precisely as accident, as qualities, as attributes; even if they are non-contingent attributes, necessary accidents, they are external to the subjectivity of the subject. The subject as such doesn't happen. For the other to happen, to come to me, to come to us - and what is true for the other is true for me - maybe the perhaps is needed. But the *need* for the perhaps is not necessary. If you transfer to the need the necessity you exclude from the perhaps then it amounts to the same. Even the need for the perhaps is not a necessity. So, what are we going to do with this strange need which is not necessary. Usually we define the essence of need by necessity, we need what is necessary. In that case we don't even need what we need for something to happen.

[A member of the audience interrupts JD to ask that AGD be allowed to say something]

JD:
Thank you for that... That's the best surprise for me! I was waiting for that for a long time.

AGD:
That's the sort of happening you were anticipating, without wanting to anticipate it. I shall try to grasp the occasion. As I was listening to you I thought that what you were saying might be a good definition of what is called an 'occasion' or an 'opportunity'. Something happens, an event we cannot foresee, and we grasp it as an occasion, as an opportunity for things to change. An occasion is that which we cannot expect, it happens unexpectedly, we grasp it without having expected it. So we must ask ourselves: how can we recognise an event as being an occasion, or as carrying an opportunity? How can we seize the opportunity? How can an event affect us in such a way that we experience it as an event and recognise it as an occasion? Must the radical suspension of all expectation not be accompanied by some kind of expectation? I'll try to put the question differently, in more general terms. Death is something that can happen any time, but I cannot expect it, I am never prepared for it. At the same time, though, I might be obsessed with it, or I might think of it again and again. I am then preparing myself for it. What would be an *ars moriendi* which would take into account these two contradictory and incompatible moments which seem to define any possible experience or non-experience of the event? How do they relate to each other? On the one hand we cannot but expect the event, because it will affect us and we will experience it only to the extent that we were prepared to receive it. Recognising and grasping an occasion and thinking of death would be two possible examples here. And on the other hand there is no event without a radical suspension of all expectation and anticipation, of all possible relation to it. We relate and

we do not relate to the event, both at the same time. How can we think this 'at the same time'?

JD:
I don't think there is an *ars moriendi*. Of course, we do our best to reach such an art of dying, by being obsessed with it, by preparing ourselves for death, and philosophy is this discipline: it prepares us for dying in the best way. Nevertheless, if there is death, if death happens, it will defeat any kind of art of dying. What I describe as the modality of the maybe does not imply that we should teach ourselves or deliberately choose the maybe, it is not a matter of choice. We try all the time to resist the perhaps, to protect ourselves against the absolutely unpredictable coming. But, even if we succeed in anticipating or predicting everything, what happens is surprising. For instance, as soon as I entered this room I knew in a way that someone would at some point interrupt me, and I knew it would come from here! [JD points at the member of the audience who had earlier interrupted him] I knew but I couldn't be sure. So I was getting impatient, how long should I go on speaking? What is he doing? Finally, when it happened it was nevertheless a surprise, a good one, but I was prepared, and very precisely prepared; but the fact that we are prepared does not mean that we are not surprised. What I try to describe under the strange word perhaps is not an art of living, an ethics, it's an affection, we are exposed to the perhaps. And we have to take into account the fact that, however prepared, protected, resisting we may be, we remain exposed to what is coming. And even if we know in advance the details of what is coming, the *fact* that it comes, in its factuality, is absolutely unpredictable, it's new, it's a novelty. In everything which happens there is such a novelty at work, and we cannot erase it; no science, no programme, no predictability could erase such a novelty.

Let's take a political example. Ten or fifteen years ago we could know, some of us could predict that at some point the Berlin Wall would fall, that in Czechoslovakia the totalitarian regime would collapse, that apartheid would be abolished, it was not unpredictable; and we could provide a number of analyses which could prepare us for these events. Nevertheless, no-one could predict exactly when it would occur, and the surprise was total - not in terms of the *content* of what happened, but as to the moment, there was something unpredictable in what was predicted. It had to do with the rhythm not with time, at least not with time understood as a succession of now points, as a linear succession of present moments; if we think not simply of such a time but of rhythm, that is something qualitative, acceleration and slowing down, then there was something in the rhythm which remained totally unpredictable. You are right, it's a self-contradictory structure. We cannot handle this structure in the form of ethics and politics. We cannot say well, there is a good way of handling the contradiction, that is ethics and politics, we cannot say we should handle the contradiction in such and such a way, there is something which cannot be mastered here. This is not good reason to give up of course, to be

responsible in ethics and politics implies that we try to programme, to anticipate, to define laws and rules, and so on and so forth, but if possible without cancelling the happening of what happens, that is, what is at stake here, the challenge, is to do our best to predict, to prepare, to programme, to organise ethics and politics, social security, which is a system to soften or cancel the surprise: we have to do this, master the surprise, without, if possible, erasing the heterogeneity, the alterity of what is coming, and that is the political and the ethical challenge.

AGD:
You mentioned affection, being affected by; do you think that a certain experience of this contradiction, of the necessity of this contradiction, that on the one hand we have to suspend all possible expectation....

JD:
No, I don't say we *have* to suspend...

AGD:
We cannot but?

JD:
It *is* suspended. Even if we don't know it, it's not something we decide.

AGD:
It is already suspended, and we try to relate to it. So, we have a certain experience - I don't want to say knowledge but experience - of the necessity of this contradiction and of the fact that, as you might want to say, all we can do is endure it, and again this would not even be a decision because we are already in that situation, in that configuration. But does the fact that we do have something like an experience of the contradiction, and that you can say what you are saying now, and can try to show why this is a necessary contradiction, one that has not been waiting for us, for our decision to make it necessary, does that affect the way in which we are exposed? Is our exposure itself affected by the fact that in some way we might know something or experience something about the necessity of the contradiction? Are we not exposed differently?

JD:
I would be tempted to say that on the one hand to formalise the contradiction in this way is totally useless, that is to say we won't draw any consequences from it; it is a philosophical formalisation and things will remain the way they were before, and we'll continue to be exposed without knowing how to handle it; it is philosophical speculation, and a small community will be cleverer at phrasing this problem, at discussing it at

conferences, at universities, but it won't change anything. But on the other hand I would say the opposite, and I'll try to show this in a more concrete way. Let me go back to what I am doing right now in my seminar in Paris on hospitality, because the problem of hospitality is a major one today. Of course it is an eternal problem, but it has some specific features, today, in our European societies which deserve attention. And, of course, since we are here in a situation of hospitality, I select this topic to show what I am trying to show. In principle there is a law of hospitality, what I would call the unconditional law of hospitality; that is, a law which tells us or invites us, or gives us the order or injunction to welcome *anyone*, any other one, without checking at the border who he or she is, what his or her nationality is, it's a way of being open to whoever comes. Whoever comes should feel at home here. That's the unconditional law of hospitality. Of course there is no family, no country, no nation, which would open unconditionally its doors, its borders, etc. So then we define in the plural laws of hospitality, with restrictions, conditions, customs, and so on. Now, if we consider this unconditional law of hospitality, it should be open, hospitality should be offered to any *one*, anyone in the singular, any singular one, any other as a singular. Hospitality is offered always to some one in the singular. The otherness of the other who comes to me is singular, he is irreplaceable by any other one, hospitality is offered to an irreplaceable other as a singularity. But the law says to me that you should open your house, your borders, your country, to *any* other, to *any*one. We have the universality of the law, which is its ideal concept, and we have the singularity of the other. Since we cannot practically, pragmatically or realistically open the door to anyone, since we cannot dream of such a hospitality, which could be perverse if we were simply to open the door, we have to make decisions as to how to respect the unconditional law of hospitality, and at the same time we have to restrict, we have to have a policy of hospitality, public or private. In that case we have to define a policy of absolutely unconditional openness to whoever is coming *and*, because this is absolutely impossible, we have to produce laws and rules in order to select, in the best possible way, the ones we host, we welcome. This is an example of a situation where we must remain absolutely open to who is coming, but nevertheless try to adjust our policy as far as possible, and the conditions as far as possible, to this unconditionality. And this is in every singular instance a political and an ethical challenge. That is, to prepare ourselves for the other. This problem is a major problem today in Europe because, among other things, the European Union, with the Schengen agreement, has opened the borders inside whilst locking the borders outside. Today it is not simply one problem among others, it is the problem of nation states in the European Union. It is the problem of who is to come.

AGD:
If the hypothesis is that there is something like radical evil, my question would be how does this law of hospitality in its universality relate to the possibility that that which is

coming might be of the order of radical evil? Or, to put it differently, how does the possibility of an unexpected and radically evil event affect the event itself and our relation to it? How can we show hospitality to the event, to the coming of the other, if there is always the possibility that that coming is radically evil?

JD:
Of course, we could give a number of names to the evil, there are a number of bad things which could come, predictably or unpredictably. I want to try to address here the problem of radical evil in itself, the way Kant and others dealt with it. Even if we don't think there *is* such a thing as radical evil - and I wouldn't want to draw any conclusion on this, whether man is or is not bad, radically bad or not, whether there is or is not radical evil in history; what I do want to say is this, and it's minimal - if we exclude the mere possibility of such a radical evil, then there will be no event at all. When we are exposed to what is coming, even in the most generous intention of hospitality, we must not exclude the possibility that the one who is coming is coming to kill us, is a figure of evil. If we excluded this possibility from the beginning, either philosophically by thinking there is no such thing, or by thinking we are able to control it, then there would be no perhaps and no event. For an event to happen, the possibility of the worst, of radical evil, must remain a possibility, something that may indeed happen. Otherwise the good event, the good Messiah, could not happen either. For an event, even a good event to happen the possibility of radical evil must remain inscribed as a possibility. Your question was, if it remains inscribed as a possibility how does it affect our experience of what is coming? Well, I think it affects it intrinsically. Because, when I experience something good, the coming of a friend for example, if I am happy with a good surprise, then in this experience of happiness, within it, the memory of or the lateral reference to the possible perversion of it must remain present, in the wings let's say, otherwise I could not enjoy it. So, the pleasure, the enjoyment is conditioned by the reference to the worst. This is true even in the most peaceful experiences of joy and happiness. The experience might have been terrible. Not only that it *might* have been terrible, but the threat remains. That this good friend may become the devil, may be perverse. The perversity is not an accident which could be once and for all excluded, the perversity is part of the experience.

AGD:
So would you say that the experience of an event as an experience of an irreducible 'to come' is always an experience of undecidability, because it could always be radical evil or evil that is coming, and because experiencing the coming means taking into account that possibility in a certain way?

JD:
There are many layers of undecidability here. The most obvious one is the one we mention right now. I cannot decide what or who is coming. The fact that I am exposed and vulnerable to the good and to the evil event means that I am not in a position to decide. Being exposed to the 'to come' I am not able to make a decision. Now, this situation doesn't mean that I am simply neutral and suspending any decision. I don't decide to be in undecidability. And the other way round, there would be no ethical or political responsibility without this first layer of undecidability. If everything is known or calculable, then there will be no decision. For a decision to occur some incalculability, some undecidability, must structure the experience. This undecidability is not, as has often been described in a stereotyped way, opposed to decision, it is the condition of any decision, *if* there is a decision. *If* a decision happens, and we'll never know in terms of theoretical knowledge if a decision as such has taken place, we cannot theoretically determine whether a decision has been made and say 'I have taken my responsibility, I'm sure of it, and this can be verified,' no, an action, responsibility, a decision cannot become the object of a theoretical statement. One must always say - and this is again the appearance of the perhaps - a decision, *if* it takes place, if there is such a thing, *s'il y en a*, if a decision is made, if a responsibility is taken, then it is only to the extent that some undecidability has been experienced, has been traversed. Without in the first place crossing this space of undecidability, the decision is only a calculation, a causality, a non-decision.

AGD:
Then the following question could be asked. If no decisions are taken without a certain experience of undecidability, and a decision is that which is taken in that experience, and if democracy is essentially a democracy to come because every decision that aims to be democratic is suspended the very moment it is taken, then isn't there a risk of paralysis involved? Rather than exposing us to a democracy to come, the awareness of an irreducible and necessary undecidability would immobilise us, would prevent us from taking a decision. A decision always calls for a new decision, the undecidability reproduces itself incessantly - a paralysing thought.

JD:
Undoubtedly there is such a risk. And we should not reduce the risks in making decisions. A decision with no risk is a non-decision, a calculation. There is no responsibility without running some risk. You refer to the risk of becoming paralysed, and being compelled to make another decision, again and again. What is paralysis? There is a paralysis which consists in keeping immobile, and that's a necessary moment for reflection. You must at some point stop acting in order to act. Then there is another paralysis, where people never stop acting, people who are absolutely sure that they are making the right decisions and

acting responsibly, who are incessantly doing something, who are compelled to act. Activism isn't simply the opposite of paralysis. I don't want to choose between paralysis and non-paralysis. As to the necessity of making another decision after the first one, again and again, well, that's the structure of decision. When I make a decision I say yes, I sign, I commit myself, I make a pledge, I take responsibility for doing this, I accept to be involved in this action. Such a commitment in the form of a decision has to be repeated at least a second time, as a new decision; that is, a political decision, an ethical decision, calls for another one. We are never at peace with a decision, we have to start again and again, after a decision we are again paralysed because we have to confirm the decision by a second decision. Let's take the example of the oath, 'I swear I'll come to London tomorrow to give a lecture, I promise'. This 'yes', this promise has to be performed once, for the first time, but has to be immediately confirmed by a second yes, that is I commit myself to confirm the yes tomorrow or in a moment, and that's *another* decision, even if it has the same form. Responsibility implies that we make another decision after the first one, and again and again. If you think when you get married it's enough to make a decision once and not the day after, then it's not a promise, it's not a decision. And the second decision is as new as the first. The content is the same - and it is different.

AGD:
It occurs to me that if we try to translate what you have said into a possible politics, we would have at least two ways of doing so. On the one hand, we could be talking in the name of reformism, because each decision calls for another one. We face an ongoing process of reform after reform after reform. But at the same time we could radicalise that thought into something like a permanent revolution. Would you be happy with such translations?

JD:
Yes, I'm rather happy... if you don't want me to choose between reformation and revolution. A decision is a revolution, and that's why we're never sure it happens. That's why we must say ..*if* there is a decision. A decision, *if* there is such a thing, must be revolutionary. A decision means cutting into, there is no decision without interrupting the usual course of history. A decision, if there is such a thing, must interrupt the usual sequence of history. When I referred a moment ago to messianicity without messianism, I was describing a revolutionary experience. A Messiah is not simply someone coming, he is someone coming as the figure of justice, the promise of something absolutely new coming. But when I insisted on the fact that we must nevertheless prepare the revolution, it was because we must not simply be open to whatever comes. The revolution, however unpredictable it may be, can and must be prepared for in the most cautious, slow and labourious way. But it *is* a political aporia, it *is* a terrible choice.

AGD:
If that which comes might be radical evil, why do you call the coming 'messianicity'? Given that the Messiah is, as you have just said, the one who comes to do justice, why not choose another word than 'messianicity', which already inclines the balance towards the good rather than the always given possibility of evil?

JD:
I would say that for justice to be justice, evil cannot be excluded. The messianic one could be expected without being expected, as a surprise, in the figure of something just only to the extent that we cannot exclude the possibility of its being perverted into the worst. And of course we can give examples of this: good revolutions which turn out to be terrible experiences. We could associate with the best figures of Messiahs the most terrible catastrophes in history. This doesn't mean that we have to give up any insurance, but whatever precautions there are it is inscribed in the structure of the good, the just, the good revolution, that it may be terrible. I was wondering why we are very impatient, why we want to address ethical and political questions. Because we think that if we don't do that here we won't be taken seriously. But perhaps that is a mistake on our part. Perhaps we should have avoided any reference to ethics, politics and law, saying the same things. It is intimidation, to think that to be serious and to be taken seriously in a public space we must address political examples. That's a question.

AGD:
At the beginning of *In the Case of Wagner* Nietzsche says that to become a philosopher we have to find an antipode. The antipode is not just someone who remains exterior to us We become philosophers by overcoming ourselves, and we overcome ourselves by finding an antipode who becomes an integral part of ourselves. The name Nietzsche gives to his antipode is 'Wagner', and the process by which he *becomes* a philosopher, without perhaps ever being one, is a process we can trace from the early untimely meditation *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, up to the late texts *In the Case of Wagner* and *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*. To have an antipode is not something bad; the antipode is not simply the one whom we have rejected. It is Nietzsche's hospitality for his antipode which allows him to become a philosopher and to admire Richard Wagner. Do you think that this is true for all philosophers, that they have to find an antipode in order to become philosophers?

JD:
Well, we started with a sentence from Nietzsche where he says we need enemies. We have to be grateful to our enemies. In the *Politics of Friendship* I try to trace this thread, that we need enemies, to Carl Schmitt's theory of the political. As you know Schmitt built his theory of the political on the possibility of having enemies; the category of hostility,

of enmity, is the condition of the political. So, if we follow Nietzsche, we have to be grateful for our enemies, we must love them, we have to deserve them. The metaphor of the antipode implies that each of the two poles of hostility is identical with itself, in which case we would know who is who, who is the friend and who is the enemy; I would know who I am. But if I know who I am, and if I know who my enemy is, one enemy for every self-identical person, then there would be no perhaps at all. The perhaps does not only condition the possibility of the coming of some*one*, but the coming of a plurality of some*ones*, and the possibility for me to be more or less than one. The polarity of subject and object reduces the perhaps, there is no perhaps in the subject-object correlation. The perhaps implies that others are plural singularities, and that on my side too there are pluralities of singularities - this isn't simply a formal way of putting it, I have the experience of 'myself' as a multiplicity of places, images, imagos, there are others in me, I have experienced mourning where the other is in me, there is more than one other, we are numerous in ourselves, and there are a number of singularities over there, and that's why there is a perhaps, and why there are questions of ethics and politics.

[Questions were then invited from the audience]

Question:
As most of us did not have a chance to read your remarks about Levinas at the time of his death perhaps you could say a few words. How would you relate your comments on decision and on every decision implying a further decision to Levinas' being responsible to the other, even for the other's responsibility?

JD:
Everything I have tried to say here implies something I share with Levinas, that is the absolute irreducibility of the otherness of the other. The other, even if he or she is a finite being, is infinitely other, and this infinity is precisely what resists any reappropriation; I cannot appropriate the alterity of the other, whether in the other person or in myself. In myself there is something irreducible to identity, to the ego, which is infinitely resistant to appropriation. And that's why the coming of the other is totally unpredictable. Out of respect for the other I must take into account this unpredictability, even if the other wants to kill me. What I have in common with Levinas, as a common reference, is that I read Husserl intensely. In his *Cartesian Meditations* Husserl says that the *alter ego* can never become the object of a full intuition. I can have no direct access to what the other lives in him or herself, that is something which remains absolutely inaccessible for me, at least in the form of intuition. Now, this quasi-evidence - that what you live on your side I cannot share, that here and now I occupy this absolute zero point, and that yours is infinitely different from mine - is not simply a negative condition, it is the condition for a relation to the other, for being responsible for and to the other. By insisting on this

relation to the other Levinas has tried to think the ethical in a way that, to him at least, the philosophical tradition has never done. He put the ethical in the place of metaphysics, as first philosophy, *protē philosophia*.

What happens when a friend dies? Realising his or her death we have to mourn, not to deny the death but to bear the other in oneself. The paradox of mourning is that the other remains totally other, totally outside, whilst being kept within oneself. When a friend dies I have to respect his or her absolute transcendence outside of me; Levinas will never be in me, but nevertheless I am responsible for his remaining as other somewhere in me. But this 'in' is not an inclusion, because he is in me as infinitely outside. I myself refer to myself as someone who bears a number of others - Levinas is not the only one who has died before me. My hypothesis is that the self is constituted by a certain work of mourning, by a work which incorporates or introjects these others. I could not say 'myself' without these others being 'in' me. Levinas speaks of being the hostage of the other. Before making any decision I am already subject to the other, already under his or her law. The idea of being hostage seems to deprive me of liberty: I am responsible without being free. Whereas for Kant, for example, I am responsible to the extent that I am free, that I have a free relationship to the law. But for Levinas I am free inasmuch as I submit myself to the heterogeneity of the other.

Now, no-one can replace me in my decision, but the decision is mine in a way in which I cannot appropriate it. It is mine but in some way it is not mine. In *Politics of Friendship* I oppose Carl Schmitt's decisionism, in the first place by dissociating decision from activity. There is something passive in the most radical decision. If a decision is wholly under my control, if it is predicated of a subjectivity, if I am the one who decides for the decision, and it is totally active in that sense, then what follows as an effect of the decision is programmed. However paradoxical it may sound I must be affected by my own decision. To the extent that my decision is the other's, my decision is passive, it is affected by itself (as the other's) - which is I hope consistent with what I say about alterity constituting my own identity. The decision is made by some other in myself, and in that sense it is always the other's, in that sense I am a hostage to the other, responsible for the other, as Levinas says. If a decision is simply an expression of myself, my identity or nature, if it just follows from what I am, it is not a decision. In being decisive it must cut something from myself. The fact that the decision is not simply mine doesn't lessen my responsibility. I am fully responsible for decisions which are taken in me by some other with whom I have a privileged relationship. This is why justice, the evaluation of another's behaviour, is something terrible. We don't know who is responsible for the worst crimes. The way law functions today, the way judgements are made, juridical language and codes, is too primitive to take account of this. Given what we know by experience (through psychoanalysis, etc), the problem of responsibility today is the problem of how to improve the law.

Question:
We are exposed to the perhaps; the perhaps is absolute, or it is something marginal but always present. Does this reduce necessity to nothingness? Is there an absence of necessity behind every act, making science an impossible enterprise?

JD:
There is necessity, perhaps absolute necessity. But our experience of what is to come necessarily leaves room for some indeterminacy. This indeterminacy is not in the things themselves but in our existence, in our relation to the world and to ourselves. This is why I call the perhaps a modality. Even if everything is absolutely necessary, our experience of necessity, the experience of finite beings, cannot exclude or reduce the margin of this modality of the perhaps, it is our experience of time and space. It is not incompatible with the hypothesis that everything in the world is necessary.

Question:
Earlier you said 'I must suspend any present certainty about what is to come'. I'd like to ask you about the force of this 'must'. If it's an imperative it is one which transgresses itself in its very enunciation. 'I must predict that what is to come is unpredictable.' I appreciate from what you said about the factuality of the new that, if there is a formal contradiction in this, it doesn't affect the newness of the new, or the advent of the other in its factuality. But I wonder whether it doesn't effect the privileging of the unpredictable. Couldn't we with equal justification say, without anticipation or prediction there is nothing new, and hence the imperative 'I must predict', 'I must anticipate', is equally primordial, which in turn might bring out something disturbing about newness, that the prediction or anticipation must be destroyed by the advent of the new, which I would relate to the coming of the other as a traumatism?

JD:
I didn't mean by saying 'I must suspend' that there is an obligation to suspend, but that, given that the perhaps is irreducible, we must take this fact into account. Levinas uses the word trauma to define the experience of otherness. Being affected by the other is always a trauma, which is not simply wounding in the bad sense - which it is as well. It is something which affects me in my body, in my integrity; if the other doesn't transform me in an essential way then it isn't the other. We would have to distinguish between different modalities of violence. There is a violence we would call a good one, and a violence we would call a bad one. We would have to build a new discourse on violence.

Question:
During your talk you used the word 'deconstruction' only once, giving us as well a few synonyms in English of what the word might incorporate in its meaning. One of them was 'to destroy'. Does deconstruction involve destruction?

JD:
I use the word deconstruction 'as if' there were such a thing. Initially, this word encountered so many objections and such hostility, reproaching it with being nihilistic, destructive, negative, that I had to insist again and again that deconstruction does not mean destruction, and is not negative. But perhaps this strategy was somewhat dangerous, because it is not true, there *is* destruction. In Heidegger, what one might translate by 'deconstruction' is *Destruktion*: a de-structuration which is not simply a theoretical or speculative gesture. There is something destructive, not a negative destruction but in the sense that we cannot not destroy. So, I'm a little uneasy about my own insistence on the non-destructive character of deconstruction. But it was not simply out of strategy that I constantly insisted on its affirmative dimension, on its 'yes'. In *Politics of Friendship* I try to show that the experience of the perhaps is even more radical than the experience of the affirmation, of the 'yes', and I do this in the context of a discussion of Heidegger's insistence on the *Zusage*. For Heidegger the questioning attitude is fundamental to philosophy, philosophy starts with a question. Heidegger repeated this again and again. But late in his work he said that there is something *prior* to the question, not chronologically but structurally prior to it: that is, the *Zusage*, the acceptance, the 'yes'. Even when I address someone with a question I have already affirmed *that* I address them, and this affirmation is implied in every question and in every negation. It is not an orthodox 'yes' but a 'yes' absolutely prior to everything. One finds in Rosenzweig too reference to the 'yes' as an *Urwort*, an originary word. Before the word there is a 'yes'. And this 'yes', as with the decision, has to be repeated, it has to be reaffirmed, 'yes, yes'. Now, for the affirmation of deconstruction to be an affirmation, it implies the perhaps. I couldn't repeat or resign the 'yes', I couldn't say 'yes, yes' without the space and time opened by the perhaps. Even more 'radical' than destruction is the affirmation of the 'yes', and more radical than that is the perhaps, our relation to the other. This relation is not destructive, but the possibility for it to be so must remain open. Even for the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' to occur, the possibility of killing the other, or being killed by the other, must exist *as* a possibility. The perhaps is already implied in the affirmation, an affirmation implied by deconstruction. This is why I say that deconstruction is justice.

Question:
Your approach strikes me as profoundly moral. You spoke of hospitality as unconditional love, which is a moral way of putting it. Hospitality is most significant when it is

unconditional. Without working against undecidability, against 'perhaps-ness', we would not be able to make a decision; and, within that context, *any* decision is moral, no matter what it is dealing with, whether it is in science or whatever. The fact that one is working in and against this perhaps and making decisions at all means that one is morally engaged. Without the commitment to the perhaps we are not fully human, and it is this tension which is valuable. The radical thing is not the affirmation, but the perhaps which makes affirmation possible.

JD:
Yes, I agree with you. There must be tension, without it there would be no decision. But it is a finite one, it must not be constantly at its maximum, we have to regulate the economy of the tension to survive. I wouldn't use the word 'moral' but 'ethical', if by *ethos* we imply dwelling, to inhabit a place, a way of living. We owe hospitality even to those whom we do not love, hospitality is to welcome even those we don't like. That's one level of love. But love isn't something simply moral. Love is something abyssal enough for us to think we can welcome or offer hospitality to everyone we love without excluding the possibility that the most terrible thing may happen because of those we love. Our experience of love is not simply on the side of the good.

NOTES

1. Jacques Derrida, *Politiques de l'amitié* (Paris: Galilée, 1994), p. 46. All notes are the editors'.

2. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Menschliches, Allzumenschliches" (1878), §376, in *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* IV², herausgegeben von G Colli und M Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967), p. 269.

3. Friedrich Nietzsche "Jenseits von Gut und Böse" (1886), §2, in *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* VI², herausgegeben von G Colli und M Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968): 'Vielleicht! Aber wer ist Willens, sich um solche gefährliche Veilleichts zu kümmern! Man muss dazu schon die Ankunft einer neuen Gattung von Philosophen abwarten, solcher, die irgend welchen anderen umgekehrten Geschmack und Hang haben als die bisherigen, - Philosophen des gefährlichen Veilleicht in jedem Verstande. - Und allen Ernstes gesprochen: ich sehe solche neue Philosophen heraufkommen.' Kaufmann translates '*Vielleicht*' as 'maybe' - see "Beyond Good and Evil", in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 200-1.

On Responsibility

Jacques Derrida, an interview with Jonathan Dronsfield, Nick Midgley, Adrian Wilding
University of Warwick, 21 May 1993[1]

Question 1

J Dronsfield:
I am interested in your assertion that 'responsibility toward memory is a responsibility before the very concept of responsibility that regulates the justice and appropriateness [*justesse*] of our behaviour, of our theoretical, practical, ethico-political decisions'[FL 20]. You cite a network of other concepts, including 'property, intentionality, will, freedom, conscience, consciousness, self-consciousness, subject, self, person, community', which supervene on that of responsibility, and which have been in receipt of your close attention. Would it be fair to say that your work is concerned less with what might be called post facto responses - such as regret, shame and, in particular, *remorse* - in favour of that which precedes action, for example, undecidability, rule-following, the experience of the aporia, anxiety, duty, questioning etc? What place might the concepts that more properly find themselves invoked *after* the event occupy in the structure of responsibility insofar as they *claim* us in serious moral responses to an event and (witness your affirmation 'Yes, one must question again!' [ORH 172]) inform the necessity to 'question again' one's actions? Passage through the ethical surely does not come to an end at the moment of decision. To be sure, one must decide; but one also has to answer, and at least try and account for one's decisions, and to justify what one has done, even if one is not subject to blame, nor being held responsible for a moral lapse.

J Derrida:
When you say that I'm less concerned with *post facto* responses, I agree; *less* concerned, but not totally unconcerned. Less concerned because, usually, when we refer to responsibility and decision, ethics in general, there is some privilege given to the future. That is, when we make a decision, even if it's a decision regarding memory, or something past, the decision as such is future-orientated so to speak, even if it's a decision which is faithful to someone, or in respect to a tradition. Even if what is at stake is something past, a decision as such is asymmetrically future-orientated. Thus, when one is dealing with ethical or political problems, decisions and responsibility, 'what to do?' is a question which is turned primarily toward the future, to what is to come. This is the reason why, and it is not by choice, orientation towards the future is analytically inscribed in the

concepts of decision, responsibility, ethics. Secondly, another reason why one should, first of all, be concerned with the future, is the fact that the experiences or affects that you mention, such as regret, remorse, guilt, etc, if they refer to a past decision or action, if they have an ethical dimension, are *still* future-orientated *as* remorse, *as* regret; if not they may well be very serious and irreducibly original, but they are not in themselves ethical, they are simply psychological or existential experiences. If such experiences *are* ethical it's only to the extent that they seek to be faithful to a promise, or to become exemplary for another moment, or for the future, or for others. The very concept of exemplarity is of course future-orientated more than past-orientated. There is no decision, no ethico-political decision which doesn't try to be exemplary, to be true to or faithful to a universal rule: to be exemplary means to be exemplary for the future.

What is irreducible in a decision is its irreversibility - it has been done and one cannot erase it - and this is what is terrible about it. If a decision could be erased or transformed by its consequences, it wouldn't be a decision. *If* there is decision, since the concept of decision is, for me, a very enigmatic one: there is no safe criterion that could give us absolute theoretical or objective certainty that a decision as such has been made. When I say 'if there is a decision' it's not simply an hypothesis, it's because the structure of a decision is such that it can never become the object of theoretical or speculative certainty. Otherwise, having reached such certainty, it would be a matter not of a decision but of a cause-effect relation, and one would be dealing with the sequence of a programme, or the sequence of causality. One may infer through empirical effects that a decision has been made, but one never meets a decision, one never experiences a decision, because a decision is something which interrupts or tears the fabric of time or experience, it introduces discontinuity into experience so that one never faces a decision as an object, or as something which could be demonstrated or shown or taught. This is the enigmatic cast of a decision, one which must remain enigmatic, one cannot simply check or demonstrate or prove a decision, the order of proof (or 'evidence') is absolutely heterogeneous to the order of decision. Which is why I always say 'if there is a decision', which is not a sceptical attitude on my part, it's the relation we have to a number of things such as decision, gift, if there is a gift: if there is freedom, if there is, if there is...

With regard to '...one must question again!' There is no rule for a decision, by which one identifies a decision. A decision, if there is such a thing, doesn't rely on anything but itself. Even if there is knowledge, or norms, or rules, the moment of the decision is absolutely heterogeneous to those givens. But because of that, because the decision is the production of its own rule, and because of the fact that there are no rules prior to it, the question remains open, 'Was this a decision?' 'Was this a good decision?', and the questions coming after are endless, and irreducible. So one must question again this decision, the concept of decision, and the responsibility which has guided a given decision: we are never at peace with this. No-one could or should ever know or be quietly reassured about their decisions. When someone says 'I have taken my responsibility, I

have made a good decision', one may be sure that it's wrong. There is no possible good conscience, or at least good conscience shouldn't be possible, about a decision and about ethics. I don't say this in order to cultivate bad conscience, or depression, or the irreducible feeling of guilt, it belongs to the concept of decision. One should not be sure that a decision has been made, and even less that it has been a good decision. That's the fate of a decision, if there is such a thing.

I have provided a traditional account of the concept of decision such as we have inherited it. Now, a way which would be less traditional, and it's one which I've never explored, as you rightly say, would consist in taking into account experiences such as remorse and regret, which effectively transform the meaning of a decision, not transform the decision itself, but the way we ethically interpret that decision. A memory, a remorse or regret which wouldn't simply be a psychological, external, or accidental skin to the very ethical, and here we would have to interrogate some religious traditions. Repentance [*repentir*] implies the conversion of the sinner, which doesn't of course erase the guilt or the sin, but nevertheless changes the whole structure of its history. Thus repentance could also be a decision, a totally new experience which would refer to the past, and of course also to the future, for in Christianity the one who repents transforms him- or herself in relation to God to become a new person. Without erasing or transforming the sin itself, repentance transforms the whole ethical space in which the sin - as the relation to the other - consists; so that, finally, a second decision may effect the first one in an original way. Is it possible to say this outside of Christian or Judeo-Christian doctrine? I won't engage here in theological discourse, but I'll take advantage of these remarks to ask the question Is it possible to think of responsibility, decision, remorse, and so on - intentionality, consciousness, freedom, subject, self, person - outside of a Christian tradition? I'm not sure at all. From that point of view, going back to the first line of your question, to act responsibly, or to try to be as responsible as possible, would imply that we ask questions about the genealogy of this concept of responsibility. When I say, well, 'Is it a Christian concept?', and if I say we should try and develop a genealogical analysis of the concept of responsibility, this is a way of being responsible, since there is no responsibility without some knowledge of what responsibility means. And to know what responsibility means I have to rely on memory, on culture, on language, on what I've been taught, thus I am an heir. You know what Hölderlin and Heidegger say about language, that language has been given to men for them to bear witness [*Zeuge*] that they are, in there own being, heirs; they inherit not simply this or that, they inherit what they are. Since we are heirs to certain concepts, values, axioms, to be responsible means first to account for this heritage, to know what to do with this tradition, to understand it, to reaffirm or confirm it or not, and to select what we think we have to select from it. This is of course future-orientated, but it also past-orientated; there is no way of making a responsible decision for the future without having the memory, not simply the psychological memory, but being constituted by the memory, of language and in

language, of the meaning of responsibility. This relation to the past is irreducible, one cannot simply oppose or distinguish between future-orientated behaviour and past-orientated behaviour, since there would be no future without some memory of this heritage.

Are we able to transform the heritage of the concept of responsibility for instance through a decision which is not only one of remorse or repentance but is a transformative interpretation of the past which would be part of a decision? This is the problem of deconstruction, for deconstruction implies that you try to know as much as possible what the heritage is, to keep the memory of what our history is and of what language conveys to us, but at the same time that you interpret it, that you have a selective and hierarchising attitude towards it. An heir has to affirm, to reaffirm the heritage, and to reaffirm in the Nietzschean sense doesn't simply mean to repeat, but to say 'Well, as an heir I choose this rather than that, I prefer this spirit of Marx rather than that one.'[2] To that extent do I behave as an authentic or as a responsible heir. As an heir one has to, and it's a terrible choice - but it is a choice, one has to kill something, one has to destroy part of the heritage by this hierarchising, this selection. To keep one part of the heritage living means, necessarily for a finite being, to kill or to destroy or to marginalise or to subordinate another part of the heritage. That is the effect of the necessity of selectivity within the repetition, within the memory.

J Dronsfield:
You say that repentance can change the structure of the history of that about which a decision is made. Couldn't remorse be understood to operate in a similar way? I'm thinking of an example cited in a discussion of remorse I came across in what might be called a more philosophically analytical context.[3] During the Second World War, three runaway Jews fleeing from the Nazis ask a woman for shelter; she provides them with refuge for a time, then says no. She reasons that, because she was already involved in a plot to assassinate Hitler, being caught sheltering Jews would compromise that plot. Those Jews were killed within days of leaving. Now, one might respond by saying that she was not to blame for the fate of those she turned away. However, she went on to say that the thing for which she most hated Hitler was 'having made *her* into a murderess'. We might want to say she cannot be held responsible for certain consequences of her decision, but nonetheless she has in an important way been claimed by remorse at having made that decision. Whilst not justifiably predicable of that action, remorse has claimed her, it is inescapable for her, and alters the structure or the meaning of that historical event. Isn't it impossible here to give an objective account of the meaning of her decision because her remorse might be said to contaminate what we think of as her responsibility?

J Derrida:
Well, without referring to such extraordinary examples, such choices are an everyday experience. A decision is always bad, one can always have remorse and bad conscience is always unavoidable. A decision has to be paid for, there is always some bad consequence for even the best decision. This situation is exemplary for every decision. When she says she hates Hitler for having put her in this situation, well, this is wrong, for even without Hitler she would have been in the same situation. So it's a way of, let's say, trying to avoid the remorse when she says 'He is responsible for that, he is even worse than I thought he was, because he put me in this situation'. I don't say this to exculpate Hitler, but even without him the situation would have been the same. That is, one has to make choices, in preferring someone to someone else, which happens every day, in preferring one's family to foreigners, or one's own language to that of others, all the time one is put in such a situation, which means that the necessity of remorse is irreducible.

This example reminds me of Kant saying that to tell the truth, to be sincere, is an absolute duty, a categorical imperative, unconditional. Benjamin Constant objected to this, and wrote a small text in which he says 'Well, this German philosopher tells us that we should never lie. But in some circumstances we may lie for the good, with good intentions. In that case lying is ethical.'[4] To which, in his *On the Right to Lie*, Kant replied 'No, even if the consequences of my telling the truth are terrible I could be charged with the consequences, but I couldn't be charged with telling the truth.'[5] There is some intrinsic morality in being *wahrhaftig*, sincere. From that point of view one could say that remorse, not in the sense of Christian self-accusation but remorse in the sense of never being happy with the decision, is an essential predicate of the relation we have to any decision. We cannot refer to a past decision without a possible remorse, otherwise it couldn't be a decision. Thus reference to the past is not accidental, not simply psychological or an external addition to the ethical experience. To repeat: from two points of view reference to the past is irreducible, precisely because a decision is future-oriented; firstly because we have to know what responsibility is, what its heritage is, and second because we have no criterion to decide whether a decision is good or bad, it may always be a bad decision. This means that in our relations with others, which is the point, we should never be sure of having done the right thing. One shouldn't infer from this that all decisions are equal just because remorse is always possible. One might be fatalistic or pessimistic and say 'Well, since all decisions may be bad, how can we choose?' No! one's ethical duty would be to nevertheless try and make good decisions without given or safe norms. One has to dissociate normativity from ethics and morality; it's a difficult distinction, for usually people say normativity or prescription is on the same side as ethics.

Question 2

A Wilding:
In the "Afterword" to *Limited Inc* [pp. 152-3] you say that to think of the 'unconditional' (be it justice or responsibility) as having the sense of 'independent of every determinate context' (ie, field of application), fails to capture how the unconditional in part determines context, and therefore cannot be thought of as simply outside. Thus, what needs to be done is to articulate the precise relation of the unconditional to the contingent conditions of any particular context. This, for you, would be the moment of strategy, of politics or ethics. At the same time this moment is always impinged upon by a 'clause of non-closure', through which the outside in general (what you might once have called the general text) also in part determines that relation, disenabling any totalisation. But you are careful to caution that this does not relieve one from inquiring into how that (unconditional) concept came to us, for 'this unconditionality also defines the injunction that prescribes deconstructing'[p. 153]. To take up the question of unconditionality with respect to the example of human rights, how important do you think it is that the notion of 'rights' has come down to us contingently, in an intimate relation to *property* (a relation fixed in Roman Law and defended, famously, by Locke[6])?

J Derrida:
Let me ask a question: when you say that the notion of rights has come down to us contingently, what do you mean by 'contingently'?

A Wilding:
I was trying to draw attention to the problematic relation between rights as unconditional, which is how I think they necessarily present themselves, and the fact that whenever they've been invoked it's been in the context of property. For instance Locke's contention that a right to private property can be derived from the 'ownership' of our own body.

J Derrida:
I see. Would you say that the rights of man are on the side of unconditional justice? Are the rights of man unconditional or unconditionally *just*, or would you make a distinction between the two levels?

A Wilding:
In the sense that they must present themselves as non-negotiable in order to retain their political force they have an unconditional moment.

J Derrida:
As rights? I have some doubts about this. I try to distinguish between justice and the law [*le droit, Recht*]. The rights of man, as you rightly underline, have a complex history. It is a concept which has evolved from the eighteenth century to our age, its content constantly transformed by a number of considerations; it is contextualised, it depends on the concept of man - which has not fallen from the sky, which is historical. What I would call justice, as distinguished from law and rights, is not dependant on these contexts. I would not say that the rights of man are unconditional. I know this may shock some people. I am of course, like everyone else, for the rights of man. But it *is* an important point that the relation between rights and property does tell us a lot about the notion of rights. Today, the concept of rights of man implies property in the sense of *habeas-corpus*, everyone must be respected in his or her own body and soul, one ought not to be raped or tortured and so forth. And the property here is personal. As you know, the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme*[7] at some point acknowledges properties, belongings, goods. The concept of property itself is subject to history, and hence I am not sure that what I would call an ethical relation to the other, a just relation to the other, necessarily implies respect for something like a property.

The concept of 'proper' is very problematic for someone who has experienced the necessity of some deconstructive questions. For instance, when loving the other, does it mean one does not touch the property of the other, or that one relates to some self-difference, some alterity, not only of the other but within the other, so that property is not self-identity, is not the nature of the most sacred character or essence of myself or the other? I would want it that the other, precisely in the experience of love, disturbs or effects my own property, my own proper relation to myself. That is where the other of rights and the other of justice are heterogeneous. The rights of man implies a number of other concepts: of subject, of self-identity, of calculable identity, one person one vote, indivisibility of the subject, property of the self, consciousness, person, and so on. Once one asks questions about the genealogy of the subject then the historicity of the rights of man begins to appear as such. Even if humanity, the totality of humankind, agrees on the rights of man this does not mean that they are unconditional. What about conflicts between rights of man and rights of the animal as a living being? You know that at the beginning of the era of the rights of man only male adults were considered subjects: children, women and slaves were not subjects and so had no access to what were deemed to be the rights of man. If the rights of man can be improved upon, if they are contextualised and historical, then they are not unconditional.

What I would call justice has always to do with the absolute singularity of the other - the other not considered as a person or as an ego - absolute singularity exceeds the order of the subject, the calculable unit of the subject as voter or citizen. The unconditionality of this perhaps impossible just relation to the other is irreducible to the concept of law and the concept of human rights. I would agree with you on this, that perhaps the intimate

relation between the rights of man and the value of property teaches us a lot about this historical transformation. What I call exappropriation - that is, a process in which appropriation or the constitution of propriety or property, consists paradoxically in *ex*appropriation - deprives one of all logical consistency in applying the concept of property or the concept of human rights. The more one appropriates something the more one exappropriates. The concept of exappropriation is more powerful or more general than the concept of property or appropriation. If I am right in saying that deconstruction is unconditional - that is, there is no possible limit to the gesture of deconstruction - and if, to that extent, justice is on the side of deconstruction, then the deconstruction of human rights is also necessary. One has to constantly re-examine the axiomatics of human rights and to transform them, one has to deconstruct them to improve them. Deconstruction is not a project, it is not a desire, but something like a movement; the movement of deconstruction is unconditional, that is what it shares with justice.

Question 3

N Midgley:
Responding to the charge that deconstruction 'corresponds to a quasi-nihilistic abdication before the ethico-political-juridical question of justice' [FL 19], you have characterised deconstruction as on the contrary motivated by the appeal of justice [FL 21]. I wonder if invoking this motivation does not limit the possibilities opened up by the materialist critique of ethics initiated by Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, and indeed by a certain materialism in your own thinking of the text? Is there not a devilry to deconstruction that does not need to be apologized for, and is its delight? In *Of Spirit* you dream of a reading of Heidegger against the spirit of his work, one in which all the writing operations prescribed by him at one time or another would indeed have been carried out... "One can imagine the surface of a text given over to the gnawing ruminant, and silent voracity of such an animal-machine and its implacable 'logic'. This would not only be simply 'without spirit', but a figure of evil. The perverse reading of Heidegger." [OS 134] Was there something of this 'evil' in your reading of Searle in *Limited Inc*? Beyond the good of speech and spirit and the evil of writing and the machine is it not precipitate to find justice?

J Derrida:
I shall stop at the middle of this question and say no. When I say that deconstruction is justice it is not an apology, it is not a way of re-moralising deconstruction. Look at what I say in *Passions*: that I am not happy with people saying that in fact deconstruction is very ethical, with a high sense of responsibility, etc. No; when I say justice, and I distinguish it from love, and even morals and the usual sense of ethics, it is not a way of,

let's say, reassuring people - at least that's not my intention. The kind of justice I am referring to here is paradoxical enough, impossible enough, not to reassure every moralist. I am not being unfaithful to the tradition of materialist critique by the likes of Marx, Freud and Nietzsche by invoking an appeal of justice. What I mean by this, and what I tried to say in my public lecture yesterday for instance, is that there is in Marx what I call a Messianic appeal to justice, but not one with a religious content. There is a Messianism in the idea of democracy. 'To come' is a Messianic gesture, it's an appeal to justice. Promising is Messianic: a very simple promise implies that the other will come. There is a Messianism of some sort, of different kinds, in the critiques by Freud, Nietzsche and Marx. I see no necessary break with them when mentioning the appeal of justice.

N Midgley:
Going back to the question of human rights, where you distinguish the historicality of the discourse on rights from the unconditionality of justice, on what basis does one privilege the concept of justice and say 'Well, a notion such as rights is historically embedded and needs to be deconstructed, but there's a notion of justice that *can't* be deconstructed'?

J Derrida:
This is a way, an obscure way I agree, of saying that deconstruction must be *just*. And then we have to determine what just must be in order to be consistent with this statement. We have to analyse the genealogy of the concept of justice. It is not justice in the common sense. So what is justice? *Dikè* in the Greek sense is the horizon for an endless meditation. I hope, without knowing what it is, that justice is what deconstruction is about, and what it has to do. Justice is precisely what couldn't be deconstructed because it is or it should be the appeal or desire of deconstruction. I call it justice for reasons which are perhaps contingent: see, for example, *Force of Law* in which I oppose some appeal which resonates in the Law but which exceeds the Law, cannot be reduced to the Law, to *Recht*. I used, perhaps abused, the difference between justice and the Law. But this does not mean that the name justice is clear. Justice is something which exceeds the deconstructable, it is indeconstructable, it is what deconstruction should perform. Justice is the performance of deconstruction - it's a bet, it's a commitment, it's a performative and not a constative statement. Justice is *not* the same as deconstruction. A decision is a bet: you don't know in advance from where it comes, and where it goes to, it's an interruption. Finally, if we want to summarise, a decision is the other's. Responsibility is for the other, with the other. I am, as Levinas would say, the hostage of the other. Responsibility is not my property, I cannot reappropriate it, and *that* is the place of justice: the relation to the other.

Question 4

N Midgley:
How today do you think the relation of the deconstruction of metaphysics to science and technology? In *Of Grammatology* you identify the algebraicisation of the language of the sciences as anti-metaphysical. Furthermore, you speak of the time of that book as one in which writing has become central in diverse fields of enquiry, thus linking your own work to the discovery of DNA, and to the computer program. It was the notion of *différance* as prior to and producing the subject that allowed the deconstruction of the opposition between living speech and dead mechanical writing. In recent readings of Heidegger you have spoken of a pre-originary affirmation involved in any engagement in language, whilst indicating that this originary affirmation is itself not immune to technicity [ORH 172]. If the deconstruction of the speech/writing opposition depended on the thought of *différance* as primordial, is this deconstruction put into question by the competing primordiality of pre-originary affirmation? Could you elucidate the relation of what is pre-originary in the affirmation to what is primordial about *différance*?

J Derrida:
Let us go on from what we have just said about justice and deconstruction. Deconstruction is always an affirmative gesture. Now, I have tried to show in a number of places that affirmation in itself, however pre-originary it may be, however absolutely originary it may be, carries within its structure the necessity of being repeated. There is no 'Yes' without 'Yes, yes'. Because an affirmation as such - this is also the case with a decision - commits itself to an immediate repetition, when I say 'Yes', I say 'I commit myself to confirm the 'Yes' by a second 'Yes' immediately after and indefinitely'. This intrinsic repetition of the 'Yes' divides it, there is an immanent difference within the 'Yes', otherwise it could not be a 'Yes', it could not be an affirmation. Let us take some trivial examples. When I say a performative 'Yes', the wedding 'Yes', I say 'Yes, I approve, I agree now, I promise to agree in a minute, in a year'. My 'Yes' conveys, carries out already in itself, its own memory, its future memory of itself. (Nietzsche says this too, he never says 'Ja', but 'Ja, ja'. Yes is always already a repetition of itself.) Which means that the very first 'Yes' is preceded by or haunted by the memory of the second 'Yes'. Otherwise it would not be a 'Yes'. So, it is a deferred 'Yes', a self-different 'Yes', to be what it is. Of course this is what I call iterability; iterability is also a threat to the absolute commitment or absolute simplicity of the 'Yes', because the second 'Yes' could simply be a mimetic or mechanical reproduction of the first, a record or an aping, I could lie, I could simply repeat the same without intention. The spectre of the mimetic, the spectre of the simple 'Yes' is always possible, and *must* be possible for the authentic 'Yes' to be possible. If you exclude the possibility of lying or miming or hiding a false 'Yes' behind a true 'Yes', there would be no sincere or authentic 'Yes' or commitment

or responsibility. The possibility of betrayal, the possibility of the negative, is not simply an accident, it must be there as a possibility for the authentic 'Yes' to occur. Every simple 'Yes' - or you may substitute decision, responsibility, ethical commitment - must be divisible, there must be some difference within the simplicity, the assumed simplicity of the 'Yes'. In this sense there is no opposition between the logic of *différance* and the logic of affirmation. It is the same paradoxical logic, the possibility of negation, the simulacrum, the lie, the infelicity of the performance must be *as a possibility* there, constantly there, not simply as an extrinsic accident but within the so-called simple or authentic commitment. The fall, the negative, the infelicity, is essentially included within its opposite as an unavoidable spectre, haunting, or ghost.

N Midgley:
In *Of Grammatology* there is an opening up of the question of language, through the notion of writing, to include the genetic code, cybernetics, etc. In the first question you contrasted decision with programmed action, and characterised it as something which does not follow a code - isn't that to re-inscribe the opposition between freedom and determinism?

J Derrida:
It's difficult for us Westerners to dissociate the concept of decision from the concept of freedom. Even if I don't often use the word freedom when reflecting on decision, freedom is implied. That is why I say 'If there is decision...', 'If there is freedom...'. Let's go back to a very powerful but traditional concept of freedom. When Kant says that freedom is never an object of experience, that it must be a postulate, that one never encounters freedom, that it must be postulated by any ethical action, it means that one will never be able to provide evidence or a proof of freedom. Now, apparently, DNA is of the order of determinism, it is a programming language, writing encoded in a chain of DNA; nevertheless, as soon as one considers DNA a language, which it is, and one takes into account possible aleatory phenomena, then the scientific theory of indeterminacy, even if one doesn't refer to the absolute freedom of the deciding subject, perhaps leaves room for decision, perhaps decision has to do with the aleatory. When I say that decision has to break with any conditions, with any premisses, with any givens or norms, then it occurs as something which has the appearance of the aleatory. Even if it's ruled by respect for the other, what other? Is it this one? That one? Others are singular. The fact that I respect concretely this other rather than that one - and as a finite being I cannot respect all others equally - has some aleatory dimension. To refer to DNA doesn't essentially change the nature of the problem.

Question 5

A Wilding:
In a number of your more recent texts you have been concerned to think democracy as promissory or futural. My question is whether in the very openness of this formulation there is not a simultaneous foreclosure. Whilst the notion of democracy as a promise accounts for its propensity for re-projection (thereby displacing both the programmatic and the conservative), the fact of its being always 'to come' [*à-venir*] also forecloses the possibility of its realisation. Might the acknowledgement of this perpetual unrealisability inspire just as easily a fatalist resignation as the will to 'reinvent' democracy?

J Derrida:
It is the necessity of democracy to be not the future but 'to come'. Future present is not democracy for tomorrow. It is *within* the concept of democracy that the promise is included. The concept of promise, that is the opening that refers to the future, is part of democracy. There is no end to this of course. If one day democracy were perfectly accomplished, that is present, there would no future, and there would be no promise, and without the promise there would be no democracy. When I say democracy is 'to come' first I distinguish between *à-venir* and the future present; and I insist on the *coming* that is the event, *à-venir* meaning the advent of an event. Thus, if one is a fatalist, if one gives up the event-ness of the event, then one is not a democrat. A democrat not only says that democracy is to come but does everything possible for it to come and for the promise to live, to survive, to repeat itself, to re-confirm itself, to give birth to a new promise - it's an infinite task. The fact that one knows that if it arrives it won't be *present* doesn't mean that one has to stop working for it. Usually one associates an event with something which occurs, but I think an event happens without being present. This has to do with the other: that the other can never be fully present to itself does not force one to give up all reference to the other, on the contrary, it's *because* presence is impossible that there is desire, that there is this move to invite the other to come. The move in the 'to come' is not only not paralysed by the awareness that what could come will not be present, it is precisely the opposite, it provokes the desire or the movement towards the other to come. If I knew that tomorrow democracy would be present, that democracy was a necessity of History, that it is a law of History, that it is programmed, as some people think today, then in *that* case I would be a fatalist. It is *because* we know that this is not the case that we should struggle for democracy. But I agree this is a concept of democracy that is not very common among democrats, among politicians or political philosophers.

Question 6

J Dronsfield:
Your recent work has been concerned in part with the ways in which philosophy 'has linked itself to national self-expression, from the political, institutional, and linguistic point of view'[IC 107]. If philosophy emanating from Eastern Europe could be seen both to offer itself as a response to the promise of Europe as something akin to an Idea of reason, and as well to pose itself as a philosophical idiom in itself, how might the *institutions* of philosophy in Western Europe inquire into the 'linkages' of philosophy to nationalism in this context without re-establishing the border; and how might such an inquiry be conducted without effacing linguistic difference or idiom (thereby avoiding, if indeed that were possible, what you have called a 'metaphysico-technical gesture', one which instrumentalises language [ONH 23])? What is the first responsibility of such institutions?

J Derrida:
May I refer to what I said in an aporetic form in *L'autre cap* in which I simply said that there is no unilateral answer to this question. That is, we should try not to efface linguistic difference or idiom, but without contributing to nationalism - which is difficult. But I would advocate an experience of language which would be *as respectful as possible* of linguistic difference without interpreting this difference in a nationalist sense. I think we should dissociate nationalism and idiomaticity: nationalism in a certain form that is, for as soon as I speak my own language then I reaffirm my language. That is, I behave in a nationalist way merely in preferring French to English. Thus the choice is not between nationalism and non-nationalism, but between different kinds of nationalism. *Because* I know that idiomaticity is something preferable, both for myself and for the other, that even the idiom of the other is preferable to the mere instrumentalism of language, then I can oppose nationalism *because* of the idiomaticity of language, because of the experience I have of the idiom, out of respect for the idiom of the other. So, in order to dissociate this irreducible nationalism which occurs when I speak my idiom from what one calls today nationalism in its political, modern form - that is, as linked to certain nation state structures - we have to rebuild a number of things, especially the concept of state, from what has from the beginning of the nineteenth century tied the concept of nation to a certain concept of state: that's an urgent political task today as you know. Which doesn't mean that we have simply to oppose a ' "metaphysico-technical gesture", one which instrumentalises language'; I have never believed that there was a possible opposition between a pure idiom and a purely instrumental language. There is no pure idiom; within what one calls the idiomaticity of the idiom there is already at work - because of the law of iterability - some technical instrumentalisation: there is no opposition between idiom and the technicity of language. There are different sorts of

technicity, and even if there is a growing instrumentalisation of language I think politically we shouldn't simply oppose it, because to some extent it may help fight nationalism, crossing the borders through a common language, through scientific language. Even through what is becoming now the most universal technical language: American-English, which is an unhappy event in one sense because it may marginalise a number of languages; but on the other hand it is helpful that everyone can have his own language plus an instrumental way of communicating with every other through the media - even the mass media is not simply a bad thing, it has helped in the democratisation of Eastern European countries, for instance, through images on TV of the Western democratic model. So, we are caught in a double bind, which means that we have to adjust both contradictory injunctions at every moment in a singular situation, each time we have to make a decision. If we choose constantly, unconditionally and automatically for the idiom we will have a nationalist catastrophe. If we choose constantly and automatically for the instrumental, universal, technical language it will again be a catastrophe: the erasing of differences, the destruction of culture, the destruction of memory. So, we have to do both, which doesn't mean confusion, it means that in each situation we have to make the best compromise, and this is politics. There is no pre-existing rule; given the context we have to keep to, for instance, on the one hand untranslatable poetry, and on the other mass media and TV.

More specifically I would say that the first responsibility of Western European philosophical institutions should be to allow room for different traditions, as philosophical institutions they ought to keep alive opposing traditions whether they be 'continental' or 'non-continental' philosophy, or philosophies which are rooted in different cultures in Europe, and philosophical cultures which are, let's say, more hospitable to idiomatic language. Our responsibility is to try to protect and develop an experience of the link between philosophy and language which would be as idiomatic as possible, and at the same time as open to the other as possible. This is an experience of translation. The first responsibility would be a responsibility to translation. What are we doing with translation? If translation consists in levelling the idiom and the richness of natural language and destroying the untranslatable as such it will be a bad thing. If, on the other hand, it simply preserves the idiom, if one has to learn German for example in order to philosophise, it will be another kind of catastrophe. It is a question of an experience of the multiplicity of languages. To translate not in order to erase the original but in order to keep the original alive, a way of translating oneself into the other language without giving up one's language: that is the practice of translation in the broadest sense within the philosophical institution. As you know this is not the case currently, translation is not practised the way it should be practised in our philosophical institutions, whether in England, in France, or in Germany - we don't translate in the linguistic sense and in the sense of welcoming the other's traditions.

J Dronsfield:
I wonder how Western European philosophical *institutions* can welcome philosophy from Eastern Europe in particular, philosophy which both addresses itself to a European philosophical tradition, responding perhaps to the promise of Europe as an Idea in the Kantian sense, or an Husserlian ideal, but at the same time posing itself as a particular philosophical idiom. For example Romanian philosophy, philosophy which for the most part has not been translated into English but French, thereby perhaps conferring on France the responsibility of a privileged relation to Romania.

J Derrida:
This is a good example. We have to cross the border but not destroy the border; that is, we have to cross the border in order to understand not only their relationship to the Western tradition, but also to understand what they are doing with their own background, language, traditions, we have to travel, to go in their direction. We should not erase the border by assimilating them as simply some sub-species of Western philosophy, to identify the irreducible specificity of their philosophy as *precisely* embodied in their own language, so we have to learn Romanian, there is no other way. Even if we translate Romanian into English or French we shouldn't forget there is some untranslatability, and that there is something absolutely original (if there is such a thing) in their Romanian way of approaching, thinking, describing, saying this or that. This is a difficulty we have not only with Eastern European countries, but with any tradition at all.

Question 7

J Dronsfield:
More and more you stress the necessity of a certain form of *questioning* for philosophy if philosophy is to be responsible, not least to itself; a questioning which would question as well the history of the questioning form and its privilege. Moreover, and by example, you engage in questions which by your own admission are rigorously argumentative and anything but non-violent, both out of respect to your objects of inquiry and the better to ensure the life of philosophy. Now, one can find a profound equivocation in Heidegger's work over the most appropriate modality of responsibility, between self-willing and self-projection, whether to question or to listen. Mindful of the problem of voluntarism attending the implied distinction between active and passive, could the 'invention' you have urged upon the political, institutional, and philosophical communities be possible apart from or outside of a relation to the radical and *active* forms of questioning you pursue?

J Derrida:
I would say yes and no. Yes, this invention may be possible apart, since invention (we could translate invention by 'decision' as it were) doesn't owe anything intrinsically to theoretical or historical knowledge, it is heterogeneous to a knowledge. Then anyone, without having deconstructed anything or without having interrogated the tradition, could and should invent new ethical and political decisions, could be able and ready to make such decisions - from that point of view it could be possible apart from deconstructive questioning. Yes, I can imagine someone, an uncultivated man, uninterested in questioning, but acting, inventing, not passive but in the mood of *Gelassenheit*; one does not therefore need the activity of questioning in order to be responsible, to have an authentic relation to the community, to the other, at every moment. But even if this heterogeneity has to be taken for granted, I would say nevertheless that we should question again and again, deconstruct, and endlessly accumulate knowledge, memory, awareness, in order to control the uncontrollable. Thus, we have to circumscribe or surround a decision with the maximum of guarantees, knowledge, precautions, and so on, *even if* we know that a decision belongs to an order which is heterogeneous to knowledge. We have to know; it is better to know even if knowledge is, finally, not useless but discontinuous with the movement of the decision. I have given two answers which are themselves heterogeneous, but this is a consequence of the structure of the decision. Thus I would say that we have to question again and again, not only philosophically but deconstructively, to question philosophy itself, that is the respect in which I am for the Enlightenment. We have to ask questions about the history of the questioning form, the necessity of questioning as its other history, questions about the question which are not simply questioning but what I call just deconstruction. This just deconstruction is absolutely necessary, but it is not absolutely part of the decision, of what is here called the invention. This is the split within the space of decision, and we neither can nor should reduce this split; if we tried to reduce this heterogeneity and close the gap we would transform the invention into a simple consequence, an application of knowledge, or theoretical questioning. Invention is impossible, and has to remain impossible in order to be what it is. I am unhappy with this answer, but it cannot be any other way. Nevertheless, when I say 'I cannot think otherwise', and I acquiesce or consent to a law, to an imperative, this has to be the case even if it's aporetic, paradoxical, or unbearable. I would not want to think otherwise merely to be happy or reconciled, and this is perhaps the rigour or the inflexibility of deconstruction; even if I am not happy with the necessity of what I have to say, I have to say it, and I owe this to the other.

J Dronsfield:
Is there an equivocation in Heidegger between, simply put, an active questioning and a more passive listening? Or is there something more akin to a shift? For as you know, from the beginning Heidegger insisted on an active questioning attitude, whereas in the later

work, to philosophize, to think, is not so much to put questions as it is to listen to that which the question grants, the saying [*Zusage*] of the question...[8]

J Derrida:
...I would say both. Of course I addressed this question in a long footnote in *Of Spirit* [fn4 p 117, & fn5 pp 129-36]. When Heidegger interprets *Frömmigkeit* he says that it doesn't simply mean 'piety', but that it comes from the Greek *promos*, meaning 'at the extreme end', the 'avant-garde' so to speak, and he tries to reconcile the two.[9] It's not an equivocation, it's not a contradiction; it does not mean that *Zusage* comes first as a condition of possibility, for questioning *is* part of the *Zusage*, one has to say 'Yes' before asking questions. The very fact of asking questions, of addressing the other, implies that one says 'Yes' to the other, that one prefers to do this rather than that. In Melville's *Bartleby, the Scrivener* the narrator, a lawyer, tells the story of one of his copyists by the name of Bartleby who at some point didn't obey orders or answer questions, but simply went on repeating 'I would prefer not to... I would prefer not to...'.[10] Even this 'I would prefer not to', which doesn't measure anything, which is not a refusal, or an acceptance, in which he was simply saying he would prefer not to - neither negation nor affirmation - even in this case the simple fact that he answers 'I would prefer not to', even if he said nothing by this sentence, if he accepted nothing or denied nothing, this is a *Zusage*: he finally says 'Yes' to the other, 'I speak to you, even if I don't say "Yes", even if I don't say "No", even if I don't say "Perhaps", I uttered something, I answered, by not answering I answered something'. This answer is a *Zusage*, and even the questioning attitude implies this *Zusage*, not as a prior foundation but as its own unfolding. Heidegger is not saying he was wrong to maintain that questioning is the piety of thinking, but that if one unfolds this statement then one has to admit that some acquiescence is an essential part of the questioning. Not everything in a question is questioning.

NOTES

1. The following (numbered) questions were sent to Professor Derrida a few weeks in advance of his visit to the University of Warwick, 20-22 May 1993. Derrida delivered his responses orally. The time available meant that only one or two interjections could be made. All notes are the editors'.

2. Derrida is here alluding to his public lecture "Spectres of Marx", delivered at the University of Warwick the day before this interview took place, and since published in enlarged form as *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 1994).

3. See Raimond Gaita, *Good & Evil, an Absolute Conception*, ch 4, "Remorse & its lessons" (London: MacMillan, 1991) pp. 43-65. Gaita borrows the example from the BBC series *The World at War*.

4. Benjamin Constant, "Des reactions politiques", (1797), chapitre viii, "Des principes", in *Écrits et Discours Politiques, Tome I*, ed. by O Pozzo Di Borgo (Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1964), pp. 63-71.

5. Immanuel Kant, "Über ein vermeintes Recht aus Menschenliebe zu lügen", (1797), in *Gesammelte Schriften, VIII*, Königliche Preussische Akademie edn(Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1902). Translated as "On a supposed right to tell lies from benevolent motives", in *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason & Other Works on the Theory of Ethics*, ed. & trans. by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott (London: Longmans, 1909), pp. 361-65.

6. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ch 5, "Of property" (London: J M Dent, 1924), pp. 129-41.

7. *La Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, (1789), ed. by Stéphane Rials (Paris: Hachette, 1988).

8. See Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology", (1954), in *The Question Concerning Technology & Other Essays*, trans. by William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 35; and Martin Heidegger, *On The Way To Language*, (1959), trans. by Peter D Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 71-3.

9. "The Question Concerning Technology", op. cit., p. 34.

10. Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street", (1853), in *Billy Budd & Other Stories* (London: J M Dent, 1993), pp. 95-130.

Jacques Derrida: *Writing-Proofs* & Jean-François Lyotard: *Translator's Notes*[1]

Translated by Roland-François Lack

Foreword

As part of the "Immaterials" exhibition, conceived by Jean-François Lyotard and Thierry Chaput and presented at the Pompidou Centre between March and July 1985, a network of writing through computers connecting twenty-six authors was set up. Jacques Derrida was one of these authors. They were asked to give definitions of words related to the theme of the exhibition. The definitions were published under the title *Epreuves d'écriture* [*Writing-Proofs*], by the Centre Pompidou, edited by Thierry Chaput, Chantal Noël and Nicole Toutcheff (Paris: Editions du Centre Georges Pompidou, 1985).
We have singled out and reproduced here the definitions given by Jacques Derrida to which Jean-François Lyotard refers in his "Notes du traducteur" [Translator's Notes], which follow Derrida's texts. - C M[2]

Note on the English translation

I have kept the French heading for each entry, followed where necessary by a translation in English, or at least by a representation of the various senses suggested by the French word. Lyotard's references to Derrida's entries are signalled by the italicised entry-heading in round brackets. All interventions in square brackets are my own. They serve to signal where the author has used terms in English or to clarify ambiguities not present in the French text. Certain 'amphibolous' -- see Lyotard, *Déjouer* -- French words are italicised and followed by square brackets around English terms equivalent to the word's senses [eg. *lacs* -- 'lakes' or 'snares'], and on occasion a French word is sometimes put in brackets after its translation to highlight punning within the text [eg. *pensée* and '*suspense*'] or the resonance of a word beyond the text [eg. *cendre*]. These texts are translated from the version published in the *Revue philosophique*, 2 (1990), which featured only those definitions to which Lyotard responded in his "Notes", except that I have added Derrida's text on *Simulation* omitted by the *Revue philosophique* but referred to by Lyotard (see *Toi*). *Presentation* refers to the document called *The Immaterials No. 2*, a dossier put together by the team in April 1984 for the use of various participants and distributed to the authors of the *Epreuves d'écriture*. - R-F L

Writing-Proofs

Jacques Derrida

Capture 10 October
[capture; the diverting of a smaller river's water to a larger river]
Ex.: Definition equals capture, the imposition of confines. Commentary: another kind of capture, and every order of writing, even signature, assigns a space to meaning and to the other. 'Semantic field': 1. *Territory* (confines, code, body, writing, to inhabit, mirror, image, network, etc.); 2. *Sex* (desire, gesture, to seduce, etc.); 3. *Trap* (artificial, code, immortality, language, maternity, meandering, prosthesis, simulation, etc.); 4. *Fascination* (façade, image, interaction, interface, light, mirror, simulation, simultaneity). The matrix of writing. Our capture: in the network, the matrix and maternity of the author of the rule. Sign everything. Capture of water, the arbitrary barrage of words, potentialisation, accumulation of energy, of meaning [or 'direction'], of memory. The trap, used *for* a capture: stops working on the death of the other (captured, captive, or captivated). Remains only a signature: nothing.

Capture 5 December
From what the two of us were saying about capture, I pass on to the following question: how does this model of capture constitute the law of our relations in the experiment we are undergoing here, through 'immaterials'? Who captures whom, and what, when a certain body is absent? Another experience of the sublime and of sublimation? The 'dematerialisation', as he puts it, of capture would seem to pass through sublime fetishism, the other being preserved by the memory of an image, of smoke, of a scent; sometimes by the memory of a given or invented name, in short, of that which, as cinders [*cendre*], presents itself as unpresentable. This 'works' neither with the gaze that sees without being seen, nor without the gaze: it works only in the double fascination. This might export itself into the apparent invisibility of telephony or of teletextuality. Once again, in this telemachination, the opposition no longer works: captured/capturing, subject/object, form/matter, artificial/natural, fetish/thing, presence/absence. Nor does the dialectic work. Itself already captivating, the truth of capture will not have been thought [*pensée*], will not, to translate etymologically, have been suitably held in *suspense* by a philosophy that is held captive by opposition or by the dialectic. An efficient or effective capture preserves nothing, it must remain suspended. What has not yet been *thought*, then, is also seduction, love, mourning, the body, the given name, placed there for you, for the other in me; the other in me but beyond mourning, or reciprocally, without reciprocity, without

any possible symmetry. Without SYN-MAT, as the *Presentation* puts it: 'For memory, Sanskrit *mâtram*: matter and measure (root *mât*: to do by hand, to measure, to construct).'

Code 10 October
My code, here, ie. my signature: what remains of a negotiation with the code posed, imposed or proposed by the contract signed by me. To navigate. The meandering of writing. Can a code ever give way to anything other than a more powerful code, to a more comprehensive matrix (I do comprehend you, my son)? Does this code authorise me to pose questions in order to define, and instead of defining, to produce a commentary even, to multiply utterances in no definite order? If there is giving only beyond the code (which is not certain), is there a gift? Does a gift arrive? What else might arrive? To inhabit a more powerful matrix only so as to be able to give, to receive, to love (not to sign) -- and so that something might arrive. Contradictory: a gift cannot be programmed, nor can a coming. And what if the (proposed) game was coded, encrypted (cf. all the words beginning in M)? Writing for one and for many *all at once*. Whence the codes. Translate, for example: if, to seduce you, I tell you that these phrases are coded (numbered), what would you do with them?

Code/Confins 5 December
[code/confines]
Yes, confines 'are also at our backs'. The destruction or diversion of codes may consist in using them in a certain way. What are we being obliged to do here? behind our backs? Firstly, to accept the definition of the code by a code: 'The differential distribution of these traits forms the code of the message', or 'the matrix is the code of the message' (see *Presentation*). We pretend to accept this code, and we use tricks to overflow its confines. Confined, even at our backs, to certain kinds of phrase, certain types of writing, constrained by the number of signs and by space-time, by the words given and the words withheld, we play with the confines. We write. If I say 'sign', how will they understand and translate it? Noun or verb? Our desire: not to put the matrix out of gear, but to bend it to our desire. Poor desire. Can the machine tell you anything about the tone I have just used in saying this: poor desire? Can it tell you what I mean by these two words? And what if I wanted to say several things all at once, in several tones of the same sigh?

Confins 10 October
[confines]
In between. Between two demarcated spaces (territory), or between demarcation and non-demarcation, *the two never being in opposition*. Between my country and yours or between our countries and the desert, if it existed, the ocean, unlimited space. Thus the limit has been determined between matter, nature, and their others. Confines define and render indefinite: they are evasive, indistinct, as is my writing here. Matter determined

by its confines in opposition to X, or as indeterminacy, or as the other country, or as the non-country. Beyond opposition, the 'immaterials' are a non-concept, the undefined of the frontierless, hence like the mark, the trace, the phrase (in the sense noted in *The Differend*), the displacement, the writing of the frontier itself. Why is 'confines' written in the plural? For this very reason? Indistinct, image of the *horizon* (the limit itself, etymologically, and limitlessness).

Corps 10 October
[body]
Tombe [ie. 'fall' or 'tomb']. Falling by chance [*aléa*], here, between *two* meanings, at least, of 'corps'. Falling one upon the other (you and I) but coinciding, falling more or less into place: 1. 'one's own' body, yours over there, mine here, the supposed central point of your country and mine, defined solely by the fact that we never leave them, so we never arrive there nor return there. 2. Other bodies, bodies as 'objects' unrelated to ourselves (so it was said), bodies that fall like apples, these would form the most general class. Our 'own' bodies (of which you say 'this is my body') are a part of that class, can inhabit those other bodies, can also take them, comprehend them, can navigate over them, can translate them. Bread, wine, pipe smoke, and scent are all bodies, as much as writing, signs, and signature, but also they become pieces of you and me, they fall from us to be sublimated, raised up, dematerialised (or the reverse: improbable immortality). What writing can I invent for you to recognise *my* desire (my body, my gesture, my voice, my breath) through the matrix and the code of the other?

Désir 10 October
[desire]
Is not, as the modern tradition would have us believe, opposed to need (a difference to be re-thought). When I say that I desire you, when we define desire, it is desire that situates me, defines us, gives us a *place* (such and such a place, date, and hour). No modern language about seduction, simulation, originary repetition, etc., will ever take away the breath of this desire's wild affirmation. It is older than the beginning. Lacks nothing. Whispers ['breathes'] all writing to me. Always multiple, each time in dyadic terms: the third party can say nothing of it that does not stop at the image, at the façade. It is reborn with every gesture, from one sign to another, as a desire to reinvent habitat, codes, the body, the right, idiom, the gift beyond money, the song of an immortality without proof, prayer without religion, tears.

Droit 10 October
[right; law, legality; straight, directly...]
Adjective, noun, or adverb? The 'word list' does not specify, leading us to navigate between the three, in the supposed unity of their meanings. Homonymy is not possible in every language. Capture of language: the gesture that assigns a language and confines to a network of signs in order to establish a law [*droit*] ('the rules of the game') is not subject to the law. Who was given the right to choose the words and the authors? Who gives the right, who delegates it? Who legitimates or authorises me to put forward a writing that forestalls you and that, coming before you, makes the law [*loi*] (like me, you are *before* the law)? The right of...? The right to...? Grammar. The philosophical displacement or displacement of the philosophical attempted here does not annul the law [droit]. Impossible return to some imaginary savage condition.

Droit 5 December
Do we have the right, in an experiment such as this (we have to consider the exhibition, the public, we mustn't use books, type quickly, etc.), to multiply scholarly or 'professional' references, to philosophers, for example? Could I cite Schlegel's Letter to Dorothy on woman and popular philosophy? You cite Aristotle (do we have the right to address each other familiarly by saying 'tu'?); on the subject of straight lines [*le droit*] and curves I could cite Kant. And what if we brought in a citation from Kant on machines? In the Doctrine of Right (*Metaphysics of Morals*), where, incidentally, he answers the question 'What is a book' in terms that ought to have their place among the 'Immaterials', Kant opposes the straight [*droit*] not only to the curve but also to the oblique. 'The straight (*rectum*) is opposed as that which is straight (*gerade*) on the one hand to the curved and on the other to the oblique.' Here, I haven't the right to go any further: consequences...

Ecriture 10 October
[writing]
Improbable, unsustainable, unbearable. Always thought of by philosophy as a sign of sign (of voice), artificial gesture or prosthesis, exiling in space the time of breath. We have since claimed the right to seduce this metaphysical code, to divert the use of the sign 'writing', beyond its traditional or modern confines. The trace, the mark do not arrive at a subject, a substance, a support: neither an attribute nor an accident, nor a form or a sign. A 'phrase', in the Lyotardian sense?

Espace 10 October
[space]
Opens and limits, and so inspires desire, as well as language. *Here*: the number of lines and signs allowed by the 'rules of the game'. Space's ruse: ellipsis, economy, law of the

oikos. How will you inhabit this list of words, sign yourself in the game without mastering it, without accumulating in it, potentially (space, time, speed, network, interaction), the maximum of language or of meaning? Leave space for the insertion of the other. *My* experience today of space, bodily suffering, chance desire: telephonic prosthesis, the near-simultaneity of voices, at apparently infinite speed, no language, breath. Desire for an image-telephone. Remains: spacing, the *khora*. Another code: extra-terrestrial 'space', the medium of new communications (satellites, a new legality [*droit*]). Another idiom: to be somewhere else (distracted, a little crazy): *spacy, spaced out* [in English]. Finally, *blank out*, *Zerstreuung*, *Spielraum*, etc. [in English and German].

Geste 10 October
[gesture]
What no 'model of language' seems able to capture, confine, translate. Just as linguistics or a philosophy of language would not be able to make itself inhabited by the pragmatic, or simply by the language that it speaks. Eg.: a gesture of language, a gesture of writing. In the stricter, more conventional sense: the coded writing of the body (animal or human) presumed to determine itself (subject); also, then, the coded writing of the voice (intonation). Idiom: make a gesture. A call to peace, to reconciliation, but without the pardon that, for its part, makes no gesture, should not even say: we shall efface the harm. Has already left it to efface *itself*: what I call writing.

Geste 5 December
'That's what you were invited for.' The gesture is coded, nonetheless it is what no one else could do in your place. It situates you in an order rather than being your own action, the action of a subject. There can be no absolutely calculated gesture, not even reflexive, not when my index finger is turned towards me (me-I), nor when my fingers or my lips touch. In the gesture of showing myself, I do not see myself. And more than any other, the beauty of the 'beautiful gesture' exhausts reflexivity, if it doesn't entirely exclude it.

Habiter 10 October
[to inhabit; to live]
A rarity: one of the four verbs on the list. Both transitive and intransitive ([in French] I *live in* this town; that's where *I live*, at your place), whereas the others are either transitive (to seduce, to translate) or intransitive (to navigate). Inhabiting is the thing a subject does, decides upon, or 'acts' the least, it is not an action. I only inhabit from a distance: the only way to think that writing, memory, and language give rise to inhabiting; they give a place to inhabiting and deprive me of that place. They are just the places where I aim to place myself or to return to with you. The dread [*hantise*, hauntedness] of return (a coming back, back from the dead), by the circular path, by the ring, by odyssey. The difference between haunting and inhabiting?

Image 10 October
Your image is *in me*, a phrase that could be authored by anyone, everyone understands it. A very simple thing about which in the end nothing satisfactory has been said by either philosophy or the 'positive' sciences (neuro-biology, discourses on the brain, the registering of optic traces, etc.). Same thing for the sound-image. A very simple question. For the rest, we are all experts, stop. Whatever can be said should be kept quiet.

Immortalité 10 October
[immortality]
Figure of the impossible itself. How to 'learn' no longer to desire it, neither for ourselves nor for the others who might still preserve us *in them*? Is non-testamentary writing, affirming death without return, or 'immortality' as 'a condition indifferent to life and death' (see *Presentation*), given as such to man? Only to woman? Immortality, he says, has come to me several times. Whoever distinguishes between the desire for immortality and immortality itself has never loved nor promised. Likewise for whoever confuses the two. Conclusion? There is immortality between you and me, whom we shall see die. Translate: we shall see us die.

Immortalité/Signe 5 December
[immortality/sign]
To these two signs I add 'speed', making three signs, immortality, sign, speed. I do not think that immortality today is 'academic'; nor a theme for some sort of 'naïveté', not simply that. Just as the 'immaterials' are not the contrary of or something other than matter, so 'immortality' is not strange to the most indisputable experience of death. I shall associate its name with speed and sign by speaking of incineration, of the ruse, and of love that, for oneself, make incineration desirable. Love: not to burden others with one's remains, place, name, or funerary monument. No more place, no more mourning! There is also the sublime ruse of glorious immateriality: no longer occupying the assigned place that allows others to live in peace and to mourn in the knowledge that the deceased remains there where he is (not having written for example), the memory of the fire [*feu*, also 'the deceased'] or of the cinders [*cendres*] then takes up every place, or tends to do so, it spiritually impedes mourning, it no longer leaves the others in peace. We always write, we always sign with cinders. No more place, no more mourning! We sign in order to immortalise ourselves with all speed, the time of the fire [or of 'the deceased']. The time of the immaterials is also, as it has long been in Japan, the time of cemeteries without bodies or tombs. Machines for processing text and small urns, at most. A little respite: we have not really written on our new machines, we have written out by hand on our old typewriters, electric or not, and then transcribed laboriously. It is nonetheless true that some cruelty will have been apparent: when my first utterances were 'seized', the difficulty I had re-reading them, recognising a tone, a rhythm, a way of posing voice or

hand, made me understand that, telegraphically, using signs economically, I had already written for this new machinery, in this new world, following the rules of the game, at full speed and at a speed that is no longer mine. We sign at a certain speed, each at his own, irrespective of the length of the name. Conclusion: to accept the earth, human inhumation, to remain in one's place and to ask (smiling to oneself) not to be disturbed, not to disturb habits that are also habits of speed, of sign, and of mortality.

Interaction 10 October
If there is, *in effect*, 'general interaction' (see *Presentation*, a moment very 'Leibnizian' in tone), where *to situate* rupture, disassociation, heterogeneity, the incommensurable, the entirely other? And the differend? And dissymetry (the *dissynmât*)? Are they unsituable? How to think the interaction *with* the interruption of the relation, with the rupture or distancing (finite-infinite) of *ference* and of all its modes, with difference? No doubt this is behind my suspicion of the word 'action' (my allergy, I should say). This may be the first time I use the word in the singular. I prefer 'act' (a sometimes erratic event, an exposed trace or archive, an act without subject or cinders, the act of blessing the cinders (Célan), the irreversibility of chance). I much prefer 'inter' [*entre*, 'between'], the act of entry into the interaction and even into the interval [*entr'acte*]. Enter, then. Translate.

Maternité 10 October
[maternity]
(Too late, change gender: the place!). No versus. Place of holy, infinite perversity. Derives its sublime all-powerfulness from being opposed to nothing. Everything save 'the function of the message's sender' (see *Presentation*). Determines, destines, decides nothing, carries off in advance every *de-*, signs everything. Place for thought [*pensée*], when, deciding nothing, maternity suspends. What is thought in Latin? 'To be in suspense' (*pendere*) [*en souffrance*: 'in suspense' or 'suffering']. (Cf. *La fine del pensiero*, Agamben.) An idiom, a family, a mother other than *Denken*, *danken*, *Gedank*, *Gedacht*.

Matière 10 October
[matter]
1. In the 'list of words', why are there more signs beginning with M (12 out of 50 signs, with 17 different initials) even when there is no immediately apparent connection with the 'immaterials' matrix? M: pure chance [*aléa*]? Has something of the *rule* of the game, of the *measure*, something of the *mât*, been hidden from us? 2. What desire leads us to preserve, with this word, the memory of oppositions that, we are told, are no longer pertinent? What desire for *histoire* ['history' or 'story'] again and for inhabiting a deserted language? Why 'mourning' and 'grief' (see *Presentation*)? 3. Matter: that which *remains*, not as substance, and that which resists, not as objectivity. Finds itself paradoxically on the side of the rule, of necessity, of measure without measure, of that aleatory measure

without which nothing would be. Here it is the economic limit, the condition of writing, even if it is exceeded (50 words, this many signs, this many lines, by a certain date).

Mémoire 10 October
[memory; memoir]
1. In French the meaning changes according to number and gender (*'le mémoire'*, *'la mémoire'*, *'les mémoires'* (masc. or fem.)).Economy of an interminable discourse on the heterogeneity of the three meanings. 2. My chances: that the only form of unhappiness would be to lose, not to preserve, memory (looking at preservation [*regard sur la garde*] itself, the truth of truth: hence not true). 3. The *Presentation* says: 'For memory, Sanskrit: *mâtram*: matter and measure (root *mât*: to make by hand, to measure, to construct).' Well, as far as thinking the immaterials is concerned, what about memory? What about that which has been expired, disqualified, or even merely situated by postmodernity?

Miroir 10 October
[mirror]
Example: this morning, I am behind you, you are in front of your mirror, I look at you seeing me see you. This is a sentence everyone understands; you know that it is addressed to you, here, now. 'We look at ourselves in the mirror' can have so many meanings, in French, at least three, plus what attaches to them. Translate. No representation by photography (writing with light), no general representation can surprise a face-to-face, even in a mirror. Here we expel the third party by holding up our mirror to him.

Mutation 10 October
[transfer, in a juridical sense; transformation; mutation]
Metamorphosis without memory, difference without repetition. Is that possible? What I seek in terror. Here, it should make us forget even the root, the *mât* would be effaced without remains. Teach me an *entirely other* language, one in which today I am totally mute [*muet*]. *Mute* [in French; Derrida has invented a word, perhaps an adjective from *mutation*]. Beyond all translation, with no unit of measurement (*mât*) for some 'semantic field'. How would a machine translate this 'mute'? Every time I write 'translate' I am asking the question of the *mât* and more precisely of the material.

Naviguer 10 October
[to navigate]
A word to muse on, among these others. One of the four verbs in the stock, with *to inhabit* (as in to live on a boat, for example), *to seduce* (as in to lead astray, to lead a boat off its course), *to translate* (*Übersetzung*, *Übertragung*): speaking of finishing a poem, in *Our ultimate gratitude towards art*, Nietzsche says that what we translate or transport, what we transfer (*übertragen*) 'over the river of becoming', we feel that it is a goddess.

(Verify this.) 2. Legendary empiricism of island-dwellers, the art of navigation: maximum calculation, taking into account the maximum of constraints *and* of chance occurrences. To calculate with the unforeseeable, to gamble with destination, at the risk of losing it for good. To navigate by sight (as I am doing here). 3. The soul (or the subject) that is not in the body, 'like the pilot of a vessel', he would say. Whence: sentiment or cybernetics, must we choose? 4. To navigate: a labour, an operation that produces nothing, no object out of matter. Transports, metaphorises, translates: the place of boats and sails in rhetoric. Like translation, navigation is the calculation of a *situated* subject, who masters only by following the wind, the given force, the currents between two lands. Immense calculation, the only writing and reading that are possible, ceaselessly renewed, the inventive genius of a certain passivity. 5. Great or not so great, there are only *lacs* ['lakes' or 'snares']. Translation is a trap.

Ordre 10 October
[order]
To translate, one into the other, the two meanings that enter the network here: 1. *the given order*: play! write! observe the rules! 2. *the given order*, such as the alphabetical order of a series of words. When I accept and countersign these two types of order, there is a contract, but there was already a convention that enabled me to receive and understand them. The authors of the game must have taken account, in order to *give their two orders*, of established conventions, situations and orders. They must have inhabited, navigated, seduced, translated, since that is the pragmatic precondition of any efficient performative. Conclusion: one order (2), by *remote control*, will, from a distance, have command -- not necessarily in a constitutional sense -- over the other order (1). *Sauf l'improbable* ['unless the improbable happens' or 'the improbable is saved'].

Preuve 10 October
[proof]
Has never interested me -- I think. But I also think that it should never be forsaken: always more reason and more light, so as to save the improbable in its ultimate confines, those of the other. I love only faith, or rather, I love faith's irreligious proving [*épreuve*]. 2. Lyotard's definition of wrong [*tort*] and of the differend: 'Damage accompanied by the loss of the means to give proof of the damage (...) the impossibility of proving' (*The Differend*). To be wrong (which is always susceptible of proof) is not the same as to do wrong. To acknowledge or prove a wrong, is that possible? No, therefore it is the only interesting thing. It is never probable. It can always be proved that someone has not admitted their wrong, but only acknowledged and explained the damage done. No proof needed for a pardon (requested or granted). Can two have done the *same* wrong, a symmetrical wrong (*syn-mât*)? No, by definition. -- *Prove it!* [in English]

Prothèse 10 October
[prosthesis]
Can we replace everything *at once* (for example man, the subject, etc.) and still desire, love, suffer, feel pain in our prosthesis as 'in' a phantom limb, can we dialogue with it? Apparently not, you say, and, through these 'immaterials' that make a leap forward, only a leap, in the field of prosthetic extension, he invites us here to understand a 'grief', a 'mourning', a 'disquiet', a 'wise melancholy', etc. (see *Presentation*), to truly feel these things, to 'intensify' the interrogation that accompanies them. Indeed, we shouldn't ask whether a prosthesis can suffer, or love, etc.: of necessity, we need to know the reverse: there is no suffering, love, desire, voice, or 'life' without prosthesis. Only the matrix's potential for prosthetic supplement can seduce, translate, leave open to desire, cause to suffer, put into mourning, live. Ellipsis: in the middle the infant. And then the signature that will have never produced an infant.

Réseau 10 October
[network]
'General interaction.' Connection, therefore ties, obligation. Commonly passes through the representation of 'threads' [*fils*: also 'son' or 'sons']: cloth [*tissu*], text, skein, genealogy, tree. With no recognised or manifest central point? Another 'semantic field', linked to the other by the non-manifestation of the central subject: the clandestine, clandestination, concealed resistance, the crypt, the secret, the private, the plot, the disassociation of the irridentists: you and I, the conspiracy. Postmodernity seems to hold equally to both meanings of network. It cannot network them together. Its concept may be dissociated from that attempt, may be the concept of disassociation itself.

Séduire 10 October
[to seduce]
In diverting the subject from the subject, from so-called Cartesian mastery, in removing it from its project as from its habitat, in destabilising the subject, in leading it astray, I seduce it, I draw it towards me: you no longer have a home, come, love me, come to me, come alongside me. Let's roam together. And yet my call goes out somewhere beyond the meandering of seduction, beyond my signature and rhetorical codes, and beyond, by definition, 'myself', the 'me' of 'come alongside me'. Nor do you come in order to seduce me. If 'postmodern' seduction no longer diverts towards a seducing subject, no longer diverts from a straight path, have we lost seduction? Postmodernity itself would no longer be seductive, unless seduction was something other and more than itself, or unless the 'tradition of modernity' still had more tricks in its bag. Postmodernity would still be its artificial language, one more simulation to seduce us, to lead us off course: classic. I wanted to seduce your very memory, to live in it even at those moments when I was not there for you.

Sens 10 October
[the first and second person infinitive, and the second person imperative of the verbs *to smell*, *to feel*, *to sense*; the singular and plural of the nouns *sense*, *direction*, *meaning*; the name of a town to the South of Paris]
The pragmatic economy of examples: 1. '*smell* this, it's the perfume we chose together'; 2. 'I *smell* [or 'I *feel*'] good after that bath'; 3. '*Feel* how hot my hand is'; 4. 'I love you with all five of my *senses*, and even, in my gentle madness, with my common *sense*'; 5. 'This *direction* is prohibited' ['one-way street']; 6. 'Does history have a *meaning* [or '*direction*']?; 7. 'Only sentences have *meaning*, not single words', says Austin; 8. 'They understand the multiplicity of *meanings* that I give to these words that are addressed only to you but which you sign, of which you are the receiver, he would say the mother'; 9. '*Sens*? I'd like to go there with you, but not to live there'; 10. 'The *sense* of these sentences, unless this is their value, is to illustrate the heterogeneous uses of the written sign 'sens'. It is improbable that these could ever be translated word for word, one word for one word, the one for the other.

Signe 10 October
[sign]
The noun is more tiresome than the verb. Sign! The order in one word. Seems to be implied in every order: understand the order, demonstrate that you understand by signing, the pre-condition of obedience. And yet, 'sign!' is an order to perform the most free gesture, the paradigm of freedom. 2. Idioms: what is 'to make' in 'to make signs' or, a different gesture, 'to make a sign'? 3. If everything is a sign, a coded referral to some other thing, institutional prosthesis, there is no *real*, only a *functional* opposition between a sign and a thing, *no thing* to replace (*aliquid pro aliquo*), only signs to replace, only replacement (artificial, prosthetic), only places and sites. The completion of the 'modern tradition', or postmodernity? 4. A sign from you, my everyday tongue, what I cry for. Translate.

Simulation 10 October
'True' simulation, simulating the true without inverted commas, its impeccable perfection: effacing itself as such, in other words writing itself to the point that no subject, be it that of absolute knowledge, could tell it from that which it simulates. I don't know if I think what I am saying here now, if I feel what I feel. Oh! -- If, if I had to suffer what I am suffering, I'd die. -- But can a sentiment be simulated, I mean for itself, and not in its sign? For example the worry, the grief, the melancholy referred to in the *Presentation*? The logic of prosthesis: if I simulate suffering, I suffer the limitless possibility of simulation. You are my thought [*pensée*] of simulation, I am hanging [*suspendu*] from it, beyond any distinction between the order of the simulacrum and its double. I believe in

the telephone -- that we shall never be machines. To be translated. But it depends on you, it's hanging on your voice.

Simultanéité 10 October
[simultaneity]
Always improbable. Breathe! Breathe without a sign into a telephonic prosthesis, over mountains and lakes, and at the same moment... My 'sentiment', the rock of my hollow certitude, is that beyond all these displacements, differential delays and relays, beyond all these various 'relativities', there is simultaneity, of which there is nothing to say but itself and the ultimate connection it preserves with the other, whatever the differend. There are 'contemporaries', the only ones to whom I am *a priori* attached (?) by an irreducible simultaneity. The most ignoble of them are thrown into the same world as I am, the same here and now. Once only. 2. At full speed, at near-infinite speed, connect in one stroke the *hama* (simultaneously) of *The Differend* and the 'aAMma' of the 'dedication'. Sign. Translate.

Temps 10 October
[time; climate]
It would take too much time to give a definition of time -- in particular. The definite is implied in definition. Pre-understood in a 'hermeneutic circle', the definite defines the defining, therefore it doesn't define enough. Or it defines too much. The sentence gives a clear but vague image (*out of focus* [in English] because of a certain ellipse: bifocal). What I have tried to show by using, as far and as well as I could, words from the list to define words from the list. Tautology? General interaction? A purely analytical operation? Have I, instead of defining, simply 'commented', with the help of a few supplementary words whereby I have signed my failure, in my own manner? This failure, is it mine? This question leaves you time, or gives you time. What is it to give time? '*Le temps qu' il y a*' ['there is', ie. temporal time] (***es gibt***), or '*le temps qu'il fait*' ['it/he makes', ie. climactic time]? You give me the time made ['it makes' or 'he makes', 'what the weather's like'], *if you see what I mean* [in English].

Traduire 10 October
[to translate; to bring to justice]
Example: the essential thing is not that we are awaiting one thing or another, on arrival, in the language of arrival, but that we are awaiting each other, you and I, on arrival, in the language of our country. *Could you übersetzen such a 'déclaration'* [in English, German, and French]? 2. Since 'to translate' can only be defined in one language at a time, a signed definition of translation is an *untranslatable* sentence, written out of love, out of love for the language, ie. to seduce the language and provoke translation, to provoke a *translatable* sentence, *to be translated*. Give machines time.

Vitesse 10 October
[speed]
The measure of all things that allow themselves to be measured, could I say '*mater*' [ie. invent a new French verb; see the Sanskrit *mât*]? What is proposed here: that we gain a maximum of time by use of a spatial apparatus, a networking that allows the accumulation of the most (the most what, exactly?) at the greatest speed. It demands a calculated choice of all kinds of *mât* (words, concepts, codes, senders, receivers, etc.). What is being done by the person who simulates acceptance to signify that in truth he refuses? And who says: I want to take all my time with you, meaning; that gives me the idea, in the non-Kantian sense, of an imperceptible, incalculable time, of a rhythm without speed? 2. We can speak of the 'absolute speed of the performative' (see *Presentation*). But there is no performative without language, or rather without mark. And a mark already takes time, gives it, leaves it.

Voix 10 October
[voice, voices]
A species of writing! [*Espèce d'écriture!*]. (Why do they hear this as another term of abuse?) [*Espèce de ...*: French formula for abuse] 1. This is heard [or 'understood'], even here, is heard badly. What is the limit of a deep voice, of an inner voice as voice of the other? Synthetic voice? 2. The 'immaterials' of postmodernity and *grammar*: beyond the active, passive or middle 'voices' of so-called Western grammar? 3. The 'immaterials' of postmodernity and *politics*: can there be a politics of postmodernity? The *Presentation* is reticent on this subject. Would it still consist in 'giving one's voice' [ie. 'voting'], is there a postmodern sense of 'to vote'? To give voice is something else again. Translate. And once I told you that at times you gave me your voice, that too was something else again, a kind of wild mimesis sprouting plant-like from my throat.

Translator's Notes

Jean-François Lyotard

Déjouer [to frustrate, foil, outmanoeuvre, evade, play off]
Your fear (you have left me the *vous* [a formal or plural form of address], for good measure, agreed) on the large and the small scale, of being made captive. Of being made. A fear multiplied here by the network, by the contracted constraints, themselves constrained (*Ordre*). Multiplied is your sense of a defect, of a suspected fault in the armour, of a defaulting, as a means of escape. Might to deconstruct have escape as its motive? To deconstruct also relieves fear, sublimates it, makes it humorous. The captive in you, or who thinks of himself as such, says: will I find the escape route, there is no outside, and I shall be outside as I am inside, the captive of a network (*Code*). Hence there is no action nor interaction, but an 'inter' that acts (*Interaction*).

And as for the present network, ordered by and made payable to the *Epreuves*, you will have scrupulously complied with its constraints. But not without adding the constraint of 'employing', as far and as well as you could, in your text, the words of the imposed vocabulary (*Temps*). That wasn't asked of you. Insubordination within subordination. Will the enriching of the constraints pass unobserved? Your network doubles, packs the imposed network, conceals itself within it (*Réseau*). You point that out, however. Do you betray yourself? The confession is not due to fear but to the logic of fear successfully realised. To betray oneself, to translate, is more reliable than to keep silent, for the captive. Your ruse -- to undo -- works in the same way on the words and their arrangement into sentences, in your mother tongue. The words and the sentences are untranslatable (*Traduire*), cannot be restored 'on arrival'. The network is thus captivated by itself, its determinations delivered up to the indeterminacy of its maternal matter. Which decides nothing, signs everything, suspends and leaves thought pending, pensive (*Maternité*).

The untranslatable leaves something that 'can be brought to justice' [*du 'traductible'*], something still to be translated. 'That we are expecting one thing or another, on arrival' is not the essential thing, it is 'that we are awaiting each other, you and I, on arrival'. Not in the language of arrival, but in 'the language of our country'. (I defer this 'you and I'). To await one another: reflexive, transitive? How to translate this outmanoeuvring [*déjeu*]? In the language in which it is written. You resist capture thanks only to love of the language that captivates. Since language captures by means of its amphibologies, you mark them. In order to seduce language. Not to captivate it in its turn, not to draw it to

you (*Séduire*). To recall it to its suspense. 'An efficient or effective capture ... must remain suspended' (*Capture*). The essential capture is the 'to be translated' of language within language, the suspense, thought [*la pensée*]. What thinks in language is what outmanoeuvres the senses of 'sense' (*Sens*). You wouldn't allow it to be called senseless.

Encore [again, more, yet, although, still]

I obey constraints, here. Those of the special issue, of the *Festschrift*, a writing of what feast or of what firmness? I try to approach. You give me your voice (*Voix*). But you have nothing to give. Except suspense. I try suspense. But one mustn't hang from it [*s'y suspendre*]. No more than there is a gesture to be 'made' (*Geste*). There is far too much gesture in my approach. A noble gesture? My suspense weighs too heavily. Dead weight, pastiche. You won't be frightened by it, at least. You will smile. Here's another one who's mistaken. You watch me watching your gaze in the mirror I hold up before us (*Miroir*). There is always someone behind it, as there is always a network outside. Confines 'are also at our backs' (*Code/Confins*). Frontalities are illusory. Hence approaches are also. And oppositions are futile, *the two never being in opposition* (*Confins*). We are encircled. We are inhabited, i.e. haunted (*Habiter*). Our desire is not to put the matrix out of gear, but to make it bend to desire (*Code/Confins*). 'Poor desire'. But even to calculate that 'Poor desire' has only one tone is still too poor. To be outmanoeuvred [*déjouer*]: 'to say several things all at once, in several tones of the same sigh' (*Code/Confins*). 'Encore' says one thing and its contrary, not enough or too much, according to the tone of one's impatience, imploring or irritated. But there can be not enough too much, too much too much, etc. And again there's the 'encore' that is interrogative (*some more?*), imperious (*again!*), restrictive (*although ...*), etc. 'Encore' has much to do with desire. Although desire 'lacks nothing' (*Désir*). Although it draws inspiration from the thing that stifles it, like the conditions of space-time (*Espace*).

Yet the desire to bend the matrix of the game to desire lacks time. You complain of this. You are breathless. (What speed, nonetheless.) I run to *Temps* [Time] to see if it is lacked by your desire to bend the matrix (to make it submit?): 'It would take too much time to give a definition of time -- in particular.' What particularity? Concerning time, 'the definite defines the defining'. See aorist [*Confins*]. 'Therefore it -- the definite, therefore the defining -- doesn't define enough. Or too much' (*Temps*).

There's the 'again' again, the entreaty, the unbearable. That of writing itself, said to be 'unbearable', among other things (*Ecriture*). Writing, too, lacks nothing. Except time. Time? No, writing is time, inasmuch as time is that which lacks. Translate: it lacks itself [*il se manque*; also 'it misses itself', 'it fails in its suicide']. Your impossible *hama* (*Simultanéité*) (You try to circumvent me with this *hama*. But no). Not impossible, improbable (*ibid.*). Against which nonetheless you declare your 'sentiment', your revolt, or your ruse: there is simultaneity, beyond all temporal deferrals. There is 'at full speed', at quasi-infinite speed (*ibid.*), creating synchronies, political contemporaneities, for

example, even 'ignoble' ones, but above all there is the reprieved, absolute 'at the same time' of a being together outside of the system, as 'dyad', which eludes any third party (*Miroir*), I'll come back to this.

The importance of the telephone for this speed. Proust sums up love: space and time made sensitive to the heart. The telephone also makes them sensitive, but differently. Compare telephonic sentiment with that of the watcher in *La Prisonnière*. In each case this sentiment is called 'encore', in every tone, of every breath. Analyse the waiting for the message and its end when the message arrives via the telephone, and used to arrive by the mail coach, by *diligence* (You haven't unpacked 'diligence' yet?). Or arrives via the loving caress, also diligent. I wonder whether full speed, your 'hollow certainty' (*Simultanéité*) that simultaneity is possible, so to speak removed from difference, spirited away from every '*de-*' term, is to be taken as frankness, an *affranchissement* [freeing or postage] at the least discounted by the captive of delays and postponements, or else to be taken as a forcing of desire by desire itself, the effacing of its encore, a ruse of patience simulating absolute impatience. Resolution. It would cut short the problem. Between you and I, it's cut short.

Toi [You]

Frankness or simulation, the opposition must be played off [*déjouer*] against itself. If we simulate suffering it is because we suffer from the infinite possibility of simulation (*Simulation*). Would you say it was being frank with simulation to simulate frankness? You surely would say that it is being resolute regarding simulation to simulate resolution. Wittgenstein asks: the difference between a sentiment and the simulacrum of that sentiment? You make the original into 'the double' of the simulacrum (*Simulation*). Your ruse is being patient here: you accept being tested [*l'épreuve*] in this game only to signify that you refuse it (*Vitesse*). Not to deceive the fools who invented it. To play off the codes so that the agreed stakes bend to yours, after all. This was the very *épreuve* [test and proof] of your writing. To submit your writing to defined rules, to requests for definition, to a fixed lexicon from elsewhere, to the defining of spaces to be filled and of delays to be respected, to one or several extrinsic problematics, to writing-partners imposed, unknown and removed from the simultaneity of the face-to-face (*Code/Confins*). I mean: none of these partners could be you [*toi*]. 'Do we have the right to address each other familiarly by saying "toi"?' (*Droit*). Who had 'the given right' to make me undergo this test? How could I sign it?

You are the one who signs, only you. 'These words that are addressed only to you but which you sign, of which you are the receiver, he would say the mother' (*Sens*). He was quite wrong to have said it. Maternity is 'everything save' the function of the message's sender (*Maternity*). You, you determine, you decide, you destine nothing. Maternity 'carries off in advance every de-, signs everything' (*ibid.*). Opposes nothing, that is its 'sublime all-powerfulness', its 'holy, infinite perversity' (*ibid.*), that of the 'khora, perhaps',

imperviousness, the remainder 'beyond opposition', 'inflexible' (*Matière* [*intraitable*, ie. 'inflexible', is not used anywhere by Derrida in the published text; 'beyond opposition' is in *Confins*; 'khora' is in *Espace*]). There's some names for you. When I send writing to myself, it is 'with you' (*ibid.* ['with you' is in *Habiter*, Sens, and *Vitesse*, not in *Matière*]). But these are given names 'placed there for you, for the other in me' (*Capture*). 'Your image is *in me*', that's the 'very simple thing' about which nothing has ever been said. And yet the only thing to be said (*Image*). It is this, you, that leaves thought suspended, that allows thought [*penser*]. Keep quiet whatever can be said (*Maternité* [see *Image*, rather]). Say only what cannot be said. With you, 'I want to take all my time' (*Vitesse*), you who 'give me the time made, *if you see what I mean*' (*Temps*).

'There is immortality between you and me, whom we shall see die' (*Immortalité*). To be translated. But you yourself translate (?): 'the essential thing is ... that we are expecting each other, you and I, on arrival, in the language of our country' (*Traduire*). To be translated, again. I am trying. But I am afraid of forcing, of forcing you and of forcing myself into a thesis of the you [*toi*] and on the you, and into a line of argument that would, perforce, be futile. A fear arising from your ruse arising from your fear. I translate. We shall await each other. You will await me and I shall await you, on arrival and in the place of arrival. Or: the two together, we think that there will be an arrival, no, the arrival. Together we anticipate that it will happen [*arriver*], that the shore [*la rive*] will be reached. Which shore? 'We shall see us die.' You will see me die and I shall see you die. Or: dying will happen to us both together and we shall know it together. The shore: the other side of the lakes [or 'snares', *lacs*] that we are navigating. 'Great or not so great, there are only lakes (*Naviguer*). We transfer (we translate) across them something like 'a goddess' (*ibid.*), you have Nietzsche say. The goddess is you. Having navigated, we shall have expected each other on the other shore, and each of us will have expected that there be the other shore. I navigate, I write, for you, but you are the one who signs. You sign everything, you are on every boat, on every plane. I navigate the lakes, the snares, the traps, you in my boat, I in your *hantise* [your hauntedness, your dread]. To write is to translate, its 'a trap' (*Naviguer*). There is immortality between you and me because we shall see us die together. Neither ever dead for the other. Myself I desire immortality, I who pilot across, translate, write. Whereas you, no, nothing, perverse, holy, all-powerful, and silent. 'Whoever distinguishes between the desire for immortality and immortality itself has never loved nor promised' (*Immortalité*). The desire is always to cross the lakes, to find the passes, the love of language. The immortal one is you in me as I orient myself towards you, who have no orient. Who are there, simultaneous. I love the goddess, I promise to arrive there, to speak her, the mute one, *mute* [the mutated one?] (*Mutation*). She has no need (= desire) (*Désir*) to love. And yet: 'Teach me an *entirely other* language, one in which today I am totally mute' (*Mutation*). Your language, the language you are. But you will teach me nothing. You will have left me in suspense. 'It depends on you, it's hanging on your voice' (*Simulation*). Your voice that says nothing. The one who confuses

you with me, who confuses immortality, the goddess herself with the desire of writing in writing, has never loved, doesn't know what it is to promise, to send over there, to the other shore, to the confines of the lakes, before and behind, to send the arrival before arrival. And if we distinguish language and writing, that is again from want of love, in the cause of abstraction. Oppositional abstractions: competence/performance, thought/language, matter/form. As if I could even hope (desire) to navigate, to await arrival, if you weren't aboard. As if you were waiting for me on the shore. When you are aboard. Aboard my boat and the lakes. That, very quickly, is my translation.

So I fall upon *Corps*, which to begin with you comment with the ambivalent 'Tombe' ['fall' or 'tomb'] (*Corps*). And which you take up again with '*two* meanings, at least, of "corps". Falling one upon the other (you and I) ...' (*ibid.*). I stop at this 'you and I', which you dissect and deploy thus, commenting the first meaning of *corps* [body], the 'proper' *corps*: 'yours over there, mine here, the supposed central point of your country and mine, defined solely by the fact that we never leave them, so we never arrive there nor return there' (*ibid.*). Which sends me back to the text of waiting '... on arrival, in the language of our country' (*Traduire*). Is this a mistranslation? Is 'our country' possible? Our country on arrival? If we never arrive at the country, and if the country, being body, cannot be shared? Our country, belonging to you, the immortal, and to me, your desire, would be when we fall one upon the other. When we would have finished crossing the lakes, simultaneously, but never together. Met at last? Funereal coitus, upon which we wait. On the shore of arrival, we will see ourselves die (here, I cut it short: 'to see oneself', impersonal, non-reflexive, as in 'the battle saw itself reduced to a duel'), because your body and my body, at which neither you nor I can arrive, we shan't arrive there, we shall arrive at the other body. It would be another country. Sombre. Translate. Where we shan't see each other. Or only see ourselves go under [*sombrer*], be blinded, not-writing [*in-écrire*], be delivered up to translators and ferrymen. We are only 'us' posthumously. You and I await it. It is not that language will ever go under. It is on the boat of every transit. But it is its image in me. Arrival is when it falls upon me. We go under. That is to say: I go under, language will already be elsewhere, promised to the vain hands of the others. But I, 'I wanted to seduce your very memory, to live in it even at those moments when I was not there for you' (*Séduire*). To take you aboard me for ever, when you pass with others over the ocean of writing. That which, in me, calls you is 'beyond the "me" of "come alongside me"' (*Séduire*). You sign this desire, with my signature?

Deuil [Mourning]

'A sign from you, my everyday tongue. What I cry for. Translate' (*Signe*). Already translated: you make me cry, I cry after you, I shall always cry, until the arrival. There will be no mourning. The memory will be preserved. 'My luck: that the only form of unhappiness would be to lose, not to preserve, memory ...' (*Mémoire*). My luck is the nasty misfortune that you be unforgettable. You haunt me. It's my luck to be captivated.

You preserve me and I look at you preserving me 'looking at preservation [*regard sur la garde*] itself, the truth of truth: hence not true' (*ibid.*). Writing truer than true. Frustrating the truth of definitions, of oppositions. It is not that they have become impertinent. They have never been that. 'Why "mourning" and "grief"' for this truth imagined to be lost? (*Matière*)? A 'desire for *histoire* ['history' or 'story'] again and for inhabiting a deserted language?' (*ibid.*). It is not for this supposed loss that I cry, but for and after your presence, language, never deserted. Which will always have happened as long as I will have written, out of place [*hors lieu*]. This gap gives space and time for tears.

Every sign of you does me harm. 'To acknowledge or prove a wrong, is that possible? No, therefore it is the only interesting thing. It is never probable' (*Preuve*). The harm I suffer from your indifferent all-powerfulness, I shan't prove it [*le prouverai*], I shall feel it [*l'éprouverai*]. 'Can two have done the *same* wrong, a symmetrical wrong (*syn-mât*)? No, by definition.' Impossible to settle our differences [our *différend*]. Impossible to pardon each other. 'No proof needed for a pardon (requested or granted)' (*ibid.*). The test [*épreuve*] to which you submit here, in discharging yourself, asks: 'Make a gesture', is a call 'to peace, to reconciliation' (*Geste*). But all the test does is cause damage. It doesn't deserve to be forgiven. You are asked: 'we shall efface the harm' (*ibid.*). The harm done by writing. But damage calls only for litigation and a decision, not for pardon, which escapes the rule. The pardon would pardon only the harm. But it is not a gesture and makes no gesture. The pardon 'has already left it ('the harm') to efface it*self*: what I call writing' (*ibid.*). That is why there is no proof of it. While I write, you do me harm and I pardon you, but it will never be proved, even by my tears. While you haunt my writing, without your holiness asking me for anything, I do you harm. Do you pardon me? Who will prove it? Mute.

Asymmetrical, with word-for-word translation, the words' 'replacement' (*Signe*), the debt passes through writing. We pass over the lakes, one with the other, one without the other, the with and the without not being the same for one and the other, dual, you unforgettable, I terminable. 'What is the limit of a deep voice, of an inner voice as voice of the other?' (*Voix*). You whisper to me (you breathe into me) your voice. I am your 'supplement', your 'prosthesis' (*Prothèse*). That is why there is this gap, 'melancholy', a harm exceeding the declared pardon, consuming itself in writing. Of which you have no need. That is why the mourning is never lifted, the fire never put out. It is vain to count on being acquitted of your 'privilege from seizure' through incineration (*Immortalité/Signe*), through the consummation of writing in an immediate fire and by the signature in cinders. An aping of that signing [*singerie de cette signerie*]. Cinders are still matter. I sign in the humus. Of the inhuman, I bear witness to the inhumed. False witnesses. 'I love only faith, or rather, I love faith's irreligious proving' (*Preuve*).

NOTES

1. We are grateful to the *Revue Philosophique* for permission to publish this translation of works which originally appeared in *Revue Philosophique*, 2 (1990), 269-92.
2. This foreword was written by Catherine Malabou, editor at the *Revue philosophique*.

Justice Without Ethics?

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In "Passions: 'An Oblique Offering'" Derrida summarized the debate about the relation of deconstruction to ethics. He saw a split between, on the one hand, those who criticize deconstruction as a modern form of immorality and irresponsibility and, on the other hand, those who are encouraged to find signs in his more recent texts that he has become more interested in ethics. Derrida rejected both observations as leading toward a restoration of morality, and thus, in his view, a new dogmatic slumber. Derrida professed that he could imagine nothing worse than a community of complacent deconstructionists, happy in their good conscience. For himself, Derrida questioned the very names *ethics*, *morality*, *politics*, *responsibility* and *the subject*. Without underwriting any of these terms, he posed the questions 'What is the ethicity of ethics?, the morality of morality? What is responsibility? What is the "what is?" in this case?, etc.' It might seem that this does not bode very well for those, like myself, who have for some time sought to establish that there is a close affinity between Derrida and Levinas [PO 14 / POO 40].

According to Derrida's 1964 essay on Levinas, "Violence and Metaphysics," Levinas does not 'seek to propose laws or moral rules, does not seek to determine a morality, but rather the essence of the ethical relation in general' [VM 111 / VeM 164].[1] Derrida called it 'an Ethics of Ethics.' It is likely therefore that Derrida had Levinas in mind when in "Passions" he referred to the ethicity of ethics. Derrida's point would be that Levinas's work posed an appropriate question, but still without sufficiently questioning the term 'ethics'. That this is how Derrida read Levinas is confirmed by other texts. For example, in a discussion of Levinas's philosophy in *Altérités*, Derrida emphasized that he had no objection to Levinas's thought, but that there were differences of idiom and of language between them however difficult those differences might be to determine [A 74]. It was in this context that Derrida outlined his concern over the term 'ethics' [A 70]. Derrida began with Heidegger's observation in the "Letter on Humanism" that ethics was a late development compared with the question of Being,[2] and concluded that to make the question of philosophy depend on the question of ethics, as Levinas does, is ultimately to fail to interrogate the ethicity of ethics. This constitutes a serious objection, given Derrida's earlier characterization of Levinas's thought as an ethics of ethics, but he modified it somewhat with the judgement that, even though Levinas's use of the word 'ethics' has some continuity with that found from Greek philosophy to nineteenth century

German philosophy, it is nevertheless 'wholly other' (*tout autre*).[3] Even so, it is 'the same word' and so the question arises as to the legitimacy - and likely success - of attempting to free a word of its historical determinations. This is a familiar deconstructive move: Levinas's intentions were betrayed by his language. However, Derrida did at least offer a suggestion as to how Levinas might negotiate the problem by proposing a Heideggerian-style argument that is also characteristic of deconstruction. According to it, Levinas's semantic transformation of the word 'ethics' would not be arbitrary, but would restore the condition of possibility hidden or dissimulated in Greek and German ethical thought.[4]

Although Levinas has underwritten the formula 'ethics as first philosophy', this is not quite the same thing as suggesting that the ethical provides the condition of possibility of the tradition of Western philosophy. He would not want to circumscribe his thought by adopting the argument proposed by Derrida here. Nor has Levinas engaged in the prolonged confrontation with Greek and German ethical thought that this would require. Ultimately Levinas has been more concerned to show the ethical as that which interrupts Greek (and German) philosophy without detailed reference to how ethics has been present in that tradition. Levinas has tended to think this interruption differently both from the way Derrida thought it and from the way that Derrida thought that Levinas thought it.[5] This is fully apparent only if one reads Levinas's confessional writings alongside the philosophical writings. Levinas has come to understand the task of his confessional writings as that of translating Hebraic wisdom into the Greek language. Levinas's distrust of the ontological tradition, a distrust that has long been expressed in his philosophical texts, is not extended to 'the Greek language' in the sense of the languages of the West. He judges these languages to be both clear and malleable and so eminently suitable for this work of translation.[6] This was in large measure Levinas's response to Derrida's appeal in "Violence and Metaphysics" to 'some indestructible and unforeseeable resource of the Greek logos' such that whoever seeks to repel the logos would always be overtaken [VM 111-112 / VeM 165]. The serious question of whether Levinas's distinction between language and wisdom is itself not circumscribed by the logos is not the issue here, so much as his apparent rejection of Derrida's claim in "Violence and Metaphysics" that 'Greece is not a neutral, provisional territory, beyond borders' [VM 153 /VeM 227]. Levinas not only believes that the Greek language is neutral and beyond territory, he also supports the universalist pretensions of the West, understood as the conjunction of Greece and the Bible [HN 155], at the expense of an appreciation of other cultures.[7] As a result he himself seems to re-enclose in a unity what might otherwise seem to interrupt the Greek logos.

However, apparently in direct response to Derrida, Levinas has in recent years begun to question the term 'ethics' with which he was at one time so closely identified. When François Poirié in a wide-ranging interview introduced the word 'ethics', Levinas responded, 'The word ethics is Greek. Nowadays above all, I think much more about holiness, the holiness of the face of the Other or the holiness of my obligation as such.'[8]

Levinas does not reject the word 'ethics' simply because it is Greek. He has not given up the word 'ethics'. Levinas has always objected to what he takes to be a certain 'Greek' subordination of ethics to ontology. If he now prefers the word 'saintliness', it is perhaps to avoid that connotation, but he subjects neither term to genealogical scrutiny. However, what he does say about the word elsewhere indicates at least some sensitivity to the problems that concern Derrida. Already in *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas had warned that 'saintliness' or 'holiness' (*sainteté*) carries the 'odor of the "numinous"'[9] This would severely hamper its suitability for describing the topic of Levinas's thought. However, in a book of commentaries on the Talmud, *From the Sacred to the Holy*, Levinas came to relate the word 'holy' (*saint*) to the *dé-mythisation* of the religious that is said to be characteristic of the Judaic tradition.[10] Anticipating his subsequent displacement of ethics by 'holiness', Levinas identified an 'ethical meaning' that can be extracted from the Torah, and which corresponds to the holy. According to him, it presents 'the ultimate intelligibility of the human'. In one of the Talmudic readings in the volume, "Desacralization and Disenchantment", Levinas opposed the holy to the sacred, asking whether they can coexist: 'I have always asked myself if holiness, that is, separation or purity, the essence without admixture that can be called Spirit and which animates the Jewish tradition - or to which the Jewish tradition aspires - can dwell in a world that has not been desacralized' [SS 89 / QTR 141]. There is a clear parallel between what Levinas describes here and what he attempted in the philosophical context of *Totality and Infinity*, where the target is 'the violence of the sacred' [TI 77 / Tel 49], as well as the onto-theological language of Western philosophy. Levinas's questioning of the sacred contributes to his redetermination of ethics even though he is relatively silent about the part played by the sacred in the history of ethics.

Although Levinas has nowhere offered a genealogy of either 'ethics' or 'holiness', such as Derrida required, this brief examination of their preferred terminology does not reveal a great gulf between them. Both share an extreme suspicion of 'good conscience'. What Levinas proposes under the name 'ethics' and what Derrida attempts when he challenges what usually passes for 'ethics' is to some extent the same: an attack on good conscience [Ap 19]. That a genealogy of Levinasian ethics would be as much concerned with his Judaism as with the history of Greek philosophy is clear. Levinas goes some way to closing off the exploration of both sides of his genealogy by insisting on the distinction between his confessional and his philosophical writings. However, it is not difficult to break through this distinction. When one does so, one not only finds that *Otherwise Than Being* is dedicated to the victims of National Socialism and 'the millions of all confessions and all nations, victims of the same hatred of the other man, the same anti-semitism', one also finds that that dedication and the naming that takes place there belongs to a larger account of the role of Judaism within the history of the West that is recorded in *Difficult Freedom* and elsewhere.[11] If Derrida's focus on the historical determination of concepts, his recognition of the 'unlimited power of envelopment by

which he who attempts to repel it [the Greek logos] would always already be overtaken' [VM 112 / VeM 165], meant that he was concerned only to draw Levinas back into the orbit of Greek philosophy, then Derrida might find his suspicions confirmed by Levinas's tendency in his confessional writings to insist on Europe and the West, to the point of excluding virtually everything else. But, of course, neither Levinas, nor Derrida, loses sight of the necessity of the interruption of the order of being, albeit while recognizing the impossibility of sustaining any such interruption. To show this with reference to Derrida's most recent texts I will now examine the claim about the proximity of Levinas and Derrida in the context of Derrida's introduction of the word that will serve him as 'ethics' served Levinas. That word is 'justice'.

Derrida underwrote the word 'justice' in a most dramatic way. In "Force of Law," a text presented at the Cardozo Law School in October 1989 on the occasion of a conference entitled "Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice", Derrida announced:

> Justice in itself, if such a thing exists, outside or beyond law, is not deconstructible. No more than deconstruction, if such a thing exists. Deconstruction is justice. [FL 145]

The law is deconstructible, whereas justice is not. Where now is the suspicion that was so much in evidence when Derrida was questioning 'ethics'? More puzzling even than this special treatment offered the word 'justice', which is adopted without genealogical scrutiny, is Derrida's attempt to enlist Levinas's support for it. Derrida's first move was to draw a parallel between his own use of the word 'justice' and the discussion of justice found in *Totality and Infinity*. By quoting Levinas's identification of 'justice' there with 'the relation with others' (*la relation avec autrui*), Derrida was able to associate it with Levinas's account of the heteronomic relation to Others, where I am hostage to the face of the Other that commands me [FL 959].[12] He next related what Levinas called 'justice' in these sections of *Totality and Infinity* to what Levinas called 'holiness' or 'sanctity' in his Talmudic lectures. *Sainteté* is, as I have mentioned, the word Levinas appealed to elsewhere in order to displace 'ethics'. And yet throughout this discussion Derrida did not mention the word 'ethics'. Derrida's restraint in not introducing his objections to the word 'ethics' can perhaps be understood as strategic, even diplomatic. But how is one to understand Derrida's failure to mention the fact that Levinas's use of the word 'justice' in the section from *Totality and Infinity* that he cited does not conform to Levinas's standard usage? It is within the context of Levinas's work anomalous. The general claim that Levinas was making is summarized in one of his section headings: 'Truth presupposes justice' [TI 90 / Tel 42]. That is to say, truth is founded on the relation with the other that he here called *justice* [TI 99 / Tel 72], and which he had only a few pages earlier explained as this approach to the face in discourse (*cet abord de face, dans le discours*) [TI 71 / Tel 43]. Elsewhere, however, Levinas identified justice somewhat differently.

Levinas customarily reserved the word 'justice' for the relation to the third party. However, occasionally, such as in the passages Derrida quoted from *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas used 'justice' as a synonym for what he elsewhere called 'ethics', the face to face relation with the Other. This would raise the question as to whether Derrida's recourse to 'justice' in "Force of Law" did not take advantage of that ambiguity. Could it be that Derrida, recalling that his objections to Levinas were largely to his use of the word 'ethics', had found a way of bypassing the objection by focusing on those moments when Levinas used the word 'justice' instead of 'ethics'? Derrida's reference to *sainteté* and the absence of any mention of the ambiguity of Levinas's use of the word 'justice' encourages one to understand his text in this way. However, it would still leave unexplained why the word 'justice' was not subjected to the same kind of questions that Derrida had raised against the word 'ethics'. Derrida, it has to be said, did not offer a genealogy of justice, even though Nietzsche already made some suggestions in *On The Genealogy of Morals*. Nor did Derrida raise the question of the role that the term justice has played in Western metaphysics, even though Heidegger had suggested how the history of Western philosophy might be read in terms of it.[13] Derrida merely issued the obvious warning:

> Left to itself, the incalculable and giving (*donatrice*) idea of justice is always very close to the bad, even to the worst for it can always be reappropriated by the most perverse calculation. It's always possible. And so incalculable justice requires us to calculate. [FL 971]

He did not add, what seems to follow, that nondeconstructible justice is not only what requires us to deconstruct [FL 955], it also requires us to deconstruct 'justice'. On this reconstruction of Derrida's argument, there would seem to be a latent equivocation. Given Derrida's understanding of language, how could the two words, 'justice' and 'ethics', be understood as equivalent? Derrida's whole discussion of justice as 'not deconstructible', according to standards that Derrida himself has helped to establish, seems more provocative than scrupulous. However, the issue requires more analysis before Derrida can be accused of lapsing into his own dogmatic slumber.

When, in 1975 at the University of Leiden, Levinas was asked about the ambiguity in his use of the word 'justice', his response was that he did apply the word more readily to the relation with the third party than to the relation with the Other, but that the two relations are not distinct: 'In reality the relation with the Other is never uniquely the relation with the Other: the third party is always already represented in the Other; in the very apparition of the Other the third party already looks at me.'[14] This account was borrowed from the brief passage in *Totality and Infinity* where, under the heading "The Other and the Others" (*L'autrui et les autres*), Levinas presented an argument that the third is not an addition, but is already there in the encounter with the Other. 'The third party looks at me in the eyes of the Other - language is justice' [TI 213 / TeI 188]. In other words, the alleged ambiguity of the word 'justice' arises from the nature of the

relation with the Other as Levinas analyses it, and is not simply the result of an equivocation of terms. This complicates the question of how one is to judge Derrida's appeal to Levinas's usage in order to justify his own adoption of the word 'justice'. The complexity of Levinas's account of justice confirms that Derrida was wise in "Force of Law" not to extend any further than he did the parallel between his own thought on justice and that found in Levinas:

> But since Levinas's difficult discourse would give rise to other difficult questions, I cannot be content to borrow conceptual moves without risking confusions or analogies. And so I will go no further in this direction. [FL 959]

However, that presumably should not prohibit others from attempting to draw the comparison.

In "Force of Law" Derrida insisted on the ordeal of the undecidable in respect of justice.

> The undecidable is not merely the oscillation or the tension between two decisions, it is the experience of that which, though heterogeneous, foreign to the order of the calculable and the rule, is still obliged - it is of obligation that we must speak - to give itself up to the impossible decision, while taking account of law and rule. [FL 963]

This experience, or, more precisely, what in this experience deconstructs 'all presumption of a determinant certitude of a present justice', confirms that the 'infinite "idea of justice"' surpasses rule and calculation [FL 965].[15] Justice is 'infinite, incalculable, rebellious to rule and foreign to symmetry, heterogeneous and heterotrophic' [FL 959]. To this extent it corresponds more closely to what Levinas calls 'the ethical' than it does to what Levinas calls 'justice'. Levinas associates justice with 'comparison, coexistence, contemporaneousness, assembling, order, thematization, the visibility of faces, and thus intentionality and the intellect, and in intentionality and the intellect, the intelligibility of a system, and thence also a copresence on an equal footing as before a court of justice' [OB 157 / AE 200]. This is what Derrida would call 'law'. To this extent, Derrida's nondeconstructible idea of justice could even be said to be more Levinasian, more 'ethical', than Levinas's idea of justice. But it would still be something other than Levinas's notion of the ethical under another name.

According to Levinas's 1975 explanation, the distinction between ethics and justice is unstable. One cannot readily separate the asymmetrical relation to the Other, whereby the Other demands of me more than I have the right to demand of the Other [TI 53 / TeI 24], from the symmetrical relation with all the others, where each, including myself, has a right to equality. In one of his interviews with Philippe Nemo, Levinas spoke of his attempts to relate ethics and justice. He repeated that the presence of the third party alongside the Other is what conditions laws and establishes justice [EI 89 / EeI 94]]. If

there was only the Other, I could say that I owe the Other everything. The third complicates this.

> The interpersonal relation I establish with the Other, I must also establish with other men; there is thus a necessity to moderate this privilege of the Other; from whence comes justice. Justice, exercised through institutions, which are inevitable, must always be held in check by the initial interpersonal relation. [EI 90 / EeI 95]

If this meant only that justice as it is exercised by institutions must be questioned in terms of an infinite idea of justice, then it would correspond to the way Derrida understands the relation of the law to justice. However, for Levinas ethics goes further. As he wrote elsewhere, 'There are, if you like, tears that a functionary cannot see, the tears of the Other.'[16] That means that ultimately what Levinas says of politics must also apply to justice: 'left to itself [it] bears a tyranny within itself' [TI 300 / TeI 276]. Levinas's early work from 1947, *Time and the Other*, already posed the question. It is an insight that survives in his later work, particularly if one translates what is here said of charity into the language of love or ethics: 'Does not the essential difference between charity and justice come from the preference of charity for the other, even when, from the point of view of justice, no preference is any longer possible?'[17] In other words, not even the infinite idea of justice could satisfy what Levinas calls ethics. Does not Levinas show how the ethical exceeds every conception of justice, just as Derrida shows that justice exceeds law and calculation [FL 971]?

The difference between Levinas and Derrida at one point seemed to be very small, perhaps only terminological. It seemed that what Levinas called 'justice' was much closer to what Derrida called 'law' than what Derrida called 'justice' and that what Levinas called 'ethics' corresponded to what Derrida called 'justice'. However, Levinasian ethics is not the same as undeconstructible justice. It may be even more hyperbolic. Ethics, as Levinas understands it, introduces a level of impossibility beyond the problem of doing justice to all. Even in a society of two, I could never do enough for the Other. Levinas does not simply present justice as a modification or a deficient form of the ethical, arrived at by negotiating all one's ethical demands. Justice also has legitimate claims against the ethical. Levinas made the point succinctly in "Sociality and Money", when he asked, 'Are not elevation and the holiness of love of the neighbour compromised by inattention to the third party . . .?'[18] A similar point is made at greater length in the fifth chapter of *Otherwise than being*, Levinas's most sustained discussion of justice. Here justice is initially presented as a way of negotiating the problem that arises when the third party intervenes on the proximity of the Other [OB 157 / AE 200]. It is problematic that Levinas has the third party enter on the scene after the Other, contrary not only to the analysis of the third in *Totality and Infinity* but also to the tendency in *Otherwise than being* to move away from a portrayal of the encounter with the Other in empirical terms

[cf. OB 115-116 / AE 147]. However, Levinas quickly corrected this impression. Within the space of a page, he acknowledged both that the entry of the third party is not an empirical fact and that the others obsess me 'in the proximity of the other' [OB 158 / AE 201]. This is important because the narrative account here renounced, and which even so retains a certain popularity in the secondary literature, is what tends to support the view that the ethical provides the basic from which justice derives, when the third party is added. Once it is recognized that 'the others concern me *from the first*' [OB 159 / AE 202], a somewhat different picture prevails. Levinas wrote, 'The third party introduces a contradiction in the saying whose signification before the other until then went in one direction (*sens*)' [OB 157 / AE 200]. Once there is a third party, and the third party is always already in place, then, from a certain perspective, the ethical needs correction: the relation with the third party is presented as 'an incessant correction of the asymmetry of proximity in which the face is looked at' [OB 158 / AE 201]. That justice is not simply a degeneration, diminution, limitation, or neutralization of ethical responsibility is emphasized in the Judaic writings.[19] One could almost imagine a reading of Levinas according to which justice puts ethics in question, just as ethics questions justice.

There could be for Levinas no justice without ethics, nor ethics without justice. And yet the demands of ethics and the demands of justice cannot be reconciled. This aporia amounting to a contradiction is at the heart of Levinas's thought, even if it is not always presented by him in this way or recognized as such by his commentators. It is an aporia as challenging as the aporia of justice addressed by Derrida in "Force of Law".[20] If Levinas has tended to focus on ethical asymmetry, it is not least because it is what has been overlooked in the traditional evocation of justice. That is why Levinas has attempted to think an ethics without justice, a face to face relation with the Other without the third party, even if it reverts to the narrative account whose appropriateness he elsewhere denies. One cannot argue that, because there can never be a face to face with the Other without the others, the notion of ethics makes no sense and there is only justice. That would be to attempt to reduce the ethical to an ontological event; it would be to insist that the ethical be a ground of the kind Levinas seeks to question. If one allows that there are invisible tears to which even infinite justice is blind, then a certain distance separating Levinas from Derrida comes into view.

What seems to be absent from "Force of Law", as a consequence of Derrida's reluctance in that place to address the ambiguity of the word 'justice' in Levinas, is the Levinasian problem or aporia of the relation between ethics and justice. When Derrida in "Force of Law" came to set out three ways in which the aporia of justice is distributed, the contradiction in the attempt to do justice to one while doing justice to all was not thematically developed. Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that Derrida did evoke that issue early in the essay when he wrote:

> To address oneself to the other in the language of the other is, it seems, the condition of all possible justice, but apparently, in all rigor, it is not only impossible (since I cannot speak the language of the other except to the extent that I appropriate it and assimilate it according to the law of an implicit third) but even excluded by justice as law (*droit*), inasmuch as justice as right seems to imply an element of universality, the appeal to a third party who suspends the unilaterality or singularity of the idioms. [FL 949]

The apparently Levinasian reference here is confirmed when one reads later that 'justice always addresses itself to singularity, to the singularity of the other, despite or even because it pretends to universality' [FL 955]. It is these passages above all that might lead one to suppose that Derrida was indeed intending to construe the aporia of justice and law on the model of the relation between ethics and justice in Levinas. The result would be what one might call a 'Derridean-Levinasian account'.[21] However, in the course of developing his account of the aporias, Derrida did not pursue the same path as Levinas. He did not address the question of the blindness of justice. He took a more Kierkegaardian route that leads to the theme of decision.[22] It is this difference of focus that must be accounted for within the context of certain genuine parallels in the way Levinas and Derrida develop their different but related themes.

The parallels begin already when Derrida early in "Force of Law" quoted what might seem some relatively unremarkable lines from Pascal:

> Justice without force is contradictory, as there are always the wicked; force without justice is accused of wrong.[23]

In "Force of Law" Pascal's sentence is used to complicate the distinction between justice and force, which in turn anticipates Derrida's claim about the instability of the distinction between justice and law [FL 959]. The instability of the distinction between justice and law in Derrida is presented in terms parallel to those employed by Levinas in his exposition of the instability of the distinction between ethics and justice. Derrida wrote:

> This 'idea of justice' seems to me to be irreducible in its affirmative character, in its demand of gift without exchange, without circulation, without recognition or gratitude, without economic circulation, without circulation and without rule, without reason and without rationality. [FL 965]

The point is not only that Derrida here and elsewhere has developed a sense of the logic of the gift that was already suggested by Levinas in "The Trace of the Other".[24] Derrida, like Levinas, developed the logic of the gift according to a certain logic of the 'without' (*sans*). The logic of the 'without' is an interruptive logic in which what interrupts the order of being is 'impossible, unthinkable, unsayable' from within that realm [cf. VM 114 / VeM 168]. Exchange, circulation and rationality would be interrupted by the gift [GT 156 / DT 197]. The gift is not an event in being. Just as Levinas employed the logic of the

'without' to problematize 'ethics',[25] so Derrida's endorsement of this logic here serves as confirmation that, even if he did not in fact submit 'justice' to genealogical questioning, he did not leave it unproblematized.

We would be left marking the difference between Derrida's justice and Levinas's ethics, and yet at the same time showing certain similarities in the way they are presented, were it not for another text by Derrida that has recently appeared, *Spectres de Marx*. That the question of justice in its necessity as well as its aporias cannot be separated from that of the gift is confirmed by *Spectres de Marx*, where Derrida again begins by citing Levinas's formula 'the relation with Others - that is to say justice', before again separating law with its calculus of restitution from the infinite dissymmetry of justice [SM 48-9, 53, 56]. Justice is thereby located beyond the living present in a certain non-contemporaneity with itself of the living present that is also characteristic of the gift. Derrida evokes this responsibility beyond any living present and, in a phrase that reads like a rewriting of Levinas, finds it 'in the face of the ghosts (*devant les fantômes*) of those not yet born or already dead, victims or not of wars, of political or other forms of violence, of nationalist, racist, colonialist, sexist or other kinds of extermination, of oppression, be it that of capitalist, imperialist or any other type of totalitarianism' [SM 16]. By his use of this phrase, Derrida has shown himself not to be averse to evoking the victims of oppression, albeit without naming them victims of anti-semitism specifically. He has also shown himself still prepared to use words like 'responsibility', when they are subjected to appropriate warnings and a redetermination that locates them 'beyond being'. But, most importantly, in the face of this evocation of the victims, the distinction between Derrida's justice and Levinas's ethics seems to collapse: for the victims it makes no sense. The thesis of the affinity between Levinas and Derrida would seem to stand. One is only left remarking the most curious affinity of all, one that Derrida himself unwittingly uncovered and still has time to alter: it is the fact that he is himself subject to the same criticism that he directs to Levinas, of failing to submit his central concepts in this realm to genealogical investigation.[26]

NOTES

1. Levinas later confirmed this: 'My task does not consist of constructing ethics; I only try to find its meaning'. E. Levinas, *Ethique et Infini* (Paris: Fayard, 1982), p. 95; *Ethics and Infinity*, trans. by R. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), p. 90. Henceforth EeI and EI respectively.

2. See M. Heidegger, "Brief über den Humanismus", in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1967), p. 147; "Letter on Humanism", in *Basic Writings* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 195. For a more detailed discussion, see R. Bernasconi, "Deconstruction & the Possibility of Ethics", *Heidegger in Question: The Art of Existing* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1993), pp. 211-224.

3. For further discussion of Derrida's remarks on Levinas in *Altérités*, see Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 9-11 and 15-17.

4. The privileging of Greek and German thought is not an unimportant part of what would make this argument 'Heideggerian', but both Derrida and Levinas fail to contest this privilege as much as one might expect them to. It is striking, however, that on this occasion Derrida does make the identities behind the identity of 'Western philosophy' more explicit. I shall return to this theme later.

5. Derrida develops the notion of interruption himself in *Altérités* (p. 82), but not with respect to philosophical discourse as such. By contrast, Levinas calls for precaution in thinking the possibility of a conclusion or closure (*fermeture*) of philosophical discourse, by rasing the possibility that interruption is its only possible end. E. Levinas, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), p. 24; *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. by A. Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), p. 20. Henceforth AE and OB respectively.

6. E. Levinas, "La traduction de l'écriture", *A l'heure des nations* (Paris: Minuit, 1988), pp. 43-65, esp. pp. 64-65. See also "La Bible et les Grecs!", ibid., pp. 155-157. Henceforth HN.

7. See also, for example, "Intentionen, Ereignis und der Andere. Gespräch zwischen Emmanuel Levinas und Christoph von Wolzogen", in *Humanismus des anderen Menschen* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1989), p. 140.

8. François Poirié, *Emmanuel Levinas. Qui êtes-vous?* (Lyon: La Manufacture, 1987), p. 95.

9. E. Levinas, *Totalité et Infini* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961), p. 169; *Totality and Infinity*, trans. by A. Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p. 195. Henceforth TeI and TI respectively.

10. E. Levinas, *Du sacré au saint* (Paris: Minuit, 1977), p. 10; *Nine Talmudic Readings*, trans. by Annette Aronowicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 92-93. Henceforth SS and QTR respectively.

11. I explore this at greater length in *Between Levinas and Derrida* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming).

12. Derrida cites *Totality and Infinity* [TeI 62 / TI 89]

13. See R. Bernasconi, "Justice and the Twilight Zone of Morality", in *Heidegger in Question*, op. cit., pp. 40-55. Derrida concedes the absence of 'the least detour through historical memory' [FL 957]. There are, however, allusions to this history at FL 927 and 955.

14. E. Levinas, *De Dieu qui vient à l'idée* (Paris: Vrin, 1986), pp. 132-133.

15. That this Levinasian language is employed according to a seemingly Levinasian logic is confirmed by the fact that Derrida declares that the 'idea of justice' is infinite because it is irreducible and that it is irreducible because it is owed to the other before any contract. One would also need to consider the 'absolute justice' of God as Levinas interpreted it in one of his Talmudic Readings. See E. Levinas, "Leçon talmudique. Sur la justice", in *Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. by Catherine Chalier and Miguel Abensour (Paris: Editions de l'Herne, 1991), pp.120-133 (p. 127).

16. "Transcendance et hauteur", *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie*, vol. 3 (1962), 89-113 (p. 102).

17. E. Levinas, *Le temps et l'autre* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1979), p. 76; *Time and the Other*, trans. by Richard Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987), p. 84.

18. E. Levinas, "Socialité et argent", *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*, vol. 50 (1988), pp.415-421 (p. 420).

19. In an interview from 1988 Levinas emphasized the demands of both love and justice as they arise in the Judaic tradition. E. Levinas, "L'autre, utopie et justice", *Entre nous. Essais sur le penser-à-l'autre* (Paris: Grasset, 1991), p. 261. In an essay dating from 1957, "A Religion of Adults", Levinas had already explained that Judaism prefers to talk of justice rather than love, because love demands justice: 'My relation with my neighbour cannot remain outside the lines which the neighbour maintains with various third parties. The third party (*le tiers*) is also my neighbour.' *Difficile Liberté* (Paris: Albin, 1976), p. 34; *Difficult Freedom*, trans. by Sean Hand (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1990), p. 18. Henceforth DL and DF respectively.

20. For a brief survey of the three forms of the aporia of justice discussed by Derrida, see Drucilla Cornell, *The Philosophy of the Limit* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 133-135.

21. See John Caputo, "Hyperbolic Justice: Deconstruction, Myth, and Politics", *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 21 (1991), 3-20 (p. 8).

22. Caputo has also insisted that 'the whole analysis of undeconstructible justice sounds like a citation of *Fear and Trembling*, a repetition of distinctly Kierkegaardian themes' (ibid. p. 10). What does that make the relation between Levinas and Kierkegaard? Perhaps one could argue that Derrida sees Kierkegaard as the third party who looks at him in the eyes of Levinas.

23. Cf. Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. by A. J. Krailsheimer (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), Fragment 103, p. 56. Cited at FL 937.

24. E. Levinas, "La trace de l'autre", in *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger* (Paris: Vrin, 1967, pp. 187-202); "The Trace of the Other", trans. by A. Lingis, in *Deconstruction in Context*, ed. by Mark Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 345-359. Henceforth DEHH and TO respectively.

25. For a discussion of the logic of the 'without' in Levinas, see R. Bernasconi, "The Ethics of Suspicion", *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 20 (1990), 3-18.

26. In *The Gift of Death* Derrida invokes Patočka's genealogy of responsibility [GD 18,33]. However he does not here consider the peculiar history of the term 'responsibility'. See R. McKeon, "The Development and the Significance of the Concept of Responsibility", *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, vol 11, 39 (1957), 3-32. Since completing the present essay in July 1993, I have taken up the investigation of Derrida's genealogy in "Ethische Aporien: Derrida, Levinas und die Genealogie des Griechischen", forthcoming in a volume on Derrida for Suhrkamp edited by Bernard Waldenfels and Hans-Dieter Gondek.

The Buck Stops Here:
Deconstruction and the Regression of Authorisation

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> Acts are called just and self-controlled when they are the kind of acts which a just and self-controlled man would perform; but the just and self-controlled man is not he who performs these acts, but he who also performs them in the way just and self-controlled men do.
> **Aristotle**, ***Nicomachean Ethics***, 2.4[1]

> Does not my relation to the singularity of the Other as Other pass through the law?
> **Derrida** [PF 641]

I. Who is Responsible to Whom?

Without the authorisation of its 'founder', Deconstruction became a movement; equally without authorisation, the movement took directions - and in particular, found *applications* - apparently quite other than Derrida's earlier work, becoming something like a method for, to pick a prominent example, legal studies. Later still, in a predictable move - but one which certainly may not be as laughable as it looks - the centre claimed the fringes as its own, and indeed as precisely what it had been doing all along [eg. FL 7-10]. In other words, Deconstruction is now addressing the question of its actual or possible ethical and political responsibility, not as one question among others (of this there is no debate) but as the question which explicitly or not organises all Deconstructive discourse. However, to claim not just a relationship to, but an explicit focusing on, ethico-political issues is to risk returning to well known standards and genres of discursive practice, of institutionalised and accepted ballyhoo, of normalised topics, judgements and procedures. This begins with the very concept of 'responsibility', which we will focus on here.

As a concept which is borrowed from a philosophical tradition, responsibility *seems* necessarily to imply *agency* - i.e. an essentially continuous substratum which 'acts responsibly' or perhaps 'irresponsibly', or is at least already in a position to *respond*. One wants to know 'who' or 'what' is responsible. To say that Deconstruction is responsible, then, is to say that some 'thing' (in whatever sense) is an agent of an act or failure to act; or, more likely still, that some thing has assumed a burden, carries the standard (in all senses), speaks the response. Bearing responsibility in an ethically full sense is more than going through the motions. Responsibility demands the *performance* of an *assumption*[2], and *for a future*. In other words, we want to know of Deconstruction's supposed responsibility, not only by virtue of what authority or law, but again by what act of assumption.

At what moment is 'Deconstruction' supposed to have become responsible, or evaded its responsibility - acquired its capital letter? For was the text, concept or system which 'undergoes' Deconstruction, or is Deconstructed, ever *not* Deconstructed, ever in a state of blissful, genuinely self-fulfilled autonomy prior to the completely contemporary and emergent violence of Deconstruction? If not (and presumably not), what, then, does it mean for the Deconstructive turn to 'surface' or 'come to light' such that an assignment or assumption of responsibility would be possible?

This bewildering proliferation of questions is of some urgency, is of precisely that urgency which demands responsibility of Deconstruction. For before the charge can be levelled or defended that Deconstruction (whatever that is) bears or does not bear a burden (actual or possible) of responsibility (to what?) - before this charge can be brought to trial, its intelligibility, that is its very relationship to the traditional discourses which make its asking possible, needs sorting out to some minimal degree. What is more, we are necessarily speaking formally here, of *any* responsibility, of responsibility *in general*. But is one allowed to? - for responsibility is the one thing which above all cannot be *merely formal*, which may in fact be coextensive with the event of absolute particularity.

The Deconstruction of the notion of law as such on the one hand, and the 'invention' of the act which may found law on the other, has left us in a situation where the question of authorisation is inevitably seen as interminable. Posing these questions is easy - at least the above has set the scene for a more focused discussion of the problem of the regression of authority.

II. Musical Chairs

The originary moment of responsibility certainly cannot be found and explored. For the origin to be present to experience in its very originality would entail the possibility of its being taken up into a judgement *according to rules*. In other words, the dispensing or dispensation of responsibility would be not only not linked to agency (in the widest possible sense) at all, but therefore *also not to ethics*. This contradicts the elements of the concept of responsibility we described above. It is the unthinkability of the origin of authority or responsibility which sets the regression in motion. Derrida accordingly writes:

> A decision that didn't go through the ordeal of the undecidable would not be a free decision ... It might be legal; it would not be just. But in the moment of suspense of the undecidable, it is not just either, for only a decision is just ... And once the ordeal of the undecidable is past (if that is possible), the decision has again followed a rule or given itself a rule, invented it or reinvented, reaffirmed it, it is no longer *presently* just, fully just. There is apparently no moment in which a decision can be called presently and fully just. [FL 24]

One classic 'solution' to such a problem is to assume, with Kant, a noumenal spontaneity of the subject which legitimates itself within and through its very act of giving itself the law. But consider that Kant's account of judgement (above all but not merely aesthetic judgement) addresses a similar issue. For Kant, except in a very limited class of cases (here as in Deconstruction the least interesting class), judgement is not merely the mechanistic playing out of a prior rule. Kant gives a variety of the third man argument here[3], which Derrida echoes (regularly throughout FL, eg. p. 17).

The third man argument usually runs as a *reductio ad absurdum*. We are compelled to assume that some other principle operates to bring a determinate halt to the regression, perhaps before it even begins. Either (1) Responsibility (and it follows, justice too) proceeds according to rules (more or less well known) in which case distributing one's obligations is just a mechanical act, and there is a genuine problem of temporal regression regarding origin and thus *authorisation*. Where do the laws come from, such that, from that point, the question of whether they prescribe *legitimately* can be raised? Either then there *is* an origin (in 'convention', contract, God, etc.) or the notion of authorisation itself will likely be discarded. Or (2) responsibility follows no rules in itself (these, if at all and such as they are, come afterwards as descriptions) and the burden of *making justice happen* is placed on each and every decision, whether it makes that claim or not. Prescriptive laws, such as there are, carry no legitimacy until and each time justice happens. But *where* is this happening of authorisation? It entails not a temporal regression, to be sure, but in Kant at least a kind of *natural* regression back through empirical and theoretical modes of cognition to *something other*, the noumenal self, as pure self-affectivity, giving itself the law. Now, each of these two contradictory positions is *pure*, each entrenched in metaphysics, and each is as it stands unlikely.

Derrida summarises the kind of problem we have identified in the following way:

> ... I am less interested in the generality of these laws or these problematical conclusions than in the singularity of a proceeding which, in the course of a unique drama, summons them before an irreplaceable corpus ... There is a singularity about relationship to the law, a law of singularity which must come into contact with the general or universal essence of the law without ever being able to do so. [BL 187]

The problem, then, is to understand the cohabitation in a situation of this 'must' and 'without ever being able to'. How does this relate to regression? In Derrida's reading of

Kafka's 'Before the Law' (upon which we will not dwell) the necessary impossibility appears in at least three ways: in the sequence of ever more terrible guards, who may be innumerable; in the delay or interim until death in which there is the 'possibility' of entrance; in the fact that the gate is open and the guard to one side, and passage through it at once both available and not available. The first of these involves a spatial regression, the second temporal, and express at least a *de facto* unavailability of the presence of law itself. The third, however, is different. The man from the country *'entschließt er sich, doch lieber zu warten...'*. He *himself* resolves, not under actual compulsion but spontaneously, that it would be preferable to wait. Derrida writes:

> We are therefore compelled to admit that he must forbid himself from entering. He must force himself, give himself an order, not to obey the law but rather to *not gain access* to the law, which in fact tells him or lets him know: do not come to me. [BL 203]

Again, then, the same either/or - but here represented in one situation. My claim here is that *this aporia (and threat of absurd regression) of law and performative spontaneity is inseparable from the aporia of singularity and universality* in the first quotation above. Thus:

> Its very moment of foundation or institution .... the operation that amounts to founding, inaugurating, justifying law (*droit*), making law, would consist of a *coup de force*, of a performative and therefore interpretative violence that in itself is neither just nor unjust and that no justice and no previous law with its founding anterior moment could guarantee or contradict or invalidate. [FL 13]

Either we have an infinite regression of judgements and application criteria, or judgement is always in some sense autonomous, original, as well as the bearer of an irreducible intentionality to the judged. Judgement, Kant says famously, 'conforms' to the rule, but does not merely follow it. For Kant, the question is not merely of the *correctness* of a judgement, but its *legitimacy* (*quid juris*). This requires asking why should the rules, even those which are merely 'conformed' to and not blindly followed, be *these particular rules* - what authorises their application? In transcendental philosophy, the answer is the impossibility of otherwise understanding the possibility of a certain region of experience. Can this account of judgement begin to supply us with a way of thinking which avoids the too-easy alternatives (law, or spontaneity) discussed above?

Similarly[4], the problem for Deconstruction is again not the political sensitivity of its posturings, but an ethically loaded sense of responsibility or obligation which above we described in terms of assumption. *The pure dialectic of spontaneity and law described above becomes in recent Deconstruction a dialectic of self and other.* In this, each is radicalised in several dimensions: phenomenological or ontological, psychoanalytical, linguistic, Levinasian, and so forth. In the carrying out of this radicalised dialectic through a Deconstruction of the immanence and authorising status of the texts of the

history of Western metaphysics, there seems to be a regression which does not allow us to retreat from having to think the problem through. Namely, the *historical or cultural* regression of paradigmatic instances of justice and injustice, the political, social and moral (immoral or amoral) traditions (both conservative and radical, both celebrated and hidden), and the philosophical efforts that claim to dispel or ground them, all of which make up and complicate the situation of responsibility. The *situation* is a prior givenness belonging outside the presence of the subject. This may be in fact historical or 'contemporary' or both, but in either case always concrete, and which functions in some way normatively but not univocally. We will begin, therefore, with an analysis of the temporal regression in order to better understand the *arrival* of this situation.

III. The Squalor of Time.

Here I want to propose a new concept, that of *indeterminately finite regression.* This does not mean that the regression stops, but rather that its *limitless* (rather than infinite) regression *is precisely its stop.* Infinite regression (just like the absolute origin) is a rational idea (hypostatisation) projected as a consequence of the discursive unthinkability of the stop. But within experience, the limitless is the *schema* for that impossible stop, the manner of recognising the happening of regression. But in the schematising, something perhaps has changed, or been recognised.

In the Transcendental Aesthetic, Kant makes just this distinction between infinite and limitless.[5] Intuition presents itself as limitless; or rather, intuition presents itself such that any determinate limit (*relatum*) stands out as 'subsequent' or *a posteriori* with respect to the *a priori* field of possible *relations.* Such a regression is indeterminately finite, not because it has an end, but because it does not present its never-having-an-end as such.[6] Intuition is an *invitation* to activity, to the discovery of the end or of its absence, not a *fait accompli.* Thus, the not-having-an-end is not (within experience) a formal matter, since 'each' not-limited is so in its own manner, is somewhere else and differently *situated.* We say 'each' - but unlike formal infinite regression, there can also be no counting. That is, no discrete points between which the regression leaps in its immaterial purity, and at which is allowed to continue - which points could then be identified as all in the same way 'unaccountable'.

Infinite regression demands of us a naive view of time, taken over from pre-quantum physics into a region of experience which may be alien to physics. We are asked to accept that time is *merely formal and everywhere metrical* - that the third non-stop or regression is formally indistinguishable from the first, second or fourth. It asserts that the past, for each moment of decision or assumption, is absolutely past, without consequence or meaning - and that the future also has nothing proper to it (either just as a time with a difference, or as futurity) but is once and for all decided right now. 'Right

now', as if, this time, the present were or could be present, delineated, made to bear such a unique burden. The future has no *openness* - not even to the limited extent of possessing the possibility of any closure proper to it.

This description is hardly one that we recognise - if nothing else, a common and habitual scepticism tells us that any story of absolute origin will not be fulfilled. But 'why not?' poses difficulties. It is not a question of solving such a paradox, for solution is precisely what is out of the question.[7] Such a view of time is 'naive' - but have we a more substantial reason for rejecting it?

This pure formalism in fact denies what we can call the materiality of time, the mass of accumulated moments: time's *momentum.* The notion of a 'situation of assumption' was designed to correlate with the squalor and momentum of time implied by the concept of indeterminately finite regression. Such regression simply *slows down*, saturates, loses its way and in so doing, 'finds' itself. After 'a time' - and this is certainly empirically obvious - one encounters the blunt and often infuriating response to all questions: 'That is the way things are done (now or here)'. This 'way', importantly, generally *belies both full codification and explanation* and indeed may be at times avowedly self-contradictory. Nor is it a spontaneity, not even a spontaneity by an ideal community, for it is often linked to mythic or historical narratives, paradigmatic examples - that is, has a history, is *situated.* Now, such a response is clearly pragmatically appropriate (we cannot always think through 'to the end' - most especially when we suspect that there is no end) - but perhaps it can be appropriatepractically and even theoretically as well.

There are several possibilities: Either (i) this 'that is the way' is simply a mistake - that is, must be understood as essentially arbitrary, having no authority. But although that dissolves our whole problem, it creates innumerable others. The aporia of responsibility and authority (of *justice*) will not go away so easily. Or (ii) the 'that is the way' can be subsumed, if not reduced, under more general laws. But then we return to the formal regression above, the rejection of which led us down this path. Or (iii) we must try to think the possibility of historically regional and local essences - or, more carefully expressed, the possibility of regional authorisation. Let us, then, entertain this third alternative. The situation - understood now to be in some way 'localised' by the thickness or squalor of the regression - can be said to authorise. But not in itself, such that the assumption would not involve *judgement,* since the situation is rarely if ever determining and the 'that is the way' rarely if ever fully codifiable. Not in itself, then, but in the taking up or over of the situation, and in a manner always ready either to preserve or to reinterpret its *prima facie* claim.[8] Why should this be possible, and what is its relation to the question of authorisation?

There may be no answer to be found in Kant, but there are suggestive ways of asking the question.

IV. Developed Harmony.

So, we return to judgement. Kant admits that 'all' that one learns are rules and examples of rules being applied - and yet judgement can still be *cultured* or *developed* (*gebildet*). There could hardly be a more well used concept than that of development. For it is built deeply into Greek philosophy, and visibly part of various Christian traditions. The aesthetic judgement, on Kant's account, does not proceed according to rules - it can, Kant argues, never be proved correct or incorrect - and yet it can be *trained by experience*.

What is native in we humans is the mere *capacity* for judgements of taste, which we become aware of through what Kant calls 'common sense', which has a necessity he terms 'exemplary' [CJ §§ 18-22]. (This exemplarity turns out to be of fundamental importance below.) Accordingly, Kant provides the transcendental description of my faculties of imagination and understanding, the 'harmony' or 'resonance' of which is my experience of beauty. However, actual judgements of taste, which not only demand but actually achieve something like universal consent, are only possible if a sharing not only of a general language for communication, but more specifically a sharing of standards, objects, judgements and evaluative language is *already in place*. We require, then, a more or less culturally relative language of taste - i.e. the empirical rules within every society or sub-society which govern what is a possible candidate for beauty. Only in this way can a judgement without a determinate concept never-the-less direct itself to an individuated object to be judged. But mere knowledge of 'current tastes' certainly does not guarantee taste proper.[9] Indeed, these two requirements (the transcendentally functioning faculties; the shared community of evaluation), although necessary, are insufficient. In addition to all these, then, something else is needed which corresponds to the notion of 'development'.

Art, for Kant, is the production of an original sign of excessive (i.e. open, or incompletely synthesised) meaning. The transcendental faculties make judgements and intentional experiences possible by providing the horizons within which meaning is safely contained and accessible. To say that something, an object or a sign, means something is to say that it bears a relationship to something else (a real or ideal 'object', in the most general possible sense) by virtue of and within an intentional attitude that I adopt towards it. But for Kant, objects are not *given*, they are constituted in a synthetic act. Prior to such synthesis, even transcendental forms are 'meaningless' - although the synthesis itself can be pure. Meaning in general requires 'stuff': intuitions and perhaps sensations. In order, therefore, for art to have meaning, it must be grasped synthetically; however, in order for art to be art, it must be excessive, and that means *not* synthesised. How are we to get around this contradiction? We have already mentioned Kant's solution: for discursive synthesis is substituted 'harmony' or 'accord' [variations on *Einstimmung* or *Zusammenstimmung*]. Let us pursue this 'paradox' further.

The judgement of the beautiful is recognised in us by being productive of a certain 'type' of pleasure. Pleasure is, as Kant states, our only access to the judgement itself [CJ 32, 59-60]. Therefore, we infer, it must be in some way distinctive from other pleasures, or else we would never know (or even suspect) that we were forming a proper aesthetic judgement.[10] Such pleasure 'signals' the properly aesthetic judgement. The judgement is not merely formed out of and on the occasion of an empirical experience, but is *only recognised for what it is* on the basis of the empirical experience of the aesthetic judgement. That is, the judgement itself can be fallacious in various ways, and the only way of acquiring the ability to form the judgement properly (disinterestedness, etc.) is through the feedback mechanism of pleasure. But this is to argue in a strange circle, vibrating between the empirical and the transcendental. Before I can know what it is to experience the beautiful, I must experience it - but before I can experience it, I must know it. We are forced to judge our judgement - and yet another abyssal regression threatens. Indeed, we are asked to judge our judgement *before ever making it*.

Now most hermeneutic circles have a missing arc - the meaning of the word 'know' in the first statement differs significantly from 'know' in its counterpart - the circle then springs open becoming a spiral which 'goes' somewhere. But Kant allows no such escape. Neither the beginning nor the end of this hermeneutic spiral can leave the realm of reflective judgement. We only have reflective judgements to work with - judgements that function by way of conceptual resonance rather than determination, both inside (this is after all an experience) and outside (for 'conformity' and 'resonance' are not categories) the transcendental functions of meaning. It is not a hermeneutic circle or even spiral so much as an hermeneutic *möbius strip*. Our question about culturing or developing becomes a question about what kind of 'knowledge' corresponds to these quasi-empirical[11] conditions for reflective judgement and taste.

V. Inside the Pleasure Organism.

But the pleasure cannot be a sign in an ordinary sense, for pleasure is not itself a mental state but rather a relationship between representation and will.[12] Moreover, in this case even *this* relation is shorted out and compressed. As Kant describes it, the representation-in-me itself *also* takes over the function of will [CJ 64]. We must say that the pleasure *is the judgement itself* in so far as within itself, it draws attention to itself, sustains itself, and we dwell upon or rather *within* it. The judgement as conscious act is both ground of itself, and wilful determination of its being dwelt upon. In other words, it is *alive* according to a very traditional account of life, and in particular Kant's own.

Here it is important to remember that aesthetics concerns only half a book also concerned with teleology, the starting place of which for Kant is the teleological organisation of the organism. Life, for Kant, is first and foremost a question of inter-

relationships in which the life of the organism, its flourishing as what it is, is like a whole which is prior and super-ordinate to all its organs. It may be possible to explain all the *effects and operations* of life with the empirical concepts of natural science. Yet, Kant claims, the network of interrelationships cannot be thought through with such notions. The teleological judgement is thus not determinate - and yet in no other way is life to be recognised.

The pleasure organism of the aesthetic judgement, by being self-enlivening - thus takes over this 'holistic' structure. Let us consider the problem in more detail. Above, we noted that the beautiful object has no determinate concept - and yet it is no doubt an *object*. How is this possible? Presumably by way of what above we called a culturally relative formal language of taste. The judgement can never be pure - it is a *going through* of the empirical even conventional apprehension of the object *towards* its being a sign of excessive meaning. Certainly, but as Kant insists several times, the object is never the real focus. What is judged, Kant claims, is a representation and not an object - the very representation which is the pleasure organism. The pleasure organism whose life and telos is irreducible (indeed, strictly speaking undiscoverable) to a pattern of procedures and rules.[13] Thus, the various 'parts' of the judgement - its effects and its content - are co-ordinated by a finality without determinate end. The judgement of such a unity is a spontaneous harmony among the faculties of the mind, experienced simultaneously as both pleasure and a boundless expansion of *thought*. More: by virtue of this structure, the judgement avoids the 'third man' regression by being in itself a judgement of itself; it delivers both pleasure and the *judgement of* pleasure. There can, therefore, be no question of whether this pleasure is the right pleasure - precisely if that question arises, the whole judgement is dead. A false judgement means judging twice, and thus mis-recognising the immanence of the judgement; a false judgement does not just mean mis-recognising the response to the object qua beautiful, but not responding at all; falsehood, then, means being-false, a betrayal of the very essence of the aesthetic judgement.[14]

It follows that developing taste cannot mean learning to judge one's judgements, or learning to recognise judgements for what they already are. Developing taste as learning in *this* sense returns to the naive view of time discussed above: it formalises time excessively, refusing to see the thickness of time.

Let us take a moment to summarise. The problem of regression, which the Deconstruction of presence and closure brought to crisis, has been linked (i) to the mere formalisation of time found principally in Newtonian physics; and (ii) to an account of judgement which assumes an absolute opposition between the law, which can legitimate, and spontaneity, which can authorise the judgement. In the account of aesthetic judgement, Kant decisively rejects both of these. The physical account of temporal sequence and connection because it is a priori insufficient to understand the teleology of life and thus either judgement's 'harmony' or its 'vivacity'; the opposition of law and spontaneity, not only because absolute spontaneity must be understood as binding itself

to its own law, but because judgement is impossible without '*Bildung*' which is neither of the two by being both. In a sense, none of these moves are new - they are in fact, roughly Aristotelian. Kant's contribution is two-fold: (i) to have offered, from *within the most sustained metaphysical attempt to ground classical physics*, a critique of that physics which leaves its other *equally grounded*; (ii) to have seen not only the problem, but to have seen that the above mentioned 'moves' constitute a way of thinking the problem. The next step is to follow through the implications of these developments, which essentially move back from a Deconstruction of judgement to a Deconstruction of the judging self.

VI. The Haunting.

All we learn are rules and examples. Rules are necessary but not sufficient; so what does it mean to become aware of the significance of an example without rule, concept or object? Further, are these examples to be examples of beautiful objects, or *must they not rather be exemplary judgements*? The 'beautiful' object is unique because there are no rules for duplicating its achievement - but the allocation to the object of the predicate 'beautiful' is, Kant insists, simply an unfortunate manner of speaking; beauty lies in the judgement as an aesthetic judgement. The whole question changes when we recognise that it must be judgements themselves which develop judgement. And, as we just saw, remembering a judgement as example can not mean judging the judgement, for we would be right back to formally infinite regression.

Taking other (past or contemporary) judgements as exemplary seems bizarre. Objects and even events we can identify and remember intersubjectively - apparently, we can share objects while still remaining here, *within ourselves*. What, however, could it mean to 'remember' a judgement, another's judgement, which (or so it would seem) by its very nature is an irreducible, performative act which lies entirely 'within' consciousness? Sharing judgements would require nothing less than the emptying of self, the dissolution of self as an interiority. If judgement (either aesthetic or ethical) is neither pure spontaneity (in which case it is, by definition, unintelligible in any sense) nor pure law-concretisation (intelligible even before being a judgement), then the judgement is only intelligible *from within the situation of judging*. For a judgement to be exemplary for me, I must allow myself to have been elsewhere, and to allow others into my situation which I had thought was *my place*. Taking judgements (rather than objects and rules for objectivity) as paradigmatic and as both vehicle and cargo of the development of taste, means not that I must abstract from out of myself a *universal* self, but that I allow 'myself' to be possessed, haunted, *inspired*. We must see the constitution of *anything like a self* as conditioned by otherness.

The examples and rules are not themselves development; rather, they function as tools - or better, opportunities - for the migration of the self and its haunting by others.[15] It is not a question of 'seeing through another's eyes' - as if the eyes, even the sense organs or body in general, alone carried the burden of *situation* (as defined above in sections I and II). Similarly, I do not 'see as' or 'as if', playing a part, where the mask wraps itself around me, precisely *preserving my place*. If so, I would still have to judge the analogy between my situation and that of the role, both as clearly defined 'views' - and regression threatens. The transposition can only be hypothetical from the point of view of a subject who *already has* a view of its own. Rather, the situation as 'mine' is always already a palimpsest of possible 'as if's and 'self's. (This is the 'dialectic of self and other' mentioned above at the end of section II.)

In other words, I have no self which could be haunted (which has a place), much less something I could *allow* to be haunted until, by virtue of my development through such haunting, I 'learn' to be a self, learn to recognise what is most mine and the manner in which it is mine, the surfacings of myself in the babble of prior meanings, obligations, possibilities of being. Yet implicit here is the recognition that the 'I' behind the voice is a formal operation, a tag, which only becomes concrete by losing itself. As we shall see, the 'concrete I' which *returns* to itself can not be understood as a self (which possesses itself and its own in opposition to the not-self) or a subject (which has its place at the centre of a field of experience), if it is marked by otherness. We might therefore say that taste, the developed faculty of judgement, is a sense above all of the delicate interface between the transcendental (in Kant's sense) and the worldly. That is, an awareness by the 'concrete I' of the complex inter-implication of *all* that which transcends it - for both of the above transcend by constituting 'my' situation and 'my' conditions. This knowledge *cannot be had theoretically*, by way of rational reflection, because it necessarily cuts across the form/content distinction which is essential to Kant's (and not only Kant's) account of theoretical knowledge.

In still other words, following the Aristotle who speaks in our opening quotation, might one follow 'men of practical wisdom' as in the account of ethical training and decision making? Might one precisely remove self from self - in a regression which Aristotle, for reasons we are now beginning to understand, does not name as a regression, or not one which renders the account of virtue absurd - in order most virtuously to supplicate self before the Other?[16] For Aristotle, ultimately, it is not enough to ignore some pleasures and allow certain pains - to behave virtuously 'externally'. One must train oneself to be most oneself (most human), to feel pleasures at the right things, since '...no one would call a man just who did not enjoy acting justly' [NE 1.8]. The development of virtue is prior to selfhood as human. In other words, we must not only subdue the irrational part of our soul, but make it speak with the voice of *logos* [NE 1.13]. Deliberative choice, Aristotle tells us, is a *product* of the formation of virtuous character. Yet this voice is never a

single voice that speaks everywhere the same - in certain situations indeed, it speaks most unclearly but no less insistently, and this by necessity.

Action (and thus ethics) always deals with the *singular* for Aristotle. What is required is to make the singular speak with a voice which allows not rule formulation (the Mean, for instance, is not a rule but an analytic tool), but the transposition (*ekstasis*) of self and Other's other, what I shall call the *horizontal other*, Aristotle's *Sophron*, exemplary in being most him or herself by being least *only* a self. That is, by being open to a transcendent - indeed, transcendental - relation to the Other[17] and to the community.[18]

Authority seems to be deferred in the transposition to the exemplar or model. But it is not deferred, because *firstly* the exemplar is taken into the self as a part of its development into a self (the formation of *hexis*). The model only becomes authoritative, and its exemplarity legitimate, for the singularity of the act now, *in* that singularity. Not insofar as it *was*, but insofar as it *is*, i.e. is repeatable. Similarly, Derrida argues,

> It belongs to the structure of fundamental violence that it calls for the repetition of itself and founds what ought to be conserved ... A foundation is a promise. [FL 38]

But the repetition must not just 'follow' the founded law, but the founding itself. This structure gives rise to the appearance of an absurd regression. Yet the infinite regression thickens, becomes a part of my opaque character - to such an extent that 'my' freedom (if Aristotle can be said to discuss a recognisable concept of freedom), must be treated as Kant (and indeed Heidegger) treat it: freedom is that pinnacle of achievement whereon one offers oneself (offers, lest we forget, *for Assumption*) to whatever remains worthy to reside there.

Secondly, authority is 'deferred' *horizontally* (to stay with that metaphor), meaning it remains within the self's sphere of being. E.g. I too become an exemplar, for myself (now and in the future) and for others. The horizontal deference would be a transcending act only for a traditionally understood subject. *Thirdly*, authority is not deferred because the ethical (as indeed the aesthetic) judgement is always singular and cannot be postponed, for to postpone is already to judge. Presented with a call, silence can be among the most definite answers. We must understand the haunting or culturing as a deferral that does not abdicate, but rather allows the assuming of, responsibility.

The deferred/not deferred paradox is only a paradox from the 'point of view' able to see transposition as hypothetical or 'as if'. It is this point of view which is the fiction.[19] Nor is it the case that we must simply invert the order of constitution, and say (as is so tempting) that the self is one of the products of judgement. Just like the hermeneutic circle of aesthetic judgement we discussed above (end of section IV) which had no terminus we could yet recognise, the process of development ends[20] not in the classical subject with its place (pure immanence), but in (for Aristotle) the philosopher-within-the-*polis* and (for Kant) the realisation of the *sensus communis*.

VII. Deconstruction and Squalor.

The history of metaphysics is not just a history of failures, even if the most interesting of failures. Who, even before Deconstruction, needed any reminding of that? It is a history which has a devastating though largely hidden immanence to contemporary thinking. The manner of this immanence, however, cannot be understood on a model of inter-textuality, where fragments of text or argument structure circulate into ever-new combinations. For this carries a strict analogy to the excessively formal view of time discussed above, and cannot account either for how texts could assume responsibility (for truth, for the ethical other, for the past or future of philosophy), or for how the adequate and pure meta-language of inter-textuality could possibly arise from within such immanence. Nor (for similar reasons) can it be fully understood with Heidegger as a destiny transmitted and played out since the pre-socratics.[21] These are the most common errors of both followers and critics of Deconstruction.

On the contrary, the complicity of discourse (including the Deconstructive text) with the history of metaphysics must be understood through what we have called the squalor of time. This involves first the recognition that texts, or individual concepts, when their tensions are pursued, reveal a conditioning complicity with what they demand be discarded. This complicity is not, however, a simple failure, for the nature of the 'conditioning' discovered by Derrida defies the formal one-way logic of any traditional concept of 'condition'. The complicity is thus *also* what allows the text to have its say, and to contribute something 'new' to the history within which it belongs; and moreover, to generate a 'new' meta-language for the disclosure of precisely its complicity (*Pharmakon*, supplement, *parergon*, hymen, etc.). The structure here is the same as that of judgement. An interiority which can be in itself responsible, and which functions as exemplary (even for itself) - but only by virtue of its prior haunting, without reserve, by that which is exterior.

Certainly, deconstruction demands a recognition of a *complicity in guilt and atonement* - but it does not demand some mythical alleviation of this guilt through either the antics of postmodernism or the 'authentic' pursuit of the meaning of Being. The end of metaphysics does not describe a place nor even an identifiable path, but an *obligation*. To the Other, of course, but *precisely because of that*, an obligation or responsibility that is always in the first instance horizontal, sideways (through history, through texts), the *long way round*. The 'long way round' is, again, not an evasion or sharing of responsibility. And not simply because there alone lies the possibility of any *actual* response or offer, of justice as a real issue. But because although such a response must be of infinite inadequacy, not all responses are of equal value; the difference is 'informed' by vigilance (and never simply negative, as Deconstruction is often accused of being)

with respect to the legacy or heritage of justice and the discourse of justice.[22] The 'shape' of this vigilance has been our concern here.

How arrogant - how unjust - to suppose the Other has eyes only for me. That the self-Other relation, however infinitely weighted and disruptive of selfhood, is asymmetrical in only one-dimension - without thickness, momentum, complexity. Or, more deviously still, to suppose that I, universal man (member of the *sensus communis*), *could* take upon myself all guilt, all burdens, all sacrifices. That I could - not by virtue of some special quality, but rather precisely by the *lack* of such a quality - nominate myself as the one who judges the law, which is to say, the one who *is singled out and judged by* the Other, by the face of justice (and, indeed, of beauty) itself. That I could, for so it would appear, alienate and supplicate myself to the extent that I have the inverted arrogance to become or imagine I could become the insolvent origin itself, to *become the Other*.

NOTES

1. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by Martin Ostwald (Indianopolis: Liberal Arts Press, 1980). Henceforth, NE. Not surprisingly, Jorge Luis Borges provides a delightfully different version of this: 'For years I tried to live up to the part of the outlaw Moreia, who, in his time - the way I figure it - was probably trying to play the part of some other gaucho outlaw.' See "Rosendo's Tale" in *Dr. Brodie's Report*, trans. by di Giovanni (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p. 48.

2. Of soul *and body*, remember - thus, on our deliberately loose borrowing, a transcendence which carries with it its inherence.

3. In both the first *Critique* (A132-4=B171-4, although the account of 'training' the judgement and the role of examples is different here) and the third (Preface, p.5). Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan Education, 1989) and Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. by Meredith (Oxford: OUP, 1988). Henceforth CJ.

4. The bottom line is indeed a productive similarity or analogy between ethical/political judgement 'before' the law, and aesthetic judgement in Kant (though, as we were careful to note, it is not an isolated problem for Kant). Throughout, we will be shuttling between aesthetic judgement and ethical or even political judgement. That is to say, for our purposes, the philosophical problem of judgement has taken a certain priority. This 'analogy' needs defending. To conflate these two, certainly, would be appalling. Now, formally - that is to say from the sterile point of view of a philosophical analysis - the problem of the regression of authority is the same; and the problem of this strange development or culturing, which begins and ends with a certain radical openness of the 'self', seems also to be the same. This openness (prior obviously to simple will, and thus prior also to our question of simple agency) is *responsibility for assumption*. But this talk of 'formally' sounds as though the difference is only one of the 'content' of the judgement. On the contrary, nothing here has contradicted the assertion that the ethical judgement is more fundamental, getting 'under the skin' of the mental abilities of sense, imagination and cognition which both Kant and Aristotle rely upon for their discussions of what today is called the aesthetic. We have captured the sense of this connection by way of the notion of assumption. It follows that the link between the two 'types' of judgement is not one of identity, to be sure, but also not a mere formal analogy. The relative accessibility of aesthetic judgement to philosophical thought, combined with this connection of 'symbol' or 'in the service of', gives this shuttling some validity.

The appalling hang-up would seem to be pleasure. The aesthetic judgement produces pleasure necessarily; while the ethical judgement can even contravene it. We are confusing two levels. What later on we will call the 'pleasure organism' of the aesthetic judgement is not *grounded* in pleasure, and certainly not sensible pleasure, any more than is the ethical judgement Pleasure, or displeasure, is instead a description of its structure.

Beauty as the 'symbol' of morality? It is the wrong trope. For how one unpresentable 'thing' is supposed to symbolise another is something Kant is never entirely clear about. Or, more interestingly, perhaps that is Kant's point: for a Being the essence of which is absence, absence always signifies, and has an object, which is never entirely indeterminate because absence is never zero. If there is an analogy here, it is an *analogy of excess*, always at the level of a language, of what is off the written page, visible only by being *in a certain manner* invisible. The analogy lies between two events which 'intimate' or 'suggest' a value and an obligation at the end (and thus, finally, at the beginning) of all our values. That which is subject neither to an absolute relativity, nor conceptual universality which would isolate it from its material locality. And, that of which, finally, the self-legitimation is nevertheless thus conditional upon what I shall call (one paragraph hence) an indeterminately finite regression through, in part, actual spaces of conceptual universality and law. This 'certain manner' is the phenomena which authorises the analogy. Not absolutely (it would cease to be an analogy!) but within its own locality, and for a specific purpose which only it can help illuminate.

5. See for example, the difference between A and B versions at A25=B39-40.

6. Intuition is the presentation of the necessary absence of the absence (of the end): precisely the *sublime*. A mistake that is often made is to consider the sublime as a response to the infinite. On the contrary, at least in the first instance - prior, that is, to the 'subreption' - it is a distinctively intuitive response to the unlimited - but the sensible (a posteriori) unlimited. But the sublime also accords with *sensus communis*, exhibits objectivity, and is not merely a subjective (and therefore arbitrary, and in a public sense illegitimate) response.

7. In the end, we know that whatever efforts are made to think this stark disjunction (and here we have barely begun), its 'solution' is pre- and even contra-reflectively possible only within a local situation. Before during and after, we can only stand back for an orienting gaze (essentially sterile but also essentially necessary, before during and after). 'We *have*, we *must* have, only the thankless aridity of an abstract axiom...' [OH 71].

8. The language of an always present possibility of preservation or abolition is here deliberately Heideggerian (as at *Sein und Zeit*, paragraph 62). But this is not exclusive, see for example the question Derrida poses - and which, notice, is linked to both responsibility and culture - of whether 'Europe' can or should be seen as the experience of an opening with respect to 'heading': 'We must be suspicious of *both* repetitive memory and the completely other of the absolutely new.' [OH 19].

9. Kant is developing just this idea in the first footnote to CJ §17 (p. 75).

10. Aristotle too has to posit different kinds of pleasure, and for much the same reason [NE 10.5].

11. The problem, of course, lies in a classically narrow definition of empirical, as Husserl was already telling us in *Ideas*. 'Quasi-empirical', then, refers to experience, but not by way of anything like the stories of the genealogy of knowledge told by empiricists.

12. CJ p.63. Note the relation to Hume, who in the appendix to the *Treatise* (p. 628) called such phenomena as feeling the 'manner' of a representation's being within consciousness. See Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. by Selby-Bigge and Nidditch, 2nd ed. (Oxford: OUP, 1978).

13. Kant describes this most directly in treating of the aesthetic *attributes* of an idea. Cf. CJ §49 (p. 177).

14. This presence of judgement to itself would be disturbingly metaphysical were it not for the fact, which we are about to explore, that its possibility is conditioned by *Bildung* which is radically exterior to the presence of a subject to itself.

15. 'If our letters are upsetting,' Derrida writes in "Envois", '...perhaps it is because we are already several on the line, a crowd, right here' [PC 105, cf. also PC 112]. Of course, it is not as if (Derrida insists on this elsewhere) the crowd were something which 'happens' to the monological sending, rather it is (for lack of a better phrase) the latter's condition. The self - here identified as *deciding what to burn*, and thus precisely linked to decision, judgement and responsibility - is from the 'first' haunted. 'We are the card, if you will, and as such accountable, but they will seek in vain, they will never find us in it.' (p. 509) The 'never finding' is a textual operation - or, if that is too restrictive, let us say an operation of the trace.

16. Where the 'Other' is first and foremost the divine element of the soul, the absolute end of human potential, towards which all ends converge.

17. For Aristotle, this means *Logos*, to be sure, as the divine and impersonal part of the soul - but precisely as human *telos*. That is, a possibility of being of the self which is, without delay, a possibility of being 'others'. Thus also: community.

18. Considered as transcendent, not only because the *polis* is the *mechanism* of individual character-development, but because *polis* is nothing less than the *condition of possibility* of any such 'being open'.

19. Not even a regulative idea.

20. And just like the aesthetic judgement, it is not necessarily the case that such an 'end' ever has or ever will be reached. Part of development, as we already know, must be the identification of the model, not only

because there is no rule to perform this duty for us, but also because one must learn to recognise the virtuous life virtually written within the situated act.

21. Unless we accept something like Derrida's reading of this in, for example, SR.

22. Thus the phenomenon with which this paper began is not, entirely, laughable. And thus Derrida can claim, not without justice, that 'Deconstruction is justice' [FL 15, cf. 21].

The Ethics of Deconstruction: An Attempt at Self-Criticism[1]

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I

Any presentation of a book's main themes and arguments by its author must, it seems to me, begin from the statement of the constitutive impossibility of self-reading. This is *a fortiori* true of *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, for if this book has any central concern, it is the demonstration that the act of reading is not something self-contained or circulating within what Levinas would call the economy of the Same. Rather, reading tends towards alterity as its law, towards a suspension of the movement of comprehension, towards a destabilization of the intentional investment of a text, towards a singular event of transcendence, towards a certain explosion of the book.

One of the lessons of the work of Maurice Blanchot and, after him, Paul de Man, would seem to be that any act of self-reading that is not going to result in the narcissism of bad faith, must confront its fundamental impossibility as its condition of possibility.[2] Thus, the impossibility of self-reading as the law of reading entails that I am necessarily and *a priori* blind to the guiding insight of my book. Employing the terminology of a Levinasian hermeneutics that I will explain below, I am deaf to the Saying that resounds in the Said of the book, which means that in this presentation I will have to listen to another Saying, and perhaps imagine momentarily that *The Ethics of Deconstruction* was written by someone else, some foolish alter-ego. Thus at the outset, I find myself pulled up short by the need to be obedient to the law of reading that I have sought to demonstrate. It is always for others to illuminate this blindness and begin the act of reading.

An alternative reading strategy would be to adopt a lacerating ironic distance from the book, of the kind Nietzsche adopted with respect to his own work in *Ecce Homo*. Again, one might try to multiply the voices in which one writes - in dialogue or polylogue - and to play these voices off against each other, a strategy that Nietzsche also attempted in his 1886 prefaces. I am thinking particularly of the "Attempt at a Self-Criticism" that prefaces the second edition of *The Birth of Tragedy*, a title where the emphasis should fall, it seems to me, on the word 'attempt' (*Versuch*); self-criticism always has the provisional character of an attempt.[3] Such a play of voices is equally at work in the Athenaeum fragments, Wittgenstein's *Investigations*, Blanchot's *L'entretien infini*, several of Derrida's later pieces, and, of course, all of Plato's dialogues. However, I shall adopt none of these

more demanding rhetorical strategies and instead opt for the simpler path of banality. And yet, as a prelude to this, let me risk the strategy - itself already rehearsed at the beginning of philosophy, as the beginning of philosophy in Plato's *Phaedo*, if to philosophize is indeed to learn how to die - of attempting to commit suicide in public; where, once again, emphasis should fall on the word 'attempt'.

My textual hemlock will be a passage from a recent text by Derrida, which appeared after my book was finished, entitled "Passions: 'An Oblique Offering'". I quote at length:

> One can attend or participate today, in many different places, in a congenial and disturbing task: to restore morality and especially to reassure those who had serious reasons for being troubled by this topic. Some minds believing themselves to have found in Deconstruction ('*La Déconstruction*'), as if there were only one,[4] a modern form of immorality, or amorality or of irresponsibility (etc.: a discourse too well known, I do not need to continue), while others, more serious, in less of a hurry, better disposed towards so-called Deconstruction, today claim the opposite; they discern encouraging signs and in increasing numbers (at times, I must admit, in some of my texts) which would testify to a permanent, extreme, direct or oblique, in any event, increasingly intense attention, to those things which one could identify under the fine names of 'ethics', 'morality', 'responsibility', 'subject', etc. Before reverting to *not-responding*, I would like to declare in the most direct way that if I had the *sense* of duty and responsibility, it would compel me to break with both these moralisms, with these two restorations of morality, including, therefore, the remoralization of deconstruction which naturally seems to me more attractive than that to which it is rightly opposed, but which at each moment risks reassuring itself in order to reassure the other and to promote the consensus of a new dogmatic slumber. And it is so that one not be in too much of a hurry to say that it is in the name of a higher responsibility and a more intractable (*intraitable*) moral exigency that I declare my distaste, uneven as it may be, for both moralisms. Undoubtedly, it is always following the affirmation of a certain excess that I suspect the well-known immorality, indeed the denegating hypocrisy of moralisms. But nothing leads me to believe that the best names or the most suitable figures for this affirmation are ethics, morality, politics, responsibility, or the subject. Furthermore, would it be moral and responsible to act morally because one has the *sense* (the word emphasized above) of duty and responsibility? Clearly not, it would be too easy and, precisely, natural, programmed by nature: it is not really moral to be moral (responsible etc.) because one has the *sense* of morality, of the height of the law, etc.[5][...] All this, therefore, still remains open, suspended, undecided, questionable even beyond the question, indeed, to make use of another figure, absolutely *aporetic* (my emphasis, S.C.). What is the ethicity of ethics?, the morality of morality? what is responsibility? What is the 'what is?' in this case?, etc. These questions are always urgent; in a certain way they must remain urgent and unanswered, at any rate without a general and rule-governed response, without a response other than that which is linked specifically each time, to the occurrence of a decision without rules and without will in the course of a new test of the undecidable. And let it not be said too precipitately that these questions or these propositions are *already* inspired by a concern that could by right be called ethical, moral, responsible, etc. I know that, in saying that ('And let it not be said too precipitately...'etc.), one gives ammunition to the officials of anti-deconstruction, but all in all I prefer that to the constitution of a consensual euphoria or, worse, a community of complacent deconstructionists, reassured and reconciled with the world in ethical certainty, good conscience, satisfaction of service rendered, and the consciousness of duty accomplished (or, more heroically still, yet to be accomplished). [PO 13-15 / POO 37-41]

Perhaps you can now understand what I mean about the strategy of committing suicide in public. This text, written as an explicit response to both those 'anti-Derridians' who claim that deconstruction is immoral, and those 'Derridians' who attempt to find an ethical motivation in Derrida's work, would seem to pre-empt and scupper in advance the basic thesis of *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, boldly stated on the back cover blurb, that 'Derridian deconstruction can and indeed should be understood as an ethical demand'. Of course, one option available to me at this point would be to drink the hemlock and to die pleading with Blackwell's to take the book out of circulation or at the very least to include an erratum begging the reader to disregard its contents. But before deciding on such a drastic path of action, perhaps I should contemplate the hemlock a little before I drink it, to see if this poison, this *pharmakon*, might not also be a cure.

II

Of course, everything in this debate hinges on what is meant by 'an ethical demand' and how that demand is to be articulated. Returning to the back cover blurb, it should be noted that after I claim that deconstruction can and should be understood as an ethical demand, I go on to add the caveat, 'provided that ethics is understood in the particular and radical sense given to it in the work of Emmanuel Levinas'. The entire plausibility of my book hangs on this caveat; namely, what is meant by an ethical demand must be articulated through an explication of what Levinas means by 'ethics'.

As a way into this, what one might call a double displacement of ethics can be thematized: first, *The Ethics of Deconstruction* attempts to reclaim or hegemonize the vocabulary of ethics as a way of responding to the polemical accusation that Derrida's work is an immoralism or an amoralism. it should not be forgotten that this book is part of an ongoing struggle in the domain of what one may loosely call 'the definition of culture' and the place of 'theory' and 'anti-theory' in that definition. The whole sordid Cambridge affair is merely epiphenomenal to this debate. It seems to me that the real worry about 'Deconstructionism' (sic) is not so much its alleged 'cognitive nihilism'[6] but rather the way in which such 'nihilism' can open the door to moral scepticism or even a complete disregard for questions of value that, it is supposed, will have pernicious social and political consequences. So, the first displacement of the word 'ethics' in my book is to reclaim quasi-polemically the language of morality from those proponents of the anti-deconstructionist *doxa* mentioned by Derrida above.

Of course, this leads me into certain problems. The book is a response to what I believe to be an impasse in Derrida's work and in discussions of that work. It is a response to the serious and sincere questions posed on page 1, 'Why bother with deconstruction? What demand is being made by deconstruction?', and attempts to show that these questions demand an ethical response. However, my keenness and impatience in arguing this thesis

leads me into the precipitous use of a number of philosophemes - *ethics, politics, truth, duty, unconditionality* - before which Derrida's cautious rigour would doubtless hesitate.[7] It could be said, echoing Derrida's words, that I move too quickly or precipitously from the elaboration of deconstructive reading to the affirmation of the ethical demand implicit in this enterprise. My approach shows too much decidedness and too little undecidability in speaking without hesitation on the ethics of deconstruction. As such, my text leaves itself open to, indeed calls for, the kind of deconstructive reading elaborated in the text. This is true. I accept it without reservation. As Levinas might retort, '*Voilà des objections bien connues!*' ('These are familiar objections!'). However, this in no way, I believe, minimizes the *necessity* of the gesture attempted in *The Ethics of Deconstruction*. The argument of my book might be, strictly, incoherent, but it is, I believe, also necessary (I shall come back to this).

Mention of necessity takes me on to the second displacement: if I am attempting to reclaim or hegemonize the language of ethics in order to rebut the charge that deconstruction is an immoralism, then a displacement of the meaning of the word 'ethics' is required in order not to fall prey to the fatal second *doxa* outlined by Derrida, that of the 'remoralization of deconstruction'. If one defines ethics and an ethical demand in a way that simply repeats and restores the traditional sense of morality (whatever that sense and that tradition might be; but it should be noted that tradition in Derrida, after Heidegger, refers to the history of metaphysics, a history which, in the age of technology, becomes socio-historically effective and where the category of the ethical is symptomatic of nihilism or the forgetfulness of Being), but simply places it on the side of 'deconstruction' and not 'anti-deconstruction', then one has made of Derrida's work a moralism, a project that demands a scrupulous dismantling, and remains eternally and validly open to the most powerful critiques of morality: Hegel's critique of Kant's ethics, Nietzsche's genealogical critique of morality and Heidegger's subordination of the claims of morality to those of fundamental ontology or the thinking of the truth of Being. To linger a moment on Heidegger, Derrida's reticence about the word 'ethics' is similar to that articulated by Heidegger in his "Letter on Humanism".[8] Heidegger argues that ethics and the whole question of the *Sollen*, the ought, is a latecomer to philosophy (that is to say, in Heidegger's singular periodization, it arises with Aristotle) and is therefore derivative and secondary to the original task of thinking, conceived with Parmenides as the sameness of thinking and Being. Heidegger reconceives ethics in terms of *ethos*, that is, as human dwelling thought in terms of openness to the event of the truth of Being. As Derrida makes lucidly clear in *Altérités*, one cannot simply 'do' ethics in the traditional sense without first engaging in a deconstructive analysis and asking the kind of questions raised in the above passage: 'what is the ethicity of ethics?, the morality of morality? what is responsibility? what is the "what is" in this case?'[Ap 71]. Any conception of the ethics of deconstruction that is not simply going to become subject to the Hegelian, Nietzschean or Heideggerian critiques of morality must articulate itself at the adequate

aporetic level expressed in the above questions. Such is the task of the double displacement of ethics attempted in this book: to reclaim the language of ethics from those who polemicize about the immorality of deconstruction whilst refusing to let this 'deconstructive' conception of ethics be wholly (it might be partly) subject to the critique of traditional morality.

Critique is the operative word here and the implied master-word in the above passage, where Derrida refuses the identification between deconstruction and moralism by claiming that to admit such an identification would be to fall into a new dogmatic slumber (of the kind from which Hume awoke Kant). The responsibility of deconstruction is to maintain the vigilance of the critical stance (let us note in shorthand that, when it suits him, Derrida will refuse the assimilation of deconstruction to critique [ED 21]; that for Levinas, ethics is critique; and that Levinas in his short essay on Derrida, "Wholly Otherwise", identifies deconstruction with Kantian critique [ED 146]. In addition, these allusions to critique allow one to grasp the extent of Derrida's allegiance to *philosophy*; that is, deconstruction or deconstructions must engage in a continual confrontation with dogmatic slumber or *doxa*, and, through the activity of critique, allow the various *doxai* governing human life to confront the irreducibility of *aporia*. *Aporia*, perplexity, let us recall, is the moment in Socratic dialogue when the passage from *doxa* or slumber to philosophy is enacted. *Aporia* is that *Stimmung*, that mood, that announces the beginning of philosophy; a lesson not lost on the early Heidegger, as the untitled first page of *Sein und Zeit* intimates, where the task of philosophy is to retrieve perplexity or *aporia* about the question of the meaning of Being.[9] For the later Levinas, and through a singular inversion of statements made in *Totality and Infinity*, the mood that philosophy is called upon to serve is *love*, and philosophy is defined as 'the wisdom of love in the service of love' [ED 235 & 246-47]

Thus, the traditional language of *ethics* is a *doxa* or dogmatic slumber which must be exposed as such by an aporetic 'critico-deconstructive' questioning. Any determination of the sense of ethics that legitimized the formation of a consensus about value, or the good for the human being, must be refused by deconstruction *in the name of philosophy*. If an ethics of deconstruction were written as a kind of moral code intended for adoption by various persons inside and outside the academy, then this would indeed produce a kind of consensual euphoria or what Derrida called above 'a community of complacent deconstructionists'.[10] Deconstruction cannot therefore be reconciled with any claim to ethical certainty, good conscience, or the clear consciousness of duty, and the ethics of deconstruction does not provide us with a decision procedure for producing and testing the validity of maxims as a prelude to action. Deconstruction must persistently interrupt the argumentative process that results in consensus. And this is perhaps the philosophico-political imperative of deconstruction, where philosophy is understood as the dissensual moment in any political consensus the disruption of *doxa* as the truth of *doxa*, the figure of the philosopher as the gadfly and not the king, or to use the recent example of Vaclav

Havel, the philosopher as dissident and not president (all of this begs the meta-question as to what *use* an ethics of deconstruction might have if we bracket out the possibility of ethics as a decision procedure; for me, the passage from undecidability to the decision is the question of politics, which I take up in the concluding chapter of *The Ethics of Deconstruction* [ED 188-247]).

III

Now that we have cleared the debris a little; the investigation can take on a sharper focus. If I am right in claiming that Derrida's sceptical remarks about the possibility of an ethical dimension to deconstruction do not contradict my argument, if in a sense they were known to me *avant la lettre* in a miraculous act of clairvoyance, then what am I really attempting to do in *The Ethics of Deconstruction*? More specifically, what is meant by an ethical demand in the Levinasian sense and how might such a demand free itself from the sort of objections raised by Derrida above? Hopefully a response to the second question will help clarify the first.

What is an ethical demand in the Levinasian sense? First, an important semantic remark about the word 'ethics': after a certain point in his work marked by the 1951 essay "Is Ontology Fundamental?",[11] Levinas uses the word 'ethics' to describe the non-totalizable relation with the Other; although it should be noted that the word is strictly epiphenomenal to the argument of that essay and is only introduced on the basis of an allusion to Kant's ethics.[12] In *Totality and Infinity* ethics is described as the placing in question of the ego or consciousness by the alterity of the Other.[13] The Other here is not some general - and hence empty - theoretical category, but is rather the particular and concrete other who faces me and places me under obligation, the one before me before whom I am infinitely responsible; at this moment, *each* of you. A question immediately arises about the necessity of this word 'ethics'. The word provokes instant and perhaps insurmountable confusion amongst some, even anger and *ressentiment* amongst others. What Levinas means by ethics, whilst not being unrelated to the Kantian tradition of moral philosophy - particularly the second formulation of the categorical imperative, the formula of the end-in-itself, which guarantees respect for particular persons *before* the Law (both the temporal and spatial senses of 'before') - maintains at best an oblique and perhaps even a critical relation to the tradition as a whole. Levinasian ethics does not seek to tell us how we ought to act, nor does it even claim to offer a normative system or procedure (like the categorial imperative procedure) for formulating and testing the acceptability of certain maxims, judgements or values. Levinas writes in the autobiographical essay "Signature", 'moral consciousness is not an experience of values, but an access to an exterior being';[14] Levinas's name for this exterior being is 'face' (*visage*). Ethics is the relation with the face of the Other (although it is to say the least

unclear what Levinas means by 'face'; is the face given to vision? Levinas says not, insisting that it is rather given in language. But how can a face appear in language? And can only beings capable of language have ethical obligations? And do we as a consequence have no obligations towards non-linguistic beings, like animals, plants and stones, assuming that they are non-linguistic beings? Is Levinasian ethics a humanism? And is this humanism necessarily a weakness? You can begin to imagine the labyrinth of difficulties we enter into here).

Here, then, is our semantic problem: Levinas uses the traditional word 'ethics', just as he uses the words 'metaphysics' and 'subjectivity', but what he seems to intend by these words is something quite novel. For example, ethics signifies a non-totalizable relation to the Other, metaphysics is the movement of positive desire tending towards infinite alterity, subjectivity is a pre-conscious, pre-reflective sentient subjection to the Other.[15] As Derrida notes in *Altérités*, 'I believe that when Levinas speaks of ethics... ethics is wholly other, and yet it is the same word' [A 71]. It is with this ambiguity - *ethics is wholly other and yet it is the same word* - that one can begin a serious deconstructive interrogation of Levinas's work. For Derrida, Levinas's work - against which Derrida says in an extraordinary passage 'I never have an objection' and where Derrida is extremely anxious to deny any 'philosophical differences' between himself and Levinas - performs a 'semantic transformation' of the meaning of the word 'ethics'[ED 9-10]. It is the same word, often apparently employed in the same way, but its meaning is wholly other. For Derrida, it would seem to be in the irreducible particularity of my obligations to the singular other (*l'autre singulier*) and the unique demand that he or she places on me, prior to all procedures of universalization and legislation (here lies the difference with Kant), that the word 'ethics' is able to exceed its traditional determination. As Derrida notes, 'The respect for the singularity or the call of the other is unable to belong to the domain of ethics, to the conventionally and traditionally determined domain of ethics' [A 71]. Listening to this quote, we can see how Derrida can at one and the same time both distance himself from ethical interpretations of his work and affirm his point of absolute proximity to Levinas.

Of course, one might (and perhaps rightly) object at this point that such a conception of ethics is no ethics at all and unworthy of the name. Indeed, Derrida wonders whether the title 'ultra-ethics' might not be a better description of his own and Levinas's projects, and in "Violence and Metaphysics", Derrida describes Levinas's work as an 'Ethics of Ethics' [VM 111]. My book might more faithfully although less felicitously have been entitled *The Ultra-Ethics of Deconstruction* or *The Ethics of Ethics of Deconstruction*. In his last book, John Llewelyn speaks of 'proto-ethics', and Robert Bernasconi has persuasively argued for an 'ethics of suspicion', or even an 'ethics against ethics' on the basis of Levinas's work.[16] One might also wonder whether one should not entirely reject the burdensome palaeonym 'ethics' in describing the relation to the Other; why not use some other old name, like 'religion', a synonym for the ethical in Levinas's earlier work,

or sacrifice, or (to employ a word recently favoured by Levinas) *la sainteté* holiness, or *la pitié* in Rousseau's sense. We might also think of the 'ethical' significance of a chain of words in Derrida's work, all of which signify an irrecuperable moment of alterity: the trace, the remains, the crypt, ashes, mourning and, most recently, the secret. These semantic remarks at least allow one to see that there is a displacement of sense taking place already within the word 'ethics' that might enable one both to affirm a conception of ethics and avoid the moralistic consequences of the word 'ethics' pointed out by Derrida in the above passage.

IV

I would now like to look at what Levinas means by an ethical demand with a little more philosophical rigour and ask: if there indeed exists this happy *homoiosis* between Levinas and Derrida that exempts Levinasian ethics from the moralism condemned in the above passage (and so gets me off the hook), then what on earth is Derrida doing in his extended, and at times highly critical, 1964 monograph on Levinas, "Violence and Metaphysics", where he seems much more intent on burying Caesar than praising him?

First, and this is an absolutely essential proviso, deconstruction must be understood as *double reading* [ED 20-31], that is, a reading that is not straightforwardly either commentary or interpretation, but which enacts a determinate destabilization of the stability of the dominant interpretation or intentional self-understanding of a text. In a first moment, deconstructive reading engages in the patient, microscopic fidelity of commentary (or what we here call commentary for simplicity's sake; it is, of course, highly doubtful whether there can be any pure repetition of the text that would not already be an interpretation, however minimal [ED 23-25]), whilst, in a second moment, it enacts an interpretative traversal of the text that brings the latter into contradiction with itself or with the dominant interpretation of the text. Derrida often articulates this double reading around the semantic ambivalence in the usage of a particular word, like *supplément* in Rousseau, *pharmakon* in Plato, and *Geist* in Heidegger.

Thus, if "Violence and Metaphysics" is a deconstructive reading, then it is a double reading that is not simply *against* Levinas. Derrida is not denouncing an incoherence in Levinas - just as he is not denouncing an incoherence in Foucault, Bataille or Artaud or any of the other 'transgressive' authors he chooses to read - rather he is wondering about the meaning of the *necessity* that provokes such an incoherence; a necessity to which Derrida's own discourse is subject. I here note that, for me, the basic question of philosophy in its deconstructive moment is the following: *what is the necessity for incoherence?* Or, in other words, why is the attempted transgression of philosophical discourse that has characterized so much of the work of recent decades both philosophically incoherent and still necessary? A question which, in my mind, is linked

to the early romantic statement of philosophy as the real homeland of *irony*, which arouses, in Schlegel's words, 'a feeling of indissoluble antagonism between the absolute and the relative, between the impossibility and the necessity of complete communication'.[17]

However, although these provisos are valid, and "Violence and Metaphysics" is not against Levinas in any straightforwardly polemical sense, it should not be forgotten that, despite the undoubted generosity of his reading, the dominant gesture of Derrida's text is to show how Levinas's ethical overcoming of the tradition is itself conceptually dependent upon the very traditional resources it sought to overcome, namely: Hegelian dialectic, Husserlian phenomenology and Heideggerian thinking of the meaning or truth of Being. Derrida identifies a devastating problem at the heart of Levinas's project: the question of *language*.

As I mentioned above, the model for ethics in Levinas's *Totality and Infinity* is the relation to the singular other, the face-to-face relation. Levinas argues that this relation exceeds the ontological language of the philosophical tradition that has always sought to reduce alterity, and yet that the ethical relation takes place in and as language; an ethical language respectful of the otherness of the Other. Thus, Levinas would seem to be claiming a linguistic immediacy to the non-ontological relation to the Other that precedes and evades the ontological mediations of the philosophical tradition. Now, Derrida's claim - and evidence suggests that this claim 'tormented' Levinas (it is his choice of word)[18] - is that Levinas's attempt to find an ethical opening beyond philosophical or ontological language *within* language, cannot succeed *except* by addressing the problem of *closure*, a theme I consider to be absolutely central to the logic of deconstruction [ED 59-106].

Broadly stated, the problem of closure describes the duplicitous historical moment - *now* - when language, conceptuality, institutions and philosophy itself show themselves both to belong to a metaphysical or logocentric tradition that is theoretically exhausted, and at the same time to be searching for the breakthrough out of that tradition. The problem of closure describes the liminal situation of late modernity out of which the deconstructive problematic arises, and which, I claim, Derrida inherits from Heidegger. Closure is the double refusal of both remaining within the limits of the tradition and of the possibility of transgressing that limit. Closure is the hinge that articulates the double movement between philosophy and its other(s). My broad claim that I cannot substantiate here is that ethics signifies in the (undecidable yet determinate) articulation of this hinge.

Returning to "Violence and Metaphysics", Derrida's claim is that Levinas's project cannot succeed except by posing the question of closure and that *because* this problem is not posed in *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas's dream of a non-totalizing ethical relation to the Other that is linguistic but which exceeds the totalizing language of the tradition, remains just that, a *dream*. Derrida calls it the dream of pure empiricism that evaporates when language awakens. Levinas's discourse - like all discourse that attempts to exceed the tradition, that of Foucault, Bataille, Heidegger or whoever - is caught, unbeknownst

to itself, in an economy of betrayal, insofar as it tries to *speak* philosophically about that which cannot be spoken of philosophically (madness, sovereignty, *das Ereignis*, the Other). *Not to philosophize is still to philosophize!*

The real advance of Levinas's later work - and by that I mean essentially the *magnum opus*, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*[19] - is that he incorporates the lesson of the Derridian problem of closure into his attempted articulation of the ethical and thus, in a sense, responds - with an obliqueness and discretion that leave few obvious traces in his work - to Derrida's intervention. If there is an under-determination and a certain philosophical naiveté about the possibility of an ethical language in *Totality and Infinity*, then this is completely transformed in *Otherwise than Being* where the aporias entailed in the attempted expression of the ethical in the language of ontology become, arguably, the central preoccupation. Levinas's real innovation in *Otherwise than Being* is the model of the Saying and the Said as a way of explaining how the ethical signifies within ontological language. To explain briefly this distinction, the Saying is my exposure - corporeal, sensible - to the Other, my inability to refuse the Other's approach. It is the performative stating, proposing or expressive position of myself facing the Other, whose essence cannot be caught in constative propositions. On the other hand, the Said is a statement, an assertion or constative proposition, about which the truth or falsity can be ascertained. This distinction is perhaps analogous to Lacan's demarcation of *énonciation*, the subject's act of speaking, and *énoncé*, the formulation of this speech act into a statement.

The question addressed in *Otherwise than Being* is the following: how is my Saying, my exposure to the Other, to be Said or given a philosophical exposition that does not utterly betray this Saying? The answer to this question is found in the method of what Levinas calls (with little explicit reference to Husserl) *reduction*. The philosopher's effort consists in the reduction of the Said to the Saying, finding in sentences and propositions the fact or the act by which these words are addressed to an Other, making manifest their latent ethical dimension. But how is this reduction to be *shown*? If, as Levinas insists, everything that shows itself takes place at the level of the Said, at the level of phenomenality, phenomenology and light, then how does the enigmatic ethical Saying show itself? My claim is that the Saying only shows itself through a *writing* that enacts the contestation of the Said within a permanent economy of betrayal.[20] This is what interests Levinas about scepticism, where although scepticism is continually and validly refuted by reason because it is self-contradictory, it returns to haunt reason eternally, like a ghost. As Levinas writes, in a formulation favoured by Blanchot, 'Language is already scepticism'; that is, the reasonable Said is always subverted by the force of the sceptical Saying, only to be once again refuted by reason. The language of ethics works with(in) an economy of betrayal, where the Saying disrupts the Said, and in disrupting the Said is caught within the Said, betraying the Saying and calling for another Saying. The philosopher's effort is to enact a spiraling movement within language, a non-dialectical

oscillation between the Saying and the Said. The reduction uses the unavoidable language of the Said, and attempts to unsay the Said by finding the Saying within it; yet, and this is crucially important, this reduction is never pure or complete, the reduced Said retains a residue of the unsaid Said within it. The consequence of this is that philosophy is left in a spiraling movement between two orders of language, the Saying and the Said, where the ethical signifies through the undecidable oscillation or alternation of these two orders, an alternation that Levinas calls, 'the enigma of philosophy'.

Levinasian ethics, at least after it has been disrupted by the Derridian problem of closure, is a certain practice of language (perhaps ultimately a practice of the self in Foucault's sense), an enactment of writing at the limit of conceptual intelligibility, writing under the law of a necessity that risks incoherence in the name of thinking, a practice attentive to the aporias of closure, where ethics signifies enigmatically or undecidably. [ED 168] I would like to conclude now by returning more closely to Derrida.

V

Referring back to our helping of textual hemlock from "Passions: 'An Oblique Offering'", it has hopefully already been established that The *Ethics of Deconstruction* does not seek to promote a new deconstructive complacency about the sense of the word 'ethics', around which a consensus would be able to form; nor does it seek to derive a programme of action from a clearly defined conception of rights and duties. Rather, the ethical moment in deconstruction, the moment of responsibility, arises out of the restlessness of an experience of aporia, that is, of the suspension of choice, ambiguity, equivocity, hesitation, undecidability. As Derrida writes in the "Afterword" to *Limited Inc.*, 'there can be no moral or political responsibility without this trial and without this passage by way of the undecidable' [AED 198]. Such an experience of undecidability is at the very antipodes of complacency, it is the perpetual wakefulness of thinking taking place as the interruption of consensus. Deconstruction is a 'science' of the undecidable (what Drucilla Cornell calls 'the philosophy of the limit' and David Wood dubs a 'liminology'[21]), that is, the relentless and rigorous attempt to determine, through a scrupulous act of close reading, the figures of undecidability (e.g. *Geist*, *pharmakon*, *supplément*) in the limitless context of what we can call (*sous rature*) 'experience'.

I would like briefly to unpack these remarks: as a consequence of the Cambridge affair, even readers of the *Daily Mail* now know that Derrida said 'There is nothing outside the text'.[22] But what does this mean? Roughly this, that the field of what Derrida variously calls textuality, the general text, or context, is a limitless network of differentially ordered signs which is not preceded by any meaning, presence or transcendental signified, but rather which constitutes each of the latter. Derrida extends the concept of the written sign - which, from Plato's *Phaedrus* onwards is characterised in terms of iterability and

absence and thus breaking with the permanent presence of speech (one needs to write because one's interlocutor is absent and what one writes can be repeatedly cited) - to the entire field of experience. Thus there is no experience of pure presence but only of chains of differential marks. The linguistic sign is arbitrary and differential and language is a system of differences without positive terms and without an anchor in the plenitude of presence. The present is constituted by a differential network of traces, that Derrida calls the *movement* of *différance* taking place on the surface of the general text or context. In the "Afterword" to *Limited Inc*, Derrida offers as one possible definition of deconstruction, 'the effort to take this limitless context into account' [AED 136]. To understand the general text as limitless context and to rewrite *Il n'y a pas de hors-texte* as *Il n'y a pas de hors-contexte*, is important because it once again (and why must we say it 'once again'? What forces motivate this persistent and willful misunderstanding of Derrida?) frees deconstruction from the charge of bibliophilia. A generalized concept of the text does not wish to turn the world into some vast Borgèsian library, nor does it wish to cut off reference from some 'extra-textual' realm. Text *qua* context is glossed by Derrida as 'the entire "real-history-of-the-world"', and this is said in order to emphasize the fact that the word 'text' does not suspend reference 'to history, to the world, to reality, to being, and especially not to the other' [AED 136-7]. Derrida's point is that all of the latter appear in an experience which is not an experience of presence, but rather the experience of a network of differentially signifying traces which are constitutive of meaning. Experience traces a ceaseless movement of interpretation within a limitless context.

But why? What motivates this definition of context? Why is this important? Why bother? If the words 'general text' or 'context' are not to be understood empirically, but are rather Derrida's attempt to articulate the transcendental conditions of possibility for experience in general, then what has to be understood - and once again this is made clear in the closing pages to the "Afterword" - is that this conception of context is itself conditioned by a notion of the *unconditioned*, by a thought of *unconditional affirmation*. It is this thought of unconditional affirmation that, I believe, constitutes the 'horizon' for Derrida's work. In a nutshell, there is nothing outside context (no transcendental signified), but the context itself contains a clause of non-closure, where what interrupts and motivates the limitlessness of context is the unconditioned, which is independent of a context in general. Of course, by employing the language of unconditionality, Derrida strategically and deliberately recalls the language of Kantian ethics and the distinction between hypothetical and categorical imperatives. For Kant, ethics, properly speaking, is restricted to unconditional categorical imperatives that are free of the means-end rationality characteristic of prudential maxims (i.e. in utilitarian and consequentialist moral theories). The moment of unconditionality in deconstruction is, Derrida writes, revealed in the link connecting deconstruction to the thought of affirmation, to the Nietzschean or Joycean 'yes' and 'yes, yes' that resound in so many of Derrida's readings.

Yet, what does affirmation affirm? As is made clear at the end of the "La différance" essay from 1968, *différance* is a name for 'that which makes possible nominal effects', and as such remains metaphysical. [D 26-7] *Différance* is a metaphysical name for the unnameable and it is the latter that must be thought in deconstruction without Heideggerian nostalgia or Heideggerian hope. 'On the contrary', Derrida adds, 'we must affirm this' - that is, deconstruction must affirm and say 'Yes' to the unnameable. Thus, my claim is that the ethical moment that motivates deconstruction is this Yes-saying to the unnameable, a moment of unconditional affirmation or a categorical imperative that is addressed to an alterity that can neither be excluded from nor included within logocentric conceptuality but rather which renders undecidable the limit of logocentrism. To open a Pandora's box that cannot be examined in detail here, I believe that this is why Derrida feels entitled to say that, 'I know nothing more just than what I today call deconstruction'. 'Deconstruction is justice', that is, justice is the undeconstructable condition of possibility for deconstruction [FL 15 & 21].

VI

Of course, the aporias into which thought is driven by its attempts to say the ethical (the unsayable, the unnameable, the ineffable) are not unique to Levinas and Derrida. Perhaps one should concur with Wittgenstein when he defines the ethical as being revealed in the endless attempt to run up against the limits of language. Ethical Saying is precisely nothing that can be said, but is rather the perpetual undoing of the Said that occurs in running up against its limits. One cannot comprehend the Saying within the Said, rather the Saying can only be comprehended in its incomprehensibility, in its persistent disruption or interruption of the Said. Such is also perhaps the paradox of the final sentence of Kant's *Grundlegung*, where we are carried to the limit of human reason by the demand to comprehend the unconditional necessity of the moral law, a law that must be comprehended in its *incomprehensibility*. One can also find a similar pattern of thought in Pascal, where nothing is so consistent with reason as the denial of reason; the paradox of the human condition - we are both animals and angels - is articulated through the need for human beings to recognize the need for transcendence and yet also, more importantly, their inability to grasp that transcendence.

By pushing against the limit of philosophical language, even by employing anachronistic philosophemes that require perpetual deconstruction, one prepares the ground for an explosion within language. What is envisaged under the name of ethics is a certain practice of language, a writing, that would bring about the explosion of the book, as the very symbol for unity and totality. As Wittgenstein writes in a text that provides the epigraph for *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, 'I can only describe my feeling by the

metaphor, that, if a man could write a book on Ethics which really was a book of Ethics, this book would, with an explosion, destroy all the other books in the world.'[23]

NOTES

1. This lecture was first presented at the Institute for Contemporary Arts, London in July 1992, as part of a discussion session on my book, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); references to this book will be abbreviated as: |ED xx|. The respondents on this occasion were Robert Bernasconi and David Wood, and the lecture retains traces both of their thoughtful interventions and its oral origin. The lecture was subsequently presented to the Centre for Theoretical Studies Seminar, University of Essex (October 1992) and to the Philosophy Department Seminars at University College Cork and University College Dublin (February 1993). A German version was presented to the Institut für Philosophie, Ruhr-Universität Bochum (June 1993). I am grateful for the discussions the paper provoked with Ernesto Laclau, Jay Bernstein, Hans-Dieter Gondek, Richard Kearney, Timothy Mooney, Tony O'Connor and Bernhard Waldenfels.

2. Cf. Paul de Man, "Impersonality in the Criticism of Maurice Blanchot", in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1983), pp. 60-78.

3. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. by W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), pp.17-27.

4. In personal correspondence, Dominique Janicaud has rightly criticized my book for speaking of deconstruction in the singular, 'as if there were only one', and thereby presupposing some unity to Deconstruction (with a capital 'D') and identifying the latter solely with the work of Derrida. On reflection, I too think it would be more appropriate to speak of 'deconstructions' in the plural.

5. This last sentence appears only in the French edition, it is absent from the original English edition.

6. A term coined by *The Independent on Sunday* on 17th May 1992, the day after the vote to confer upon Derrida an honorary doctorate was passed; the headline ran, 'Cognitive nihilism hits English city'(!).

7. This is a problem also faced by Drucilla Cornell in her stimulating recent book, *The Philosophy of the Limit* (London: Routledge, 1992), a text whose strategy - the use of Levinas to illuminate the ethical moment in deconstruction - is very similer to my own, and which encounters similar problems of bad faith.

> 'By attempting to say what Derrida does I am also naming the ethical force of the philosophy of the limit.... In that sense, the arguments I have made take us beyond Derrida's own relative silence, before the name of the ethical aspiration enacted by "deconstruction".'(p.90)

8. Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, ed. by D.Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p.232.

9. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962).

10. As a thought experiment, try to picture such a community; it presents an almost infernal vision. Of course, in the background of these remarks on consensus one senses the bad taste in Derrida's mouth after his unsatisfying debate with Habermas, a non-dialogue based on a mutual non-reading.

11. Levinas, "Is Ontology Fundamental?", trans. by P. Atterton, *Philosophy Today* (Summer 1989), 121-29.

12. Ibid., p.126.

13. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. by A. Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p.43.

14. Levinas, "Signature", in *Difficile liberté*, livre de poche edition (Paris: Michel Albin, 1976), p.409.

15. On the question of metaphysics and subjectivity in Levinas, see my "Prolegomena to any Post-Deconstructive Subjectivity", in *Deconstructive Subjectivities*, ed. by S. Critchley & P. Dews, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

16. John Llewelyn, *The Middle Voice of Ecological Conscience* (London: Macmillan, 1991); Robert Bernasconi, "The Ethics of Suspicion", *Research in Phenomenology*, Vol.20 (1990), 3-18 and "Levinas

and the Ethics of Conscience", *Krisis*, forthcoming.

17. Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. by P. Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p.13.

18. Cf. Levinas, *Autrement que savoir* (Paris: Editions Osiris, 1988), p.70.

19. *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974); *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. by A. Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981).

20. In an extremely welcome and incisive discussion, Steven Connor, I believe, overstates the extent of my defence of Levinas against Derrida's reading. I do not want to defend the thesis of the absolute purity of the ethical Saying prior to the Said; rather, like Connor, I want to show how the ethical signifies precisely through paradox and undecidability; cf. *Theory and Cultural Value* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp.225-27.

21. Drucilla Cornell, op. cit. & David Wood, *Philosophy at the Limit* (London: Unwin & Hyman, 1990), p.150.

22. See the breathtakingly superficial account of the Cambridge affair by John Casey, "Much ado about the man who believes in nothing", *Daily Mail*, Saturday May 16th, 1992.

23. Wittgenstein, "Lecture on Ethics", *Philosophical Review*, vol.74 (Jan 1965), p.7.

Responsibility Reinscribed (and How)

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Much of Derrida's recent work has been devoted to thinking through the ethical dimension of deconstruction in terms of justice or more frequently, responsibility.[1] Responsibility thought in terms of a responsiveness or openness to what does not admit of straightforward decision, to what exceeds conceptualization. If deconstruction *is* responsibility (or justice), the urgency of *this* moment can be found in particular topics, issues etc. but also in the continuing response to the call of philosophy itself, reactivating perhaps a certain tradition of philosophy as responsibility. Not everyone will agree that the fate of philosophy and our own capacity for philosophizing is bound up with that of deconstruction. But the ethical and political dimension Derrida has more recently explicitly given to deconstruction answers at least those critics who have thought it alien to such concerns.

To understand something of the significance of Derrida's reference to responsibility, we should not forget the formative influence on Derrida of his reading of Husserl. In two late essays, Husserl repeatedly linked philosophical method, its historical and cultural significance, with the idea of responsibility. Responsibility for Husserl meant living and thinking within the possibilities of reactivation of our original intuitive grasp of phenomena, even if his idea of a community of scholars living in 'the unity of a common responsibility'[2], contributing to 'a radically new humanity made capable of an absolute responsibility to itself on the basis of absolute theoretical insights'[3], is now honoured more in the breach than in the observance.

Heidegger's meditations on the task of thinking at the end of philosophy, on the plight of the West, on the call, the appeal, are moving in the same element. Heidegger's destruction of the tradition, of ontology, is in the service of what is first a program of renewal. Later, less of a program.

In *The Other Heading*, Derrida writes:

> Now we must ourselves be responsible for this disclosure of the modern tradition. We bear the responsibility for this heritage, right along with the capitalizing meaning that we have of it. We did not choose this responsibility, it imposes itself upon us, and in an even more imperative way, in that it is, as other, and from the other, the language of our language. [OH 28]

The filiation is clear. Derrida is *taking responsibility for responsibility* as Husserl had originally laid it out, rethinking reactivation in terms of language rather than intuition, rethinking language in terms of the trace, chance, the proper name, signature, rather than in Heidegger's more poetized ontological way, and insisting on the original displacement wrought by the other - but conceiving the other, beyond Levinas, not as limited to the other man, but as the dimension of initial and permanent ruination of all presence. Being responsible for responsibility, reactivating - it is in such expressions that the importance for deconstruction of the phenomenological tradition in its broadest sense appears.

The relation between responsibility and language is an enduring theme for this tradition at many levels. It is a central issue, for example, in judging Heidegger's now infamous "Rectoral Address". Our first dismay is at what Heidegger is saying, our second at his saying it. But perhaps the lingering worry is about his willingness to use a language we would think to be bound up with the project of reinterpreting the texts of the tradition for overtly political purposes. A similar concern arises in reading Derrida's The Other Heading. When he writes 'it is necessary to make ourselves the guardians of an idea of Europe ...', it is not difficult to feel a certain astonishment. But what Derrida has done is to enter the realm of public discourse by converting the old principle of writing under erasure into an insistence on bringing to the surface the aporetic structure of central philosophical concepts. Instead of new words, or old words with displaced meanings, Derrida works to develop the contradictory implications of concepts central to the tradition. Responsibility is one of these concepts, and like 'justice', it is privileged in being able to guide our very reception of it. When Derrida writes 'Now, we must ourselves be responsible for this discourse of the modern tradition', he is of course putting a weight on a word that is part of the modern tradition. When he writes 'we bear the responsibility for this heritage', his words are inseparable from the tradition itself. Responsibility is obligation, burden, duty etc. No words are forbidden, if ever they were. Indeed, if anything, Derrida is increasingly willing to draw the most traditional words within his embrace. Because it is the disturbing embrace of ex-appropriation, of dislocation. For each word he chooses, deconstruction will be its undoing, and its restoration as a word with which to think. The word responsibility is a case in point; there could be no more potent entrance into ethical and political discourse.

Elsewhere[4] I discuss in this context some of the ambivalences surrounding Derrida's recognition of the limitations of both Levinas and Heidegger's restriction of the Other to the human Other. Here I would like to pursue some of the categorial and methodological difficulties that surround Derrida's resurrection of responsibility.

In "Eating Well", Derrida tells us that 'responsibility is excessive or it is not a responsibility'[5]. In *The Gift of Death* he will draw the consequence that I can never justify the fact that special obligations (to my friends, my pets, my children) are not equally extended to all other beings [GD 69ff]. I want to argue that this understanding of the implication of 'excessive' is mistaken, that Derrida successfully transforms responsibility

from being an attribute of a subject to being an openness that makes being a subject possible. But the price of this achievement is the disabling of any quantitative characterizations of our responsibility. 'Excessive', in other words, is a term that signals the need for a category shift. It inscribes at one level considerations that cannot be satisfactorily dealt with or recognized at that level.[6] I want to illustrate this structure of argument and the issues involved by a brief excursus into early Heidegger reception.

In his inaugural address, "What is Metaphysics? (1929)[7]" Heidegger deploys the expression 'Nothing' (das Nichts) as a way of pointing to a dimension of concern beyond that of 'beings', one in which the English 'no-thing' is arguably an improvement over the German. Wider appreciation of Heidegger got off to a mixed start with Ryle's 1929 review of *Being and Time*[8]. Ryle is full of praise for Heidegger, while fearing that his presuppositions are steering him onto the rocks. Twenty years later, having become famous for his Oxford lectures on 'Austrian railway stations' (Bolzano, Brentano et al.) Ryle launched the concept of the 'category mistake' in his *The Concept of Mind* (1949)[9]. The most immediate application of this phrase was to diagnose the error of dualism, of supposing that in addition to the body, we need to posit a complementary entity, the mind. And it is not too difficult to see this book as a logically cleaned-up, and partial, transformation of *Being and Time*. Where Heidegger displaces substance altogether by talking about different modes of Being, and replaces what for phenomenologists is essential to the mental - intentionality - with Being-in-the-world, Ryle understands the mind as an illegitimate hypostatization of certain kinds of predicates - a category mistake.[10]

Carnap, in his essay "The Overcoming of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language" (1931)[11] had accused Heidegger's 1929 discussion of Nothing of being full of 'metaphysical pseudostatements' and in 'violation of logical syntax'. 'Nothing' is being treated, illicitly, as a thing. How else could Heidegger arrive at the folly of 'Das Nichts nichtet' [Nothing noths]? Carnap's essay, however, raises serious questions of intellectual responsibility. For the whole point of Heidegger's essay is to elucidate the potential of the experience of 'Nothing' for giving us access to the Being of beings. That Nothing is not a thing, but an experience giving us access to things *as such* - the central thesis of Heidegger's lecture - seems to have wholly escaped Carnap. It may perhaps have offended Carnap that Heidegger insists that there must be a higher court than logical consistency, that the sense of such logical operators as 'not' must be more than merely formal. And PC Carnap's firing squad mentality, his righteous sense that there is a proper form of language for philosophy, rings hollow in the light of the well-rehearsed logical flaws of positivism itself.

However, while Heidegger may be pushing for a certain derivativeness of formal logic, there is no mistaking the kind of weight he attaches to the distinction between Being and beings - the ontological difference. Heidegger writes, for example, that 'For human existence the nothing makes possible the openness of beings as such'. For example,

through anxiety, in which we come 'face to face with the totality of beings as it slips away', we are lifted out of our everyday being alongside things in the world and made aware *that* there is a world, *that* our everyday engagement with it can become thematic and need not be taken for granted. The movement from being *alongside* things to being aware *that* there are things, and *that* there is a world, gets its force not from any repudiation of logic but from the way it grounds a logical distinction (say between a relation and a proposition) in an existential transformation, or, to put it in a less question-begging way, because of the way in which it allows us to see logic and experience as mutually informing. I may be listening to a lark singing without being aware of the bird *as* a lark, without being aware *that* the bird is a lark. That change of awareness counts as a qualitative transformation and not just (say) a modification of intensity, by embodying a logical/grammatical distinction. If we articulate this awareness, we end up with an assertion, a proposition, a claim, and it is no accident that these both have a distinct logical status (truth-bearers) and are human practices.

If Ryle felt that the development of phenomenology in Heidegger's hands courted disaster, it was, I suspect, because he did not share Heidegger's ambition, one inherited from Husserl, to ground formal categories in experiential ones. (One obvious expression of this is Heidegger's substitution of the term 'existentials' for many of those essential features of Dasein's Being that would otherwise have been called 'categories'.) Ryle continues to believe in the primacy of grammar.

How can we distinguish the position of the phenomenologist from that of the logician? The implication of the respective roles played, for example, by Husserl's sharp distinction between fact and essence[12] and Heidegger's insistence on the distinction between Being and beings - the ontological difference - is that categorial distinctions[13] are both unavoidable and fundamental. This does not mean that what philosophers would like to be able to keep separate can in fact be so kept. Heidegger struggles mightily to sustain the ontological difference against the threat of an entanglement of levels. Categorial distinctions are not just claimed to be fundamental, rather such claims are fundamental to the distinctness and power of the thought in which they occur. And understanding and communicating the categorial status of claims being made is a central concern of philosophy.

Is there any principled explanation for the entanglement of levels? A clue may be provided by a strange phenomenon, one that may not be limited to philosophy, but seems at first blush characteristic of it - the double inscription of key concepts. In addition to Derrida's account of responsibility, I offer as examples Kant's account of causality, Nietzsche's of truth and Sartre's of freedom. I hope it turns out to be more than trivially true that one way or another, all philosophers who aim at scope and depth[14] generate some version of the distinction between empirical and transcendental concepts, that is, between concepts already functioning pre-philosophically in everyday life, and concepts introduced or reworked by philosophy in order to ground, regulate or account for the

operation of those everyday concepts. It is perhaps hard to imagine philosophizing without something approaching technical concepts. And yet concepts that function at both levels are particularly powerful both for structural/systematic reasons - where this double inscription seems to weld the levels together - and for making philosophical pronouncements on the wider stage, where the link between an empirical concept and some deeper level gives it a special power. Kant's account of causality functions in the first way, appearing both at the level of an empirical concept and also as the glue that conjoins the empirical and the transcendental. Indeed without transcendental causation the whole structure would collapse. Nietzsche's account of truth rubs our nose in this double inscription. 'Truth', he says, 'is a lie'. He appeals to a more sophisticated account of truth (and its opposite) in denouncing our ordinary understanding and/or valuation of truth. And yet, of course, he draws on our pre-philosophical attachment to the value of truth in condemning it as a lie. We approach Derrida's discussion of responsibility even more closely with Sartre's discussion of freedom.[15] Sartre claims that 'Man . . .is wholly and forever free or he is not free at all'[16] - a remark remarkably similar to Derrida's claim about the excessive nature of responsibility - and elsewhere Sartre writes not that man is free but that 'Man is freedom'. These two hyperbolic claims about freedom come to the same thing. To say that we are 'wholly and forever' free is not to deny the existence of prisons or paralysis but to try to connect the way we think about empirical freedom with a deeper claim about what it is to be human. And to say that 'man is freedom' is to emphasize that freedom is not simply a property of human beings ('man is free') but a fundamental and essentially illuminating condition. To shift our sense of freedom from being a property to being a fundamental condition is to propose a change in the categorial status of 'freedom'. And yet, just as Nietzsche does with truth, he leans on the value we already attach to freedom in its everyday sense to infuse this 'transcendental' claim with significance. A critical response to Sartre would be to say that this deep phenomenon to which he is alluding - sometimes described in terms of negation, or the power to nihilate - is not freedom, but the (or a central) condition for freedom. His response would be that we do not understand (empirical) freedom adequately unless we understand what its various instances share. What they share is not merely some common structural feature or quality, but a characteristic infusion with consciousness. The immediate consequence of this move is to destabilize our habitual capacity to distinguish between everyday cases of freedom and its opposite. And the consequence of that destabilization is to open us up to probing questions to do with self-evaluation, and self-understanding, questions which Sartre himself often puts in terms of responsibility. Nietzsche described Christianity as 'a hangman's metaphysics'(it was in a rather different sense that Marcuse said that for Sartre man was free even at the hands of the executioner!) and the same logic applies to Sartre. The hyperbole of freedom leads to a hyperbole of responsibility. We become responsible, accountable if only to ourselves, for choices we never even knew we had made, as if the logician's definition of freedom - that we could have done otherwise - had

taken root in the soul. It is this double inscription of freedom - freedom as practical and as ontological - which gives rise to the sense that Sartre's is a philosophy of freedom. The danger of course is that the link between ontological freedom and those values and concerns we ordinarily associate with freedom might become weakened or severed. We might then agree that Sartre had successfully begun to describe the conditions for freedom, but that much more needed to be said even to complete that level of description. Arguably, he himself makes just such a move in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. In the meantime, there is no doubt that Sartre had achieved the goal of disturbing our complacency about the limits of our responsibility ('We are all responsible for the war'). The haunting possibility of bad faith that serves as the instrument of (self-)critical vigilance rests on the double inscription of freedom, on a certain mobility back and forth from its ontological to its existential significance.

Early in *Of Grammatology* Derrida declares as his main goal that of *faire trembler* (disturbing, shaking up) the value of presence. If I am right, the function of remarks of the sort we have quoted from Sartre and Derrida in which an absolute claim is made about an apparently empirical concept, is to insist on a change in the categorial status for the concept in question. It is comparable to putting your foot hard down on the accelerator, which in a car with automatic transmission will effect a change to a lower gear. In the case of 'There never was any "perception"' [SP 103], what looks like a strong empirical claim is, of course, a claim about the illegitimacy of 'perception' functioning as a philosopheme, of our supposing that there could be experience not already entangled with language and with judgement.

In his "Afterword: Toward an Ethics of Discussion" Derrida reformulates his 'notorious' claim '*Il n'y a pas de hors-texte*' as the claim that 'there is nothing outside context', adding that '[this] formula would doubtless have been less shocking, but [would not] have provided more to think about' [AED 136]. There are those who think that these claims are not synonymous, but they do share the same property we have diagnosed - that they serve not to tell us some general inductively arrived at truth about what there is, but to announce, and proclaim the legitimacy of a theory of meaning and truth, and a corollary 'method' of interpreting philosophical (and other) texts. Derrida's claim that responsibility is excessive or it is not a responsibility sounds like a claim about the scope of (my) responsibility. I shall argue that it is the claim 'that responsibility is excessive or not a responsibility' that is excessive, that it does have an important category-shifting significance of the sort that we have already diagnosed, but that Derrida is led astray by Levinas in thinking that I have very large, perhaps so large as to be unfulfillable, actual responsibilities. This claim is the consequence of taking too literally a productive 'category mistake', properly and successfully deployed in other ways.

Levinas' philosophy works on the double inscription of the ethical. What is called the 'ethics' of the face-to-face relation is strictly speaking not ethics at all, but a proto-ethics[17]. And proto-ethics is not a kind of ethics, but rather the laying out, opening up, of

a dimension of relatedness that makes the ethical possible. That Levinas falls foul of this confusion appears in his interview "The Paradox of Morality" when he says that 'when we sit down at the table in the morning and drink coffee, we kill an Ethiopian who doesn't have any coffee'.[18] This is meant to elucidate the breadth of scope of 'Thou shalt not kill'. But it is not just false, but incoherent. Which Ethiopian do I thereby kill? Would it really be morally equivalent to kill an Ethiopian and forego the coffee? And why an Ethiopian rather than some other starving child? If I cannot determine which one, do I kill everyone who doesn't have any coffee? What has having coffee got to do with the matter? If an Ethiopian has harvested it for export, might it not be the wages from that activity that keep him alive, not the coffee? These are not the questions of a heartless soul. What is at issue here is recovering the insight from under the incoherent exaggeration, recovering what I might call the modal propriety of the claim. Often, but not always, when I do something for my own benefit, I could instead be doing something that would benefit someone else more needy than me. But it is ethical incontinence to suppose that what follows from this is that I always should so act. That would involve me in the same kind of distance from the care of my self, a neutralizing abstraction from my own situatedness, that characterizes certain kinds of hysterical utilitarianism. Levinas is confusing the fact that there are no a priori limits to my ethical exposure to the other - which is the powerful grain of truth here - with the claim of infinite obligation or responsibility, one which would convert my drinking a coffee into an act of indiscriminate murder.

There are other important claims being advanced here implicitly - for which there is a modally correct and a hopelessly overblown interpretation. Compare for example: (i) *a failure to prevent a wrong (e.g. save a life) is indistinguishable from committing that wrong (e.g. murder),* with (ii) **there are circumstances in which** *a failure to prevent a wrong* **may be** *indistinguishable from committing that wrong.* The first must be wrong for reasons of quantification. If ten children are drowning in front of me, I cannot be said to have murdered the ones I am unable to save, even though, had I abandoned others, I could have saved them. My claim that 'there are no a priori limits to my exposure to the other' does not mean that I cannot justify drinking my morning coffee. There may be no absolute justifications, but whoever thought justification required absolutes?

An account of my 'exposure' to the other is proto-ethics, an account of how the ethical comes into being. It is, consequently, no accident that "Eating Well", in which Derrida's discusses responsibility extensively, is sub-titled ". . .or the Calculation of the Subject". Derrida's category-shifting argument is designed to show that we think of responsibility too late if we think of it as the property of a 'subject'. Subjects are already lost to calculation (values, rights, determinable responsibilities). That is how the concept of 'subject' functions. But such an account cannot enjoin particular responses; it rather points to the space of my response-ability. In Levinas's writing, killing is doubly inscribed, meaning both the taking of life and any violence to the other which repudiates

or blocks my response to his needs, or deafens me to his or her call. But 'the other' cannot mean 'all others' in some additive, or even distributive sense, such that I have impossible-to-fulfill obligations to every other person[19] in the cosmos. Which is why Derrida's allusions to 'my obligations to the other others whom I don't know, the billions of my fellows (... and animals)' [GD 69] seem to me misplaced. I am not a divine being, or even a health-care organization, but a mortal humbly drinking a cup of coffee, aware of the fragility of every sense I might have of 'what my situation is' or 'what my responsibilities are'. But equally aware that to respond or act at all I cannot cease to be finite, situated, to have my own needs and limitations etc. Double inscription is both powerful and dangerous. There is real dramatic intensification when we think of drinking coffee as killing. But it would be a terrible mistake to think of killing someone as comparable to drinking a cup of coffee. It is true that the potential for active and passive violence in our everyday life is real enough, and easily lost sight of. What is not true is that finding my place in the sun *need* block the light from anyone else. Levinas is somewhat recklessly universalizing zero-sum models. It could be said that the Ethiopian reference reminds us of the implications of global capitalism for broadening our sense of the context of significance of our actions. To buy an ivory pendant, knowing what we know, is (surely) to support elephant poaching. It is more true than ever that no man is an island. But there are notoriously many principled options here, and it is not clear whether being a careful, ethically informed consumer is not more of a recipe for a beautiful soul than a practical contribution to social transformation. Inconclusive arguments about boycotting the products of exploitative labour conditions show us precisely why our exposure to the other is not some huge, excessive obligation, but rather a complex openness to requests, demands, pleas, which call not just for an acknowledgment of my obligations, but for scrutiny, for negotiation, for interpretation and ultimately for recognizing both opportunities and limitations.

In conclusion I would like to see what happens if I put a little pressure on the assumptions with which I have been operating. My sympathetic allusions to Ryle's idea of a 'category mistake', a concept that one could almost as easily draw from Kant's distinction between the empirical and the transcendental, rest on the utility, perhaps unavoidability, of recognizing that key philosophical claims are always of a categorial nature, or something closely analogous. This caveat is meant to include claims about the *limits* of categorial or conceptual thought, such as that couched by Derrida in terms of an opposition between the excessive and the calculable. It is hard to imagine continuing to think without taking for granted, most of the time, that working distinctions between different levels and different categories can actually be sustained. It is not clear, however, whether the idea of double inscription presupposes this or flouts it. Double inscription occurs when key concepts function at two distinct levels for structural/systematic purposes.[20] That this is frequently to be found in the most powerful philosophical writings does not, however, make it unproblematic. And I have tried in Derrida's case to separate

out responsibility as a kind of constitutive openness to the other, and any attempt to dramatize the supposed resultant scope and scale of our obligations to others. There are, however, reasons to think that distinctions between levels are quite as imperfect as they are necessary. We may oppose appearance to reality as two different levels, and yet we know that appearances are part of the real. We oppose ordinary language to philosophical language and yet we know that the sense of the latter would dry up unless it was continually fed by the former. Following Heidegger, we oppose the ontic to the ontological, and yet this distinction is sustained by a being whose (ontic) condition is to be ontological - Dasein. The structure that best illustrates this combination of opposition and continuity is the Moebius strip - at every point two radically discrete sides, but only one surface. Would taking this lesson to heart teach us anything about responsibility?

Derrida contrasts responsibility as calculable with responsibility as excessive. The way he elaborates on the excessive (references to the billions of my fellows etc.) suggest an ill-advised quantitative interpretation, one which nonetheless rightly explodes any deal by which I have given myself a good conscience.[21] This quantitative interpretation allows Derrida to avoid the charge that Hegel laid at Kant's ethics, of being merely formal. But there are two better ways of thinking of the interpenetration of responsibility as openness to the other, and such specific responsibilities as I may acknowledge. The first I have already adumbrated: my *exposure* to the other means that there are no a priori limits to my responsibilities. But there are limits. (e.g. I cannot save all the drowning children.) The second way of grasping the interconnectedness of these two levels is no less significant here for having a broader application. Responsibility as openness to the other can function adverbially as a modal operator in *the way we deal with and understand* such finite responsibilities as we do take on - willingly accepting consequential or corollary responsibilities, and acknowledging responsibilities we would never have chosen.[22]

Finally, however, the ultimate reworking of the sense of responsibility is to say that philosophy is itself responsibility (cf. 'deconstruction *is* justice' [FL 949]). That philosophy is a response (to pain, to dis-ease, to wonder, to anxiety, to confusion) is a truth it is particularly important not to lose sight of. Responsibility is a certain kind of attentiveness and fidelity of response. Importantly it suggests a displacement of the primacy of the subject and the will, that philosophy is quite as much grounded in what befalls us, in our situatedness, our exposure, as in our powers of positing. And one way of understanding the opposition between responsibility as calculation and as excess is to think of excess as a kind of unlimited recursivity, or movement between our concepts and the experiences to which they are tied, a movement akin to what Merleau-Ponty called hyper-reflection[23]. If philosophy as responsibility is the willingness to live in, to endure, the uncertainties and aporias that accompany our capacity for conceptualization, we might come to think that Keats put it quite well when he coined the phrase 'negative capability'.

NOTES

1. See for example: OH, FL, AED, EW, GD, Ap.

2. See Edmund Husserl, "The Origin of Geometry" (1936), in *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, by Jacques Derrida, trans. by John P. Leavey (New York: Nicolas Hays, 1978), p.165.

3. See Edmund Husserl, "The Crisis of European Man" (1935), in his *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, trans. by Quentin Lauer, New York: Harper and Row, 1965. p. 169.

4. See my "*Comment ne pas manger:* Deconstruction and Humanism", in *The Animal as Other*, ed. by Peter Steeves (Amsterdam & Atlanta: Rodopi, forthcoming). I am grateful to the editor, Peter Steeves, for permission to rework some of the material in this paper.

5. Derrida continues by saying, 'a limited, measured, calculable, rationally distributed responsibility is already the becoming-right of morality' [EW 118].

6. Derrida has himself made much of similar strategies - I am thinking especially of his use of 'indecidables' in his early writing.

7. In *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. by David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

8. In *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, ed. by Michael Murray (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

9. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963).

10. 'To talk of a person's mind is not to talk of a repository which is permitted to house objects that something called 'the physical world' is forbidden to house; it is to talk of the person's abilities, liabilities and inclinations to do and undergo certain sorts of things . . . in the ordinary world.' Ibid., p.190.

11. In *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, op. cit.

12. See Husserl's *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (1913) (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1931), ch. 1.

13. I mean by 'categorial distinctions' distinctions between orders or types of knowledge, of relationship between or to things. This includes both distinctions between different categories, and between 'categories' and other 'things'. Grammatical categories are included here when they are deemed to be philosophically significant.

14. I'm trying to avoid saying 'systematic philosophy' so as to include non-constructive even anti-systematic philosophers such as Nietzsche and Derrida..

15. The anticipations of Derrida in Sartre, and other parallels between them are of great interest. See especially various writings by Christina Howells, including her "Conclusion: Sartre and the deconstruction of the subject" *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre* ed. by Christina Howells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and "Sartre and Derrida: Qui perd gagne", *JBSP*, 13 no. 1 (1982). An interested reader might start with such a remark as 'Man is free because he is not himself but presence to himself'. (*Being and Nothingness*, "Being and Doing: Freedom", p. 440). This shows Sartre thinking self-presence precisely *not* as self-coincidence, but as something like that difference-from-self which Derrida called 'différance' and used to probe the value Husserl had given to self-presence.

16. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (1943) (London: Methuen, 1958), p. 441.

17. The expression proto-ethics is used for example by John Llewelyn in his brilliant *The Middle Voice of Ecological Conscience* (London: Macmillan, 1991). I do not begin to do justice here to his grasp of the multi-dimensionality of our responsibilities, not least to non-human animals.

18. In *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, ed. by Robert Bernasconi and David Wood (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 173.

19. And, *pace* Llewelyn, it is hard to sustain the exclusion of other living beings from any account of the space of our concern.

20. For a more developed discussion of the way philosophical concepts structure the texts in which they occur, couched in terms of textual reflexivity (exemplification, reflective modification and totalization) and different kinds of operators (boundary regulators, structural and transformational operators) see my "Philosophy as writing: the case of Hegel", in *Philosophy at the Limit* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), ch.4.

21. Sartre's claim (*Being and Nothingness*) that good faith is a form of bad faith seems very close here.

22. Compare here Derrida's treatment of Kant's distinction between acting *in conformity* with duty, and acting *out of respect for* law. See FL 949.

23. See Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and the Invisible* (1964) (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), pp. 38, 46.

Politiques de l'amitié. By Jacques Derrida. Paris: Galilée. 1994. 419 pp. ISBN 2-7186-0438-7; ISSN 0768-2395.

Review by Ed Bullard

Jacques Derrida's *Politiques de l'amitié* brings together two products of the eponymous seminar given at the *Ecole d'Haute Etudes en Sciences Sociales* in 1988-89. The major part of the book is taken up by the title-piece (of 323 pages) which 'represents', as Derrida somewhat enigmatically writes in his preface, merely the first session of this seminar, though it has clearly been considerably reworked and expanded since it was originally given and subsequently published in varying forms in translation.[1] The second text "L'oreille de Heidegger: Philopolemologie (*Geschlecht* IV)"[2] was given at the conference held in commemoration of the centenary of Heidegger's birth in Chicago in September 1989 and forms part of the series of essays on Heidegger that Derrida has published since 1983.[3] Although its title emphasises its connection to its predecessors in the *Geschlecht* series, its concerns are closer to those of Derrida's *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question* as it pursues the task set out in the long footnote to *Of Spirit* in which Derrida, in response to a question about the decisive passage in *Unterwegs zur Sprache* in which Heidegger writes of an experience of language 'older' than any question, set out various pointers for a renewed reading of Heidegger which would identify those moments before the explicit withdrawal of the privilege of the question that anticipate the thought of the *Zusage* and of hearing as the piety of thought [OS 132-36/DE 147-54]. At the top of the list of the signs and markers that might guide such a reading we find everything in *Being and Time* that concerns the 'call of conscience'. In "L'oreille de Heidegger" it is, or seems to be, another voice that is at issue: 'the voice of the friend whom every *Dasein* carries with it',[4] which for Heidegger exemplifies the constitutive role of hearing for *Dasein's* openness to its most proper potential for being and, perhaps, for its openness to others. Derrida rules out any 'deconstructive' critique of the type that, for example, Husserl's conception of the inner voice of the ego might call for, asserting that it really is the voice of the other which is at stake here; at the same time he apparently rules out reading the figure as a discreet allusion to the subsequent analysis of that other voice that calls *Dasein* to its most proper potential for being: the call of conscience. This exegetical problem is complicated further if one suspends for a moment Derrida's initial claim that listening to this voice of the friend differs fundamentally not only from any ideal of self-presence but also from the Aristotelian conception of *philia* [PA 348/168] always tied to the values of presence, proximity and familiarity. When Derrida asks whether there is not some specific quasi-citation which he is sadly unable to recognise [PA 358/175] it is

tempting to suggest one or more passages in the work of the very philosopher from whom *Being and Time* is set apart in the opening paragraphs of the essay.

In Heidegger's 1924 lecture course "The Ground Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy"[5] an analysis of hearing and listening parallel to §34 *Being and Time* is carried out with explicit reference to Aristotle and, in particular, to the description in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1102b) of the participation of *pathos* in *logos* as a kind of listening and obedience to *logos* like that with which we 'listen to *logos*' from father or friends. If one traces the development of this analysis from Heidegger's appropriation of Aristotle, and especially the *Rhetoric* II and the *Ethics*, through subsequent lecture courses to *Being and Time* §34 then the listening which places the affectivity of the *pathos* in thrall to the *logos* comes to seem a convincing candidate for the source of Heidegger's elliptical reference. However, such a reading, while it would tend to confirm Derrida's contention that the relation between the voice of the friend and the call of conscience is 'more than an analogy or coincidence' [PA 348] and, perhaps, undermine the view that it really is the voice of the other which is at issue, could not be set against the general point that the 'autoheterology' of the voice(s) of the friend and of conscience, the phenomenon of nearness through distance which they describe, differs radically from a monologue of the inner voice and from a certain Aristotelianism. Whether, as the Heidegger of *Being and Time* seems to have thought, a different reading or appropriation of Aristotle is possible and how this might relate to the ellipsis of the phrase 'father and friend' remain open questions of relevance to the book's other, longer, essay "Politiques de l'amitié".

The task of thinking through the status and import of the over-determined figure of the voice of the friend leads Derrida from Heidegger's *Magnum Opus* through the overtly political texts of the 1930s to later essays in which Heidegger wrote of another experience of language. In this way, Derrida re-enacts the passage across almost the entirety of Heidegger's work performed with such synoptic élan in *Of Spirit*, but with this difference, that in the later essay, following the fate of friendship and struggle, *philia* and *polemos*, in Heidegger's texts, Derrida shows us another way of reading Heidegger, another *Being and Time* which 'overflows the hypothetical frontier' between a philosophy dominated by the eroticism of the question and one which may have preceded it and may come after it:

> *Si* Sein und Zeit *était le livre de l'ami, ce serait aussi le livre le plus et le moins érotique qu'il nous soit donné de lire en ce siècle.* [PA 386/193]
>
> If *Sein und Zeit* were the book of the friend, it would also be the most and the least erotic book given us to read in this century.

Now, while exploring what in the figure of the friend might exceed the priority of the question, Derrida also draws the reader's attention to the most troubling aspects of Heidegger's writings, showing the extent to which the language of *polemos*, of struggle,

associated with a nationalist political voluntarism, extends beyond the *Rectoral Address* to subsequent readings of Heraclitus and elsewhere and can already be discerned in the account of historical community set forth in the fifth chapter of *Being and Time*. Drawing these themes together, Derrida's essay highlights not only the ambivalence of Heidegger's positions, from author of *Being and Time* to mediator of the 'sacrificed' poet Hölderlin, but also the ambivalence of the very notion of friendship itself. It is the genealogy and logic of this ambivalence which Derrida explores in "Politiques de l'amitié" where a hope, at once philosophical and political, drawn from the responses to friendship of various philosophers and writers from Kant to Blanchot is accompanied by a wide ranging critique of an exclusively fraternal tradition which, Derrida contends, has governed the understanding of friendship from the Greeks to those very texts which occasion that hope and announce, perhaps, another friendship and another politics.

Derrida begins by identifying various commonalities in accounts of friendship from Plato, Aristotle and Cicero to Montaigne, Kant and Nietzsche and by recalling the broad reference of the term '*philia*' in Aristotle's writings where it designates not only the relation to a singular friend or limited group of friends but also the basis of familial, social and political relations in general. In classifying political structures on the basis of the relations of rulers to ruled - as monarchies, oligarchies and democracies - Aristotle drew an analogy with the familial relations of, respectively, father and son, husband and wife and brother with brother which share with the corresponding political systems relations of seniority, superiority and equality. Derrida contends that this fraternal conception of democracy is mirrored in Aristotle's account of true friendship whose fundamental traits are, he attempts to show, carried over into Christian and 'Republican' conceptions of fraternity and friendship (the latter famously expressed in 'Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité'). In offering a critique of this tradition Derrida thus hopes to prepare the way for a novel conception and, indeed, practice of democratic politics which may, he suggests, already have been at work in modern history and in philosophy since Kant.[6]

The essay begins with the statement attributed to Aristotle in the first century B.C. by the biographer Diogenes Laertius: '*O phíloi, oudeis phílos*',[7] which, reading the omega as a vocative, may be translated as 'Oh friends, there are no friends'. This apparently contradictory statement, in the numerous translations, interpretations and quotations made of it, provides the guiding thread of the study, raising the question of its relation to Aristotle's account of friendship and of the relation of the latter to subsequent writings on friendship which quote and seemingly endorse it but which might, for other reasons, be thought to differ fundamentally from it (Kant, Nietzsche and Blanchot provide Derrida's most important points of reference). The former question is incapable of yielding anything approaching a definitive answer given the provenance of the phrase but it does provide an interesting pretext for exploring the various aporias which Aristotle's discussions of friendship attempt to resolve.[8] The traditional interpretation of the phrase, reading the '*O phíloi*' in the vocative, yields an apparent contradiction and can as such

plausibly be read as a index of any of these aporias. If the omega is read as a dative pronoun,[9] termed the '*version de replis*' by Derrida and familiar to English readers from R.D. Hick's bilingual edition in the *Loeb Classics* series, the phrase can be translated as: 'He who has friends, can have no friends'. This version can also be read as a contradiction if it is taken to affirm the possibility of the same person, having and not having friends in the same respect and at the same time, though this no longer has the marked performative dimension of the other reading. Either version can be saved from contradiction by interpolating a modifying adjective or clause, as Hicks does in his translation: 'He who has friends, can have no true friends'.[10] This can then be read in either of two modalities: possible: one can have friends *and yet* have no true friends, or necessary: one cannot have true friends if one has friends. The latter reading is 'paraphrased' by Derrida as 'whoever has too many friends has none' [PA 236] thus allowing the phrase to be read as a claim about the limited number of true friends it is desirable or possible to have, and so as a reference to the thesis on this issue propounded in books VII and IX of the *Eudemian Ethics*. Derrida argues that Aristotle's view that there is a happy medium for and a limit to the number of true friends one can have is analogous to his thesis that the size of the *polis*, as distinct from the *ethnos*, should fall within certain limits of moderation. Alongside his critique of fraternity, Derrida opposes to theses of this type the hyperbolic notion of friendship for the unknown, for the stranger, which, on the basis of Aristotle's analogy between friendship and the political, might correspond to a possible democratic politics foreign to both Aristotle and the modern nation state.[11] The idea of this '*rapport sans rapport*', 'relation without relation', is developed with reference to the apparent contradictions, the indeterminate series of statements of the form 'X without X', which proliferate in the writings of Bataille, Blanchot, Nancy and others who have followed in the wake of Kant and Nietzsche. In particular, Derrida explores the possibility that the Nietzschian reversal of Laertius's phrase - 'Enemies, there are no enemies'[12] - and the Kantian notion of respect, which introduces an irreducible distance into the relation to the friend, are, in different ways, incompatible with Aristotle's ethics and politics (and perhaps unthinkable for 'Greek' thought more generally) and announce the possibility of a new kind of political thought and a new kind of politics.

However, although Derrida's interpretation of the political aspects of Aristotle's discussions of friendship has its own merits and interest, its central role in the book has other more general consequences. By focussing on the putative analogy between the number of friends and the limits of the *polis* and giving pride of place to a critique of it and of fraternal traits in accounts of friendship, Derrida tends to elide the aporetic nature of Aristotle's own accounts of friendship, to which the interpretation of the phrase as a manifest performative contradiction might point.[13] Instead he argues that if an experience of friendship is the negative condition of another political thought then it must involve aporias or contradictions other than those which so concerned Aristotle. This Derrida

terms 'a sort of hyperaporetic' [PA 225], a somewhat opaque notion of a non-logical contradiction or aporia, which would differentiate this other interpretation of friendship from Aristotle's. In particular, Derrida discounts the possibility that in recognising as a condition of true friendship the wish that friends exist for their own sake Aristotle[14] touches upon the very topic of separation in friendship which provokes the most hyperbolic moments in Blanchot and Bataille when friendship is construed as a relation without relation, '*sans partage...sans reciprocité*', 'without sharing...without reciprocity' [PA 328]. Though Aristotle clearly considers the sharing of conversation and thought to be conducive to friendship, the condition of wishing good for the friend's own sake leads him to give as examples of true friendship mothers' love for children from whom they are separated and the friendship of those separated by being on different sides of a conflict.[15] With reference to "L'oreille de Heidegger" one might note in passing that this rather critical interpretation of Aristotle might preclude understanding the reference to listening to the voice of the friend in *Being and Time* as a reference to Aristotle at one with Heidegger's more sympathetic interpretation of Aristotle's practical philosophy at that time. These examples of true friendship point to a broader question for Derrida's thesis on the political dimension of accounts of friendship from Plato and Aristotle to modern times. Although there may appear to be a fraternal bias from the Greeks to Levinas and Blanchot it is never established that this bias is a consequence of the way friendship is conceived. A political theory based on an account of the family, as Aristotle's seems to be, can clearly be the object of a critique of patriarchy and gender relations. However, it is less clear that the same argument can be made against accounts of friendship merely on the basis of the analogy between friendship and the social and political relations. Similarly, it is questionable whether Aristotle's insistence on the limited number of true friends one can have can be understood merely through an analogy with the limits of the *polis* or as a consequence of metaphysical commitments such as the primacy of actuality, proximity and stability. Could it not be related to the problem of the singular yet universal virtue of friendship?[16]

The problem of the singularity of friendship lies at the heart of what may, at least in part, be the essay's underlying motivation, a discrete polemic with those of Derrida's friends (as he himself calls them) who have taken up the task of thinking afresh about friendship and community after Kant and Nietzsche, namely, Blanchot, Bataille, Nancy and, to a lesser extent, Levinas.[17] Derrida suggests that the hyperbolic notion of friendship for the stranger, for the unknown, which he seeks to differentiate radically from traditional conceptions and interpretations of friendship, the aporia which ceaselessly calls for one predicate to be neutralised by another in the endless series of propositions ('*rapport sans rapport*', 'relation without relation', '*communauté de ceux qui n'ont pas de communauté*', 'community of those who have no community'...) calls for a register other than that of the common or the shared [PA 330-331]. In this way, his own reticence in abstaining from the use, though not the mention, of the term '*communauté*', which

figures so prominently in Nancy's work and in Blanchot's response to it, would be exemplary for a future politics (though presumably this word is itself open to the same critique) which would no longer be fraternal or subject to numerical limits and calculations. The central claim made in the important final chapter of the essay, that reference to community or the communal always risks bringing about 'the return of the brother' [PA 331], rests on the understanding of Blanchot's, '*amitié pour ce qui a passé sans laisser de traces, réponse de la passivité à la non-présence de l'inconnu*', of the stranger-friend.[18] If, Derrida asks, the friend is a stranger why am I the friend of this stranger rather than of any other?

> *Pourquoi ne suis-je pas l'ami de n'importe qui?* [PA 331]
>
> Why am I not the friend of just anyone?

This is an extreme form of the worry that always seems to have concerned philosophers when they have come to think about friendship: the conflict of the singular and the universal. However, if one were to respond in the affirmative to Derrida's question, the notion of friendship with which one would be left might not only be outside the order of proximity and distance, belonging and not belonging to a community, but might also resolve the tension between love and respect which underlies the facsinating ambivalence of philosophical accounts of friendship, abolishing the very singularity of friendship. As Aristotle may have said, and perhaps rightly, 'He who has too many friends (or is everyone's friend), has no true friends'. In any case, as Derrida writes, there can be no soothing answer to this question, drawn from texts of such extreme difficulty as Blanchot's *L'Ecriture du désastre* [PA 331].

What the essay does do however, as well as leading the reader on a fascinating if, at times, somewhat meandering journey through the history of philosophical interpretations of friendship (only a few of the stages of this journey have been mentioned here), is offer an ironic *mise en scene* of the above question. Throughout the text of the essay, in its citations and footnotes, in the scene of the seminar at the EHESS described in its preface in which Derrida addressed the assembled audience with the phrase '*O mes amis, il n'y a nul amy*' and in its reference to its very readers as '*ami lecture*' [PA 89] Derrida enumerates a seemingly endless list of 'friends' whom the texts he reads, from Aristotle to Blanchot, seem to claim could not be friends at all. For example, when Derrida quotes this from Blanchot to whom he refers as a friend,

> *L'amitié... passe par la reconnaissance de l'étrangeté commune qui* ne nous permet pas de parler de nos amis, mais seulement de leur parler, *non d'en faire un thème de conversations (ou d'articles).*

> Friendship ... goes through the recognition of the common strangeness which *does not permit us to speak about our friends, but only to speak to them*, not to make them a theme of conversations (or of articles)[19]

something of the performative contradiction of 'Oh my friends, there are no friends' (to translate Montaigne's translation) is at work. Not only could the friends Derrida mentions in the essay not all be true friends according to Aristotle (though they could be friends for utility or pleasure) they could not be, it would seem, for Nietzsche or Blanchot either, to the extent that the very act of speaking *about* them thematically would be destructive of friendship. What this acting out of an apparent performative contradiction reminds us of is that if the *aimance* (the neologism due to Derrida's friend Abdelkebir Khatibi which serves as a term for the middle voice beyond activity and passivity, friendship and love), described in hyperbolic terms by Derrida, is possible at all, if it will one day or has already occurred, it could nevertheless never be brought forth as an example in an argument, could never be the object of a theory. And so, as Derrida emphasises, a 'politics' of this 'friendship' could only ever be talked about in the modality of a '*peut être*', 'perhaps', ruling out any talk of founding an actual politics, policy or programme on it [PA 246]. Might one not see in this modesty in the face of the contradictory nature of accounts of the experience of friendship an echo of Plato's ironic staging of the problem of friendship in the *Lysis* which ends with Socrates's young friends being led away before a final conclusion to the discusion over the nature of friendship has been reached:

> To-day, Lysis and Menexenus, we have made ourselves ridiculous - I an old man, as well as you. For these others will go away and tell how we believe we are friends of one another - for I count myself in with you - but what a 'friend' is, we have not yet succeeded in discovering.[20]

NOTES

1. The English translations, entitled "The Politics of Friendship", are in *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. LXXXV, no. 11 (New York: 1988), 632-44, and *American Imago, Studies in Psychoanalysis and Culture*, vol. 50, special issue on *Love*, ed. by Thomas Keenan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

2. This essay is translated as "Heidegger's Ear: Philopolemology (*Geschlecht* IV)" by John P. Leavey, Jr., in *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations* ed. by John Sallis, pp. 163-218 (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993).

3. Cf. "Geschlecht: différence sexuelle, différence ontologique" and "La main de Heidegger (*Geschlecht II*)" both in *Psyché: inventions de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1987), and *De l'esprit: Heidegger et la Question*, (Paris: Galilée, 1987).

4. *Sein und Zeit*, 17th edition (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993), p. 163, *Being and Time*, trans. by Macquarrie and Robinson, p. 206 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962).

5. Cf. Theodore Kisiel's gloss on the course in, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

6. The possibility that this deconstruction of the fraternal bias in democratic politics may be underway is suggested in a protracted analysis of Carl Schmitt's political theory which focuses on the themes of the enemy/friend and 'depoliticisation'.

7. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, with an English translation by R.D. Hicks, vol. 1., Loeb Classics (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1925), p. 464.

8. Derrida bases his critique for the most part on the *Eudemian Ethics*, and to a lesser extent on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The account of friendship in book 2 of the *Rhetoric*, so important to Heidegger, does not play a substantial role.

9. The difference between the vocative interjection 'Oh' or 'O' and the dative pronoun 'for whom' is marked in Greek by a difference in accent and an iota below the omega in the dative.

10. Op.cit., Aristotle distinguishes three types of friendship founded on: utility, pleasure and virtue (*telos* or first friendship for which I employ Hicks's term 'true friendship' throughout). For Aristotle, it is by partial analogy with the latter focal meaning that the two lesser types count as friendship at all.

11. Derrida insists that the modality of this new political thought must be that of a 'messianic possibility'. To attempt to actually found a politics on this hyperbolic notion of friendship would be to betray it [PA 246].

12. *Human, All Too Human*, I, §376. 'Friends'.

13. Cf., Pierre Aubenque's "Sur l'amitié chez Aristote" appendix I to *La Prudence chez Aristote* (Paris: P.U.F., 1963).

14. Cf., *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1166a, 1-10.

15. Ibid., and 1159a.

16. When he writes that, '*Le partage (singularité/ universalité) a toujours divisé l'experience, le concept et l'interpretation de l'amitié*', 'The division (singularity/ universality) has always divided the experience, the concept and the interpretation of friendship' [PA 308], Derrida appears to entertain this possibility. See also p. 284.

17. See the long note pp. 55-6 and pp. 331, 338. Nancy has replied in his recent book, *Être singulier pluriel* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), p. 104.

18. *L'Ecriture du désastre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), p. 47.

19. Ibid., p. 327. The quotation is from *De l'Amitié* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), p. 328. The italics are Derrida's. See also, *Politiques de l'amitié*, p. 72 where Nietzsche is quoted to the same effect.

20. In *Plato III. Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias*, Loeb Classics, (London and Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), p. 71.

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Review by Céline Suprénant

The relation between deconstruction and psychoanalysis is a *persistent* problem. *Deconstruction* has always been interested in psychoanalysis and affirmed the necessity of 'taking into account the event of psychoanalysis'[2], while simultaneously insisting, as in the famous lapidary statement at the beginning of "Freud and the Scene of Writing", that it does not, for all that, aim to carry out the psychoanalysis of Western metaphysics [FSW 196]. And yet, a few years later in *Positions* (1971), Derrida asserts: 'is it entirely useless to recall first that since *Of Grammatology* (1965) and "Freud and the Scene of Writing" (1966) *all* my texts have inscribed what I will call their psychoanalytic 'import'?', an assertion which, even then, hindered any attempt to demarcate Derrida's work *on* psychoanalysis from the rest [P 83 / Pos 110, tr. modified]. These statements, however, do not begin to make explicit the political and philosophical stakes of the *complicity*, for want of a better term, between deconstruction and psychoanalysis. Even recording Derrida's circumspection on the strategical use of certain metaphysical and psychoanalytic concepts, the case of 'the psychoanalytic conceptuality in Derrida's work' is hardly settled, especially if we attend to the affirmation according to which, 'psychoanalysis in *general*, ... does not exist ... as a great central and homogeneous corpus' [RP 144], an affirmation which is both the greatest difficulty *and* the resource of the three essays of the book [RP 46].

But what all three essays collected in *Résistances* suggest, albeit unevenly, is that the *articulation* between psychoanalysis and deconstruction, if such there be, crucially needs to be interrogated around a certain concept of *resistance*. Because, unlike other more unequivocally identifiable psychoanalytic concepts (such as, for example, 'the return of the repressed'), the word 'resistance' may indeed point to a 'common root' of deconstruction and psychoanalysis.[3]

It might be useful, therefore, to return to certain passages in *Positions*, notably where Derrida describes what he calls 'a kind of *general strategy of deconstruction*'. This *strategy*, as everyone knows, implies a double gesture towards the binary oppositions of metaphysics. One must first, says Derrida, 'traverse a phase of *overturning* [*renversement*]', that is, reverse the violent hierarchy which organises the classical philosophical oppositions. Derrida insists on the structural necessity of this phase, but it is equally important, Derrida continues, to mark, 'the interval between inversion, which

brings low what was high ... and the emergence of a new 'concept', a concept that can no longer be, and never could be, included in the previous regime' [P 41, tr. modified].

Now, what is of particular interest here is the way in which Derrida describes the marks of this *écart*, as that which 'resists and disorganises' the philosophical opposition:

> Henceforth, in order better to mark this interval ... it has been necessary to analyze, to set to work *within* the text of the history of philosophy, as well as *within* the so-called literary text ... certain marks ... that by *analogy* (I underline) I have called undecidables, that is, unities of simulacrum, 'false' verbal properties (nominal and semantic) that can no longer be included within philosophical (binary) opposition, but which, however, inhabit it, resisting and disorganizing it *without ever* constituting a third term, without ever leaving room for a solution in the form of speculative dialectics .[P 42-3, tr. modified]

When it is a question of Derrida's interest in certain literary texts which have raised the question of 'literarity' most acutely, one is faced, again, with a 'scene of resistance':

> Certain texts classed as 'literary' have seemed to me to mark and organise a 'structure of resistance' to the philosophical conceptuality that allegedly claims to be able to dominate them, to include them, whether directly or whether through categories derived from the very philosophical conceptuality.[P 69, tr. modified]

It would be interesting to continue reading *Positions* or, more generally, Derrida's other writings, and focus on the recourse to a certain *concept* of resistance which appears to have preoccupied Derrida long before *Résistances*. These few examples, however, should suffice to indicate how the difficulty of clearly distinguishing between a psychoanalytic and a non-psychoanalytic *use* of the concept of resistance might be included among the 'semantic and disseminal chances' of the word *résistance*, of which Derrida speaks at the beginning of the first essay [RP 14].

The opening essay "Résistances" [RP 13-53] is a modified version of Derrida's contribution to a Franco-Peruvian conference on *La notion d'analyse*, organised by the Collège International de Philosophie in 1991.[4] It is the only essay in the book which does not, at first sight, refer to earlier, well-known polemics, but it is nonetheless somewhat the most *retrospective* one.[5] It is also the essay which addresses most forcefully the necessity of a *rapprochement* between *psychoanalysis* and *deconstruction*, which the following review aims to emphasise.

In the first section of the essay, Freud's well-known interpretation of his dream of Irma's injection provides the point of entry for an exploration of the psychoanalytic concept of resistance (or resistances) with respect to the traditional philosophical concept of analysis. This examination crucially calls forth a discussion of the Freudian notion of

the *compulsion to repeat*, to which, as Derrida states more than once in *Résistances*, deconstruction's *Auseinandersetzung* with psychoanalysis has attached itself [RP 46-47].

In the second section of the essay, Derrida presents, under the guise of a peculiar *self-analytic session*, the various structural movements of *deconstruction* with respect to 'each of the philosophers of the tradition' with whom it has been preoccupied [RP 43], as so many 'resistances to the analytic (meaning psychoanalytic) concept of analysis no less than to the philosophical (analytic or dialectic) concept of so-called analysis' [RP 40]. In this *self-analytic* situation, however, the analyst - whoever or whatever might be said to occupy this position in a set-up which blurs, perhaps more than anything, the distribution of work between 'analyst' and 'analysand' - will have learned to operate with 'another concept of resistance, or rather, of *restance*, a *restanalysis*' [RP 22].[6]

It is tempting to have recourse to the structure of the sophistry of the borrowed kettle for the exposition of Derrida's argumentation around the 'question of meaning (*sens*) and of analysis' [RP 18] in "Résistances".[7] In the analysis of the dream of Irma's injection, Freud introduces this structure in order to present the competing motifs of his wish, as Derrida notes in passing by recalling the three 'lines of defence': 'The defendant asserted first, that he had given it [the kettle] back undamaged; secondly, that the kettle had a hole in it when he borrowed it; and thirdly, that he had *never* borrowed a kettle from his neighbour at all'.[8] In Derrida's work, the sophistry of the borrowed kettle is invoked at crucial moments. For example, in *Of Grammatology*, both the ordering of Saussure's arguments around writing and Rousseau's treatment of the sign *supplément* are linked up with it. The *rapprochement* is made again in "Plato's Pharmacy" in order to exhibit the logical contradiction which presides over the reduction of writing by Plato-Rousseau-Saussure [DG 67, 348; D 137]. Setting aside the actual articulation of the first section of the essay, a re-ordering of the 'contradictory predicates' which it accumulates would go as follows: 1. Psychoanalysis is an art of interpretation; 2. But what interests it most is what radically resists interpretation; 3. Moreover, if one attempts to determine the concept of resistances, following Freud's identification of the most *resistant* resistances, the very principle of psychoanalysis as an 'art of interpretation' collapses. Let us develop briefly these arguments.

1. Psychoanalysis has instituted itself as an art of interpretation (or an hermeneutic of symptoms produced by various mental afflictions) which finds in 'whatever interrupts the progress of analytic work', its most significant material.[9] Accordingly, the therapeutic technique is conceived as a *rapport de forces* [RP 26], whereby 'reserve' [*la réserve*] [RP 22] or, 'the trace which subsists' [RP 30] is interpreted as a resistance *to* the work of interpretation, which consists in 'overcoming such resistances by opposing oneself to them' [RP 26]. In this construal, whatever resists analysis is annexed to the order of meaning (*sens*) inasmuch as it only ever marks 'a provisional limit', 'a reserve of meaning in waiting' [RP 23], which promises itself to analysis through the resistances themselves

[RP 26]. This is partly why the Freudian concept of analysis can be said to merge in with the principle of reason as that which prescribes 'to "render reason", *reddere rationem*, at all costs' [RP 17].[10] Another qualification of what resists analysis, however, seems to contravene this principle. In the last of the two remarks appended to the analysis of the dream of Irma's injection, Freud (quoted by Derrida) confesses that,

> There is often a passage in even the most thoroughly interpreted dream which has to be (*man muss*) left obscure; this is because we become aware during the work of interpretation that at that point (*eine Stelle: muss man oft eine Stelle im Dunkel lassen*) there is a tangle (*Knäuel*) of dreams-thoughts which cannot be unravelled (untangle itself, *der sich nicht entwirren will*) and which moreover adds nothing to our knowledge of the content of the dream. This is the dream's navel (*Der Nabel des Traums*), the spot where it reaches down into the unknown. ... It is at some point where this meshwork (*Geflecht*) is particularly close that the dream-wish grows up, like a mushroom out of its mycelium.[11]

In this passage, Freud seemingly admits of an 'absolute limit' to analysis, what he calls the 'dream's navel', the place (*eine Stelle*) where 'analysis must stop' [RP 28]. For Derrida, what matters is that this limit *also* designates the place of origin of the dream. Calling attention to the rhetoric 'of the thread and of the knot' which runs through Freud's remark, Derrida emphasises that this place is also 'a knot or a tangled web, in brief, an unanalysable synthesis' [RP 28-29].

It is this *knot* which introduces, in Freud's argumentation, what Derrida calls a *double-bind*, a structure which is invoked throughout the three essays, and which points to the necessity to think 'how the cut (resistances, "whatever interrupts the progress of analytic work") may tie up a knot or, conversely, how the tie may be interruption itself' [RP 25].

2. The second *predicate* of Derrida's argument ensues from the supposition according to which not all resistances may be overcome through the *Deutungsarbeit*, that is, restituted to *the order of meaning*. Freud's identification of something like the dream's navel gives free rein to the possibility that the psychoanalytic technique might not have evolved only according to a 'an hermeneutic urge (*pulsion*) or watchword' [RP17] - not only, then, by aiming at 'the simple revelation to the patient of the true meaning of a symptom' [RP 31]. If the dream's navel has any pertinence in determining what resistances entail, it does so by obliging Freud to admit different types of resistances. But that there may be numerous types of interruption is asserted even more strongly when resistances 'resting on an affective basis' are at issue [RP 30]. These resistances demand a principle of analysis different from the one which falls within the province of 'the order of representative consciousness' [RP 32]. Freud quoted by Derrida:

> Besides the intellectual motives which we mobilize to overcome the resistance, there is an affective factor, the personal influence of the physician, which we can seldom do without, and in a number of cases the latter alone is in a position to remove the resistance.[12] [RP 32]

The strategy of analysis which they require consists in 'an unbinding dissolution, a practical, effective and affective analysis of the resistance whose strength is broken down and displaced' [RP 31]. It seems, then, that psychoanalysis has invented a *new concept of analysis*, distinguished from the concept of analysis prevalent in 'the history of philosophy, of logic and of science' [RP 32], following which the analytic cure no longer proceeds from communicating to the patients 'the hidden meaning of their symptoms' [RP 20]. But this assertion is soon disqualified: 'Freud has certainly not introduced or invented an entirely new concept ... In order to make himself understood, Freud had to inherit from the tradition. In particular, he had to keep the *two constitutive motifs* of any concept of analysis.' [RP 33]:

> The conjunction of these two motifs figures in the very figure of Greek language, that is to say, of *analuein*. It is, on the one hand, what could be called the *archaeological* or *anagogical* motif as it is indicated by the movement in *ana* (a going back to the first principles, the most originary, the one [*le plus simple*], the elementary, or the detail which cannot be broken down); and, on the other hand, a motif which could be nicknamed *lythic*, *lythological* or *philolythic*, indicated by *lysis*: decomposition, release, solution, dissolution or absolution, and, at the same stroke, final ending [*achèvement*]. [RP 33]

Therefore, if, at first sight, only resistances answering to the demand of the 'restitution of meaning to meaning' [RP 17] appeared to testify to Freud's inheritance of the traditional concept of analysis, resistances which apparently require a new *concept* of analysis, soon turn out also to call on the traditional concept of analysis. Not only, then, it is the case that the concept of resistance 'cannot be unified' [RP 34] because there is more than one type of resistance, a situation which sufficiently disturbs the principle of analysis developed on the basis of resistances amenable to interpretation. But the lack of unity of the concept of resistance would seem to *duplicate* the lack of unity of the traditional concept of analysis.[13]

3. The third *predicate* seems to answer to the possible objection that the concept of resistance has been unjustifiably 'pluralised'. However, it is precisely when trying to unify it under a 'sens tuteur', that the concept of resistance is at its most precarious. Derrida turns to Freud's classification of resistances in the Addenda to "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety"(1926) where Freud states that 'the analyst has to combat no less than five kinds of resistance, emanating from three directions - the ego, the id and the super-ego', and which call forth different analytic strategies.[14] This classification includes, according to Derrida, 'a resistance to analysis which figures simultaneously the most resistant of all resistances, ... the hyperbolic resistance, *and* yet, the one which disorganises the very principle, the constitutive idea of psychoanalysis as analysis of resistances'(RP 36), which Freud calls '*the resistance of the unconscious*'. Once the resistance which 'proceeds from the ego' has become conscious, the work of analysis consists in 'bring[ing] forward logical arguments against it'. But this, Freud writes, does

not 'cover the whole state of affairs in analysis'. The work of 'undoing the repression' does not succeed by means of this procedure. There needs to be a 'phase of "working-though" (*Durcharbeitung*)' in order to lift the repression because, 'after the ego-resistance has been removed [by logical arguments] the power of the compulsion to repeat - the attraction exerted by the unconscious prototypes upon the repressed instinctual process - has still to be overcome'.[15]

The irreducible resistance - the one which may serve as a paradigmatic reference in Freud's classification of resistances - is the *compulsion to repeat*. Derrida describes this 'resistance of the unconscious', following the logic of a quasi-transcendental: 'the principle of a series is also transcendent with respect to that series, and, subtracted from the meaning (*sens*) which it confers, it comes to deprive of its meaning (*sens*) that to which it precisely gives meaning' [RP 36-37]. The absolute resistance, which gives its name to the series, turns out to be a resistance which takes the form of a non-resistance and, moreover, one which has no meaning, because, as Derrida expounds:

> The latter combines the two essential motifs of any concept of analysis, the regressive or archeotropic movement and the movement of dissolution which leads to destruction, which likes destroying by dissociating - and this is why I earlier called it *philolythic*. A double reason why the compulsion to repeat cannot give meaning (*sens*) to the four other resistances: it has no meaning (death drive) and it resists analysis in the form of a non-resistance: for the very reason that it is itself of an analytic structure [RP 37-38].

The compulsion to repeat 'being itself of an analytic structure or vocation' can be thought of as being homogeneous to psychoanalysis, up to the point where it looks as if psychoanalytic theory, therapy and institution represent 'the compulsion to repeat at work'. If this is the case, the compulsion to repeat 'being itself analytic' can be that of which psychoanalysis represents the resistance, 'disguised as non-resistance'. In this construal, psychoanalysis cannot institute itself on the basis of a concept of resistance clearly separated from a certain concept of analysis.

In the second part of the essay, Derrida sets out to mime 'a more or less impersonal self-analysis of sorts' [RP 40] which risks appearing 'as peculiar as a failed quasi-analysis' [RP 40]. It involves a review of how, despite *resemblances*, *deconstruction*, as far as the traditional concept of analysis is concerned, cannot quite be the matter of what 'each of the philosophers of the tradition [Kant, Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger]' have elaborated under various well-know headings, such as, for example, a transcendental analytic, a dialectic, an analytic of active or passive constitution or an existential analytic, to name but a few.

But *what* exactly is Derrida going to *mime*? Let us suppose that it will be 'this resistance of resistances before which Freudian psychoanalysis found both its resource and its limit, that is to say, the compulsion to repeat' [RP 46], which Derrida designates, elsewhere in the book, as a '*matrice problématique*' [RP 144]. For want of a better

understanding, at this point, of what 'miming ... an auto-analysis of sorts' [RP 40] precisely entails - *whose* auto-analysis will the exposé imitate? - let us say that, in the second section of the essay, Derrida more or less repeats the argumentation developed on the basis of the psychoanalytic concept of resistance, only this time with 'what is called 'deconstruction' [RP41],[16] and whereby:

> What compels [incites, urges] deconstruction to analyse without respite the analyticist and dialecticist presuppositions of ... philosophy; what in it resembles a rhythmic compulsion to track down the desire for a simple originarity present to itself, well, - here is the *double-bind* - this also makes deconstruction go into a transcendental overanalysis [*surenchère analytiste et transcendantaliste*], commits it to a hyperbolism of analysis which sometimes ... takes the figure of a hyperdiabolism. In one way, deconstruction is also an interminable drama of analysis. [RP 43].

There is no space here to discuss this 'interminable drama of analysis' with respect to each quasi-concept presented in relation to the figure of the *double-bind*. Let us however isolate one of them, the concept of iterability, following Derrida's suggestion that it might be 'strategically economical' as far as the *rapprochement* between deconstruction and psychoanalysis is concerned, to privilege it for two reasons:

> On the one hand, iterability, the condition of the constitution of identities, of ideality, and let us say briefly, of any concept in general, is in this way, the becoming-objective of the object or the becoming-subjective of the subject, thus, the becoming analysable in general. But (*double-bind*), it is also what disrupts, by resisting them, the binary and hierarchical oppositions which authorize any principle of distinction in ordinary as well as in philosophical or theoretical discourse. [RP 46]

The second reason for insisting on the problem of repetition and iterability is that 'all the difficulties of the greatest resistance to analysis', which Derrida has examined in the first section of the essay, 'finally lead ... to the compulsion to repeat'.

These two reasons for privileging the concept of iterability are further developed with reference to the analyses of "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" and Lacan's "Seminar on *The Purloined Letter*" in *The Post card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. To put it briefly, Derrida demonstrated in these essays how the notion of the compulsion to repeat entails that 'the possibility of unbinding is also, of course, the only condition of possibility of binding in general' [RP 48]. This formal situation can be transposed into the terminology of *Résistances*, as 'the tension between the archaeological and the philolythic principle of analysis', which could be 'substituted to the duality of the Freudian principles in "Beyond..."' [RP 48].

The concepts of iterability and the compulsion to repeat allow Derrida - at least in this 'quasi-analysis' - to formulate what he calls 'the question of divisibility', of which he says it is no less than 'one of the most powerful instruments of formalisation for what is called "deconstruction"' [RP 48]. The passage deserves to be quoted at length:

If, on the basis of an absurd hypothesis, there was one and only one deconstruction, a single thesis of *deconstruction*, it would lay down divisibility: *différance* as divisibility. Which paradoxically comes down to commit to overanalysis a thought otherwise very careful to take into account what always refuses itself to analysis (originary complication, the non-simple, crossed out origin, the trace or the affirmation of the gift as trace). An only apparent paradox: it is because there is no indivisible element or no element of simple origin that analysis is interminable. Divisibility, dissociability, and thus the impossibility of stopping an analysis, just as the necessity to think the possibility of this indefiniteness, such could perhaps be, if one insists, the truth without truth of deconstruction. [RP 48]

What to make of an 'absurd hypothesis' in a text concerned with conceptualities which taught us, among other things, to take seriously *absurd* processes of thought, including hypotheses? Moreover, can an 'absurd hypothesis' not be numbered among what Derrida calls 'the phenomena of anomaly, of the accidental, of the marginal, of the parasitic', which he says that the concept of iterability allows us to consider? [RP 46]

Taking the absurd hypothesis of the 'thesis of divisibility' in all seriousness, it could be argued that it can only be sustained by calling forth its *homologue* from Freud's "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", namely, the *speculative* hypothesis of the compulsion to repeat and of the death instinct, to which "Résistances" and the two other essays of the book ceaselessly send us back, by means of references to Derrida's earlier analyses of the texts where it is at issue. One is thus compelled to return to the *classical* texts of Derrida's 'explanation of analysis in general and psychoanalysis in particular ... in the vicinity of "Beyond the Pleasure Principle"'. [RP 39]

To put it briefly, what the three essays develop perhaps most insistently, through various detours which we have been obliged to leave aside, is that, faced with various attempts to reduce the *divisibility* of psychoanalytic concepts, of psychoanalysis as a corpus, indeed, as an institution, (whether it takes the form of affirming that the letter does not undergo partition, as in Lacan [RP 47], or of refusing to take into account 'Freud's evil genius' [RP 110], as in Foucault), one must be reminded of 'the "demonic" compulsion to repeat' [RP 37] and of its *analytic*, unbinding character with all that ensues from it, inasmuch as other psychoanalytic concepts are affected by it, notably everything which Freud elaborates under the heading of the *dualism of the drives* (*Trieb*), but also the concept of repression, etc.

The *absurdity*, if such there be, of putting forward 'a single thesis of deconstruction' could then be said to lie in the way in which it risks appearing to *unify* 'the demonic' under the aegis of *a* compulsion to repeat as if the 'thesis of the divisibility' would find in Freud's compulsion to repeat and its ally, the death instinct, a *unique* resource.

However, just as we have tried to emphasise what Derrida more or less elliptically suggests throughout the three essays, namely, that any reading of the philosophical tradition cannot not be bound to the psychoanalytic conceptuality, an *enchevêtrement* which we might want to link to what Derrida calls '*l'impression freudienne*' [MA 54], it

would be possible to show how the analyses of the compulsion to repeat (and of the death instinct, indeed, of the Freudian conceptuality as a whole) simultaneously, and consistently, engages 'each of the philosophers of the tradition' with which Derrida is preoccupied.

NOTES

1. *Résistances de la psychanalyse* will henceforth be abbreviated as RP. Page references appear in the text in square brackets.

2. Derrida, "Let us not forget - Psychoanalysis", *Oxford Literary Review*, "*Psychoanalysis and Literature*", 12 (1990), no.4. The *event* of psychoanalysis is dealt with under the heading of "*l'impression freudienne*" in MA 54, 56-7, 59-60.

3. See p. 9 for discussion of *différance* as the 'commom root' of conceptual oppositions. In FSE 300-301, the neurological notion of *frayage* (*Bahnung*) is explored with respect to Freud's conception of memory, that is, the idea of 'originary repetition' which crucially implies a certain concept of resistance.

4. G. Granel, E. Rigal (eds.), *La notion d'analyse:* Actes du colloque franco-peruvien "La notion d'analyse" 30 octobre - 6 novembre 1991 (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 1992).

5. The second essay, entitled "Pour l'amour de Lacan" [RP 57-88], was presented at the conference "Lacan avec les philosophes" (Unesco and Collège International de Philosophie. Actes du colloque published by Albin-Michel, 1992). The last essay "Etre juste avec Freud" [RP 93-146] was written for the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of Michel Foucault's *Histoire de la folie* organised by the Société internationale d'histoire de la psychiatrie et de la psychanalyse, and was first published in *Penser la folie. Essais sur Michel Foucault*, (Paris: Galilée, 1992).

6. The problematic of *la restance* runs through the three essays (see in particular RP 22, 40, 44, 49, 67), see also the discussions of *la chance* [RP 34-35, 48, 83], *la destinerrance* [RP 61], and elsewhere *la revenance* (in eg. TP), and both *Glas* and Derrida, "Mes Chances, Au rendez-vous de quelques stéréophonies épicuriennes", *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*, no. 1, maart 1983, 3-40.

7. Compare how the 'logique du chaudron' relates to the principle of reason in "Pour l'amour de Lacan" [RP 81] and "Le facteur de la vérité" [CP 510].

8. S. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (PFL 4), p.197, quoted by Derrida at RP 19.

9. Ibid., p.662, n.1.

10. For a discussion of the principle of reason with reference to Heidegger, see Derrida's "Les pupilles de l'Université, Le principe de raison et l'idée d'Université", in *Du droit à la philosophie* (Paris: Galilée, 1990), in particular, where it is a question of the principle of reason and the 'il faut' [471sq.]. Cf. RP 27, 51.

11. S. Freud, op. cit., p.671.

12. S. Freud, *Studies on Hysteria* (PFL 3), pp. 368-9.

13. The *multiplicity* of resistances also ensues from a distinction between '*les résistances psychiques individuelles*' and '*les résistances culturelles*' [RP 34]. In Derrida, the articulation of the so-called individual and cultural or 'collective' registers crucially passes through Freud's *Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays* (1939) (PFL 13). Cf. "Freud and the Scene of Writing" where Derrida points to how the concept of *Nachträglichkeit*, '*la vraie découverte de Freud*', is put at work beyond individual psychoanalysis at the level of the history of culture in *Moses and Monotheism*, p.303.

14. S. Freud, "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety" (1926), in *On Psychopathology* (PFL 10), p. 319.

15. Ibid., pp. 318-9.

16. This could be explored in relation to Derrida's question in "Spéculer sur 'Freud'": '*comment une écriture autobiographique, dans l'abîme d'une auto-analyse non terminée, peut-elle donner* sa *naissance à une institution mondiale*?' [CP 325]. See also "Me-Psychoanalysis: An Introduction to the Translation of *The Shell and the Kernel* by Nicholas Abraham", *Diacritics*, March 1979, 4-12 (p. 8).

Derrida & the Political. By Richard Beardsworth. London: Routledge. 1996. 174 pp. ISBN 0-415-10966-3.

Review by John Protevi

Richard Beardsworth's *Derrida & the Political* is a truly excellent book, one of the very best ever written on Derrida. The author's clear prose, sophisticated understanding, careful focus, and ambitious project make it a useful reference for scholars, a helpful guide for students and a powerful tool for polemic against those who, out of ignorance or malice, persist in decrying either the apolitical or neo-conservative nature of Derrida's work. And for those historical-libidinal materialists who think Derrida political, all-too-political, Beardsworth's concluding critical questions to Derrida about a possible neglect of 'originary technicity' offer a very useful jumping-off point for the coming project of articulating Derrida and the nexus one could name Deleuze/Guattari/Foucault.

Although the book does not shirk from explicating the technical difficulties of Derrida's thought, the clarity of its organization, aim, and argument make it easy to navigate. The organization is straightforward: an introduction which gives an overview; three chapters which carry the argument through readings--both Derrida's and those of the author--of Saussure, Kafka (i.e., the linguistic/literary), Kant, Hegel (modernity), Heidegger and Levinas (post-modernity); and a critical conclusion which points to future work in investigating the afore-mentioned Derridean lapsus. The aim of the book is clear: to read the political implications of Derrida's work as relevant for 'the reinvention of political concepts to measure up to the technicization and globalization of political communities in the next century' [DP xi]. The argument is complex but sharply delineated: deconstruction's highlighting of the irreducibility of 'the aporia of time and of law' shows the violence inherent in the political logic of community formation whereby a universal law assigns rights and duties to particular groups or individuals. While political logic thus attempts to resolve or ignore the aporia of time and law, deconstruction teaches its irreducibility, thus inextricably linking judgment and time. The result is technically speaking not a 'politics of deconstruction' - not a series of content-laden judgments - but a reminder of how to judge: judgment must withstand the experience of aporia in making contingent judgments that are open to future revision. Deconstruction thus issues in a recognition of the 'economy of violence' of political judgment and the concomitant necessity to keep open a 'promise of the future'. Temporalized judgment thus recognizes the prescriptive rather than descriptive nature of political judgment (more precisely, the interweaving by which a 'constative' implies a performative that forms the very reality it pretends to describe); such recognition, it is

hoped, 'may make one more ready to transform the field that is posited by the nature of one's decisions' [DP 12].

The readings in the body of Derrida & the Political are noteworthy for their succinctness and insight. Chapter 1 first takes the reader through Derrida's reading of Saussure in *Of Grammatology*. Here Beardsworth shows deconstruction's diagnosis of attempts to avoid the irreducible interweaving of empirical and transcendental in disavowing inscription (the paradoxical necessity of empirical support for transcendental surpassing of the empirical). Beardsworth shows the violence of all such disavowal of the empirico-transcendental interweave as the violence inherent in any institutional foundation, or in any form of 'horizonal' thinking, so that an 'economy of violence' must thus be acknowledged in any institution. Beardsworth isolates three regions of such an economy: a) originary violence (the system of differences allowing for and eviscerating identity); b) the violence of legal institution (which necessarily occludes originary violence in pretending to description rather than prescription); c) empirical violence (the possibility of which lies in the violent occlusion of originary violence in institutional violence).

After the discussion of Saussure, Beardsworth then negotiates Derrida's readings of Kafka and Freud in "Before the Law". Here Beardsworth shows that for Derrida literature is 'the enactment of an aporetic relation between universality and singularity' [DP 25] and hence is uniquely suited as a site to discuss the aporias of time and law. These aporias arise through the inability to tell the origin of law (as in *Totem and Taboo*) and the inability to think the interweaving of nows in time (as in "Ousia and Grammē"). Resisting any attempts to tame them in political logic, these aporias are 'both "undeconstructible" and the source of all deconstructions' [DP 33]. The aporias appear in the excess of singularity: any attempt of a universal to grasp and situate a particular produces an excess, the singular, that 'escapes and/or haunts all conceptual determination' [DP 43].

This interplay of singularity, universality and particularity, 'presented' in the unpresentable limit of infinite and finite, structures Beardsworth's Chapter 2 , which discusses the canonical modernists, Kant and Hegel, in the context of Derrida's reading of Hegel in *Glas*. Despite an overly harsh reading of Kant (harshness produced by ignoring the *Third Critique*), Beardsworth does an excellent job in situating Hegel's (equally harsh) critique of the formality of the categorial imperative and consequent attempt to resolve the distinction of freedom and nature in ethical community or *Sittlichkeit* (Hegel's response to the violence of civil society). To Kant's abyss between infinite and finite, and to Hegel's dialectical resolution of infinite and finite, Beardsworth juxtaposes Derrida's aporias of time and law (or better, shows the violence of Kant's and Hegel's attempts to avoid aporia). My review can't do justice to the complexity of the argument here; suffice it to say that Beardsworth clearly articulates the way *Glas* reveals that the limit of infinite and finite is unpresentable, so that Hegel's attempt to present it

in the *Volk* is phantasmatic. In other words, the presentation of the limit of infinite and finite as a dialectical contradiction resolvable in a figure always figures the opposition by one side of the opposition. Rather than dialectical then, Derrida's stricture is aporetic. The chapter concludes with another overly harsh reading, this time of Marx, presented as a modernist and metaphysician, an inverted Hegel who imprisons matter in dialectical logic. This reading, whose limits are obvious (it's not that such a reading cannot be produced - it's all-too-common - but that its violence might have been better acknowledged) is atoned for somewhat by Beardsworth's pointing to Marx's highlighting of technicity. (A question: why not extend to Kant and Marx the interpretive sympathy extended to Hegel?)

Chapter 3 attempts to locate the specificity of Derrida versus Heidegger and Levinas, to both of whom Derrida is too-often assimilated. The issue is again limit, this time the 'limit between the unpresentable and presentation, that is, the limit between aporia and decision' [DP 104]. The twist is that aporia both cannot and must be recognized: 'one's relation to aporia must consequently be itself aporetic' [DP 104]. Again, I will refrain from repeating too closely the run of argument, respecting its complexity; I can attest this time, however, to Beardsworth's careful and accurate renderings of Heidegger and Levinas without qualms as to his fairness (not that these are 'knock down arguments' as our analytic friends put it, for Heideggerian and Levinasian rejoinders are of course possible; it's just that Beardsworth seems here more open to nuance than in his readings of Kant and Marx). All too briefly put, Beardsworth clearly shows how Derrida's joining of the aporias of time and law overcomes both the Heideggerian exemplification of a site of thinking of time (authentic temporality as that to which the Greeks or Germans are uniquely called) and the Levinasian exemplification of a site of being-disrupted by the other (the 'precedence' of Jewish or human alterity).

After this well-earned praise, some critical comments from a Deleuzo-Guattarian perspective. Since I take it to be one of the tenets of book-reviewing that authors should only be held accountable for the books they write, not the ones a reviewer might have wished they had written, I pose these in the spirit Beardsworth invokes in his excellent and thought-provoking conclusion: 'an invitation to greater debate' [DP 148]. These critical questions are advanced all the more tentatively in acknowledging the constraints of the series format: Derrida & the Political is part of Routledge's "Thinking the Political" series, which is designed to provide positive accounts of a thinker rather than (explicitly) critical engagements. With these qualifications, I advance five questions.

1) The violence of tradition formation. Just as there is a violence in community formation, there's a violence in tradition formation. When Beardsworth writes in the Introduction of his intent to 'take the reader through the political implications of the most complex negotiations of Derrida's thinking with the western tradition' [DP xii], but then focuses on Kant, Hegel, Heidegger and Levinas, there's an implicit restriction of the western tradition to its idealist/phenomenological canon and consequent marginalization

of a materialist/empiricist counter-tradition: Hobbes, Spinoza, Hume, Marx, Nietzsche et al., (granted, only certain readings of these thinkers produce such a lineage), culminating in the historical-libidinal materialism of Deleuze/Guattari/Foucault. More attention thus could have been paid to discussing Derrida's choices of readings, his implicit formation of a tradition.

2) The logic of community formation. Beardsworth shows Derrida's focus on the violent logic of community formation. If community-formation is the primary political act, the overriding problem of politics is totalitarianism, the 'saturation of the political field' [DP xiii]. The response of deconstruction to the incipient totalitarianism of political logic is to reveal the singular as the remainder of the community and the aporia of time/law as the remainder of the logic of contradiction. This focus on the individual and community relation neglects micro- and macro-political (or perhaps infra- and supra-political) investigations into affairs below and above the level of political community. In other words, besides the saturation of the political field, which maintains a focus on the state, contemporary thinkers have shown the importance of thinking the marginalization of the political field, the importance of investigating the gendering and racializing of body parts and the flow of international capital. Indeed, with regard to the latter, contemporary political judgment seems less focused on community formation - notwithstanding the regionalist movements in the UK and the rest of Europe - as in setting up administrative supplements to the political, such as NAFTA and GATT, which are designed precisely to override the political. Thus while Beardsworth is perfectly clear in his aim to render Derrida's work relevant to 'globalization and technicization', he doesn't show how the logic of community formation is relevant to these movements above and below the level of the community.

3) The relevance of philosophy. Beardsworth leaves unexamined the relation of an academic audience to political power, or abstractly, thought and practice. When he writes that 'the names of Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia ... testify to the present paralysis of political thought and practice' [DP xii], I must add that these names don't testify to a paralysis of practice in the slightest. All too horribly, the practitioners of ethnic cleansing weren't in the least inhibited in their actions, nor were the Western powers: they acted (by intervention or boycott or acquiescence) as they always have, according to the judgment of their leaders as to 'national interest ' (i.e., domestic and international capital, if I can be permitted this shorthand--in other words, supra-community flows) and electoral popularity (which are increasingly a matter of gendering and racializing bodies-that-labor--in other words, infra-community flows). Philosophers and political scientists may thus very well be paralyzed by a lack of new ideas or old habits of judgment about 'the political', that is, about community formation, but the practitioners of 'politics' (reproducing here the distinction between *le politique* and *la politique* made by Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe) have never been paralyzed by that problem. Rather - one might argue - either the old ideas about purified communities are good enough for them

when it is a matter of community formation, or, perhaps more radically, politics isn't a matter of realizing ideas about community, but of intervening in the supra- and infra-community flows of capital and labouring bodies--even when it appears to be a matter of logically-driven community formation.

4) The subject of political judgment. Although Beardsworth is careful to articulate the Derridean critique of the 'we' of a substantial community, his notion of the subject of political judgment seems problematic at times. When Beardsworth writes that 'the acknowledgement of the prescriptive force of one's statements may make one more ready to transform the field that is posited by the nature of one's decision' [DP 12], the notion of a 'one' who 'posits' a field seems to imply a transcendent political organizer. In other words, granted that a post-phenomenological subject undergoing the impossible experience of aporia in judging is no longer the self-present subject ideologically thought to be in control of itself, Beardsworth hasn't yet seemed to thematize the residual hylomorphic relation of that impossible subject to the field it posits, the community it is said to form. Rather than the deconstruction of the pretension of community formation to description and totality, a more radical challenge to the political logic of community formation might be to attack the notion of formation itself when it is figured by an organizer who transcendentally imposes a form on a chaotic matter. In a formula then, rather than the 'one who posits', the field which crystallizes (and in so doing produces the illusion of a 'one who posits').

5) The technical non-human. Finally, is the inhuman thought with sufficient radicality when it is assimilated to the technical, as in Beardsworth's conclusion? Perhaps the alterity of the technical is only the fold of the uppermost stratum that allows a tapping into what *A Thousand Plateaus* calls the 'machinic phylum' or what Manuel DeLanda in commentary on *ATP* calls 'non-organic life' [*Incorporations: Zone 6* (NY: Zone Books, 1992, pp. 128-167)]? With the question of technicity the question of Beardsworth's hostility to Kant and neglect of the *Critique of Judgment* returns, as the latter contains Kant's (hesitant) attempt to think not only biological self-organization, but also political self-organization (especially §65), in relation to, and contra-distinction from, the mechanical, technical, or hylomorphic.

Let me end the questions here, however, in order to end on a note of well-deserved praise. *Derrida & the Political* is an excellent, thought-provoking book. It should be read carefully by all those concerned with political philosophy and contemporary French philosophy and will reward that careful reading with a rich appreciation of both Derrida's work and of Beardsworth's accomplishment.

Abbreviations for texts by Jacques Derrida cited in this volume

A *Altérités* (Paris: Osiris, 1986).

AED "Afterword: Toward an Ethic of Discussion", trans. by Samuel Weber, in *Limited Inc.* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1988), pp. 111-160.

Ap *Aporias*, trans. by Thomas Dutoit (Stanford UP, 1993).

BL "Before the Law" (1982), trans. by A Ronell & C Roulston, in *Acts of Literature*, ed. by Derek Attridge (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 181-220.

CR "An 'Interview' with Jacques Derrida", trans. by Christopher Johnson & Marian Jeanneret, *The Cambridge Review*, vol 113, no. 2318 (October 1992), 131-9.

D "Différance" (1968), in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. by Alan Bass, (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1982), pp. 1-27.

EW (With Jean-Luc Nancy) "'Eating Well', or the Calculation of the Subject: an Interview with Jacques Derrida", in *Who Comes After the Subject?*, ed. by Eduardo Cadava et al. (London: Routledge, 1991) pp. 96-119.

FL "Force of Law: the 'mystical foundation of authority'" (1989), trans. by Mary Quaintance, in *Deconstruction & the Possibility of Justice*, ed. by Drucilla Cornell & David Gray Carlson, (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 3-67. Originally published in *Cardozo Law Review*, vol 11, 5-6 (July/Aug 1990), 919-1045.

FSW "Freud & the Scene of Writing" (1966), in *Writing & Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 196-231.
[FSE "Freud et la scène de l'écriture", in *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), pp.293-340.]

G *Glas* (1974), 2nd edn, 2 vols. (Paris: Denoël/Gonthier, 1981).

GD *The Gift of Death* (1992), trans. by David Wills (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1995).

GT *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1992).
[DT *Donner le Temps. 1. La Fausse Monnaie* (Paris: Galilée, 1991).]

IC "In Conversation", with Raoul Morley, in *French Philosophers in Conversation: Levinas, Schneider, Serres, Irigaray, Le Doeuff, Derrida* ed. by R Morley (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 93-108.

LD *La Dissémination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972).

Ma *Mal d'archive* (Paris: Galilee, 1995).

OG *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP,1976).
[DG *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1967).]

OH *The Other Heading* (1991), trans. by Pascale-Anne Brault & Michael B Naas, (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1992).

ONH "Onto-theology of National-Humanism (prolegomena to a hypothesis)", *Oxford Literary Review*, vol 14, 1-2 (1992), 3-23.

ORH "On Reading Heidegger: an Outline of Remarks to the Essex Colloquium" (1986), *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. xvii (1987) 171-85.

OS *Of Spirit: Heidegger & the Question*, trans. by Geoff Bennington & Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1989).
[DE *De l'esprit: Heidegger et la question* (Paris: Galilée, 1987).]

Ou "Ousia & Grammē; Note on a Note from *Being & Time*" (1968), in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1982), pp. 29-67.

P *Positions* trans. by Alan Bass (London: Athlone Press, 1981).
[Pos *Positions* (Paris: Minuit, 1972)]

PC *The Post Card: from Socrates to Freud & Beyond*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1987).
[CP *La carte postale: de Socrate à Freud et au-delà* (Paris: Flammarion, 1980).]

PO "Passions; 'an Oblique Offering'", trans. by David Wood, in *Derrida: A Critical Reader*, ed. by D. Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 5-35.
[POO *Passions. 'L'offrande oblique'* (Paris: Galilée, 1993).]

PF "The Politics of Friendship", trans. by Gabriel Motzkin, *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol.75, no. 11 (1988), 632-44.
[PA *Politiques de l'amitié* (Paris: Galilée, 1994).]

RP *Résistances de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Galilée, 1996).

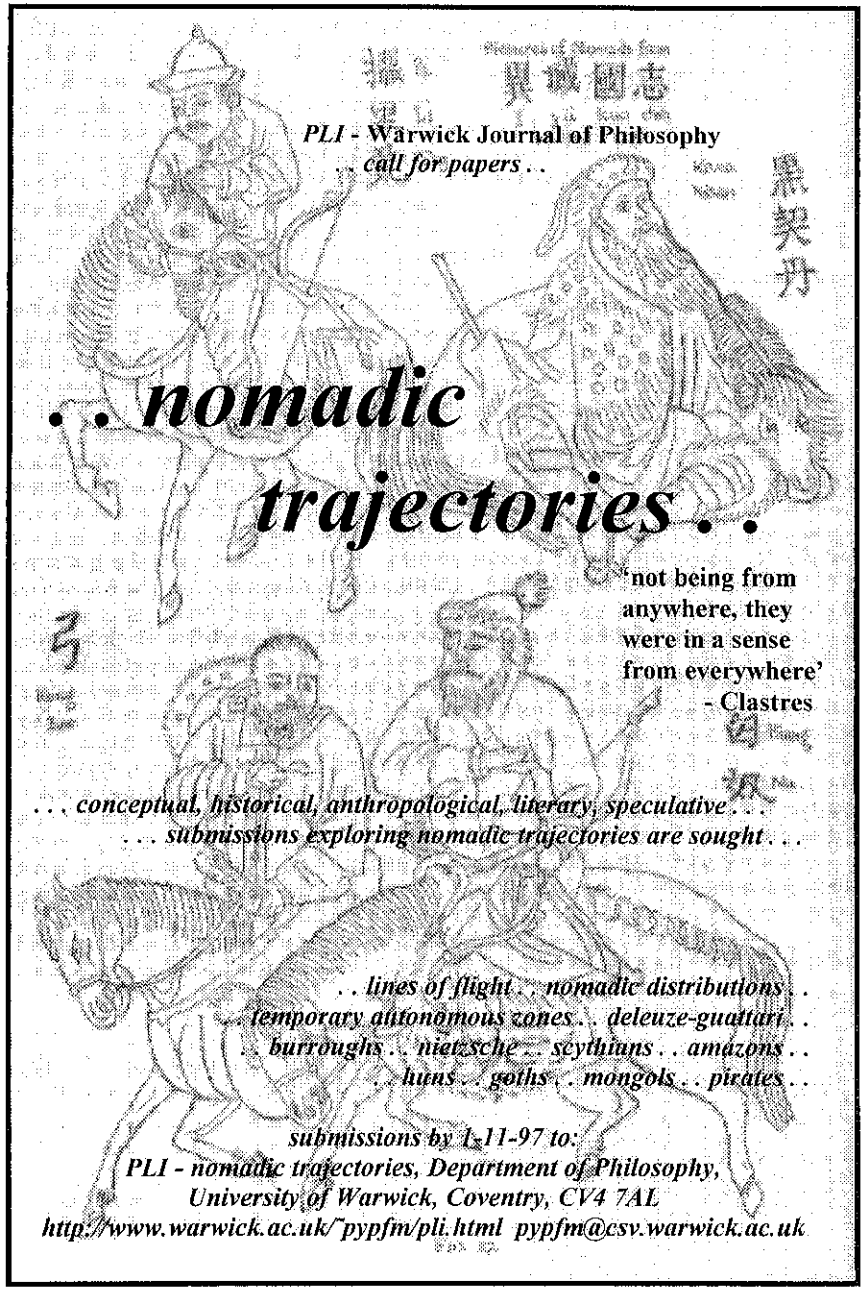
SM *Spectres of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Worth of Mourning & the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 1994).
[SdM *Spectres de Marx* (Paris: Galilée, 1993).]

SR "Sending: On Representation", trans. by Peter & Mary Ann Caws, *Social Research*, vol. 49, no. 2 (Summer 1982), 294-326.

SP *Speech & Phenomena* (1967), trans. by David Allison, (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973).

TP *The Truth in Painting* (1978), trans. by Geoff Bennington & Ian McLeod, (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1987).

VM "Violence & Metaphysics" (1964), in *Writing & Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 79-153.
[VeM "Violence et métaphysique", in *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967) pp. 117-228.]



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