Differentiating Derrida and Deleuze

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Abstract. Repetition plays a significant, productive role in the work of both Derrida and Deleuze. But the difference between these two philosophers couldn't be greater: it is the difference between negation and affirmation, between Yes and No. In Derrida, the productive energy of repetition derives from negation, from the necessary impossibility of supplementing an absence. Deleuze recognizes the kind of repetition which concerns Derrida, but insists that there is another, primary form of repetition which is fully positive and affirmative. I will argue that there is nothing in Derrida's philosophy to match the affirmative, primary form of repetition articulated by Deleuze. Moreover, it is precisely this difference that accounts for the most exciting features of Deleuze's work: the possibility of breaking through to the other side of representation, beyond authenticity and inauthenticity, becoming-becoming.

> Rising toward the sun of presence, it is the way of Icarus.
> — Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*[1]
> A theater where nothing is fixed, a labyrinth without a thread.
> (Ariadne has hung herself.)
> — Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*[2]

1. Yes and No

The difference between Derrida and Deleuze is simple and deep: it is the difference between No and Yes . . . the difference between Derrida's No, which reeks of the thick smell of Schopenhauer . . . and Deleuze's Yes, blowing in, fresh and salty, off Nietzsche's new seas.[3] It is the difference between a philosophy trapped in the frame of representation and one which breaks on through (to the other side). It is the difference between playing a Derridean game you can never win and Deleuzian game you can never loose. It is the difference between No and Yes.

In 1962, Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, helped ignite the interest in Nietzsche still aflame today, so it is no surprise to associate his work with Nietzsche. What is surprising, is to associate Derrida's work rather with the pessimism of Schopenhauer. This is bizarre. It should be easy to refute, right off the top of the pile, without digging into any esoterica.

Turn to one of Derrida's most well known early essays, "Differance," first delivered in January 1968, already translated into English in 1973. At the end of that lecture, Derrida remarks that differance remains a metaphysical name for what exceeds metaphysics, and while insisting that this is not a deficiency any linguistic innovations could overcome, he directs us to the affirmative, Nietzschean tendency of his thought. Derrida:

> There will be no unique name, even if it were the name of Being. And we must think this without *nostalgia*, that is, outside the myth of a purely maternal or paternal language, a lost native country of thought. On the contrary, we must *affirm* this, in the sense in which Nietzsche puts affirmation into play, in a certain laughter and a certain step of the dance (MP 27).

What could be more obvious? By his own admission, Derrida is a Nietzschean philosopher of affirmation. He's not a No-sayer, as I asserted. He's a Yes.

It gets worse. Derrida and Deleuze don't often refer to each other's work, but when they do, they are rarely critical, and where critical at all, they are careful to frame their criticism not as a rejection of the other's work, but as the tempering of a compliment. After Deleuze's death, Derrida wrote an essay acknowledging what he calls their "friendship" in which he writes:

> Deleuze undoubtedly still remains, despite so many dissimilarities, the one among those of my "generation" to whom I have always judged myself to be the closest. I have never felt the slightest "objection" arising in me, not even potentially, against any of his works, even if I happened to grumble a bit about one or another of the propositions in *Anti-Oedipus*.[4]

And Deleuze for his part cites Derrida occasionally and almost always in thanks for an insight that he can use . . . whether it is to insist on the originary powers of differance or to rely on Derrida's reading of the *Phaedrus* when distinguishing copies from simulacra.[5] Even in the midst of one of the rare occasions when Deleuze differentiates himself from Derrida, he insists that "as for the method of deconstruction, I see what it is, I admire it a lot."[6]

Two philosophers who admire each other's work as much as Derrida and Deleuze, can still, of course, be differentiated, but it begins to look as though I have started out on the wrong foot. Since they both defend Nietzschean affirmation, if they are to be differentiated, at all, we should look elsewhere.

Derrida has, for sometime, been interested in philosophy's other, the outside of thought. Following creases written into the fabric of metaphysics, Derrida found himself looking for a way beyond metaphysics, not beyond this or that metaphysical system, but beyond metaphysics, as such. Derrida's deconstructive approach to philosophical texts was first introduced as his

answer to just this difficulty. "What I want to emphasize," Derrida wrote, "is simply that the passage beyond philosophy does not consist in turning the page of philosophy (which usually amounts to philosophizing badly), but in continuing to read philosophers *in a certain way*" (WD 288). This whole problematic is foreign to Deleuze, who in his last book with Guattari wrote: "the death of metaphysics or the overcoming of philosophy has never been a problem for us: it is just tiresome, idle chatter" (WIP 9). And it is this difference from Deleuze that Derrida himself invokes when he observes that of all the philosophers of their " 'generation' ", it was Deleuze who was "least guilty" about doing philosophy, who did philosophy "most gaily . . . most innocently."[7]

Derrida admits to there being this difference between himself and Deleuze in point of innocence, but I think this is the same difference as the difference with which I began: the difference between No and Yes. For especially in this Nietzschean context it cannot be irrelevant that Zarathustra tells us "The child is innocence and forgetfulness, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelling wheel, a first motion, a sacred Yes-saying."[8] Thus, however surprising it might at first appear, it could finally prove true that the difference between Derrida and Deleuze is the difference between No and Yes.

2. Deleuze's Two Repetitions: Again and Again

I will defend this interpretation by contrasting the role of iterability in Derrida's philosophy and the role of repetition in Deleuze's. Deleuze distinguishes two kinds of repetition (DR 24, 25, 287). The secondary, superficial form of repetition results from a lack or inadequacy of concepts, only the deeper, primary form of repetition is, on Deleuze's account fully positive and affirmative. I will argue that Derrida's iterability is an instance of the first, negative form of repetition, and that there is nothing in Derrida's philosophy to match the affirmative, primary sense of repetition articulated by Deleuze.

According to Deleuze we will never understand repetition or difference so long as we insist on putting these notions in chains, in what he calls "the four iron collars of representation" one of which is identity in the concept (DR 262).[9] Thus chained, we will be able to approach the repetition of concepts, but never the concept of repetition (see DR 19).[10] At this point, while we are still beginning, I should point out that when Deleuze speaks of identity in the concept as one of the four iron collars of representation, he is not using the word concept in the semi-technical sense in which his last book with Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, defines philosophy as "the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts" (WIP 2). He is, rather, giving the word concept its more

familiar linguistic or representational force, and in this paper I will also follow that practice.[11]

Anyone walking along the railroad tracks will have noticed railroad ties, one after the other, repeating themselves, as if to infinity. Collared by identity, this repetition appears as the repetition of railroad ties. But no ties are really identical, there are "little differences, variations and modifications" between any two ties (DR xix). The myriad differences between each tie, are dominated by the concept of a tie, but not entirely, and the result is the apparent repetition of ties along the tracks. This repetition is only apparent; because there remain conceptual differences between the particular ties. Real repetition would require not just resemblances and analogies but two different things whose identity was so complete that they shared the identical conceptual representation. "In every case," Deleuze writes, "repetition is difference without a concept" (DR 23).

Repetition, which we might have thought to be a matter of the Same, turns out to be a matter of the Different, the obscure.[12] Two, which repeat, must be two, so they must be different, but they must repeat, so they must be conceptually identical. Their identity may be representational, but their difference must be non-representational. And the question now becomes: are there any real repetitions, at all? Are there any non-representational differences without concepts?

This possibility – the possibility of real repetition – in conflict with what Deleuze calls a certain "vulgarized Leibnizianism" (DR 11).[13] For if each particular thing can be fully characterized by its complete concept, and if each complete concept picks out only one thing, and if each thing has only one complete concept which picks it out, then the jig is up (DR 11–12). In such circumstances there could be no difference without a concept, no real repetition. But everything turns on the existence of complete concepts. I will consider two cases. First, if in some circumstances we are forced to work with incomplete concepts then there will be, in those circumstances, differences without concepts, repetition. And second, if it turns out that there can be no such thing as a complete concept, at all, then there will be real repetition, tout court, unhedged by special circumstances.

Words provide an example of the first kind of case, where circumstances force us to make do with incomplete concepts. In this vulgar Leibnizian scheme, the comprehension or sense of a concept is inversely proportional to the reference of that concept: the "larger" the sense the "smaller" the reference (DR 12). So for example the concept DOG includes in its reference all dogs, whereas a concept with a larger sense, COOKED DOG, includes far fewer dogs, especially in Pennsylvania. The idea of a complete conceptual representation of a thing is the idea of a concept whose sense would be so com-

prehensive that only one thing could fit in, like a lock which could only be turned by one key. Clearly the concept COOKED DOG is not such a lock, it can be opened by many more keys than one, in fact, any par boiled pooch will do. To restrict the reference of a concept to one particular thing, it often seems that its sense would have to become infinite.

Now think about words. The word rock, for example, refers to many more than one thing, indeed, it refers to many more kinds of thing than one. Furthermore, the definitions of words are always finite, and this means that the concepts they embody cannot be complete concepts, they will not pick out one and only one thing. Words are therefore like locks that can be opened not only by what they are *meant* to be opened by, but also by hair pins and hat pins. This is one source of word play: the limited control exercised by our intentions over our words makes inadvertent puns possible.[14] Also repetition. Words with finite definitions, referring to more than one particular, bring into existence "true repetition," but it is secondary (DR 13). And this is true of all words. Deleuze, again:

> We have here a reason why the comprehension [or sense] of the concept *cannot* extend to infinity: we define a word by only a finite number of words. Nevertheless, speech and writing, from which words are inseparable, give them an existence *hic et nunc* . . . and . . . extension is made up for in dispersion, in discreteness, under the sign of a repetition which forms the real power of speech and writing (DR 13).

The secondary repetition which forms the real power of speech and writing is explained by the inadequacy of our concepts which produces the phenomenon of twinning (DR 13). We can only ever talk about twins, ever, and so inauthenticity is always a threat, a threat we can never escape.

We could escape if we could construct a concept which was complete. This is the second kind of case I must consider: the more fundamental issue of the very possibility of complete concepts. For if there can be no complete concepts . . . not even infinite ones . . . then we will have produced a reason to believe that there is real repetition, unhedged by circumstances.

"Here, I throw the apple to you . . ." Suppose you wanted to represent this very apple. APPLE won't do, for it could refer to any apple at all, fresh, cooked, inflatable, whatever. Take the Leibnizian road of addition. Consider: GREEN APPLE. But we are just beginning, any green apple, whether a ripe Granny Smith or a still young Delicious with a hard body would satisfy this concept. We could add more concepts: TART GREEN APPLE. But this gets us no farther. Scientific sophisticates will have been itching to offer some monstrous concept like TART FLESHY GREEN APPLE TRAJECTORY THROUGH

SPACE-TIME. And let us simply stipulate that this monstrous concept picks out no other apple but the one in this room. It still won't be a complete concept. For this ugly concept is still a *universal*, though an especially devious one, so even if – in the actual world – it only picked out our apple, it would still, here and now, represent many different particular apples in other possible worlds. Of course if we could restrict our concept to the actual world our problems would be over but the actual world is simply another particular, though a big one, and if we could represent particulars, we wouldn't be having this problem in the first place.

Infinity won't help, either. We begin with an infinite number of possible particulars from which our concept is to select just one. Now, imagine our infinitely long string of concepts growing. As each new concept is added to our growing string of concepts, we will eliminate some of that infinite number, but the number remaining will always be the same: infinite. It is just as if we began with the infinity of positive integers and tried to reduce them to one integer by subtracting finite numbers of integers. We could perform an infinite number of subtractions and still be left with an infinity of integers.

Finally, even indexicals will be no help, for from at least the time of *The Blue Book*, we have known that indexical definitions presuppose, and cannot ground, verbal ones.[15] There is no way out. Neither sophisticated space-time trajectories, nor infinity, nor Mr. Pointer himself will help. There are no complete concepts. The twinning which we saw arrive with the default of our linguistic concepts is here to stay, and that means that secondary repetition is here to stay. And unless we can find an unusual way out, we will never be able to escape the dark side of twinning, the threat of inauthenticity. In the fourth section of this paper, I will suggest that the primary sense of repetition may help us escape the threat of inauthenticity, riding a line of flight beyond both authenticity and inauthenticity.[16]

In order to move in on the primary sense of repetition, Deleuze asks what explains the existence of secondary repetition. There is an easy answer, an answer that would satisfy Derrida, but it won't satisfy Deleuze. The easy answer is: the incompleteness or inadequacy of concepts is what explains secondary repetition, difference without a concept. Deleuze refers to this as a merely "nominal definition and a negative explanation of repetition" (DR 16). What is left out of such a negative explanation is any positive account for why secondary repetition appears whenever there are incomplete concepts. The top may have been be loose, but all by itself, that will not explain why the jar leaked: the jar could have been empty.

Deleuze's answer is surprising. In its primary sense, repetition refers to the swarming differences which escape through the holes in the knotted nets of

incomplete concepts. He tells us that every time we find ourselves confronted by a limitation like the inadequacy or incompleteness of our concepts,

> . . . we should ask what such a situation presupposes. It presupposes a swarm of differences, a pluralism of free, wild or untamed differences, a properly differential and original space and time; all of which persist along-side the simplifications of limitation and opposition (DR 50).

Unless there were swarming differences, secondary repetition would not be explained by the incompleteness of our concepts. So in some sense these swarms of untamed differences are the beating heart of repetition. But they are mysterious. What are they?

Approach this by analogy with a vulgarized kinetic theory of gasses. The secondary sense of repetition, the repetition of railroad ties, is like the temperature of a gas. Every morning when I come into the lab, the oxygen is at room temperature. Secondary repetition. But beneath the apparently calm surface of that repeated reading, are the wilder motions of the molecules of which the gas is composed. The temperature of the gas is an easily observed molar effect of the otherwise imperceptible molecular activity of the gas. For precisely analogous reasons Deleuze can speak of secondary repetition as naked, that is perceptible, and primary repetition as clothed, that is imperceptible (DR 24).

The reasons can only be analogous, because the swarms of differences which make secondary repetition possible are not just tiny, they are non-representational. They are neither ONE instance of a concept, nor MANY instances of the same concept. Neither one nor many, they are what Deleuze and Guattari come to call multiplicities, remarking: "a multiplicity is defined not by the elements that compose it in extension, not by the characteristics that compose it in comprehension, but by the lines and dimensions that it encompasses in 'intension' " (ATP 245; DR 238). A multiplicity is like a pack of wolves which is defined neither by the wolves which make it up in extension nor by the features which define a wolf in comprehension, but by the variable intensities of the relations between the wolves. The swarms of non-representational differences are swarms of intensities, and these swarms of intensities are the positive explanation for the existence of secondary repetition.

The true secret of repetition is that it doesn't presuppose the Same, the identity of a concept, which will only open us to the repetition of concepts, repetition of the Same. The true secret of repetition is that there are swarms of pure intensities which, under the condition of incomplete concepts, produce the diversity of what is given as so many almost identical railroad ties.

This repetition of the Same, if framed as the repetitious labors of Sisyphus or ourselves, can seem a curse (DR 293). The curse of twinning, trapped in a hall of mirrors, never to escape.[17] But if we could find a way to make the swarms of wild intensities *by* which the diverse is given appear *in* the given, in the sensible (DR 56–57) . . . then we might escape from the iron collars of our identities to an "aesthetic of intensities" (DR 244) . . . then we might ride a wild wave of pure intensities, dying the good death, experiencing an ecstasy without excess. Secondary repetition can be a curse, but primary repetition may be its cure.[18]

3. Iterability and Differance

The negative bent of Derrida's philosophy is veiled by the importance he gives to play and to the impossibility of distinguishing the serious from the non-serious, but this play and this impossibility are both made possible by an absence, a lack. We all know that words can mean many different things, there is room for semantic play, but one normally thinks that this semantic play is restricted by the central, serious meaning of the word. It is the absence of such a central meaning which, in Derrida's hands, releases the play of language. Derrida: "The absence of [the central signified,] the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of language infinitely (WD 280). One fine grained consequence of this is that the semantic play of our words is unrestricted, a larger grained consequence of this is associated by Derrida with the closure, if not the end, of the history of metaphysics as presence. But at this point I am only interested in drawing attention to the crucial role played by the negative in their defense. I will be trying to link this semantic play, made possible by a lack, to secondary repetition which can also . . . if only in part . . . be explained by a lack.[19]

In Deleuze's scheme, primary repetition is constituted by the swarming non-representational differences which show up in (secondary) repetition of the Same, and so when Derrida speaks of the "logic which ties repetition to alterity," he begins to sound as if he is moving in on primary repetition. But he is not. That clause was cut from the following the passage:

> My [written] communication must be repeatable – iterable – in the absolute absence of the receiver or of any empirically determinable collectivity of receivers. Such iterability (*iter*, again, probably comes for *itara*, *other* in Sanskrit, and everything that follows can be read as the working out of the logic that ties repetition to alterity) structures the mark of writing itself, no matter what particular type of writing is involved. . . . A writing

that is not structurally readable – iterable – beyond the death of the addressee [and beyond the death of the sender] would not be writing (Ltd Inc 7).

Iterability is here being introduced to name a specific power of writing, but Derrida quickly generalizes it to cover any significant mark, written or spoken, for when a spoken remark is overheard, it is functioning in the absence of the intended receiver, and when we inadvertently stumble into a pun, our spoken remarks are functioning in the absence of the clarified intentions of the sender (Ltd Inc 10).

Derrida will argue that there can be no linguistic action unless the marks employed are iterable. A sign that could not appear in OTHER circumstances at OTHER times would not be a sign, it would be mere noise. So iterability *broaches* linguistic action. But iterability also *breaches* linguistic action, ruining all hope of ever meaning one single serious thing, thus repeating for *sense* the Deleuzian argument about *reference*, the argument against ever being able to refer to one single particular. This ruination of sense is carried by the "logic which ties repetition to alterity" (Ltd Inc 7). It can be demonstrated by subtraction.[20] Since words are iterable they can be used with any number of possible senses, the serious ones more or less discrete, and the non-serious ones blurring everything. Suppose we tried to subtract from the possible significances of a mark all serious significances but one, and every possible non-serious signification. What would happen? The resulting mark would either be iterable . . . or not.

Take the first horn first. If it were iterable, then there and then, it might mean something OTHER than what we had intended it to mean. Derrida:

> Iterability alters, contaminating parasitically what it identifies and enables to repeat "itself"; it leaves us no choice but to mean (to say) something that is (already, always, also) other than what we mean (to say), to say something other than what we say *and* would have wanted to say, to understand something other than [what we understand, and so on] . . . (Ltd Inc 62)

This is the logic that ties repetition to alterity, and it is not different from the logic which, in Deleuze, reveals "the essence of that in which every repetition consists: difference without a concept" (DR 25). Iterability is another name for secondary repetition . . . it doesn't break through the frame of representation releasing swarms of intensities, it simply characterizes life within the frame.

According to the second horn, if the result of our subtractive procedures is not iterable, then we will have succeeded in producing a mark with one and only one serious significance. A non-iterable sign. But precisely that success

would be failure. For a mark that is not iterable means nothing. This is the tragic trajectory of Derrida's approach to linguistic action: its end (goal) would be its end (death) (Ltd Inc 129). That is why Derrida ends one of his early books with the aperçu: "Rising toward the sun of presence, it is the way of Icarus."[21] I will return to this tragic trajectory in the next section of this paper. For now, I am still trying to find primary repetition in Derrida's philosophy.

According to Deleuze, diversity is given. Diversity is a characteristic of the sensible. But diversity is an effect, it is given *by* swarms of differences, the primary sense of repetition (DR 222). The concept closest to this in Derrida is differance, the famous differance with an inaudible "a." Everything seems right. Like Deleuze's swarms, Derrida's differance produces differences. Derrida writes: "Differance is the non-full, non-simple, structured and differentiating origin of differences" (MP 11). Again, the swarms were fully affirmative and positive, not merely negative, and Derrida insists that "Differance is the name we might give to the 'active,' moving discord of different forces, and of differences of forces, that Nietzsche sets up against the entire system of metaphysical grammar" (MP 18). But something is wrong here. Differance is *non-full . . .* and yet it is affirmative. These are the two sides of differance that Derrida calls, eyeing Bataille, the economical and the non-economical (MP 19).

The non-full comes from the economical side of differance. It is the "detour which, in the element of the same, always aims at coming back to the pleasure or the presence that has been deferred by . . . calculation" (MP 19). It is this absence, this detour, which links soul and body, good and evil, inside and outside, speech and writing, in mutually supplementary relations.[22] In this economical sense, differance is "the medium in which opposites are opposed."[23] This side of differance does not take us any further than iterability, and so it doesn't take us any further than secondary repetition understood negatively by default in the concept.

The non-economical side of differance is the affirmative excessive side, for if it is not possible to mean just one thing, then we are always meaning more, and the non-originary origin of this excess can be figured as an explosive fountain, call it dissemination. This non-economical side overflows the boundaries of the opposites originating from the economical side. The economical side is the side of limitation, the non-economical, the side of excess, initiating an "expenditure without reserve . . . the entirely other relationship that apparently interrupts every economy" (MP 19).

Neither of these sides of differance is fully affirmative, both of them can be understood in terms of absence, in terms of a lack. Derrida seems to presuppose the traditional picture of concepts as vessels, hoping to be perfectly

filled. If there is endless play, it is because the vessels can never be perfectly filled. But the very fact that the vessels of meaning can never be perfectly filled means they can overflow. Indeed the very idea of excess presupposes that of a finite container. So neither side of difference escapes the negativity of secondary repetition, neither side breaks out of the frame of representation. They only play within it, disseminating unruly significances endlessly. As Deleuze and Guattari say: "Lack or excess, it hardly matters" (ATP 115).

In fact, without mentioning his name, Deleuze and Guattari launch *A Thousand Plateaus* by separating their approach decisively from Derrida's. They separate their book which they describe as rhizomatic—modeled on crabgrasses and irises where every root can become a stem and every stem a root—from two different rooted figures of the book. First, from the root-book with one root that divides into two and then four, branching into a tree (ATP 5). This is a fine figure for a system in which there is a central signified and a limited amount of play about and around this one fixed root. Like the game of tetherball. But it is the second, also rejected, figure of the root-book which recalls Derrida.

> This time, the principal root has aborted, or its tip has been destroyed; an immediate, indefinite multiplicity of roots grafts onto it and undergoes a flourishing development. . . . The world has lost its pivot; the subject can no longer even dichotomize, but accedes to a higher unity of ambivalence or overdetermination, in an always supplementary dimension to that of its object (ATP 5–6).

This is a fine figure for the absence of a central signified that "extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely" (WD 280). My own attempt to show that Derrida is unable to find room for the primary sense of repetition is one way of showing why Deleuze and Guattari find it necessary to move beyond this figure of the book to their favorite "vegetal model of thought: the rhizome in opposition to the tree, a rhizome-thought instead of an arborescent-thought" (DR xvii). They even oppose an aborescent-thought that begins, like Derrida's, from the *absence* of a principal root.

But there is, finally, a third way to interpret differance, namely, as a place holder for what may come. We are told differance remains a metaphysical name, and that what it purports to name is simply and literally unnameable, but Derrida assures us that if we admit this without nostalgia but rather with a certain laughter and dance, then we may see something he calls "Heideggerian *hope*" (MP 27) "the yet unnameable glimmer beyond the closure" of metaphysics.[24] The glimmer of the other of calculation, or quite simply, of the other.[25] This is the other which has entered Derrida's more recent writings on

the messianic "structure of experience",[26] a messianic structure without a Messiah, a messianic structure that forms the desert beneath or beyond Abraham's desert, what Derrida can call a "desert in a desert."[27]

Derrida:

> Each time I open my mouth, I am promising something. When I speak to you, I am telling you that I promise to tell you something, to tell you the truth. Even if I lie, the condition of my lie is that I promise to tell you the truth?[28] So the promise is not just one speech act among others; every speech act is fundamentally a promise. This universal structure of the promise, of the expectation for the future, for the coming, and the fact that this expectation of the coming has to do with justice – that is what I call the messianic structure.[29]

Iterability's been at it again, making possible the messianic structure of experience but also, and at the same time, ruining the possibility of any particular Messiah ever coming. This messianic structure of experience repeats in large scale the structure of iterability which I initially applied to the use of words. It does not manage to break through the frame of representation, but characterizes one of its features, what Derrida can call its necessarily "despairing" messianic structure.[30]

Iterability broaches and breaches both the fine grained linguistic action and the large grained messianic trajectory of experience. But neither iterability nor even his once favorite inaudible "a" will help Derrida break through the frame of representation. He has discovered the paradoxical characteristics of life within the frame of representation, but he has not broken through to the other side . . . to the swarms of intensities. He has not broken through because he is unable to say Yes.

Derrida is unable to say Yes, because he thinks Yes must always have a point. He does not realize that the true Yes is pointless. He is convinced that each Yes must be directed at something *to which* it says Yes. Thus Derrida insists that each Yes is already doubled: "The 'first' is already, always, a confirmation: *yes*, *yes*, a *yes* which goes from *yes to yes* or which comes from *yes to yes*."[31] But what must be repeated must also be scarred by what it hopes to avoid, that is the lesson of iterability, that is the lesson of secondary repetition. So it is hardly surprising to find Derrida writing: "This repetition, which figures the condition of an opening of the *yes*, menaces it as well: mechanical repetition, mimeticism, therefore forgetting, simulacrum, fiction, fable. Between the two repetitions [of *yes*] . . . there is a cut and a contamination, simultaneously."[32] It is this "fatal necessity of a *contamination*" which makes it impossible for Derrida to say Yes.[33] But the contamination is only necessary

if we cannot escape the frame of representation. And I shall now try to show how to break on through (to the other side). The true Yes is pointless.

4. Break on Through

We think our inability to mean exactly one thing, to perform exactly one act, is the source of our cares, so we dream of perfectly filled intentions. But were we to succeed, we would fail. And there is no escape, we must await a Messiah who cannot come. Derrida's philosophy, like Schopenhauer's before him, is a pessimistic philosophy of inevitable failure. It is brightened by smiles, but these are the smiles of Estragon, wry smiles, curled by empty repetition (See PC 99 and 243–244). Derrida's smiles are curled by an awareness of our futile situation; they do not, like recreational lying, ride laughing lines of escape, lines of flight. They do not break on through (to the other side).

This tragic dimension of Derrida's philosophy shows up most clearly in the "Envois" of *The Post Card*: a series of post cards sent by one lover to another. In an early post card, we read:

> I would like to write you so simply, so simply, so simply. . . . so that above all the language remains self-evidently secret, as if it were being invented at every step, and as if it were burning immediately, as soon as any third party would set eyes on it. . . . It is somewhat in order to "banalize" the cipher of the unique tragedy that I prefer cards, one hundred cards or reproductions[34] in the same envelope, rather than a single "true" letter (PC 11).

The possibility of expressing one's love to one person and one person only is here figured as the possibility of sealing a letter, keeping the eyes of others out. But the iterability of every mark makes this impossible, because as the author of these post cards insists, "letters are always post cards" (PC 79).

Whenever I say "I love you" I am using a form of words slurred each Saturday into the alcohol mouths of girls without last names. Do I want them between us? With us? Nor is it just drunken couples I must share my love with, also hiding in my bed is the other love of my life, hot and fresh, pepperoni pizza. Whispering sweet love, the bed crumbs full of pizza.[35] So one dreams of saying it so simply, so simply . . . so simply that it would not be repeatable. One dreams of words that burn to ashes as we use them. But it will never work. There will always be ashes, or I will never have said anything. For the ashes which remain are the work of iterability. They are the other meanings which, as I argued, cannot be subtracted from our assertions without eliminating

meaning, altogether. And since it is a matter of love, there is an urgency, and a poignancy to these post cards that is missing from most of Derrida's writings.[36] Here, above all, one cannot mistake the Schopenhaurian inclination of his thinking.

Derrida is connected to Schopenhauer by meaning, by wanting to say, hence by desire. With some rare exceptions, European philosophy has always construed desire as a lack, a painful lack. Plato tells us that when we desire something we must lack it, and that this lack is painful. What we desire, when we desire, is to stop the desire. Pleasure, on this account, is an interruption in the painful endurance of desire.[37] But the pain will return just as surely as thirst and hunger. If only we could escape desire altogether. The author of the post cards, even considers suicide, but discovers that act, too, ruined by iterability, by the ashes remaining behind, for there are always ashes (see PC 196).

Derrida plays the blues of desire in the key of meaning, of wanting to say. He returns desire and intention to the professional concept of intentional meaning. Or we could say: he returns the "t" to intension. Meaning something is wanting to say, a painfully empty intention seeking completion. So the desire continues to live. Were it completely satisfied, the meaning, the wanting to say would disappear. Die. So desire too broaches and breaches linguistic action. The lack at the heart of Derrida's philosophy is desire's lack. This is what makes his philosophy as pessimistic as Schopenhauer's. It doesn't look pessimistic because of the importance of play, but Derrida's play comes from no Yes, at all, but only from the failure of the traditional double negation. The familiar philosophical strategy of double negation . . . in this case to *abolish* an *absence* . . . is revealed by Derrida to be a necessary failure. He posts a No to the traditional hope of achieving Yes by doubling No's. Derrida knows better than anyone that double negations deliver ersatz affirmations. What broaches breaches. There is a "power of death in the heart of living speech: a power all the more redoubtable because it opens as much as it threatens the possibility of the spoken word."[38] The failure of double negation to find its way to affirmation is the source of what there is of play in Derrida's thought. It extends "the domain and play of signification infinitely" (WD 280). Secondary repetition, iterability, desire itself, have us trapped in the pain of desire. Is there any way out? Yes. Primary repetition. Yes.

Despite appearances, Deleuze does not reject the Derridean discoveries, it is only that he relocates their consequences. They are located within the plane of representation, whereas Deleuze's interest is in breaking on through (to the other side). In the language of *What Is Philosophy?*, Derrida is describing the characteristics of the scientific or logical "plane of reference" (WIP 119). Scientific functions and propositional concepts, according to Deleuze and

Guattari, aim at discrimination and separation, at determinate reference (WIP 139, 215). What Derrida insists on is that these aims can never be satisfied. Deleuze can accept that Derridean discovery, without also having to accept the Derridean presumption that there is no way to construct a different kind of plane, a plane of immanence, no way to break through the frame of representation.

In fact Deleuze and Guattari have even constructed a place for Derridean iterability in their rhizomatic thinking. There is a problem that iterability raises which I have not yet mentioned: if the domain of signification is extended to infinity, how do we manage to communicate even as well as we do.[39] Derrida's answer is power, or the police (Ltd Inc 105). Deleuze and Guattari figure this combination of *both* the infinite play of significances *and* the (subjectivating) power that stabilizes that play, as "a face: the *white wall/black hole* system" (ATP 167). The white wall is the plane where the signifiers play. The black holes police the play. Without the black holes, our every statement would be ineradicably "indeterminate" (ATP 167). So far Deleuze and Derrida are together. They separate only over the possibility of breaking through the frame of representation, breaking through the white wall/black hole system. But this is not a little difference. It is difference in itself:

> Difference is light, aerial and affirmative. To affirm is not to bear but, on the contrary, to discharge and to lighten. It is no longer the negative which produces a phantom of affirmation like an ersatz, but rather a No which results from affirmation . . . Negation is an epiphenomenon (DR 54).

The problem is with desire. Thinking of desire for an object or a person, we construe desire in negative terms, as a lack. The problem is with meaning. Thinking of meaning an object by a word, we construe meaning in negative terms, as a lack: as a vessel desiring satisfaction, wanting to be filled with meaning. And then the discovery that these two fillings . . . of desire and of meaning . . . cannot be accomplished drapes our lives in black, relieved, if at all, only by Estragon's smile. But it need not be. If we consider desire and meaning as bridges between subjects and objects, we will never escape.[40] But perhaps the identities of all objects and all subjects are, as Deleuze puts it, "only simulated, produced as an optical 'effect' by the more profound game of difference and repetition" (DR xix). This more profound game is precisely the swarming intensities, the primary repetition, which provided the only positive explanation for secondary repetition, the very same secondary repetition which is now causing such existential pain. We are all tied up in knots. The knots of our concepts. Representational knots. Untie them. How?

We know what we have to do, we have to "discharge and lighten," to loosen up, to disorganize our thoughts . . . we have to lose our selves . . . not in god or Nietzsche's early primordial unity . . . we have to disorganize our thinking and our living so that we can ride the lines which representation has tied in knots. We have to die, not the biological death, but the other death, the good death.[41] Deleuze:

> The other death, however, the other face or aspect of death, refers to the state of free differences when they are no longer subject to the form imposed upon them by an I or an ego, when they assume a shape which excludes *my* own coherence no less than that of any identity whatsoever (DR 113).

By releasing desire from the four iron collars of representation, desire is released from ruination, released from the ruination of having *something* I desire, *something* I want to say. That is what brought the whole tragic story of secondary repetition down on our necks. But what does desire become, thus freed from the idea of a goal, a point. What is pointless desiring? Deleuze, speaking with Parnet, said:

> Desire is therefore not internal to a subject, any more than it tends towards an object: it is strictly immanent to a plane which it does not pre-exist, to a plane which must be constructed, where particles are emitted and fluxes combine . . . Far from presupposing a subject, desire cannot be attained except at the point where someone is deprived of the power of saying "I". Far from directing itself towards an object, desire can only be reached at the point where someone no longer searches for or grasps an object any more than he grasps himself as a subject.[42]

To break through the frame of representation, to untie the knots we are in, we must desire without an object. These desires will be pointless, but they will be pointless in a positive sense. Their pointlessness will not consist in their not having a point, nor will it consist in their having many points, as if we were some sort of existential one man band. Rather, desire's pointlessness will consist in the delirious presence of swarms of points. These are the same swarms which, speaking of the primary, non-representational sense of repetition, I have already described as neither one, nor many, but a multiplicity (ATP 245). Good pointlessness, good death, and good repetition were made for each other. But how do we release desire from the iron collars of conceptual representation?

I do not think it can be done alone. It takes at least two, perhaps not two persons, but it takes two (ATP 243–244). And it must be beautiful. We begin to break on through by contagion, catching it, like a virus, from the beaute-

ous particles emitted by something or somebody else . . . at first slowly . . . repetitively . . . breathing beauteous particles deep inside our bodies . . . particles which take over our organs and cells . . . disorganizing them . . . exhaling more joyous particles . . . becoming-imperceptible as self and as other . . . camouflaged not by representing something we are not, but because we are surrounded by swarms of beauteous particles (ATP 280).

Beauty. Although Deleuze and Guattari rarely mention beauty, they do remark, in the first section of *A Thousand Plateaus*, that "Nothing is beautiful or loving or political aside from underground stems and aerial roots, adventitious growths and rhizomes" (ATP 15). More typically, however, they will speak of the anomalous, and they warn us not to treat the anomalous as what is "outside rules or goes against rules," but rather as designating "the unequal, the coarse, the rough, the cutting edge of deterritorialization" (ATP 244). Not simply outside rules, because the outside of rules remains in the grip of the rules, so that it is not really outside, at all.[43] The anomalous is neither clearly within nor clearly without our conceptual categories, and this brings it very close to what Kant defines as the beautiful . . . the wild or untamed play of sensations, untamed by this concept or that, eluding the frame of representation . . . extending play to infinity. Not the infinity of the sublime, infinity up. Not the infinity of dread, infinity down. This is the infinity of joy, infinity out . . . horizontal . . . looking out over the salty sea, as far as eyes can see. It needn't be a traditional work of art, but it must be pointless, and it must be beautiful. In its pointlessness, beauty will recover its autonomy, but this time, not by negation (see ATP 347). This time, beauty's autonomy will derive not from its *lack* of connection, but from myriad lines of affirmation, a multiplicity of lines connecting it from here to everywhere.

Consider a limited spatial analogy: materialized graph paper. Each of the intersecting lines can be imagined pulling against each other, so putting *tension* on each intersection along two dimensions, x and y. A three dimensional graph is a space of lines pulling their intersections along three dimensions, a 20 dimensional graph along 20 dimensions. And an n-dimensional graph is a "space" of lines putting tension on each intersection along an indeterminate multiplicity of dimensions.[44] This last is a maximally beautiful, maximally intense work of art. It is dense with tension, with lines pulling it in myriad ways . . . some formal, some political, some pretty, some cute, some erotic, some aching, some loving, and so on. But it is not as if this were a huge addition, that would still leave us with desire as a sum of various lacks, and so it would leave us marooned on an island of despair with Schopenhauer and Derrida. These n-dimensions are neither one nor many. They are a non-spatial, non-representational multiplicity. Primary repetition.

This graphic model of a work of art is also a model of a maximally beautiful, maximally intense life. And it allegorizes *within* the sensible, the non-representational swarms *by which* the sensible is given (DR 56–57). Thus intensity within experience is allegorically connected to the swarms of differences on the other side representation. The beauty of the anomalous person or thing with whom we break on through the frame of representation will be a more modest version of the same idea, not yet, however, an n-dimensional creature or creation. The anomalous will be coarse and rough, because it is not a perfect instance of any type. It is this very coarseness, and unpredictability that gives the anomalous the power to spirit us out of ourselves. The anomalous is not merely pretty, but attractive like beauty with some kind of edge . . . the surprising sexual energy of the apparently shy and quiet, the surprising intellectual power of the guy or the girl in leather . . . something that places the anomalous on the edge, the borderline. Something that draws us out, disorganizing our thoughts, lives. Something with which we can form undulating lines of becoming. Racing beyond speed, because beyond the mile markers that we left behind when desire became pointless.

The anomalous can be a person, but it needn't be a person. It can be a work of art, a scientific problem, a book, the weather some afternoon, the salty taste of the sea, but in each case it is the roughness, the coarseness, of the anomalous which gives it the power to draw us out to the borderlines of our conceptual representations. Like a sorcerer (ATP 246). Drawn to the borderlines of our existence, experiencing the delight of riding an arabesque line, slipping away from the categories we normally live within. And as we follow, contributing directions and lines of our own, the vitality of the anomalous will spread not by reproduction but like a virus, by contagion (ATP 241 and 10–11). This is a process of intensification, for we will find ourselves moving in more and more different directions, increasingly drawn in multiple directions. Drawn out by the anomalous individual, drawing ourselves out further becoming-imperceptible not by representing what we are not, but by disappearing into an n-dimensional swarm of intense relations. The beauty of this assemblage materializes Kantian formal beauty, playing between the concepts of representation, not within them. "A theater where nothing is fixed, a labyrinth without a thread. (Ariadne has hung herself.)" (DR 56).

Our loves are already like this, and we know it. We all know how ridiculous to say I love you, let me count the ways. And we know, too, how easily we can catch joy from another . . . like a virus . . . beginning to move without either one knowing where we are going . . . but together . . . and joyful (see ATP 272–273 and 278–279). This is what desire can be. Deleuze and Guattari affirm that "becoming is the process of desire," a desire we now know to be

pointless, in a positive sense (ATP 272). Two bodies caressing . . . unwrapping themselves . . . disorganizing themselves . . . swarming intensities . . . swarming caresses. Becoming-beauty . . . or saying beauty otherwise: ***becoming-becoming*** (see DR 56–57).

5. Yes and No

Secondary repetition, the repetitious repetitions of modern life, cast our lives in the false colors of theatrical lighting (DR xix; 1969, 286). It can seem natural to try . . . even in this light . . . to make our lives authentic. Not just to say "I love you," the way everyone does, but to say it, and mean it, really mean it, and nothing else. This is the traditional hope which drives Derrida's post cards. But to perform an action of a certain type is to rely on the criteria for being an action of that type, and so there can be no escape from acting according to a script, no escape from the threat of inauthenticity. This is where Derrida leaves us: undecidably between authenticity and inauthenticity. Secondary repetition inauthenticates our lives. But secondary repetition can also be a way beyond the traditional quest for authenticity . . . beyond both authenticity and inauthenticity. The way up and the way down are one. Taking the walk to our spot, again. Driving past the cows, again. Listening to the slow movement, again. These are ways of discovering the differences in so-called repetitions. Revealing that the same is not the same, it is different. It is a technique, if you will, for finding the anomalous where it would be least expected. In the familiar paths of our lives. Take them again. Once more.

Following the paths, again, is a way of releasing us from the knots of our logical concepts, concepts which destine us to a life of acting. Acting according a script.[46] But the way up and the way down are one. Secondary repetition is the false light of inauthenticity, but it is also a way, one way, to reveal the non-representational swarms of differences by which the given is given. It is one way to release primary repetition, to break on through (to the other side) of the frame of representation. Not to nothing. This is not nihilism, for nothing is only the way the other side of representation looks from this side (DR 28, 276). Releasing our desires from their objects, our selves from their identities, we can experience the joy of becoming-becoming. Not forever. But this is not a failure, because joy was not the goal to be received in return for, in exchange for, our efforts.[47] This joy is a gift, from everywhere, and it places us beyond authenticity and inauthenticity. Becoming-becoming.

Derrida divided the plane of existence like a board game . . . and played continually . . . never winning through to Yes . . . never losing it all in No. This

was inevitable. According to Derrida, to really win, one would have to mean to throw a 7, and nothing else at all. It would require massive negation. One would have to subtract from the meaning of one's intentional action, every possibility but one: 7. But this is precisely what iterability, secondary repetition, makes impossible. So Derrida tells us that "we must conceive a play in which whoever loses wins, and in which one loses and wins on every turn" (MP 20). This is the fate of those who cannot break through from secondary to primary repetition.

Deleuze imagines another game, a divine game in which at every roll of the dice "the whole of chance is affirmed in a necessarily winning throw" (DR 283). This is complete affirmation, something Derrida would find incredible. This divine game is a figure for Deleuze's Yes, a Yes as complete as it is because it derives from a desire as pointless as a work of art. Deleuze: "That the universe has no purpose, that it has no end to hope for any more than it has causes to be known, this is the certainty necessary to play well."[48] But to affirm chance in this way is to play a divine game not a human game, and when Deleuze asks himself what is the human game closest to this divine game, he replies: "As Rimbaud said: look for H, the work of art" (DR 282).[49] There is no other existential or aesthetic problem than that of becoming-becoming (see DR 293).

It is the difference between No and Yes. It is the difference between playing a Derridean game you can never win and a Deleuzian game you can never loose. It is the difference between a philosophy trapped in the frame of representation and one which breaks on through (to the other side). It is the difference between Derrida's No, which reeks of the thick smell of Schopenhauer . . . and Deleuze's Yes, blowing in, fresh and salty, off Nietzsche's new seas.[50]

Abbreviations

I use the following abbreviations both in the body of my text and in the following notes.

ATP   Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. B. Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). French 1980.

DR   Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. P. Patton (London: Athlone, 1994). French 1968.

Ltd Inc   Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc*. ed. G. Graff, trans S. Weber (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988).

MP   Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. A. Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). French 1972.

PC   Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. A. Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). French 1980.

WD   Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. A. Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). French 1967.

WIP   Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans G. Burchell and H. Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994). French 1991.

Notes

1. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. D.B. Allison (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 104

2. DR 56.

3. F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), p. 371

4. "I'm going to have to wander all alone," trans. L. Lawlor, *Philosophy Today*, 42.1 (1998), p. 3.

5. See DR 318n28, and G. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, trans. M. Lester and C. Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 261n2.

6. The full passage is: "As for the method of deconstruction, I see what it is, I admire it a lot, but it has nothing to do with my method. I do not present myself as a commentator of texts. A text, for me, is nothing but a little cog in an extra-textual machine." This passage comes from Deleuze, G., Lyotard, J.-F. *et al*. "Discussion," after the presentation of Lyotard's "Notes sur le retour de le Kapital," and Deleuze's "Pensée nomade." In *Nietzsche AuJourd'hui, 1: Intensités*. (Paris: Union Générale D'Éditions, 1973), p. 186. Thanks to an anonymous referee for help in finding this reference.

7. "I'm Going to Have to Wander all Alone," p. 4.

8. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1980), part 1, section 1.

9. Sometimes Deleuze puts the two approaches to difference and repetition in terms of two contrasting claims.

   (a) "Only that which is alike differs." (DR116)
   (b) "Only differences are alike." (DR 116)

   These two claims are also contrasted at Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 261. Deleuze defends (b), the second claim. The rejected claim, (a), collars difference with the chains of representation, and is strongly reminiscent of Donald Davidson's approach to radically alternative conceptual schemes. (See his "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," in Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).)

10. I don't think Deleuze ever draws the distinction in precisely these terms, but speaking of difference he does insist that to approach difference from within the frame of representation will reveal "conceptual difference, but not the concept of difference" (DR xv).

11. In DR, Deleuze uses the word concept to speak about representations, and he distinguishes these representational *concepts* from what he there calls *Ideas*, of which he writes: "An Idea is an n-dimensional, continuous, defined multiplicity" (182). These Ideas are the

progenitors of what Deleuze and Guattari's WIP refers to as concepts, which in that book are said to be the form creative Ideas take in philosophy (8). The later book sometimes distinguishes these creative philosophical concepts from more pedestrian representational concepts which are there called "propositional concepts" (137–138, 143–144). Since I am focusing primarily on DR, where concept is used in its propositional or representational sense, I will normally use the word concept in its representational sense, and I will not be using concept in the more or less technical sense in which WIP announces that "philosophy is the discipline that involves *creating* concepts" (5). Roughly speaking, WIP speaks of concepts in the way that DR speaks of Ideas.

12. When discussing Ideas, Deleuze remarks that Ideas are differentiated without being differenciated, hence distinct and obscure, like "intoxication, the properly philosophical stupor of the Dionysian Idea" (DR 214).

13. Why vulgar? My colleague Michael Mendelson suggests that it is vulgar, because in full fledged Leibnizian metaphysics, the reflection of each monad in every other may mean that there is, at bottom, only one complete concept.

14. See G.C.F. Bearn, "The Possibility of Puns: A Defense of Derrida," *Philosophy and Literature* 19/2 (1995, pp. 330–335.

15. L. Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), pp. 1–5.

16. Derrida can also speak of what is "beyond authenticity and inauthenticity," but his proximity to the Deleuzian position I will sketch in the fourth section is only apparent. For the beyond which I will sketch is a beyond in the direction of Yes, and Derrida's beyond is in the direction of an inevitable No: "the anyone who, beyond authenticity and inauthenticity, beyond a certain ethics, beyond *das Man* and man, would sign the experience of the impossible, of the double bind that makes a possible ruin of every architecture and an originary ruin of every signature" ("Summary of Impromptu Remarks," in C.C. Davidson, *Anyone* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), p. 45).

17. The second motto to Derrida's *Speech and Phenomena* (1967) is a passage from Husserl's *Ideas I*, § 100:

   A name on being mentioned reminds us of the Dresden gallery and of our last visit there: we wander through rooms and stop in front of a painting by Teniers which represents a gallery of paintings. Let us further suppose that the paintings of this gallery would represent in their turn paintings, which, on their part, exhibited readable inscriptions and so forth.

18. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, pp. 287–290.

19. It is perhaps the notion of supplementarity which makes the role of absence in Derridean play most obvious, at the end of a discussion of Plato, for example, we can read that, "The true and the untrue are both species of repetition. And there is no repetition possible without the *graphics of supplementarity*, which supplies, for the lack of a full unity, another unity that comes to relieve it, being enough the same and enough other so that it can replace by addition" (*Dissemination*, trans. B. Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 168). In 1967, he wrote: "The *overabundance* of the signifier, its *supplementary* character, is thus the result of finitude, that is to say, the result of a lack which must be *supplemented*" (WD 290).

20. See G.C.F. Bearn, "Derrida Dry: Iterating Iterability Analytically," *Diacritics* 25/3 (1995), pp. 3–25.

21. *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 104.
22. *Dissemination*, p. 127.
23. See *Dissemination*, p. 127. This reference to a "medium" makes one think that Derrida may still be in the grip of the Davidsonian thought that Deleuze is trying to overcome, namely, that "only that which is alike differs" (DR 116). Derrida also seems to be writing in a quasi-Davidsonian fashion during his discussion of "minimal consensus" in Ltd Inc, p. 146
24. *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 14.
25. "The Villanova Roundtable," in J.D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), p. 17.
26. *Specters of Marx*, trans. P. Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 168.
27. This "desert in a desert" demands being thought in its difference from Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between two sorts of desert dweller, migrants and nomads (ATP 380 ff). Derrida speaks of this "desert in a desert" at Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: Two sources of 'Religion' at the limits of Reason Alone," trans. S. Weber, in J. Derrida and G. Vattimo, *Religion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 19.
28. The role of truth telling here shows how far Derrida's "play" is from what might be called recreational lying . . . as opposed to the deceptive workday lie.
29. "The Villanova Roundtable," pp. 22–23.
30. *Specters of Marx*, p. 169.
31. "A Number of Yes (Nombre de oui)," *Qui Parle* 2/2 (1988), p. 126.
32. J. Derrida, "A Number of Yes,", p. 131.
33. *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans G. Bennington and R. Bowlby (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 10.
34. The author of the post cards can write, "did not everything between us begin with a reproduction? Yes, and at the same time there is nothing more simply false, the tragedy is there" (PC 9). By contrast, Deleuze and Guattari write: "We oppose epidemic to filiation, contagion to heredity, peopling by contagion to sexual reproduction, sexual production" (ATP 241).
35. In the end, we will realize that it is not so horrible to have pizza in bed with your lover. The pure goal of being with your lover alone projects an ideal coupling on the cold steel tables of an operating theater. The Deleuzian projection is more in the direction Emmanuel Ax points in this remark on Yo-Yo Ma: "If he says that Bach, ice-skating, pizza and falling in love with love are related to each other, he means it, and believe me, he'll end up convincing you of it" (M. Saltzman, "Yo-Yo Ma," *New York Times*, Sunday, September 7, 1997, Section 2 "Arts and Leisure," p. 79).
36. The tone of these post cards was made clear to me by Alison Freeman.
37. See A. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 2 vols., trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1969), volume 1, § 57.
38. *Of Grammatology*, p. 141.
39. This problem of how to constrain the play of significations under the name "Carroll's paradox" also helps motivate Deleuze's turn to the logic of *sense* in *The Logic of Sense*, 16 ff. It is as if this paradox reveals on the one side the logic of sense and on the other the logic of power. "Carroll's paradox" refers to L. Carroll, "What the Tortoise Said to Achilles," *Mind* 2/2 (1895), pp. 278–280.

40. Deleuze and C. Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 89.

41. I felt my way towards an appreciation of this good death enjoying the best of thinking with Alison Freeman trying to make sense of the little sentence: "Just like music – why does it give us the urge to die" (*Dialogues*, p. 140; also see ATP 348). Freeman's interpretation of the good death appears in A. Freeman, "Light without Heat," *Lehigh Review* 7 (Spring-Fall 1999), pp. 41–51.

42. *Dialogues*, p. 89.

43. This is a point familiar to readers of Derrida. At WD 36, this problem is attributed to the unique, and imperial grandeur of the order of reason." At MP xiv, Derrida suggests that this problem requires that we approach the outside of reason "obliquely." Derrida's suggestion is adjacent to Deleuze's advocacy of the diagonal, for example at ATP 295: "Free the line, free the diagonal." But the difference between Derrida and Deleuze is the distance between the impossibility (Derrida) and the possibility (Deleuze) of riding a diagonal through the frame of representation. As always, it is the difference between No and Yes.

44. "*Flat multiplicities of n-dimensions* are asignifying and asubjective" (ATP 9).

45. "Summary of Impromptu Remarks," p. 45.

46. This melancholy picture of acting is at home in what Deleuze calls the theater of representation (DR 10). It can be overcome by a theater of repetition which itself initiates a becoming-becoming, or as Deleuze puts it:

    In the theater of repetition, we experience pure forces, dynamic lines in space which act without intermediary upon the spirit, and link it directly with nature and history, with a language that speaks before words, with gestures that develop before organized bodies, with masks before faces, with specters and phantoms before characters – the whole apparatus of repetition as a "terrible power" (DR 10).

47. Deleuze distinguishes his approach to repetition from the traditional approach to generality by saying that the general lives in an economy of exchange, but repetition is gift (DR 1). Once again, Derrida speaks against Deleuze's Yes, for he insists that the gift cannot be experienced ("The Villanova Roundtable," 19).

48. *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. H. Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 27.

49. Rimbaud, *Illuminations* c. 1875 includes this prose poem entitled H

    All monstrosities violate the atrocious gestures of Hortense. Her solitude is an erotic mechanics, her languor, a dynamics of loving. Under the surveillance of a certain childhood, she has been, in numerous ages, the ardent cleansing hygiene of the races. Her door is open to misery. There, the morality of actual beings is disembodied in her passion or in her action – Oh terrifying shudder of beginning lovers on bloody soil lit by the brilliant hydrogen! – find Hortense.

    A. Rimbaud, *Illuminations: Colored Plates*. ed. N. Osmond (London: The Athlone Press, 1976), p. 77. Translation GCFB.

50. This paper was originally delivered at a meeting of the E astern Pennsylvania Philosophical Association on April 10, 1999. That version was written in the shelter of regular discussions with Alison Freeman and with Michael Mendelson about repetition and related issues. I have tried to answer some of the questions raised at this paper's first hear-