



In the commemorative essay written on the occasion of Deleuze's death, Derrida spoke of a "nearly total affinity" between the philosophical content of his own work and that of Deleuze.<sup>2</sup> In what follows, I am going to argue that there is *only* a nearly total affinity. In fact, I am going to argue that there is a difference between the philosophical content of Derrida and Deleuze because each develops his most basic concepts from different philosophical inspirations: Deleuze with Bergson and Derrida with Husserl. So what follows is basically a comparison of Derrida's 1967 *Voice and Phenomenon*<sup>3</sup> and Deleuze's 1966 *Bergsonism*.<sup>4</sup> These two early books are not insignificant since, on the one hand, Deleuze (with Guattari) says, as late as 1991 that only Bergson was mature enough for the Spinozist inspiration of immanence,<sup>5</sup> and, on the other, Derrida says as late as 1993 that his new concept of the specter is based on Husserl's concept of the noema.<sup>6</sup> So, what we are going to see is that, in *Voice and Phenomenon*, on the basis of Husserl's phenomenology, Derrida develops the concept of the trace, which he associates with the simulacrum (and which is the basis for his concept of the specter); in *Bergsonism*, on the basis of Bergson's evolutionism, Deleuze develops the concept of the virtual image which he also associates with the simulacrum (and which is the basis for his concept of the concept). While my primary focus is going to be these two concepts, the trace and the virtual image, I am going to examine both of these seminal books by following four trajectories: destruction versus deconstruction; purity versus contamination; fiction understood as the virtual image versus fiction understood as the trace; and, intuition versus language. On the basis of this comparison of *Voice and Phenomenon* and *Bergsonism*, we shall see two major differences between Derrida and Deleuze emerge: in Derrida, there is a priority of form and language; in Deleuze, there is a

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## A NEARLY TOTAL AFFINITY *the deleuzian virtual image versus the derridean trace*<sup>1</sup>

priority of tendency and intuition. We shall even see a difference in the relation of life and death in Derrida and Deleuze.

It goes without saying that in the examination which follows I have exaggerated certain claims made by Derrida and Deleuze in order to make the difference between them stand out as clearly as possible. I believe that, if we want to see "the philosophy of difference" continue, we need to determine as clearly as possible the different versions of this philosophy: distinguish Derrida from Deleuze; Deleuze from Foucault; Derrida from Levinas; Deleuze from Lyotard; Foucault from Derrida, etc. Without the precision that such a process of distinguishing provides, "the philosophy of difference" will die out with its founders or, worse yet, it will continue as a set of interchangeable clichés. So, I believe the exaggeration of positions is essential today.

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Before we turn to these trajectories, three preliminary comments are in order. First, we must recall some of the crucial basic concepts of phenomenology and Bergsonism. According to Husserl, there can be no phenomenology without the phenomenological reduction;<sup>7</sup> in “Philosophy as a Rigorous Science,” Husserl describes the reduction in this way: in order to return to an “actual beginning,” “all expressions that imply thetic existential positings of things in the framework of space, time, causality, etc. ... must in principle be excluded.”<sup>8</sup> In Bergsonism, the concept parallel to the reduction is “the turn of experience”; in *Matter and Memory*, Bergson says, philosophy must return to “experience at its source ... above that decisive turn where ... it becomes properly human experience.”<sup>9</sup> Both the phenomenological reduction and the turn of experience imply the reduction of transcendence to immanence. If transcendence traditionally means atemporal truth, then the return to immanence means a return to temporal experience. Thus, in phenomenology we have the living present as the absolute form of all experience<sup>10</sup> and in Bergsonism we have duration as the absolute tendency of life.<sup>11</sup> If duration and the living present insofar as absolute are the transcendental (but not transcendent) conditions of all experience, they cannot be identical to the experiences they condition. So, they must somehow be different. In his lectures on phenomenological psychology, Husserl differentiates between psychological experience and transcendental experience in terms of what he calls a “parallelism,” but this parallelism is such that there is a perfect “concealment” of the transcendental in the psychological.<sup>12</sup> The Bergsonian concept equivalent to this is difference in nature; in *Time and Free Will*, Bergson establishes a difference in nature between psychological life and matter, but psychological life itself differs in nature with itself to the point where it evolves into matter.<sup>13</sup> Compared to the philosophical tradition, the concepts of parallelism and difference in nature are new kinds of differences. So, if transcendental conditions can only be differentiated from the experiences they condition in these new ways,

then the conditions themselves must be characterized in new ways. So, in *Ideas I*, section 70, Husserl says that essences are clarified through “free phantasies”; indeed, he says, “fiction makes up the vital element of phenomenology.”<sup>14</sup> In Bergson, the virtual is not the possible;<sup>15</sup> it is defined by being “real without being actual, ideal without being abstract,”<sup>16</sup> which means that the virtual too can be called a sort of fiction.

Besides these basic concepts of phenomenology and Bergsonism, we need to keep in mind that both the Deleuzian virtual image and the Derridean trace are both memory-images. This is the case because Deleuze develops the virtual image on the basis of Bergsonian duration, which is essentially defined as memory, and because Derrida develops the trace on the basis of the Husserlian living present, in particular, on the basis of the retentional phase or the primary memory phase of the living present. So, both the virtual image and the trace refer to a past and more precisely to a past which has never been present. The analysis of the four trajectories therefore really amount to comparison of memory in Derrida and Deleuze.

The third preliminary comment concerns Heidegger. While everyone knows that Derrida has maintained a continuous debate with Heidegger’s philosophy since at least 1968 with the publication of “Ousia and Gramme,” no one even seems to associate Deleuze with Heidegger. I think this is a mistake. On the one hand, if anything the last century – the twentieth – will probably not be known as Deleuzian or Derridean or Foucaultian, but as Heideggerian. It is impossible to underestimate the influence that Heidegger has exerted in all areas including, and especially, analytic philosophy. So, to refuse to bring Deleuze’s thought into confrontation with that of Heidegger will almost certainly diminish his greatness. On the other hand – just to take one example – if one charts the occurrences of Heidegger’s name in *Difference and Repetition*, one will see that it occurs within the most important discussions. Indeed the first proper name mentioned in *Difference and Repetition* is that of Heidegger. With Heidegger in mind, let us now turn to the first trajectory: destruction versus deconstruction.

## II

Both “deconstruction” and “destruction” come from Heidegger. “Deconstruction,” however, has become synonymous with Derrida.<sup>17</sup> In contrast, Deleuze never uses the term “deconstruction”; but, he uses occasionally the term “destruction.”<sup>18</sup> The issue between Derridean deconstruction and Deleuzian destruction lies in the target of these practices. When Deleuze speaks of destruction, he never uses Derrida’s phrase, “the metaphysics of presence”; instead, he speaks of “the destruction of Platonism.” These two terms – “the metaphysics of presence” and “Platonism” – coincide in that both terms refer to the traditional philosophical conception of the origin of the world, ideas for example, as atemporal; “the destruction of Platonism” or “the deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence” then would be a critique of this conception of ideas, which places them back into temporal experience. But, the coincidence between the terms does not extend beyond this temporal critique.<sup>19</sup> On the one hand, Derrida defines presence as proximity (VP 83–84/75); this definition of presence as proximity implies that the deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence places the origin of presence in a distancing which makes the origin absent; in other words, ideas originate in a non-presencing. This distancing and non-presencing Derrida calls the trace. On the other hand, Deleuze defines Platonism in terms of its motivation “to repress” what Plato himself calls in *Republic* X “phantasmata,” that is, simulacra, copies of copies.<sup>20</sup> Platonism wants to repress simulacra “as deeply as possible, to shut [them] up in a cavern at the bottom of the Ocean,”<sup>21</sup> because the ideas originate in the simulacra. This definition of Platonism’s motivation as a distancing of the simulacra as far as to the bottom of the ocean implies that the destruction of Platonism brings up to the surface what had been distanced; in other words, the simulacra become proximate and present. In contrast, therefore, to traces which are non-presences and distant, the simulacra are presences and they come too close. We can see already that the trace, which Derrida explicitly associates with the simulacrum in his 1972 essay on Nietzsche, *Spurs*,<sup>22</sup> does not really

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coincide with what Deleuze calls a simulacrum which is related to the virtual image. Already they seem to form a sort of opposition because Derrida’s deconstruction *contaminates* the metaphysics of presence with the non-presence of the trace, while Deleuze’s destruction *purifies* Platonism with the presence of the virtual image.<sup>23</sup>

## III

This opposition between contamination and purity is the second trajectory I would like to follow. When Deleuze qualifies certain terms as “pure,”<sup>24</sup> he is using the word “pure” in a sense which derives from Bergson. Deleuze explains Bergson’s well-known “obsession” with the pure (BER 12/22) in terms of Bergson’s appropriation of Plato’s method of division (BER 11/22).<sup>25</sup> For Bergson, it is the job of philosophy to divide the badly composed mixtures with which experience presents us *in fact* (BER 11–12/22). We divide a factual mixture *badly*, for Bergson, if we make a quantitative difference between time and space, which thereby turns time into a difference of degree of space. Here we have, “an impure ... mixed” idea measuring the mixture. When we analyze mixtures into mediating ideas such as this, we have, as Deleuze says, “lost the reason for the mixtures” (BER 12/22). For Bergson, we analyze this mixture *well*, when we divide time and space into a difference in nature between duration and extensity.<sup>26</sup> These two qualities become then, as Deleuze says, “two pure presences” (BER 12/22).<sup>27</sup> The two pure presences are the *in principle* conditions of factual experience; here Deleuze uses the “Quid facti”–“Quid juris” distinction which in French is the “en fait”–“en droit” opposition. These *in principle* conditions are the true sufficient reason for the mixture (BER 20/28–29). Through the method of division, we have ascended above the “turn of experience” at which experience becomes human experience. So, purity first of all means for Deleuze *en droit*.

But, as Deleuze stresses, the difficulty that plagued Plato’s method of division disappears in Bergson (BER 24/32). Plato’s method of division lacked a middle term, a mediation in order to

recognize the good side versus the bad side in all mixtures. Plato had to resort to “inspiration,” to a myth in order to make the selection (BER 24/32).<sup>28</sup> So, in Bergson, it seems as though we must have a mediating idea of difference of nature, the, so to speak, *good (le Bien)*, in order to know how to divide *well (diviser bien)*. But, according to Deleuze, Bergson makes the division immediately.<sup>29</sup> For Bergson, differences in nature occur only on the side of duration; duration itself “presents the way in which a thing varies qualitatively in time” (BER 24/32); and duration is first of all our duration, human, psychological inner life. Duration is the “good side,” the “true”<sup>30</sup> side, the side of “essence,” as Deleuze says (BER 24/32), while extensity is the bad side, the false side, the side of appearance. It is our duration therefore which allows us to “affirm and *immediately* recognize other durations above or below us,” other differences in nature (BER 25/33; emphasis added). So, purity in Deleuze secondly means immediacy.

If we rely on Bergson’s early writings, it looks as though duration and extensity were related as pure to impure, good to bad. But, Bergson, as Deleuze insists (BER 27/34), progresses beyond this early view and realizes that extensity is one “side” of the Absolute and that the other “side” is duration. Duration is the contraction of all successive past events into a point in the present, while extensity is the relaxation of this point into the spatial coexistence of these events (BER 56–57/60–61). On either side of this point, we have two sides, as in two divergent lines. Due to relaxation, extensity is a multiplicity infinitely divisible in terms of numbers, while, due to contraction, duration is a multiplicity which cannot be divided in terms of numbers. Since extensity is arithmetically divisible, extensity is the side of differences in degree; since duration is arithmetically indivisible, duration is the side of qualitative differences (BER 24/32). Making extensity one side of the Absolute means, for Bergson, that science is not an artificial knowledge but a natural knowledge, since it is based in a difference in nature. Nevertheless, as we shall see, the illusions that overwhelm us (like Plato’s myths) still come from the side of extensity and science; these illusions we will have to distinguish

from the “true” side of duration since Deleuze suggests that essence too is a sort of fiction.

But, no matter what, when Bergson makes extensity and duration the two sides of the Absolute, he is in accordance with how Deleuze describes “Heidegger’s ontological intuition”: “difference must relate different to different without any mediation whatsoever by the identical.”<sup>31</sup> Deleuze interprets Heidegger’s ontological difference as a thought of immediacy, because Deleuze’s thought is anti-Hegelian.<sup>32</sup> In contrast, Derrida’s thought is Hegelian.<sup>33</sup> We find the Hegelian source of Derrida’s concept of contamination in his crucial 1964 essay on Levinas, “Violence and Metaphysics”; Derrida says, “Pure difference is not absolutely different (from nondifference). Hegel’s critique of the concept of pure difference is for us here, doubtless, the most uncircumventable theme. Hegel thought absolute difference, and showed that it can be pure only by being impure.”<sup>34</sup> This “Hegelianism” determines Derrida’s interpretation of Heidegger’s ontological difference as mediation.

In *Voice and Phenomenon*’s Introduction, Derrida uses Heidegger’s ontological difference to interpret Husserl’s phenomenological reduction.<sup>35</sup> Derrida recognizes that Husserl’s phenomenological reduction attempts to divide life in general into transcendental life and psychological life (VP 10/11). But Derrida stresses that the phenomenological reduction does not make an “ontological duplication” (VP 10–11/11). Here, Derrida is using the word “ontological” in a Husserlian sense, but what he is referring to is what Heidegger would call the *ontic*.<sup>36</sup> In Husserl, according to Derrida, the transcendental ego and the psychological ego are not two things separate from one another;<sup>37</sup> they are *ontically* identical but *ontologically* differentiated. Because, however, there is no ontic difference, because there is “nothing” – here Derrida follows Heidegger’s use of “nothing” (VP 11/12)<sup>38</sup> – because, we might say, there is the “nothing” between the transcendental and the empirical, Derrida argues that every time Husserl tries to define the transcendental without the empirical he fails, necessarily, to be rigorous. The transcendental is contaminated by the empirical and vice versa. So, unlike Deleuze who

is concerned with dividing mixtures into pure differences in nature, Derrida is concerned with a “unity” (VP 9/10) which mixes the transcendental and the empirical together.

The argument based on the lack of ontic difference organizes Derrida’s entire consideration, in *Voice and Phenomenon*, of the problem of the sign in Husserl’s phenomenology (VP 32/30). According to Husserl in the First Logical Investigation, signs can be divided essentially between two functions, expression and indication. The important word for Derrida is ‘function’ because function implies that the difference between expression and indication is not a substantial distinction (VP 20/20). In other words, we are always dealing with one substantial term, the sign, which undergoes two different functions; but, since we do not have two separate signs, the two functions are always “interwoven” in any given sign. For Husserl, expression is interwoven with indication only *in fact; in principle*, expression and indication can be distinguished. Throughout *Voice and Phenomenon*, Derrida uses the “en fait”–“en droit” distinction. But, unlike Deleuze, for Derrida, this distinction is not rigorous. Lacking a substantial separation, whatever one distinguishes in principle must be the same, that is, mediated.

Mediation even defines, for Derrida, Husserl’s living present. In *Voice and Phenomenon*, Derrida turns to Husserl’s lectures on internal time consciousness, because Husserl’s descriptions in the First Investigation suggest that in “the solitary life of the soul” there is no need for indication; psychic life is present to me immediately. In these lectures, Husserl seems to prioritize the primal impression of the now point of the living present as an origin, but Husserl also stresses that the living present consists in a spreading out that includes necessarily not only the primal impression but also the retention of the recent past and the protention of the near future. For Derrida, what is at stake in these descriptions is that primal impression cannot be isolated from retention. So, if retention involves anything like a signifying relation, then the “radical difference” Husserl wants between indication and expression, indeed, between perception and recollection, or even between presentation and

representation, is threatened (VP 73/65). Clearly, Derrida stresses that Husserl, in section 16 of the lectures, describes retention as a “non-perception” (VP 73/65), which immediately proves Derrida’s point: the living present involves something like a sign, since retention “indicates” the recent past which must be absent; there is no pure expression in the solitary life of the soul. But one would mistakenly interpret what Derrida is doing here, if one did not recognize that Derrida is following all the subtleties of Husserl’s descriptions. Husserl calls retention “non-perception” because it is a type of mediation, like a sign, of non-presence. But also, Husserl calls retention “perception” because it “presences” immediately what has elapsed. Retention is at once both a presence and a non-presence, and this “at once” is why Derrida calls retention a trace. As we already noted, soon after *Voice and Phenomenon*, Derrida will call the trace the simulacrum, which implies that the trace can be characterized as a sort of fiction.

#### IV

So, the trace brings us to the third trajectory which goes in the direction of fiction and therefore truth. Heidegger, of course, had displaced the concept of truth, from the correspondence between a proposition and a state of affairs to an experience called *aletheia*. For Deleuze, Bergson enacts a similar displacement. Bergson places truth no longer in the solutions to problems but in the problems themselves (BER 3/15). This displacement allows Bergson to speak of true and false problems. False problems and the illusions that cause them come from a disregard for true differences in nature (BER 13/23). Since science is primarily concerned with differences in degree, science itself invites us to see the entire world in its terms. In other words, science invites us to “project” this side of the absolute onto the other, onto duration. Deleuze stresses, that, since the differences in degree determined by science are, for Bergson, the other side of the Absolute and therefore natural, the illusions and false problems which arise from them are immanent to the absolute (BER 26–27/34–35). Here Bergson follows a Kantian inspiration (BER 10/20–21).<sup>39</sup>

Being immanent, these illusions, therefore, can only be “repressed” by the differences in nature given to us by duration (BER 27–28/35); they can never be entirely eliminated (BER 10/21).

Bergson himself calls the projection of differences of degree onto duration “the retrograde movement of the true” (BER 7/18). For example, the traditional metaphysical problem contained in the question “why is there something rather than nothing?” brings forth this answer. In order to explain why we have the particular reality in front of us, we assume there was a set of possibilities which contained every imaginable possibility. This set of possibilities is larger than the real, like an ill-fitting set of clothes; it implies that “the whole is already given” (BER 101/98). Because the whole set of possibilities is not yet realized, it is called nothingness. The realization of the not yet realized possibilities occurs through the limitation of the set down to the particular reality in front of us. So, realization would be nothing more than the endowment of certain possibilities with reality. Reality then would not be different from the possibilities but would rather resemble them. What has happened to produce this problem, according to Deleuze, is that the particular reality in front of us is conceived as a difference in degree of all possible reality in general (BER 101/98). Then an image of this particular reality is taken and projected backwards in time as one of the not yet realized possibilities. But, this “retrojection” means that it is not the real that resembles the non-real possibilities; it is the image of non-real possibilities that has been copied off the real. The image “has been abstracted from the real once made” (BER 101/98). Therefore, this image is an illusion, a myth, a fiction. And the traditional metaphysical problem of why there is something rather than nothing is a false problem.

For Deleuze, following Bergson, every false problem and its illusion is generated from this combination of possibility and negation (BER 100/98). In contrast, true problems derive from genuine differences in nature. Genuine differences in nature are conditions of experience, lying beyond the “turn” in experience. As conditions of experience, they are ideal, *en droit* (BER 13/23), but, for Deleuze, “en droit” means virtual

(BER 111/106). The virtual must not be confused with the possible. The possible is a term defined in opposition to the real; the possible therefore always lacks reality. In contrast, the virtual is a term defined in opposition to the actual; insofar as the virtual is defined in opposition to the actual it is real and positive (BER 99/96). As real and positive, these conditions are virtual images: “pure presences.”<sup>40</sup> A virtual image, for Deleuze, is a point which must be “tailored to the thing itself, which only suits that thing, and which, in this sense, is no broader than what it must account for” (BER 19/23).<sup>41</sup> That these conditions do not contain more than reality is why they are conditions of real experience; they are not Kantian conditions of possible experience (BER 13/23).<sup>42</sup> That they correspond precisely to particular realities is why these virtual images are true. Therefore, for Deleuze, as well as for Bergson, the true problems concern these true conditions. The question is: “how do these differences in nature relate to one another?”

The solution to this problem is where we encounter the fictional character of the virtual image. These pure presences are tendencies; thus they are, as Deleuze stresses, *sens* (BER 91/88), directions, divergent lines which can be developed into a convergent “virtual image” (BER 20/23). This virtual image which returns from the turn in which we made a difference in nature is the “original point” of convergence. This original point is the true sufficient reason of the thing (BER 20/23–29). Unlike conditions of possibility, with this sufficient reason (BER 35–36/42), “the whole is not given” (BER 108/104).<sup>43</sup> That the whole is not given means that the virtual image has “the power” (*la puissance*) of being divided (BER 116/110), of being divided even into arithmetical units. The original point of convergence “possesses number *en puissance*,” as Deleuze says (BER 36/42, 40/45, 95/93, 103/100). The original point of convergence has, therefore, the power of being “explicated” (BER 98/95) into two different divergent lines. Because the original point of convergence is simple or continuous, its explication follows the model of alteration (BER 23/32, 42/47), not that of alterity.<sup>44</sup> The alteration makes a difference, because what it creates does not correspond to or resemble

reality. This disparity with the real is why the virtual image is fictional or false. While the virtual image is an image and therefore a repetition, it is not a re-presentation, that is, a presentation of the same reality again. Rather, the virtual image is what Deleuze in "Reversing Platonism" calls the simulacrum; it has "the power of the false."<sup>45</sup> Repetition in Deleuze is the power to extend a sense as far as the *N*th power where it is transformed into something different, something that has never been present before, the new. Calling the solution to the problem the new and not *aletheia* means that, for Deleuze, the solution never closes off the problem.

When describing the creation of the new, Deleuze always speaks of "tracing" a line;<sup>46</sup> so, one could speak of a concept of the trace in Deleuze. In addition, whenever Derrida describes the trace throughout his writings, it sounds like what Deleuze calls the virtual image. This similarity is especially striking in *Voice and Phenomenon*'s fourth chapter, where Derrida says that "the sign is originally worked by fiction" (VP 63/56). Derrida makes this comment in reference not to indication, but in reference to expression insofar as expression must in a sense be fictional since expression is defined by the presentation of an ideal meaning. Derrida of course recalls Husserl's comment in *Ideas I* about fiction. Fiction is the vital element of phenomenology because fiction can neutralize the existence of the thing in order to give us its eidetic determinations (VP 4/6, 55/49).<sup>47</sup> Since indication, however, is defined by its reference to factual things and therefore can be distant and absent, indication too is in a sense fictional; as Derrida says, "The indicative sign falls outside the content of absolutely ideal objectivity, that is, outside truth" (VP 31/30). Therefore, for Derrida, because indication and expression share the same signifying form, it is impossible to distinguish the two senses of fiction rigorously (VP 55-56/49-50). Due to this role of fiction, Derrida's concept of trace remains very close to what Deleuze calls the virtual image.<sup>48</sup> But, three characteristics separate Derrida's trace from Deleuze's virtual image.

First, Derrida's concept of trace is formalistic;<sup>49</sup> Derrida says in his 1967 essay, "Form and

Meaning: A Note on the Phenomenology of Language," that "... form would be already in itself the trace ... of a certain non-presence."<sup>50</sup> Derrida makes this comment because, in his 1962 Introduction to Husserl's *The Origin of Geometry*; Derrida discovered that no ideality could be constituted without being embodied in a repeatable form such as a sign.<sup>51</sup> In other words, signification conditions the movement and concept of truth (VP 26/25). For Deleuze in contrast, the virtual image is a tendency, not a form (BER 91/38). Second, Derrida does not use the word "virtual" to qualify the trace; instead, he uses "possibility" and "conditions of possibility." So, in Derrida, we seem to have a combination of possibility and negation; he speaks, as we have seen, of non-presence and the "nothing." But actually this combination does not resemble what Bergson calls "the retrograde movement of the true" because the Derridean conditions are also "conditions of impossibility" (VP 113/101). The trace is at once the condition for the possibility and the condition for the impossibility of presence. For Derrida, the phrase "condition of impossibility" means a lack of power,<sup>52</sup> an "impotence."<sup>53</sup> It is impossible that presence not be formed, which implies that presence is always contaminated. For Derrida, however, impossibility also means necessity: the French idiom "il faut" is a technical term in Derrida.<sup>54</sup> It is not only impossible that presence not be formed, but also it is necessary that presence be formed. The necessity of this formation or tracing, however, implies a power, the power of form.<sup>55</sup> A form, for Derrida, following Husserl, is defined by iterability, the power to be repeated as far as possible, beyond any given presence into non-presence, beyond any given sense into nonsense, and, so it seems, beyond truth into illusion (cf. VP 64-65/58). But, this power of repetition, unlike the power of the virtual, does not make a difference in the sense of a difference of nature; every repetition is contaminated with the same form. Third, the model of repetition in the trace for Derrida is alterity, not alteration as in the virtuality of the virtual image for Deleuze. What is most striking about *Voice and Phenomenon* in comparison to Derrida's earlier books on Husserl<sup>56</sup> is his association of the First

a nearly total affinity

Investigation's descriptions of "the solitary life of the soul" with the Fifth Cartesian Meditation's descriptions of "the sphere of ownness" (VP 42/39). Derrida is led to this association undoubtedly because of his encounter with Levinas in "Violence and Metaphysics." Derrida's emphasis of the relation with the other implies that the trace is defined by representation (*Vergegenwärtigung*) (VP 49, n 1/45, n 4). The term "*Vergegenwärtigung*" suggests that the representation of the trace is the presentation (*Gegenwärtigung*) again of the same thing. But, in *Voice and Phenomenon* as in "Violence and Metaphysics," Derrida (again following the subtleties of Husserl's descriptions) points out that *Appräsentation*, which is essentially connected to *Vergegenwärtigung* (VP 5/7), consists in an "irreducibly mediate ... intentionality aiming at the other as other";<sup>57</sup> "the other's ownness, ... the self-presence of the other, ... its primordial presentation is closed to me" (VP 42/39). If there is any Husserlian concept that anticipates the Derridean concept of the trace, it is appresentation as described in paragraph 50 of *The Cartesian Meditations*. Appresentation implies "the necessity of mediation" and the impossibility of an intuition of the other as other. But, unlike Husserlian appresentation, which is analogical, the Derridean trace is not defined by resemblance since the trace is always a trace of an interiority which is forever closed to me. In short, the interiority of the other is not a presence which a re-presentation could resemble. The trace therefore is a form which iterates an other who has never been present; it is like a missive whose author has always already been concealed, "lethic," a specter.<sup>58</sup>

V

The impossibility of an intuition of the other due to the mediation of the trace brings us to the last trajectory: intuition versus language. It is not insignificant that Deleuze begins *Bergsonism* with a discussion of Bergsonian intuition; in his earlier essay on Bergson, Deleuze had already characterized Bergson's thought as a "superior empiricism."<sup>59</sup> But also, in this early essay, Deleuze says that "intuition is the *jouissance* of

difference."<sup>60</sup> The word "*jouissance*" immediately implies that intuition is based on life; Bergsonian intuition is primarily affective. Thus, in *Bergsonism*, Deleuze insists that intuition has its genesis in what Bergson calls "creative emotion" (BER 115–17/110). Many emotions arise as a result of a representation of a thing, but a creative emotion, according to Deleuze, precedes any representation and disrupts them (BER 116/110; cf. 16/26); it is a paradox.<sup>61</sup> A creative emotion, therefore, for Deleuze is a feeling that is unrecognizable and too close. Being too close, it is a power, a power of that, when I feel it, I



image allows us to understand the particular colors because it is at the limit of a particular color, the last nuance of white. The intuition of this “pure white light” extends the colors to the *N*th power, as far as they can go, in order to converge and become something else, a new color. The intuition of this point where the colors converge is a becoming of color.<sup>65</sup>

It is not insignificant that Derrida begins his 1967 *Of Grammatology* by saying “the problem of language will never [be] simply one problem among others.”<sup>66</sup> Unlike Deleuze, Derrida is not an empiricist. Indeed, in “Violence and Metaphysics,” Derrida criticizes Levinas’s “superior empiricism,” because, all experience, even the experience of the other, necessarily requires speech, if it is to make a claim on you, if it is, for example, to make you promise to do something.<sup>67</sup> The necessity of speech, derives, as we have already noted, from the fact that the constitution of presence necessarily requires being embodied in indefinitely iterable signifying forms; for Derrida, that it must be possible for presence to be embodied in iterable forms means that it must be possible for presence to be written down.<sup>68</sup> The possibility of being graphic in turn implies the death of the one who writes as soon as he writes. What Derrida calls *écriture* remains, necessarily, beyond the death of the author. In fact, Derrida stresses in *Voice and Phenomenon* that writing is defined by the necessity of remaining beyond the death of any given subject (VP 104/93). Because of the mortality they necessarily imply, the iterable forms are incommensurate with intuition. When I speak about something I intuit right now, the forms I use still function and must function even when I no longer have an intuition of the thing (VP 101/90–91). Because the form, or, more precisely, the trace, in order to function, does not require intuition, intuition does not limit it. As unlimited, the trace contains the possibility of an unlimited number of “genres,”<sup>69</sup> that is, of genera, genres, or genders; the trace contains a “+R,” “plus air,” “plusieurs,” as Derrida says, several genders.<sup>70</sup> But, for Derrida, this dissemination of “genders” is not equivalent to indefinite perspectives on a central sex.<sup>71</sup> Because the forms necessarily lack intuition, there can be no

center. Lacking a center, the trace, therefore, for Derrida is always aporetic.<sup>72</sup> But the Derridean aporia is not the same as the Deleuzian paradox. The Derridean aporia is signification and *results* in an experience (cf. VP 111/99),<sup>73</sup> while the Deleuzian paradox is an experience which *precedes* any linguistic representation. This difference in the priority of language and intuition is why the Derridean trace ultimately is not equivalent to the Deleuzian virtual image.

## VI

Derrida has said that he always found himself “flustered” when he read Deleuze’s work, because the “philosophical content” of Deleuze’s work displayed “a nearly total affinity” to the philosophical content of his own.<sup>74</sup> What we have seen is that the affinity is only “nearly total.” Derrida’s initial inspiration in Husserl led him to a prioritization of language and form, while Deleuze’s initial inspiration in Bergson led him to the prioritization of intuition and tendency. But, if there is a “nearly total affinity” between Derrida and Deleuze, this is due to Heidegger. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger renewed ontology not simply by raising once again the question of Being, but also by determining Being itself as a questioning. Both Derrida and Deleuze (like Merleau-Ponty) appropriate Heidegger’s ontology of the question. For Deleuze, every question has to be led back to the problem from which it arose. More basic than the question, the problem in Deleuze is the problem of intuition. The paradox of presence presents an obstacle to life (BER 5/16); in other words, being too close, presence is always life-threatening. I leap into the ocean whose engulfing presence makes me say, “I have no choice but to swim; otherwise I am going to die”; therefore I must learn how to swim; I must come to know how to make myself be a convergent point through which the ocean’s divergent forces flow. This solution is not true, but creative of something new, of new life; it is a beginning over. For Deleuze therefore, we have an epistemological experience – because Deleuze focuses on knowing – in which life is rebegun in the moment of death; death is the recommencement of life; life in death. But, Derrida appropriates



Husserl and Contemporary Criticism” in *The Phenomenology of Husserl*, ed. R. O. Elveton (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970) 73–147.

8 Edmund Husserl, “Philosophie als Strenge Wissenschaft” in *Husserliana Band XXV* (Boston: Kluwer, 1987) 15 and 11; English trans. Quentin Lauer as “Philosophy as a Rigorous Science” in *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965) 89 and 83.

9 Henri Bergson, *Matière et Mémoire* in *Oeuvres, Édition du Centenaire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959) 321; English trans. M. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer as *Matter and Memory* (New York: Zone Books, 1991) 184.

10 Edmund Husserl, *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1929) section 36; English trans. James S. Churchill as *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1964).

11 Henri Bergson, *Pensée et mouvant* in *Oeuvres, Édition du Centenaire* 1394–96; English trans. Mabelle L. Andison as *The Creative Mind* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1946) 188–90.

12 Edmund Husserl, *Phänomenologische Psychologie* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962) 343. The word rendered as “concealment” is “Deckung.”

13 Henri Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* in *Oeuvres, Édition de Centenaire* 15; English trans. F. L. Pogson as *Time and Free Will* (Kila MT: Kessinger Publishing Company, no date [original date of translation is 1910]) 17.

14 Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, I* (*Husserliana Band III, I*) (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976) section 70, 132; English trans. F. Kersten as *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book* (Boston: Kluwer, 1982) section 70, 160.

15 Bergson, *Pensée et mouvant* in *Oeuvres, Édition du Centenaire* 1341–42; *The Creative Mind* 120.

16 Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu, Le temps retrouvé* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954) 230; English trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terrence Kilmartin and Andreas Mayor as *Remembrance of Things Past, Time Regained* vol. III (New York: Random House, 1981) 906.

17 See Jacques Derrida, *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972) 161–64; English trans. Alan Bass as *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982) 134–36.

18 See Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968) 91; English trans. Paul Patton as *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994) 66. See also Gilles Deleuze, “Renverser le platonisme” in *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* no. 2 (1967); collected in *Logique du sens* as “Platon et le simulacre” (Paris: Minuit, 1969) 307; English trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin Boundas as “Plato and the Simulacrum” in *The Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia UP, 1990) 266.

19 Cf. VP 59/53, where Derrida himself seems to make a distinction between Platonism and the metaphysics of presence.

20 To resolve with some certainty this question of the relation of “reversing Platonism” to “the deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence,” one would have to compare carefully Derrida’s “Plato’s Pharmacy” with Deleuze’s “Reversing Platonism.” “Plato’s Pharmacy” was first published in 1968, one year after Deleuze’s “Reversing Platonism.”

21 Deleuze, *Logique du sens* 298; *The Logic of Sense* 259.

22 Jacques Derrida, *Spurs*, bi-lingual edition; English trans. Stefano Agosto (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1979) 127, 133, 139.

23 There are other ways to describe this fundamental opposition. While Derridean deconstruction distances the presence which had been closeby, Deleuzian destruction brings closeby the presence which had been distant; while Derridean deconstruction is a contamination, Deleuzian destruction is a purification. Indeed, while *Voice and Phenomenon* demonstrates, by means of Husserl’s phenomenology, the impossibility of exiting the metaphysics of presence (VP 16/16, 53/48), Deleuze’s Bergsonism determines the progress Bergson made in the actualization of a new ontology outside of Platonism [BER 1/13, 27/34–35; see also Gilles Deleuze, “La Conception de la différence chez Bergson” in *Les études bergsoniennes* vol. 4 (1965) 111]; in other words, while Derridean deconstruction, in Husserl, aims at showing that the functions of the sign, indication

## a nearly total affinity

and expression, are not distinct, Deleuzian destruction, in Bergson, aims at establishing a difference in nature between extensity (and its illusion) and duration. Indicative of this opposition between Derridean deconstruction and Deleuzian destruction is the fact that, in *Voice and Phenomenon*, Derrida always seeks contradictions in Husserl's argumentation (VP 64, n 1/57, n 6) – contradictions which imply a fundamental contamination – while in Bergsonism Deleuze always seeks consistency in Bergson's argumentation (BER 95/94) – a consistency which implies a fundamental purity.

24 Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* 83; *Difference and Repetition* 59. See also Deleuze, *Logique du sens* 32; *The Logic of Sense* 21.

25 Henri Bergson, *Pensée et mouvant* in *Oeuvres*, Édition du Centenaire (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959) 1428–30; English trans. Mabelle L. Andison as *The Creative Mind* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946) 232–33. In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson openly approves of Plato's image of the dialectician as the good carver, cutting at the articulations of the real. See Henri Bergson, *L'Évolution créatrice* in *Oeuvres*, Édition du Centenaire 627; English trans. Arthur Mitchell as *Creative Evolution* (Mineola NY: Dover, 1998) 156.

26 Deleuze, "La conception de la différence" 111. Also, Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* 83; *Difference and Repetition* 59.

27 Deleuze, "La conception de la différence" 84.

28 Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* 86; *Difference and Repetition* 61. Also, Deleuze, *Logique du sens* 294; *The Logic of Sense* 254–55.

29 Deleuze, "La conception de la différence chez Bergson" 96.

30 See yet again, Deleuze, "La conception de la différence" 87.

31 Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* 154; *Difference and Repetition* 117.

32 See BER 38/44; also Deleuze, "La conception de la différence chez Bergson" 96.

33 Undoubtedly, this claim is too unequivocal, since Derrida like Deleuze claims to distinguish his concept of difference from the Hegelian concept of contradiction. But Derrida makes this distinction while keeping himself, as he says, "at the point of almost absolute to Hegel." Derrida's "almost absolute proximity" (one never finds comments

like this in Deleuze) allows me to make such an unequivocal claim. See Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (Paris: Minuit, 1972) 58–59; English trans. Alan Bass as *Positions* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981) 43–44.

34 See Jacques Derrida, "Violence et métaphysique" in *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967) 227, n 1; English trans. Alan Bass as "Violence and Metaphysics" in *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978) 320, n 91.

35 Derrida always focuses on the reduction because of Fink's interpretation of Husserl.

36 See Derrida, "Violence et métaphysique" 196–224; "Violence and Metaphysics" 134–151.

37 See also Jacques Derrida, *Review of Edmund Husserl, Phänomenologische Psychologie. Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1925* in *Les Etudes philosophiques* 18.2 (1963): 203–06.

38 See also, Jacques Derrida, "'Genèse et structure' et la phénoménologie" in *L'écriture et la différence* 245; *Writing and Difference* 164.

39 Gilles Deleuze, *La philosophie critique de Kant* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963) 37; English trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam as *Kant's Critical Philosophy* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984) 24.

40 What here in 1966 Deleuze is calling a virtual image will become what he and Guattari call a concept in *What is Philosophy?*

41 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* 25; *What is Philosophy?* 20.

42 Deleuze, "La conception de la différence" 85.

43 Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson" in *Les philosophes célèbres*, ed. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Paris: Mazenod, 1956) 298.

44 Deleuze, "La conception de la différence chez Bergson" 90. See also, Deleuze, *Logique du sens* 303; *The Logic of Sense* 262.

45 Deleuze, *Logique du sens* 303; *The Logic of Sense* 263.

46 See, for example, Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* 36; *What is Philosophy?* 38. The word Deleuze uses is "tracer."

47 Quoted in Derrida, *L'origine de la géométrie* 29; *Introduction* 45.

48 Deleuze discusses Husserl's concept of noema in *Logique du sens* 32–33; *The Logic of Sense* 20–21.

49 See for example, Derrida, *Spectres de Marx* 123–24; *Specters of Marx* 73–74.

50 Derrida, *Marges de la philosophie* 206, n 14; *Margins of Philosophy* 172, n 16.

51 Edmund Husserl, *L'origine de la géométrie, traduction et introduction par Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962) 86, n 3; English trans. John P. Leavey as *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry an Introduction* (Lincoln NE: U of Nebraska P, 1989) 89, n 92.

52 Derrida, *Spurs* 127.

53 Husserl, *L'origine de la géométrie, Introduction par Derrida*, 171; *Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction* 153.

54 Derrida, *Spectres de Marx* 123–24; *Specters of Marx* 73.

55 Derrida, *Marges de la philosophie* 201–02; *Margins of Philosophy* 168–69.

56 There is no discussion of the Fifth Meditation in Derrida's earlier, 1953–54, *Le problème de la genèse dans la philosophie de Husserl* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1991). And he only alludes to the Fifth Meditation in his *Introduction to The Origin of Geometry*.

57 Derrida, *L'écriture et la différence* 182; *Writing and Difference* 123.

58 See Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx* 268; *Specters of Marx* 169.

59 Deleuze, "La conception de la différence chez Bergson" 85.

60 Deleuze, "La conception de la différence" 81.

61 Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* 250; *Difference and Repetition* 194.

62 Deleuze, *Logique du sens* 175; *The Logic of Sense* 149.

63 Deleuze, *Logique du sens* 303; *The Logic of Sense* 262.

64 Deleuze, "La conception de la différence" 98.

65 Cf. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille plateaus* (Paris: Minuit, 1980) 356–57; English trans. Brian Mazzumi as *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987) 291.

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66 Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1967) 15; English trans. Gayatri Spivak as *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976) 6.

67 Derrida, *L'écriture et la différence* 225–26, 225, n 2; *Writing and Difference* 151–52, 152, n 90.

68 Husserl, *L'origine de la géométrie, Introduction par Derrida*, 87–88; *Husserl Origin of Geometry: an Introduction* 90.

69 See Jacques Derrida, "La loi du genre" in *Parages* (Paris: Galilée, 1986) 249–87.

70 See Jacques Derrida, *La vérité en peinture* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978); English trans. Geoff Bennington as *The Truth in Painting* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987). As Derrida shows in *Spurs*, a masculine style can also at the same time be feminine.

71 Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972) 281–82; English trans. Barbara Johnson as *Dissemination* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981) 249–50.

72 See Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1993).

73 See Zeynep Direk, *Derrida's Renovation of Experience*, Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Memphis, 1999.

74 Jacques Derrida, "Now I'm Going to Have to Wander All Alone" in *Philosophy Today* (Spring 1998): 3–5.

75 Jacques Derrida, *De l'esprit* (Paris: Galilée, 1987) 147; English trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby as *Of Spirit* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989) 94.

76 I have invented this term, "refinition," in order to have a term parallel to "recommencement" in Deleuze. I intend with this neologism, an indefinite repetition of the end, as "recommencement" implies an indefinite repetition of the beginning.

**Leonard Lawlor**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
**University of Memphis**  
**Memphis**  
**TN 38152**  
**USA**  
**E-mail: lrlawlor@memphis.edu**

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