TOWARDS AN ETHICS OF INCLUSION

This paper first discusses Jacques Derrida's critique of intentionality, particularly in relation to Edmund Husserl. Second, it moves to his conception of the relation between intentionality and language. Third, it builds off this foundation to outline Derrida's derivation of an ethics and assess current criticisms of his ethics from such figures as Richard Rorty and Emmanuel Levinas. Fourth, it presents current defenses of this effort, especially that of John Caputo. It concludes in a reevaluation of Derrida's stated position on the possibility and the limits of an ethics.

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What is the nature of ethics? Can one speak of the nature of ethics? Philosophy long has sought answers to these questions. Recently, Derridean deconstruction has attempted to answer these questions and the results are currently being debated. As Derrida's sphere of influence grows in philosophy, literary theory and beyond, many critics have accused Derrida of all but eradicating ethics, especially via his critique of intentionality. In turn, Derrida has attempted to defend and resituate his ever-evolving method of deconstruction to reveal its necessary ethical character.

This paper discusses Derrida's critique of intentionality, moving from this to his conception of the relation between intentionality and language. We then will be able to outline Derrida's derivation of an ethics. Criticisms of Derrida will be assessed, concluding in a reevaluation of his stated position on the possibility and the limits of an ethics.

Is This What Husserl Intended?: Derrida's Critique of Husserlian Intentionality

In a broad sense, the Derridean project aims at overcoming the history of metaphysics, the tendency to metastasize the subject's meaning-intention in the object. Derrida questions the idealizing of the object in language and the resulting presencing of both subject and object in a transcendental relation. Although one of many influences, the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl remains the primary philosophy through which being and its *telos* of static meaning-intention is critiqued.

Husserl's primary goal is to establish a rigorous science which accounts for an autonomous, objective field of phenomena while also to explain how the human subject may intuit this field. He shows that the individual's conception of the world, herself and her place in the world is not a relativistic construct, devoid of a proper *telos* to guide it; the individual partakes of a truth that is reality beyond the interference of the subject (or a group of subjects). The difficulty lies in establishing how such a bond between subject and object may be conceived, and moreover, communicated.

A quick sketch will detail his basic steps. Husserl begins by investigating our accepted notions of meaning, the traditional means by which understanding is conceived. He finds that it is through language and a historical sedimentation of knowledge in language that we may even conceive of our civilization. It is through language that meaning is even initially able to be conceptualized. A prerequisite for communication of an idea requires that the object in question is one and the same. We must ensure that when we discuss something, an isosceles triangle for instance, there can be no mistake in our meaning-intention—there must be an ideal entity for verification purposes.

Husserl broadens language into a more general theory of signs. He then differentiates two distinct types of signs: *indication* (*Anzeige*) and *expression* (*Ausdruck*). The former includes signs such as a siren for a fire truck, a skull and cross-bones for poison, and/or a logo for a corporation; the indication stands in for another object and virtually communicates the existence of other objects in its stead by association. In the latter, meaning itself shines through. That is, in whatever form the expression takes (written inscription, phoneme, etc.) meaning is related. The meaning may be of a tree, a circle, a list of instructions, or whatever, but Husserl's basic point is that the object expressed in an expression shares its essence with the expression—the expression functions phenomenally as the object's meaning. What is actually happening for Husserl is that the object is *idealized*, and then communicated through an expression. As a result, an expression may occur once, may be repeated (even infinitely), may even transcend a particular language-based configuration (e.g., a word translatable into English, German, Arabic, etc.). In each instantiation, the expression represents the same idealized entity.[1] Note however, that the object may have more than one meaning, may be expressed by many expressions (a cup may be "Susan's cup" and "the blue cup in the sink"). Hence, it is not possible to reduce an object to a meaning, or vice versa.

When a person produces an expression, Husserl believes the meaning-intention approaches the transcendental idealization. Each new expression of an object, whether produced by the same subject or not, is unified transcendentally by the ideal entity. Thus, the human act of intending expresses this idealization on the phenomenal plane to "tap into," be generated by, the transcendental plane.[2] A kind of subjective transcendentality results, in which intentionality becomes more than a subject-relative construct, becomes objective while concurrently linked to the possibility of expression in general. This does not produce a correspondence theory, but rather a synthesis of identity between subject and object.

Human expression takes two forms: spoken and written. Each has respective strengths and weaknesses (which Derrida will contrast later). Spoken expression signifies and constitutes an object in the more ideal manner—the immediacy of the phoneme is less "removed" from its object, the intentional relation is more pristine, pure. The voice remains pure due to its immediate instantiation and thus has a primacy for Husserl. Spoken expression exists in consciousness and the external world, and its nonempirical quality has an ideal temporality which gives it a transparency Husserl seeks. For him, one of the drawbacks of spoken

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[1] See Robert Sokolowski, "The Structure and Content of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*," *Inquiry*, Vol. 14 (1971), for a fuller exposition of these concepts.
[2] Husserl is here adopting the idea in the Kantian sense, wherein ideas regulatively guide our intentions and help unify the various perspectives (*Abschattung*) into a single object.

expression rests in its temporality as nonempirical—the idea must exist in infinite extension and protention (Husserl's Living Present), must exist even if all human empirical consciousness ceased to exist. Only this idealized transcendental state gives our intentions meaning and spoken expression falls short here. Written expression, however, has the desirable quality of capturing meaning-intention in an empirical-historical form which may "survive" the subject or consciousness which intended it. While it loses purity due to its material embodiment, it is *necessary* that expression retain meaning after the instant of material genesis. Written expression functions in this way, so that in the absence of the subject it still retains its meaning-intention. This proves Husserl's contention that intentionality exists in both the moment and beyond, because of both its material embodiment in real history and its idealized transcendentality.

Given the high conceptuality of the Husserlian project, Derrida's critique is remarkably straight-forward. By questioning the primacy of the voice, spoken expression, he aims at destabilizing the self-sufficiency Husserl attributes to presence via the voice (and also to Husserl's idea of the intentional grapheme). If it is *necessary* that every meaning-intention be able to transcend the present in the form of written expression, in the *absence* of the subject, Derrida finds that intentionality becomes supplemented by what it is not. The absence of the present moment of intention circumscribes and invades, makes possible and defines, intention; it displaces any notion of self-identity. Writing (in Derridean conceptualization, arche-writing or the condition of meaning) fulfills and erases the Husserlian phenomenological project: "Paradoxically, the possibility of being written permits the ultimate freedom of ideality."[3] The possibility of writing prevents the fulfillment of pure presence Husserl wants to establish ideally (as found in the pure voice).

Derrida has many words for the disruption of this *telos* of presence and self-identity. Trace, supplement, *différance*: they all speak of the pre-condition which allows one *at once* to conceive of intentionality and lose it. There is a radical openness in language which subverts the closure of metaphysical presence. The absence in presence produces an arbitrariness that is the condition for human thinking. Again, the superficial contradiction this openness appears to invoke is "proof" to Derrida of the faulty edifice metaphysicians such as Husserl hope to erect:

> The paradox of such a structure, in the language of metaphysics, is an inversion of metaphysical concepts, which produces the following effect: the present becomes the sign of the sign, the trace of the trace. It is no longer what every reference refers to in the last analysis. It becomes a function in a structure of generalized reference. It is a trace, and a trace of the erasure of the trace.[4]

Intentionality is never fully recoverable. All we will ever have of it is a trace, which only slips through our fingers as we try to grasp it tighter.

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[3] Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's* Origin of Geometry*: An Introduction*, John P. Leavey, Jr., trans., (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), p. 90.
[4] Jacques Derrida, "*Différance*," in *Margins of Philosophy*, Alan Bass, trans., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 24.

Ethics As Language

Derrida's deconstruction of intentionality appears to take meaning out of human life or control, to speak solely of an anarchic determinism, stripped of freedom as traditionally localized in agency and intentionality. How can one decide between what is good or bad if any normative structure slips away, is infiltrated by what it is not?

His answer is that one cannot look for an ethics that can be expressed linguistically or semiotically and then held in some immutable stasis. The changes and new contexts brought by the flux prevents the establishment of any high court of ethical appeal. For Derrida, the only ethics we may draw on is a pre-metaphysical ethics based only on the play of *différance*. One of the staunchest defenders of this understanding of Derrida is John Caputo. In his *Radical Hermeneutics*, Caputo draws out this aspect of Derrida's thought, asserting, "The state of ethics after the catastrophe, after virtue, is what Derrida calls the *ébranler*, the diaspora, the dissemination of metaphysical guardrails and social solidarity."[5] This "ethics of dissemination" acts by "systematically reversing these [traditionally metaphysical] oppositional schemes, reversing the discrimination strategically, in order to displace oppositional arrangements in favor of the open and nonexclusionary."[6] No authority is absolute, no discourse of practice beyond alteration or transformation. It is the play of language itself which is ethical, to act ethically is to let "the play" play.

The force of an ethics of language or signification extends beyond any local ethics. Our ability even to conceptualize an ethics is conditioned by the ethical play of *différance* and dissemination. It is a sort of "Ur-ethics" based on the essential violence which is the movement of *différance* and the play of differentiation in language. It is opposed by the metaphysical aspiration to use language to define the world ethically, to pronounce a verdict on the world. Derrida points out that we do not wield language in this way; instead, *language wields us*—it acts upon us, inscribing on us the traces of the flux.

Consequently, Derrida does not situate ethics in human intentions, this would provide an ethics only after-the-fact and one open to displacement by *différance*. Ethics is *différance* itself. Furthermore, if one seeks to act ethically Derrida states that this is solely possible by assuming responsibility for the flux, to respect difference and avoid reifying the other in a static pose. Caputo comments, "Deconstruction opens up an ethics which experiences the claim, not of presence but of absence, not of identity but of difference."[7] The only "rule" is to keep *différance* in motion. Ethically, Derrida's argument thus "implies that making promises entangles us in a net of commitments and consequences far beyond what [we are] willing to [traditionally] discuss,"[8] that one's debt is better paid to other humans be respecting *différance*.

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[5] John Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1987), p. 243.

[6] *Ibid*., p. 260.

[7] John Caputo, "Beyond Aestheticism: Derrida's Responsible Anarchy," *Research in Phenomenology*, Vol. XVIII (1988), p. 66.

[8] Henry Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida*, (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1984), p. 127.

Although Derrida's earlier works rarely touched explicitly upon ethics, his later works often reflect an application of this ethical stance. In one essay he calls upon the university structure to open itself up to a dialogue beyond traditional reason and logocentrism and accept a broader "principle of reason."[9] Elsewhere he denounces the discrimination of apartheid that rests on a quasi-ontological premise of stopping the flux and its endless permutations and mixtures.[10] At another point he states that "reading is transformational"[11] while advocating a continual resituation of texts to avoid ideological incrustation. Derrida keeps himself open to continuous re-inscription and re-interpretation in his human relations and requests the same of humans wishing to act ethically. Taking this preliminary conception of Derridean ethics, we will now explore his opposition—those who claim this is no ethics or woefully inadequate—and then review his position.

But What Can We *Do*?: Critiquing Derrida's Ethics

Derrida's ethics has raised many varied objections, ranging from modification to outright denial. Given the metaphysical nature of ethics as humans conceive and seek to apply it (and Derrida affirms that this sense of ethics is as inescapable as the metaphysical language we must employ) we seek the answer to the question of the other. How are we as humans to act ethically with each other? It is this problem, in light of his cry of ethical *différance*, that crystallizes the debate. It is Derrida's position on how humans should treat each other concretely that galvanizes his supporters and detractors.

One of the larger groups of opponents comes out of neo-Marxist critical theory. Drawing upon a variety of Derridean sources, Jürgen Habermas criticizes Derrida for being *conservative* and remaining *within* the Husserlian transcendental project:

> Derrida by no means breaks with the foundationalist tenacity of the philosophy of the subject; he only makes what it had regarded as fundamental dependent on the still profounder—though now vacillating or oscillating—basis of an originative power set temporally aflow. Unabashedly, and in the style of *Ursprungsphilosophie*, Derrida falls back on this *Urschrift*, which leaves its traces anonymously, without any subject...[12]

This leads to an ethics founded on a quasi-subjectivism and resistant to the freer, more liberal intersubjective ethics needed to forge an egalitarian community inimical to human misconduct. Habermas believes Derrida's aestheticizing of language prevents rational defense of the lifeworld against totalizing speech. Moreover, Derrida's work urges us to totalize, to reduce the diversity of language. Note that both Habermas and Derrida believe they work against the urge to totalize via language but have very different ideas of what totalization is and how to combat it (dissension such as this and possible resolution will play a role in this paper's conclusion).

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[9] Jacques Derrida, "The Principle of Reason: The University in the Eyes of Its Pupils," *Diacritics*, (Fall 1983).
[10] Jacques Derrida, "Racism's Last Word," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 12 (Autumn 1985).
[11] Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, Alan Bass, trans., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 63.
[12] Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1987), pp. 178-179.

In the same vein, James Marsh accuses Derrida of aesthetic reductionism. He counters that a Derridean ethics must be one of silence and inaction because to take actual ethical action is to use reasons, to reenter the post-Enlightenment rational mode of thinking with its necessary logocentric baggage. Marsh advocates that Derrida leave behind this self-contradictory approach in favor of a rationalist schema which produces *more* reason—assigning ethics, logic, poetry, etc., their respective areas instead of lumping them together under a single *logos*.[13] By leaving undecidability more powerful than truth, Derrida undermines his ability to advocate his ethical position, he cannot present an argument which sticks.

While coming from a similar liberal humanist background, Richard Rorty buys into more of the Derridean method than the critical theorists. Out of an analytic-pragmatist background, Rorty attempts to establish a liberal utopia in which both individual freedom and the prescription against cruelty provides an ethical human solidarity. Paramount for this is the division of public and private interests for the individual. In developing one's private life and creative spirit, Rorty finds Derrida to be on target, allowing just the kind of poetic play necessary for self-growth and discovery.[14] But as for the intersubjective community (where ethics primarily resides) Derrida's "line of thought [is] largely irrelevant to public life and to political questions."[15] Rorty takes "Derrida's importance to lie in his having had the courage to give up the attempt to unite the private and the public, to stop trying to bring together a quest for private autonomy and an attempt at public resonance and utility."[16] Derrida's "vocabulary" has an ethical ring only at the private level while leaving open a space in which to insert and develop a different discursive project attending to wider, public ethical questions.

The most compelling criticisms of Derrida's treatment of ethics comes from Emmanuel Levinas, whose transcendental approach maintains the enchainment that binds humans together and from which the call to look into the face of the Other is ineluctable. Levinas sees the silence Derrida assumes (so as to keep the play in motion) as a tacit acceptance of the prevailing ethics—for Levinas there is no abdication of one's complicity with and responsibility to the Other. Derrida too easily withdraws from and reengages with the other, limiting his receptivity to the Other. Levinas at once takes Derrida to task for his dependence upon that which is deconstructed and Derrida's lack of explicitly stated obligation to the deconstructed Other. He praises Derrida's "rigorous reflection" which "lets us catch a glimpse of these interstices of Being where this very reflection unsays itself,"[17] yet seems saddened by Derrida's apparent inability to continue to expose himself to the radical alterity of the Other.

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[13] See James L. Marsh, "Strategies of Evasion: The Paradox of Self-Referentiality and the Post-Modern Critique of Rationality," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XXIX, No. 3 (September 1989).

[14] Richard Rorty, "Is Derrida a Transcendental Philosopher?," in *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philsophical Papers Volume 2*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 120.

[15] Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 83.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

[17] Emmanuel Levinas, "Wholly Otherwise," in *Re-Reading Levinas*, Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley, eds., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 6.

Peter Atterton intensifies this debate. He states that whereas Derrida sees ethics as language and language as violence, Levinas sustains an "uncompromising insistence on the originality of peace."[18] Derrida believes that Levinas's hierarchy and privileging of peace cannot be maintained due to the necessary step of conceiving the Other in (violent) language.[19] If we recall Derrida's critique of Husserlian intentionality, we may see that for Derrida Levinas's "Pure non-violence…would amount to language in its 'pure intention,' a language of 'pure invocation,' where the Other is invoked without anything being predicated (said) of her or him."[20] To conceive of the Other involves doing violence to her. Atterton states that Levinas escapes here because Derrida, despite his linguistic reduction of the Other, does not conceive of all the forms of difference—he is negligently *exclusive*. Levinas' theory involves an I, the Other, and a third party. It is this third party that brings peace (and ethics) into the dynamic. In relating to the other, coming to peace with her, there is always a third party excluded. In turning to her one attempts to redress the violence of her initial exclusion, and, eventually, by including all third parties a universal peace may be reached. Peace between the I and the Other overcomes the violence of language and ethical responsibility leads to inclusion of third parties. Violence is not thereby eliminated, but peace's role is expanded as the goal of universal peace becomes gradually realized. In the end, Derrida's ethics cannot account for the third party and how she keeps the violence/peace dynamic in motion.

The strength of the Levinasian critique is palpable enough that Derrida's defenders feel the need to answer it. Caputo attempts to insert the Levinasian openness into deconstruction, stating that Derrida's differentiating approach always establishes a curved, unfair space in which, "The other is both lower and higher; lower because excluded, higher because his/her exclusion cries out, calls for, claims my response."[21] As a result, Derridean ethics conceives of the Other in both low and high positions, the imperative being to answer the Other's call. This avoids the "inexhaustible Neoplatonic infinity"[22] of the Levinasian Other, instead resituating Levinas's call as "prophetic hyperbole." This answer is the height of disseminated ethics and the proper rejoinder to Levinasian critique.

The Exclusivity of *Différance*

Despite the wide range of criticisms against a Derridean ethics, there appears to be a common thread spun throughout: in its striving to respect the flux and keep open play to any possible permutation some valuable interest group is excluded. Whether modes of rationality or third party others, Derrida's critique of intentionality and the resultant ethics is incomplete. It is ironic that the thinker of difference, the proponent of radical nonexclusion, is accused of bias.

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[18] Peter Atterton, "Levinas and the Language of Peace: A Response to Derrida," *Philosophy Today*, (Spring 1992), p. 59.
[19] See Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," in *Writing and Difference*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) for his full argument.
[20] Atterton, "Levinas and the Language of Peace: A Response to Derrida," p. 62.
[21] Caputo, "Beyond Aestheticism: Derrida's Responsible Anarchy," p. 69.
[22] John Caputo, "Hyberbolic Justice: Deconstruction, Myth and Politics," *Research in Phenomenology*, Vol. 21 (1991), p. 13.

Is this some recalcitrant metaphysical need that is unjustifiably leveling an accusation? Isn't this kind of onto-theological comfort being sought just that shunted by Derrida in favor of the stormy *ébranler*? It is these questions which must be answered if Derridean ethics is to be fully understood. I will now propose a preliminary answer to be explained further below: Derrida's ethics is indeed exclusionary, but perhaps not for the reasons given above. He allows his bias against metaphysics to prevent full acceptance of the implications of *différance*, and adopts a position difficult to maintain based on deconstructionist tenets.

We shall begin by discussing Rick Roderick's essay "Reading Derrida Politically (Contra Rorty),"[23] which critiques the Rortyean interpretation of Derrida (as is stated above). Stressing what language does *to us*, he claims there is no room for Rorty's "liberal humanist ethos of the autonomy of individual choice."[24] Rorty is accused of "domesticating" Derrida and ignoring the political implications of deconstructing the totalitarianism of Western reason. The power of Derrida's critique is found in his attention to "the problem of enunciation."[25] Any attempt to present the other of reason must do so *through* reason, through metaphysical speech. How, then, to speak against reason except with reasons? It is exactly this problem in ethics that haunts Derrida. If in the "epistemological" problem of reason, Derrida may remain silent and simply let *différance* go to work, may he be so positionless in implicating an ethics? Is he so positionless?

Roderick's position is emblematic of the quandary of a Derridean ethics. To effect change (with intention) is in some sense to seek to delimit the play of *différance*, to betray the ethics of *différance*. To respect *différance* is to prevent oneself from slipping into metaphysical reification, to see one's actions as only a trace of what they were intended to be, never to be recovered. The kernel of intention in the trace should not be allowed to saturate language in an overripe fullness. Again, we need to push Derrida to his limits, to plumb his form in an effort to see how many shapes the clay of *différance* may assume.

As noted, Derrida speaks against homogenous thought and for respect for and tolerance of difference. He seeks to overturn an entire conceptual order so that the free play of dissemination will be set loose. But how "free" is the free play? How "absolute" is the excess of *différance*? The question is: how may any step in the dance of *différance* be precluded?

Derrida's most powerful answer to date is found in his edict that "Deconstruction is justice."[26] Justice is here viewed as the undeconstructible condition of deconstruction. It is the condition of the condition of all thought, law, literature, intelligibility itself. As Caputo points out: "Deconstruction is possible only insofar as justice is undeconstructible, for justice is what deconstruction aims at, what it is about, what it *is*."[27] "Un-de-constructible"—do Derrida and

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[23] Rick Roderick, "Reading Derrida Politically (Contra Rorty)," *Praxis International*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (January 1987).
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 444.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 446.
[26] Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority'," in *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld and David Gray Carlson, eds., (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 15.
[27] Caputo, "Hyberbolic Justice: Deconstruction, Myth and Politics," p. 8.

Caputo employ this double negative to skirt the issue of presencing a positive project? Or is our inability to presence justice proof of the play of *différance,* allowing us to glimpse justice as it dances just beyond our reach?

These questions form the heart of the matter. Justice, perhaps the weightiest of all ethical terms, is reserved for *différance* alone. To call something or someone just is always to be merely on the way to justice, never to have achieved it. His ethics tolerates virtually any stance save a lack of respect for the enigma of difference. The one trace, the one pathway discouraged from the start is that upon which Western reason has traveled since Plato (named metaphysics, onto-theology, transcendentality, etc.). This step is the fall which prevents the continuance of the dance. It is the virus that weakens the "body" of *différance*. Yet, it is also the body itself, the metaphysical cinder that smolders as the trace moves on. Here we are questioning Derrida's primal assumption—that *différance* is *good*, that it is *true*, that it does not *lie*. *Différance* only betrays us if we seek to cage it, it will guide us to justice if only we set it free. Derrida states that "truth will not be pinned down"[28] but will turn on us if we attempt to. He does not, he cannot, question the privileging of *différance*. This would lead to a double betrayal—he of *différance*, *différance* of him.

But why consider this a betrayal? I propose we free Derrida from his *différance* dependency, show him that *différance* may love a liar as well. What is it in *différance* (as if it was something we could *see* in it) that says we must respect it? A true ethics of free dance allows *all* steps, even the step that is not. The stormy *ébranler* does not care if one offends it— and what retribution might it offer? Is Derrida perhaps driven by a fear of offense, of rejection and wrath? If so, it seems unnecessarily so. No goddess of dissemination compels one to view the other in one ethical way (or at all). As Derrida himself urges, we must avoid the tendency to divinize the trace and its play. For *différance* without limits, our human no and yes are the same—the cup of intentionality is equally full and empty. Our choices, as such, exist because of *différance*, we cannot *choose différance*, in the sense that by doing so we have made the *right* choice.

Here we are following Levinas in exhorting Derrida beyond his current position. We are recommending that he may better valorize *différance* by truly setting it free. And if we are truly open to *différance* where does that leave us, what ethics might we adopt? Let us go back and look at the earlier criticisms of Derrida. What is it in them that is prevented by *différance*? That they are rational? Metaphysical? Does Derrida believe a Habermas or Levinas can adversely *effect différance* materially?

This does not hold up in the storm of *différance*. If they deny *différance*, she cares not a whit. If they forget her, no great transgression has been broached. They are welcome to her breast just the same, if indeed they have ever left. No permutation of the trace, no matter how ontological, can "hurt" *différance*. These children are as beloved by *différance* as her adoring son Jacques.

And what of Jacques? He is welcome too! Infiltrate, destabilize, reveal metaphysics all you want! Performing deconstruction is as good a life as any (and Derrida is human after all).

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[28] Jacques Derrida, *Spurs*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 55.

Respect and protect *différance* if you choose. Live the ethical life you believe this mandates. We would wish only that he consider (dare one say self-reflectively?) the full range of mutations raised by his account and admit the choice was already made and lost in the fact of our situation—that *différance* cannot come out on top. By Derrida's own stripes, what would it mean if *différance* "lost"? That justice has been impeded? Derrida should take his own advice and "conceive of a play in which whoever loses wins, and in which one loses and wins on every turn."[29]

Of course, this is simply one opinion, itself open to deconstruction. Derrida is *free* to criticize metaphysics. But anyone is free to criticize Derrida and his version of *différance*. True play and justice allow it.

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[29] Derrida, "*Différance*," p. 20.