

The *Becoming-Philosophy* as a Foreign Language: Rereading Deleuze and Derrida

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This paper will revisit French theorists, Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida, on the notion of the future of philosophy. Although their approaches to the future (*devenir* [to become] for Deleuze and *à venir* [to come] for Derrida) of philosophy may differ, I will argue that their differences allow for a space of congruence and continuity in the not only the field of philosophy but in every academic field. The question of the future of philosophy needs to be addressed because of the “crisis” that each academic department seems to face with every new faculty appointment, influx in student registration, applying for funding, etc. Each and every department in the university context seems to have the need to “justify” and validate the purpose of that discipline. I am not proposing another theory for theory’s sake, but a call to deeply reconsider and re-evaluate the philosophy of and in each department. After all, faculty members who are not even “involved” in the philosophy department still possess a PhD.

Key Words: Deleuze, Derrida, philosophy

1 An Attempt to Find a Place for Philosophy

Where does [philosophy] find today its most appropriate place?
(Derrida, 2002, p.3)

Where would we begin to reread these two thinkers? From what point should we begin? Would a rereading proffer an ethical reading of their respective philosophies? What can these thinkers offer to the field of linguistics? What relationship does philosophy (especially with these French thinkers) have with applied linguistics? What are the pragmatics of philosophy in the field research of applied linguistics? I will attempt to find a “place” where philosophy can enter even in the field of linguistics in order to iterate the importance of pragmatic research. The methodology of teaching languages nevertheless elicits an ethical practicum in class as students receive information that is ultimately a “foreign” language. Ethics of linguistics precisely begins in the classroom between teacher and students, in the very notion of teaching a methodology, and in the concept of a foreign language. From the outset I will propose that the philosophy that I am referring to is not a departmental discipline, but precisely a pragmatic methodology of rethinking the functions of philosophy, the ethics of acquiring a new language. This new language

Immanuel Kim

is not referring to the semantical, grammatical, lexical functions in the structure of any particular language, but the modalities of thinking and acquiring a foreign language. It is precisely the ability to welcome another foreign language into the department that may run the risk of radical restructuring, re-administrating, or re-objectifying the Linguistics Department's philosophical agenda in teaching English as a Second Language. It may go without saying that philosophy underwrites the theoretical and practical aspects of every discipline whether philosophical theories are consciously taught or not. My proposal argues alongside Deleuze and Derrida the "new" frontier of philosophy as a foreign language that needs to be learned and acquired through the arduous efforts of thinking the "Other." By referring to Deleuze and Derrida, I hope to reiterate the significance of research, ethics, and language (language as philosophy, the language of philosophy, the philosophy of language) in education departments from all ages and social groups.

There is much to say about Deleuze and Derrida, much to say about their contribution to philosophy, and much more to say about their friendship. Perhaps I will begin *here, there, now* reminiscent of the legacy of Hegel, moments before the machine of dialectics proceeds without turning back. I will begin with their reading of Hegel, the ground on which their philosophy took flight. They may not have discussed Hegel together, but they have taken his implications of the *closure* of the history of metaphysics, the history of philosophy rather seriously. They both have taken Hegel's notion of identity polemically. They both have been thinkers of difference/ *différance* and have allowed it to become *their* (non)conceptual legacy. Deleuze and Derrida's philosophical careers seemed to have begun and ended with Hegel. After all, wasn't *Difference and Repetition* (a text on the "other" language of philosophy, difference, that has been neglected for too long) Deleuze's way of receiving recognition in the philosophical world along with Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (a text on the science of writing)? Their later works may not have been an explicit claim against Hegel, but nevertheless, do they not question the future of philosophy in their own way? Hegel seemed to have had an answer to the *end* of history, the *end* of philosophy; but Deleuze and Derrida didn't seem to be convinced. They seemed to have a different understanding of philosophy from Hegel's, a different reading, a different *translation* or perhaps even a *mistranslation*. For both Deleuze and Derrida, the history of metaphysics may have died, or at the very least, have come to an end. In fact, one can even lay a provocative statement against Deleuze and Derrida for being the murderers of philosophy, the ones personally responsible for the deconstruction of traditional philosophy, or even departmental philosophy. The "crime" against philosophy may have brought philosophy down to its own grave (Geoffrey Bennington argues that philosophy *always already* anticipated its grave), but the result of this death conditioned the possibility of "new" philosophies to emerge. Perhaps I should begin again. I should begin with the "end of philosophy" as the point of departure and retrace the moments where Deleuze and Derrida diverge and converge in their outlook on the future [*à venir*] of philosophy and see how they still remain ethical in thinking of what I call the *becoming-philosophy*.

The Becoming-Philosophy as a Foreign Language

In order to frame this rereading, I will attempt to engage in a discussion that they never shared regarding the notions of the Other, the future as becoming, and ethics. I will argue that for both Deleuze and Derrida, ethics is the intense affection of thinking and of opening up the delimited boundaries of the Self for the Other, the Other who is not me, the Other-than-me, the Other-than-philosophy, the *becoming-philosophy*. For these two thinkers, the Self has never been a totalized, enclosed, system of identity-within-the Same; the Self is fractured, *always already* fractured, and will continue to be displaced, dislocated, deterritorialized, which already presupposes the concept of the Other as the *a priori* difference of identity. Thus, ethics precedes philosophy, a pre-philosophy if you will, as that which already instates difference within the “determinate” relation between the Self and the Other, and thereafter, ethics must proceed philosophy in order to question the infinitive movement of becoming, *to (be)come* [*devenir/ á venir*]. Naoki Sakai (2005) in *Deconstructing Nationality* revisits the notion of “mother tongue” as an imaginary space of identity or interiority. Sakai said, “The fact that humans are capable of acquiring language is premised upon their definitive alienation from anything like a symbiotic relationship with the mother, and in this sense represents the loss of a ‘mother tongue’” (2005, 18). In other words, the Self as an enclosed identity system comes to the realization that language is given by the Other, and that the alienation from the mother allows the child to realize the “foreign” language. Derrida (1998) had said a similar statement regarding the mother tongue, where the mother tongue, the only language that I “know” how to speak, the only language that describes my identity, was always given to me by the Other. Whenever I speak in my mother tongue, I am speaking the language of the Other, I am giving the language back to the Other. The language that I speak, the language that I claim to be my mother tongue, is always spoken to and for the Other because it was never mine to begin with; my mother tongue had always been some sort of a foreign language to me. The fracture self-identity tries to find consolation in its fracturedness by establishing a code of linguistics that will enable it to claim its instantiation as an identity. However, it must be recognized that the Self had been constructed by the Other, and that the Self must remain open to the Other. This is the presupposition of ethics.

Who is this Other, and why does the Other demand my ethicality? The notion of the Other, for Derrida, may have been largely influenced by his friendship with Levinas. The Other, for Levinas then, comes to me from outside my context, outside my subjectivity—the alterity of the Other, beyond being, Infinity, God. For Derrida, the Other may not have a strong theological connotation as does for Levinas; the Other becomes a political non-entity (such as law, justice, democracy, academic institutions, cosmopolitanism) that is always to come [*á venir*]. Derrida may agree with the Benjaminian concept of the *messianic* time that tears through the fabric of historicity and ruptures the *teleological* linearity of history. At the same time, Derrida considers the Other as the one who disrupts my subjectivity, leaving me vulnerable to the face of the Other to which/whom I can only respond with ethics. Derrida in *Of Hospitality*, *The Gift of Death*, and *Adieu* draws out the *aporetic*, the paradoxical notions of ethics as that which conditions the possibility of

Immanuel Kim

the impossible—the impossibility to be absolutely ethical, and yet at the same time, the need to be absolutely ethical.

In terms of education, the ethics of learning at school or at universities requires the students to be critical to the reception of knowledge; that is, the questioning of knowledge fosters greater productivity in acquiring the information as opposed to passively receiving the lesson. The critical endeavor to problematize the given knowledge allows the strengthening of academia. The passivity of acquiring knowledge, or language in this case, may only allow the student to “experience” the language, but one may not wield its potential. Derrida problematizes the notion of ethics as impossible and possible not to show the difficulty of understanding ethics, but to show the critical implications of ethics. Likewise, the ethics of learning a new language must be a critical experience for the students.

Deleuze, on the other hand, may offer a different concept of the Other. Unlike Derrida, Deleuze’s Other may not be an absolute alterity that is beyond my thought, but the possibility of the actuality, the possibility which encloses on actuality, the possible-world-outside-the-Self, but always immanent within actuality. In other words, the Other is not an absolute alterity, but the fractured Self, where the Self can no longer lay claim to a substantial, reified self-identity. The dislocation of the Self, which is no longer the Self, is always Other to itself, difference of singularities, difference of difference. Unlike Derrida where the Other disrupts my subjectivity, for Deleuze, the *a priori* Other is the disrupted subjectivity. Ethics, for Deleuze then, is not solidifying the fractured Self, but continually going beyond itself, beyond the fragments of the Self, beyond thought, beyond the enclosed system of philosophy: to think otherwise than Being. In other words, Deleuze’s notion of ethics demands the learners, researchers, educators, professors, etc. to always think beyond the realm of possibilities that reside here and now to the future possibilities of education and academia. The future of philosophy for Deleuze may be beyond the walls of the philosophy department and into the pockets of every department, every discipline.

Most of the education system or academic departments have been reluctant to interdisciplinary exchange because of the thought of devaluing the department’s code of ethics and philosophy. Each department not only takes pride in their extensive history of research and faculty, but considers interdisciplinary studies as a weightless entity with no “real” substantial anchorage of rigorous disciplinary philosophy. Thus, Deleuze and Derrida’s notion of opening up departmental doors to allow other disciplines to penetrate the long-standing self-identity incites much antagonism. However, the paradox in this reluctance to accept philosophy in each department resides precisely in the accreditation of faculty members who hold a PhD (Doctorate of *Philosophy*). Have these scholars forgotten that all the years of arduous study, research, teaching, and thinking was to obtain a PhD so that their works may be legitimized as scholarly? Have these scholars forgotten that it was philosophy that they were doing all along? It seems rather odd to neglect philosophy throughout one’s PhD research, and furthermore to keep philosophy in its own “appropriate place” in the department. Is a university not the place for humanistic

The Becoming-Philosophy as a Foreign Language

inquiries, whether it be in the literature, linguistics, (social) sciences, mathematics, engineering, medicine, law, humanities, or philosophy department? Do these scholars from each department not hold a PhD? Then why have so many scholars reduced philosophy to its own department, as if that was the only “place” where philosophy can reside?

2 A Place for Philosophy: Inside/Outside the Question

Where does [philosophy] find today its most appropriate place?

How are we to understand Derrida’s question on “appropriate” and “place”? Is there, indeed, a right place that philosophy occupies? Then, can there be a “wrong,” misappropriate, dislocated place? Derrida, in “The Right to Philosophy” (2002), criticized the history of departmental philosophy, and how this institution has governed the criteria of what and how philosophy ought look like, taught, and thought. He continued to say that there are other ways for philosophy, and more importantly that philosophy *is* the other way (Derrida, 2002, p.10). Derrida said, “Philosophy has never been the unfolding responsible for a unique, originary assignation linked to a unique language or to the place of a sole people” (p.10). A unique language or a place of a sole people becomes the target for Derrida to attack traditional philosophy with. For too long, philosophy has been governed by a particular “language” and has been excluding others, as if philosophy had its own dialect, and by a particular group of people while excluding others, as if philosophy had its own “pure” genealogy or canon. It was time for philosophy to break out of its traditional roots and establish a new way of thinking, a new way of philosophizing. What impeccable timing analytical philosophy had during this transitional period.

It seems as though the reception of analytical philosophy in the Anglo-American world has defined the “new” paradigm of philosophy. In a roundtable discussion with Derrida on the concern for “The Right of Philosophy” Hillis Miller gave an anecdote about his visit to the People’s Republic of China for a conference on analytical philosophy where John Searle was the guest speaker. According to Miller, Searle said the following:

I have news for you. We have developed in England and the United States a definitive method of philosophy which puts an end to all previous philosophy, which is called logic and analytical philosophy, and ... everybody recognizes this as the predominant philosophy, and it needs to be institutionalized very rapidly here in this large country. (Derrida, 2002, p. 32)

Could Searle be correct in saying that the history of Western philosophy ends at the footstep of analytical philosophy? Searle’s rhetoric seems to be highly concerned with the “humanity” of world philosophical politics. However, if Derrida is correct in saying that analytical philosophy shows little concern for literature, art, math,

Immanuel Kim

science, and even cinema, then how is it a deep engagement with humanity or ethics?

The hegemonic crusade of analytical philosophy seems to fall back into the trap of reinstating itself, re-doctrinalizing itself into an institution alongside the former traditions of philosophy—a philosophy without any movements or affects. Perhaps analytical philosophers are too caught up in their own currents of thought that they neglect, or refuse, to consider the language of the Other, the Other completely outside the domain of philosophy. Their attempt to situate philosophy with the “right” reading deters and defers them from welcoming another reading. However, Derrida contended that both continental and analytical philosophy have shown little concern for philosophy *itself*. For Derrida, philosophy requires the displacement and the deconstruction of these hegemonic departments. Philosophy of today requires a new language to take philosophy *beyond* itself, past the thresholds of traditional thought, past the linguistic interpretations. For Derrida, the place in which philosophy occupies is precisely the moment of inscription, marginalization of philosophy, or *translation*, the moment when language breaks through and out of the former language and goes beyond into a new reading, a new language of/for the Other.

Deleuze, in *Dialogues* (1987), recalled what Proust had once said: “Great literature is written in a sort of foreign language. To each sentence we attach a meaning, or at any rate a mental image, which is often a mistranslation. But in great literature all our mistranslations result in beauty.” What is this language of mistranslation? Deleuze was referring to style when he cites Proust, but with style there is also the immanence of becoming, the becoming-multilingual, the becoming-Other. Deleuze contrasted mistranslations from interpretations: “This is a way good way to read: all mistranslations are good—always provided that they do not consist in interpretations”(1987). The notion of mistranslation is not to misconstrue a text or to misinterpret a meaning from the text; it is precisely offering another language to the Other, speaking otherwise than Being. Translation, then, is not simply a transference of one language to another but the condition of possibility that enables the emergence of a new language. Translation, in the traditional sense of conveying a unified language to another, implies a solidarity in a particular language, that a language is totalized, consolidated, and self-reflective. The very act of translating needs to anticipate a mistranslation, for this is the premise of language. The ethics of becoming-multilingual so as to (mis)translate a text is primarily the line of flight or of variation which affects each system by stopping it from being homogeneous. To think that a particular language is homogenous and that meaning can be correctly transmitted without error may reflect the traditional attitudes that academic departments may have had in terms of thinking about their research and discipline. Research in every scholarship continues precisely because of the condition of possibility for new languages to emerge within that discipline. In other words, an academic department cannot and should not think of itself as an enclosed system of thought, but rather a porous medium between the transference of knowledge discourse of interdisciplinary studies. In this sense, every academic department needs to be multi-lingual. Philosophy, therefore, must resist conforming

The Becoming-Philosophy as a Foreign Language

to a singular language, a singular thought; it speaks in many languages. Deleuze's commitment to becoming-multilingual already suggested his willingness to "go beyond," to *translate*, to move across the boundaries of traditional philosophy where the Other awaits us with a foreign language.

For both Deleuze and Derrida, the hegemony of traditional philosophy must be deconstructed in order to proceed itself beyond to a new place *outside* of philosophy, other-than-itself. This would be troubling for Hegel, for absolute spirit would try to find another way to consume the negativity that exists outside itself just so that it can reaffirm itself to itself without anything left-over. However, the *event* of philosophy slips from the grips of the Hegelian dialectical machine and pursues in a direction with no end in sight, only possibilities (whether this be the possibility of *devenir* or *à venir*).

3 A Place of Ethical Divergence

Where does [philosophy] find today its most appropriate place?

The most evident and reductive "place" where Derrida and Deleuze diverge in their respective deconstructive mode of thinking is *inside* and *outside* the domains of philosophy. The practice of deconstruction (although Derrida never really liked to use this word) works from within the text, within the enclosed system of traditional philosophy. Derrida does not "attack" past or present philosophers; he indicates moments where the logic of one's argument becomes destabilized, dislocated, and thus fallible. These are always a working from the "inside." His stylistic and performative acts of deconstructing traditional philosophy are to disrupt the totalized Self of philosophy and move toward a new "place," perhaps a marginalized space that has been excluded by philosophy.

However, for Deleuze, Derrida had been too preoccupied with the "inside" of philosophy. This is not to say that Deleuze disagrees with the drive of deconstruction, but that Derrida's concern with the inner circle of traditional philosophers deters him from proceeding out of this tradition. According to Richard Rorty (1996), "deconstruction is not (quasi)-transcendental philosophy, but must be understood as part of a tradition of philosophy as world-disclosure, a tradition that includes Plato, Hegel and Heidegger, where our old vocabularies of self- and world-description are challenged, redescribed and replaced by new vocabularies" (p. 29). Derrida may have re-established a new form of philosophy, but it nevertheless still remained within the tradition of philosophy (not traditional philosophy). Derrida (2001) recalled a moment with Deleuze during their earlier years: "With a concern like that of an older brother [Deleuze said]: 'It pains me to see you put so much time into this institution, I would prefer that you write'" (p.193). Deleuze's concern for Derrida and for his generation of thinkers was to break out of the time investment in social-political institutions that do not generate a new modes of thinking, but that which always attempt to close the intensity of affections. Deleuze's advice to Derrida to write instead of engaging in debates on the future of philosophy perhaps struck an ethical chord with Derrida. Deleuze criticizes the ethicality of Western

philosophy for not having been ‘doing’ philosophy but instead only having been discussing it. Deleuze mentions how philosophy as a disciplinary institution in our democratic state have been charged for not prescribing answers to human rights issues, that there needs to be a call for more discussions, more conferences, more debates on philosophical matters that concern humanity. To this Deleuze says, “We do not lack communication. On the contrary, we have too much of it. We lack creation” (WP 108). In *Negotiations*, he says, “Academics’ lives are seldom interesting. They travel of course, but they travel by hot air, by taking part in things like conferences and discussions, by talking, endlessly talking...We don’t suffer these days from any lack of communication, but rather from all the forces making us say things when we’ve nothing much to say” (N 137). This advice taught Derrida to “do” philosophy, to think, to create philosophy instead of discussing, and for that, he expresses his debt to a great philosopher.

Where would one “place” Derrida? Would he belong to the department of philosophy (after all, he did invest quite some time into writing or deconstructing philosophy)? Many of his “philosophical” essays, criticisms, notes, etc. were stylistically *a-philosophical*, as if they were written in a foreign language. Or, would Derrida belong to the field of literature? His deconstructive narratives may reflect a form of literary trope. This is certainly visible in his (un)-readable analysis of Hegel and Genet in *Glas*. This text(s), *Glas*, delineates Derrida’s utmost concern for the *undecidability*, the undecidability of “place,” the undecidability of inside/outside, the undecidability of philosophy and literature.

For Deleuze, the “outside” of philosophy refers to several different aspects: first, his “event” of breaking away from traditional epistemology; second, his procreation of a bastard reading of philosophy; and third, his collaboration with Guattari. Deleuze’s early works on philosophy already show how he attacked and escaped from traditional philosophy. Daniel W. Smith (1998) retraces moments of Deleuze’s ethics without morality, the mode of thinking beyond the Kantian transcendental universalism of morality and other moral restraints set by philosophy. Kant’s categorical imperative became the target for Deleuze through reading Nietzsche. Deleuze abandons Kant’s moral philosophy by rejecting the hegemonic criteria of the Good and the Evil placed onto society by means of control and manipulation. For Deleuze (1983), adherents to this sort of “morality” is not only practicing immorality, but also by becoming-reactive to their *pontentia* they are being unethical to the progress of humanity and thought. With the advocacy of eliminating Kantian imperatives, Spinoza, Nietzsche, and now Deleuze have been charged with moral disregard, inhumanity, nihilism, relativism, and other negativities. The closure of thought, of moral values as such, and of my *pontentia* to exert affection to others are considered to be more unethical than what Deleuze (and Spinoza and Nietzsche) has proposed. For Deleuze (1983), resisting the closed standards of thought is the fundamental ethical purpose in philosophy. Hence, if morality was associated with traditional philosophy, then it would not only be “ethics without morality” but also “ethics without philosophy” or “ethics beyond philosophy.”

The Becoming-Philosophy as a Foreign Language

In *Dialogues* (1987), Deleuze commemorated thinkers like Lucretius, Spinoza, Hume, Nietzsche, and Bergson for being able to possess philosophy for its worth and for its purpose: “I liked writers who seemed to be part of the history of philosophy, but who escaped from it in one respect” (p.14). Already from his early works, Deleuze possessed a deep affinity toward these thinkers, whom he perhaps calls true philosophers. John Marks (1998) said that Deleuze aligned his philosophy closely with Nietzsche and Spinoza because of their advocacy of active forces or affections enabling the body to surpass its own elemental capacities: the transcendental not as “transcendent” but as a plane of immanence which is populated only by “events.” How is this ethics for Deleuze? The ethical concern revolves around this notion of “productivity,” that is, being able to express active affections of the will, the will to power, against the constraining powers of cultural hegemony that causes the self to become reactive. Becoming-active extricates the body of the inhumane and regressive powers of traditional Western philosophy (and later with Guattari, the resistance to capitalism and psychoanalysis). The active affections that express one’s essence with intense velocity is the ethicality of philosophy. These philosophers have affected and altered Deleuze’s mode of thinking in such a way that has allowed him to rethink and rewrite his own philosophy. Is this not the mode of translating? Deleuze does not offer a “reading” or an interpretation of Spinoza and Nietzsche, among the many; he was already developing a philosophy that diverges from his predecessors. In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1988), Deleuze said, “I imagined myself approaching an author from behind and giving him a child that would indeed be his but would nonetheless be monstrous” (p. x). The bastard child that was conceived through this sort of buggery or “productive” reading demonstrates Deleuze’s philosophical practice.

At first, Deleuze engaged with Nietzsche and Spinoza in their respective works because of their contribution to “event” of philosophy. He recalled his first entering into the study of philosophy: “So I began with the history of philosophy—when it was still being prescribed. For my part, I could not see any way of extracting myself. The history of philosophy has always been the agent of power in philosophy, and even in thought. It has played the represser’s role: how can you think without having read Plato, Descartes, Kant and Heidegger?” (Deleuze, 1987, p. 14) Spinoza and Nietzsche were philosophers of productivity for Deleuze, but it was Felix Guattari who enabled him to practice the art of going “beyond” Spinoza and Nietzsche and into the realms of new possibilities.

It was Guattari who enabled Deleuze to “go beyond” the parameters of philosophy. Deleuze (1995) said in an interview, “One of the questions about ‘philosophy,’ after all, has always been what to make of the *philos*. A philosophy amounted for me, then, to a sort of a second period that would never begun or got anywhere without Felix” (p. 137). This second period marked the new beginnings with Felix as they ventured into the pragmatics of ethical philosophy. In another interview, Deleuze (1987) said, “We were only two, but what was important for us was less our working together than this strange fact of working between the two of us” (p. 17). Deleuze may be referring to the productivity of the creation of concepts, the events of becomings, the multiplicities of singularities found in *Anti-Oedipus*

and *A Thousand Plateaus* that could only have been made possible with the “pragmatic language” that arose, or was created, between the two. In *Negotiations* (1995), Deleuze said that “pragmatics is dealing with the circumstances of language use, with events and acts” (p. 28). *A Thousand Plateaus*, therefore, expresses Deleuze and Guattari’s pragmatic (st)utterance of the dislocated, bifurcated Self which is disseminated across the plane of immanence in forms of diagrams, or that which becomes-Other to itself. Deleuze and Guattari do not make universal claims as to what philosophy ought to look like; instead, they demonstrate their thinking process, their translations. Deleuze explains that his collaboration with Guattari shows *how* he thinks as opposed to *what* he thinks about. Then, would the “outside” be a suitable “place” for Deleuze among the canon of philosophers, even among his generation of French theorists? Unlike Derrida who constantly tries to show the Other of philosophy from within, Deleuze shows the Other of philosophy by not responding to philosophy but by writing and thinking across the horizon of the “unthought.” At the same time, we cannot reduce both Deleuze and Derrida as thinkers inside/outside the philosophical domain; they are serious (and playful) thinkers about difference/*différance*. Their concern for philosophy may need to be read as a concern for socio-political establishments. In other words, their respective philosophies of working their differing ideas of the Other in and out of traditional philosophy inextricably deal with the future of philosophy—both *devenir* and *à venir* of philosophy.

The future of rethinking philosophy in the academic system affects not only the parameters of academia but the boundless social, political international entities. The geopolitical dimensions of our society today diffuses and problematizes the complexities of homogenous nationalities, gender, race, and culture. The possibility of “overcoming” language barriers with the dispersal of multi-lingual cyberspace culture enables the future of thinking through unified, homogenous politics in a different philosophical, ethical light. For instance, today, the Linguistics department in South Korea and in Japan lay emphasis on the importance of learning and acquiring English as a Second Language in order for the students to engage better in the diplomatic relations within the geopolitical world. While this education may prove to be a progressive advancement for the future of these students, it goes without saying that traditional methodologies and pedagogies that are employed to teach these students still elicit philosophical inquiries. The notion of acquiring a foreign language already problematizes the students’ understanding of their identity, for their “mother tongue” is questioned by the acquisition of the Other.

4 A Place of Ethical Convergence

Where does [philosophy] find today its most appropriate place?

While Deleuze and Derrida may have begun their careers by breaking away from the closure of thought, the notions of *devenir* and *à venir* continue in that line of thought to think the unthinkable, to respond to the Other that is beyond my comprehension, my perception. For Deleuze, the Other as imperceptible is always

The Becoming-Philosophy as a Foreign Language

becoming [*devenir*], and for Derrida, the Other as undecidable is always to come [*à venir*]. It appears that Deleuze's notion of the Other is empirical or pragmatic, whereas Derrida's notion of the Other is transcendental (not in the Kantian sense). These concepts may, at first sight, appear to be paradoxical, but I will attempt to show how these ideas are immanently symmetrical in regard to the very notion of "paradox." I will argue that the moment of convergence for both Deleuze and Derrida is on the edges of paradox, paradoxical thinking (in Latin, paradox means to go beyond (*para*) belief or opinion (*doxa*)).

Deleuze and Derrida, despite the difference in their approach to philosophy, have always been deeply concerned with the "beyond" philosophy. In *Negotiations* (1995), Deleuze said that any concept is bound to be a paradox. And in *Difference and Repetition* (1994), he said, that paradox breaks up the common exercise of the faculties and places each before its own limit. Deleuze's project of thinking the unthought, now, appears to have become transcendental (not in the Kantian sense). For Derrida, the project of deconstruction can be reduced (for argument's sake) to the inclusion of marginalized voices that have been systematically disregarded as inferior to the *telos* of philosophy. Derrida's notion of going beyond to the outer limits of our totalized parameters seems to refer to the "literature to come," or "writings to come" that have not arrived yet, but soon. It, now, seems as though these two thinkers are not as starkly different as first proposed. The *devenir* and *à venir* of the Other are immanently, but not dialectically, working with and against each other at the same time.

According to Philip Goodchild (1996), the aim of Deleuze's philosophy is to produce a movement in life, a movement in the machinic assemblage of concepts and of enunciations. This movement toward "life" is becoming. In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1988), becoming is a multiplicity, a molecular multiplicity which connects heterogeneous terms in the rhizomatic lines of connections and intersections. Becoming, within these lines, takes place "in the middle," where lines are no longer subordinated to points of origin, destination, or intersection, but take place as that which is under way (Deleuze, 1998). There is no sense of a *telos* in the becoming. There is no subject nor object. The force of becoming desires its aim at its own increase, the conjunction of lines of deterritorialization, and the production of new affects.

Becoming does not have an *originary presence* (to use Derrida's words), where a directional meaning can be derived from its trajectory. Deleuze says that becoming presupposes, or is the pre-philosophy of, Being. Becoming does not become Being; but rather bifurcates the totality of ontological, epistemological thinking that has dictated the movement of philosophy. Deleuze offers examples of "becomings" in different models: becoming-child, becoming-animal, becoming-woman, becoming-minoritarian, becoming-molecular, becoming-imperceptible, etc. These different models of becomings serve to illustrate the innumerable differences of singularities that abound the plane of consistency in their diagrammatic lines of intensity. Deleuze (1988) added that a "becoming-man" cannot exist because it is the totality, the systematic ontology of "man" that needs to be deconstructed. Likewise, there cannot be a becoming-molar, becoming-majoritarian, etc. These are

the “fascist” models that need to be disrupted by the events of a new becoming, a becoming away from, a becoming beyond the parameters of totality, the *becoming-Other*.

Deleuze argues that the Self is already disrupted, fractured by the infinitive verb of *devenir*. For Heidegger, the verb “to be” served as the metaphysical model of ontology. However, Deleuze asserts that Heidegger did not examine the complexities of *être* far enough, and has anchored Being to a stagnant notion of being rather than becoming. For Deleuze, even the verb “to be” implies the possibility of Being to transpire, transform, and translate into an entity/non-entity of becoming without end. Deleuze, therefore, does not use *être* as his model of becoming, lest people associate Deleuze to Heidegger, but *devenir* as the possibility of a new world. The infinitive verb, the “to--so and so,” opens up the possibilities of thought to overcome its own limitations and to think beyond. Deleuze may be recalling another Bergsonian reading of the possible, the actual, and the real into the formula of becoming. Deleuze (1994) said, “The other person appears here as neither subject nor object but as something that is very different: a possible world, the possibility of a frightening world. This possible world is not real, or not yet, but it exists nonetheless” (p. 17). The Other, as the new possible world, may be the possible thinking of the real without actuality, the always real but not yet actualized, the always “to become,” perhaps even the always “to come.” That is to say, *devenir* has implicitly the notions of *à venir* on its due course, where the indeterminate course, the un-coordinated flight plan, is intensely rhizomatic.

Referring back to Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche, becoming, then, affirms its own “becoming-active.” And in *What is Philosophy?* (1994), Deleuze rigorously asserted that creating concepts is the primary discipline for philosophy. Creating concepts articulates the active affirmation of a philosopher to cause or rupture events along the plane of immanence. More importantly, these ruptures of thought by creating concepts signal movement away from totalized, enclosed systematized thought and toward the possibility of the Other. Gregg Lambert (2002) adequately said, “What remains “unthought” and “outside” representation is precisely the difference that is implicated and enveloped (interiorized) in the idea of another possible world that the Other Person expresses as reality” (p. 33). Therefore, the infinite verb not only opens up the possible world, but also shows signs of progress through intense *negotiations* of becoming. Allow me to explain.

In *What is Philosophy?* (1994), Deleuze criticized the ethicality of Western philosophy for not having been “doing” philosophy but instead only having been discussing it. To this Deleuze (1994) said, “We do not lack communication. On the contrary, we have too much of it. We lack creation” (p. 108). Negotiations in terms of discussions, conferences, and debates lead back to the rubric of fascist structural discipline, where philosophers are under the impression that these would lead to progress. For Deleuze, these discussions disillusion scholars to think that they are contributing to the world of philosophy and humanities, but are inevitably puppets of society. Negotiations of becoming are not compromises; they are constant movements of involutions (that are and are not associated with regression or progression, devolution or evolution *per se*), where concepts of becoming

The Becoming-Philosophy as a Foreign Language

persistently tries to find ways “out” of the thought and into the “unthought.” Lambert (2002) offered a different reading of Deleuze’s project: “For Deleuze, it has never been a question of ‘breaking out’ of the world that exists, but of creating the right conditions for the expression of the other possible worlds to ‘break in’ in order to introduce new variables into the world that exists, causing the quality of its reality to undergo modification, change, and becoming” (p. 37). If we were to take Lambert’s analysis seriously, then there seems to be a closer affinity between *devenir* and *à venir*. It is at this point that I will bring Derrida to the fore to juxtapose the convergence of *devenir* to *à venir*.

From the outset, I would like to present two readings of Derrida’s notion of the *à venir* of the Other: first, the common understanding of *à venir* derived from his friendship with Levinas regarding the absolute Other who differs and defers presence; second, the persistent movement toward the unanticipatable absolute Other who makes this precise movement or decision undecidable. I will examine the two to see how the *à venir* of the Other could be understood.

The first (and common) understanding of *à venir* appears to be a passive response to the Other who is to come, who may come, not yet, but soon. In *Of Hospitality* (2000) and *The Gift of Death* (1995), Derrida examined the ambiguity of the code of responsibility and duty toward the Other, who calls me to appropriate a response. In both texts, Derrida presented the *aporetic* notion of ethics, where, on the one hand, I am called to be absolutely responsible to the other by adhering to the Law of hospitality, and on the other hand, by responding to the other I will be disregarding the rest (all the others). My responsibility to one will be an irresponsibility to others, for I can only respond to one at a time: the singularity of responsibility. I cannot be wholly ethical, wholly hospitable, wholly responsible to everyone, although I am called to. The example of Abraham’s response to God is considered to be ethical. However, Derrida (1995) noted, Abraham’s whole response to God is conversely a *non*-response to society, to his wife, to his son, whom he is going to sacrifice. Being absolutely ethical to one negates my ethicality to the rest. This is the ethical impasse that Derrida revealed. For Derrida (1995), one must choose in “secret” to whom one is going to be ethical. Abraham has chosen to be ethical to God as he raised his knife to Isaac on Mount Moriah. Derrida added, that being ethical requires me to raise my knife at every instant of my decision-making life, which should always question the decidability of my decision. It is precisely this undecidability of ethicality that Derrida presents in order to propose the undecidability of the *à venir*.

Deconstruction, for Derrida, is the absolute response to the Other with yeses. The “democracy-to-come,” as *à venir* is mostly associated with, is a political issue that Derrida raised in response to the ethics of universities and institutions. Deconstruction, thus, claims to accept all voices of thought and opinions in the university context, where these plurality of thoughts may be heralding the *à venir* of the Other, the new philosophy, the new Humanities, the democracy-to-come. Derrida goes even further to say that deconstruction calls all political, ethnic, cultural borders into question by proposing to open them up for free access and mobility, even at the risk of political-economical destabilization. Of course, his

critics would not settle for this account of hospitality as ethics. Derrida's critics have charged him with being too abstract, too theoretical, too ideal, too messianic. Alex Thomson (2005) in *Deconstruction and Democracy* concisely summarized Derrida's response to his polemical critics: "Clearly from Derrida's point of view, any theory which presumes to label, identify or name a present politics, a determinate concept of the political, is being more messianic, in seeking to make some particular future arrive, to make something in particular happen" (p. 173) Derrida's ethics of *à venir* may seem messianic, but he calls it messianism without content. That is to say, the messianic arrival of "democracy" has no contents of the political democracy that we understand it to be today. In fact, democracy has yet to arrive because the very concept of democracy implies that there cannot be the ideal form of democracy, that the democracy we speak of today is unworthy of its name. Our movement toward democracy must be negotiated at every point of decision-making juncture.

Thus, the second notion of *à venir* refers to the "negotiation" period for the coming Other. If there is an ethical imperative in deconstruction, then it will always already have been fractured, broken, transgressed, translated as soon as I have begun to speak about it (Thomson, 2005). This is not to say that we remain silent to the politics of ethics. By recognizing and affirming the "negotiations" that need to take place, politics of ethics open up something that may not be political nor ethical in their strictest sense. "Democracy-to-come" is neither a political project that needs to be initiated nor is it the ethical "something" that needs to be determined, although they may imply these as well. Rather, as Thomson (2005) said, "Democracy-to-come is a name for a combination of both a politics of waiting without expectation, and an incessant and impatient negotiation" (p. 143). That is, the *à venir* of the Other remains irreducible, imperceptible to our cognition and to our desire for solidarity, for presence. The Other will remain beyond the threshold, beyond the parameters of our understandability, in the domain of the "unthought." However, our response is not only passive with a "Here I am," but active at the same time with a "Here I go." In another Abrahamic reference, Derrida (1995) indicated the passage where God calls Abraham to leave his home and to go [*aller*]. This *aller* has premonitions of the un-anticipatable, the unknowing, the unthought. Abraham becomes a nomad, with no deliberate course. But with every move he makes toward the "promised land," he affirms his ethical response and conditions the possibility for another day. Abraham does not negotiate with God; he negotiates with himself as to the decision that he had made. For Derrida, *à venir* is the undecidability that needs to be traversed or overcome with much deliberation. Chantal Mouffe (1996) said, "I can never be completely satisfied that I have made a good choice since a decision in favour of one alternative is always to the detriment of another one" (p. 9). The "promised land" never arrives (not even for Moses). Hence, the Israelites, the people of Israel, the sons of Abraham are nomads, wandering the world with no perceptibility, but always awaiting for the Messiah to arrive. This nomadic movement of *à venir* seems to resemble closely the diagrammatic movement of *devenir*. This may be the moment where two seemingly divergent theories converge

The Becoming-Philosophy as a Foreign Language

on a single plane of thought as they stride across the borders into the *becoming-philosophy*.

In reference to the education systems in both Korea and Japan, each academic departments that is “responsible” for the progress of human development needs to reconsider the infrastructure of the department’s philosophical and ethical drive. Each department, presumably, had been founded on a particular cause for the development of human consciousness. Recognizing this philosophical ethicality may be the beginning of restructuring the modalities and directions of each academic discipline. The pedagogical implication is not necessarily the “how to teach” but absolutely the “why to teach.” In other words, the pedagogy of teaching methods does not derive from the instructor’s abilities, per se, but from the elemental acknowledgement of why an instructor stands before a group of students and why these students need to be in the classroom. The failure to recognize these fundamental reasons may lead to an unstructured purposelessness of education, and no creative pedagogical methods will improve the conditions of this demise.

What Deleuze and Derrida, in their own theoretical way, present to academia is the recognition of the future of academics within the context of a self-totalized education system. Research will never end as long as humanity exists, teaching will never cease to speak as it pursues foreign languages, and the ethics of learning will constantly question the philosophical paradigm.

5 Politics of Friendship: *The Place of Becoming-Philosophy*

Where does [philosophy] find today its most appropriate place?

Deleuze and Derrida: there is much to say about these scholars, there is much to say about their contributions to philosophy, there is much more to say about their friendship. I did not say this, Derrida did. His last few words to Deleuze seemed as if they had been close friends for a long time, but only a few would know that these two were anything but close. How close? How far? Surely not as close as Deleuze and Guattari. Deleuze says that it pains him to remember the gestures and glances of Guattari, that these gestures and glances should not be remembered as something past, but something to come. These were his words. Or perhaps not as close as Derrida and Levinas. Derrida bids farewell to Levinas with words that only Levinas would know, understand, and love: the words of *Adieu, a-Dieu*. These were his words. What words can, then, be said between Deleuze and Derrida? For they have been silent to one another, for they have not spoken to each other, for they have not seen each other very often. Is Deleuze a friend of Derrida, and vice versa? Great philosophers, great thinkers of difference, why, then, is there such a chasm of *indifference*? However, Derrida (2001) was gracious and grateful to Deleuze: “I only know that these differences never left room for anything between us but friendship” (p. 193).

The friendship that forged between Deleuze and Derrida (although it is difficult to say that they were friends) occurred precisely in the “between,” where the most generative ideas exploded into differences without bound, differences

without borders. These two thinkers loved to play; indeed, it was play (perhaps even *jouissance*), the most outrageous play at times that exploded the system of writing, speaking, and thinking. How playful they were with their style. Can one read *A Thousand Plateaus* once, in one sitting place, and not laugh at the multi-lingual dialects that take place? Can one read *Glas* and determine the indeterminacy of identity/non-identity, heterosexuality/homosexuality and still not laugh at the way Hegel blushes when Genet makes a pass at him? Can one even read Deleuze and Derrida *appropriately*? After all, this is the question, is it not? Of appropriateness? Of place? The politics of friendship depoliticizes all notions of philosophy, ethics, politics, economics, linguistics, and the list goes on. Between the two, Deleuze probably made the sharpest turn away from systematic philosophy, in that, he turned to the arts, music, and cinema (i.e. Cinema series I and II). Derrida remained in the political arena of the undecidability of philosophy and literature.

I began this paper with where Deleuze and Derrida had begun as thinkers of difference, and although it seems appropriate the “end” with where they finished their careers, it seems as though the “end” of their philosophical thought commences the new beginnings of philosophy. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze seemed to have made a slight turn towards the arts, where percepts, affects, and concepts still arise with such joy. It seemed as if he had much more hope in the arts than in philosophy. Or perhaps, he wished for philosophy to be like the arts. Deleuze (1995) said, “I realized how much philosophy needs not only a philosophical understanding, but a nonphilosophical understanding. You need both. It’s one of philosophy’s two sides, one of its wings” (pp. 139-140). For Deleuze (1995), philosophy needs to speak to the non-philosophical, or perhaps even become the non-philosophical. Deleuze was never worried about the end of metaphysics or the death of philosophy; he probably thought that it was the condition of inevitability. Derrida would agree. The end of philosophy may mark a new beginning in the non-philosophical world, the world of possibilities, the world of percepts and affects, the world of the Other, the world of the *becoming-philosophy*. Then what about the departments of humanities, (social) sciences, arts, and others? What does the future of *devenir* and *à venir* hold for these? Aren’t these academic departments also subject to the uncertainties within the nexus of “perhaps”? Derrida (2001) said, “What takes place does not have to announce itself as possible or necessary; it if did, its irruption as event would in advance be neutralized. The event belongs to a perhaps that is in keeping not wit the possible but with the impossible. And its force is therefore irreducible to the force of power of a performative” (p. 54). The forging of philosophy to the pedagogical methods in the classroom renders the juncture of new possibilities in the education system. We will never know what that future beholds for the system today, but we can only anticipate its foreignness as our academic system opens up the enclosed system of identity. This must be the place. Are we in the right place now? Have we found it? Are we there yet? Not yet, but soon.

The Becoming-Philosophy as a Foreign Language

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