Deleuze, Derrida, and anarchism

N. J. JUN

Department of Philosophy
Purdue University
100 North University Street
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907
njun@purdue.edu

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I argue that Deleuze's political writings and Derrida's early (pre-1985) work on deconstruction affirms the tactical orientation which Todd May in particular has associated with 'poststructuralist anarchism.' Deconstructive philosophy, no less than Deleuzean philosophy, seeks to avoid closure, entrapment, and structure; it seeks to open up rather than foreclose possibilities, to liberate rather than interrupt the flows and movements which produce life. To this extent, it is rightfully called an anarchism – not the utopian anarchism of the nineteenth century, perhaps, but the provisional and preconditional anarchism which is, and will continue to be, the foundation of postmodern politics.

I.

From Proudhon to the Paris commune, anarchist movements occupied an important place in the history of French radical politics until the end of the Second World War, when they were driven to near extinction by the triumph of the Soviet-backed French Communist Party (PCF).[1] This situation had begun to change dramatically by the early 1960s, however, owing to the increasing influence of so-called 'New Left' theory, the rise of the youth movement, and growing antagonism on the left toward Soviet-sponsored terrorism. For the first time in a long time, leftist intellectuals were no longer content to make apologies for Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy and were instead seeking viable alternatives to it.

The visible culmination of this process was, of course, the uprisings of May 1968 in France, which marked the first significant revolutionary event in the twentieth century that was carried out not only independently of the Communist Party, but in flagrant opposition to it as well. Unlike the fundamentally vanguardist revolutions of Russia, China, Vietnam and Cuba, the Paris Spring was fomented in mostly spontaneous fashion by a decentralized and non-hierarchical confederation of students and workers who harboured a common scepticism toward grand political narratives. At

the forefront of this confederation were the *Enragés*, a group of revolutionaries who sought to reinvent anarchist theory and practice.[2]

Unlike the FAI/CNT during the Spanish Civil War, the *Enragés* were not so much an organized faction as a loose collection of individuals representing a variety of political persuasions. They were not anarchists in the narrow ideological sense of belonging to a particular anarchist movement or endorsing a particular theory of anarchism (e.g., anarcho-syndicalism).[3] On the contrary, the *Enragés* had little to do with the French Anarchist Federation,[4] nor with any other residua of the pre-1945 European anarchist movement.[5] While some, like Daniel Cohn-Bendit, were indeed associated with organizations more closely related to traditional anarchism, several belonged to Marxist-oriented groups such as the Situationist International, *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, and *Informations Correspondance Ouvrieres*.[6] As Cohn-Bendit stated of his comrades, 'Some read Marx, of course, perhaps Bakunin, and of the moderns, Althusser, Mao, Guevara, Lefebvre. Nearly all the militants of the movement have read Sartre.'[7] Other influences included:

> Trotskyist criticism of Soviet society … Mao Tse-tung on the question of the revolutionary alliance with the peasant masses, and Marcuse when it comes to demonstrating the repressive nature of modern society or when the latter proclaims that everything must be destroyed in order that everything could be rebuilt.[8]

Classical anarchist theories and movements, as such, were only one source of inspiration among many, and as with all such sources, the *Enragés* did not regard them as infallible.[9]

The *Enragés* were anarchists in the more important and fundamental sense of advocating certain principles, such as opposition to centralization, hierarchy, and repressive power, that are common to all forms of anarchism.[10] It is precisely the realization of such principles in practice, however, that made May 1968 such a decisive turning point in the history of radical politics.[11] For example, despite the enormous influence they enjoyed throughout the uprisings, the *Enragés* refused to betray their anti-authoritarian beliefs by taking on leadership roles of any sort.[12] Moreover, they repeatedly thwarted attempts by others to consolidate the leadership of the movement, thereby preventing its appropriation by outside political parties.[13] Ultimately, centralized leadership was replaced with democratic, self-managing councils such as the Sorbonne Student Soviet and the Commune of Nantes.[14] As a result, the anarchist-controlled universities 'became cities unto themselves, with virtually everything necessary for normal life.'[15]

Although such successes were short-lived, the uprisings having been quelled after only six weeks, the events of May 1968 had far-reaching and lasting effects. Among other things, they marked the end of the Stalinist

PCF's longstanding dominance over the French Left,[16] laid the foundation for the German and Italian *Autonomia* movements of the 1970s and 1980s, and would eventually exert a profound influence on various anti-global-ization movements of the 1990s. They also radicalized a whole new generation of intellectuals including the subjects of the present inquiry, Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida.

Unlike his long-time friend and collaborator Felix Guattari, who had been involved in radical activism since the early 1960s, Deleuze did not become politically active until after 1968.[17] 'From this period onward,' writes Paul Patton, 'he became involved with a variety of groups and causes, including the *Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons* (GIP) begun by Foucault and others in 1972.'[18] More importantly, Deleuze's prior commitment to speculative metaphysics gave way to a deep interest in political philosophy as he attempted to make sense of the political prac-tices he encountered in 1968. Four years later, in 1972, Deleuze and Guattari published *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, the first of a two-volume work on political philosophy.[19] The second volume, enti-tled *A Thousand Plateaus*, followed eight years later.[20]

From the 1960s until shortly before his death, Derrida, too, was a committed political activist, and this despite having had certain misgivings with the events of 1968. During the 1980s, for example, he campaigned tirelessly against everything from apartheid to the death penalty. At the same time, however, it was not until the mid-1990s that Derrida began to write about explicitly ethical and political topics.[21] This has led various writers to conclude that deconstruction as such is inherently apolitical, or else that it is useless as a radical political praxis.[22]

We shall return to this point below. In the meantime, it is worth noting that, not long after the appearance of Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, Gayatry Spivak and Michael Ryan published a groundbreaking analysis of the connections between poststructuralist philosophy (including that of Derrida, Deleuze, and Guattari) and the *nouvel anarchisme* of 1968.[23] This was followed throughout the next twenty-seven years by a series of books and articles arguing that poststructuralist political philosophy represented a new kind of anarchism[24] variously referred to as 'postanarchism,'[25] 'post-modern anarchism,'[26] and 'poststructuralist anarchism.'[27]

Todd May in particular has argued at great length for an anarchist reading of Deleuze – one which, to my mind at least, is highly successful. At the same time, however, May makes a crucial mistake in trying to found Deleuzean anarchism upon *normativity*, a concept which Deleuze, like Nietzsche and Spinoza before him, repeatedly rejects. As I shall argue in parts three and four of this paper, the salient difference between classical anarchism and Deleuzean anarchism is that the latter involves a turn away from the normative and a concomitant movement toward the *ethical*. *Pace*

May, it is precisely this turn which gives Deleuze's political philosophy a decisive advantage over that of his forebears.

May and his confreres have been oddly silent about Derrida. This is not to say that nothing has been written about Derrida's politics, but (a) most of this writing focuses on Derrida's later 'political turn' and (b) with few exceptions,[28] none of it frames the analysis in terms of *anarchism*. In part five of this paper, I shall address the oft-overlooked political ramifications of Derrida's earlier and more important works on deconstruction. I will argue, moreover, that deconstruction provides a framework for anarchism that is different from, but harmonious with, Deleuzean anarchism.

II.

The primary focus of Deleuze's early works is metaphysics and the history of philosophy. Though they can hardly be called 'apolitical,' the political dimension of books like *Difference and Repetition* (1968) tends to be so vague and understated as to require extraction by skilled exegetes. This is not true of the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, the political emphasis of which is made quite explicit at the outset. Like all of Deleuze's works, however, *C & S* is so formidably dense and complicated that we cannot begin to do it justice in an essay of this size. Instead we will limit ourselves to a brief 'thematic overview' of those ideas and concepts which illustrate the *anarchistic* dimension of Deleuze's political thought, taking care to note their similarities with and differences from related ideas and concepts in classical anarchism.

Anarchism places an enormous emphasis on power or, more specifically, on what could be referred to as 'coercive' or 'repressive power.' Although Deleuze does discuss power, especially in his book on Foucault,[29] he is generally more inclined to speak in terms of *forces* – e.g., active vs. reactive forces in his book on Nietzsche,[30] forces of desire vs. social forces in *Anti-Oedipus*, etc. (For purposes of this essay, we will regard 'force' as more or less synonymous with 'power,' at least in the Foucauldian sense.[31]) Our initial question, therefore, is what force is and how it operates according to Deleuze.

In one decidedly aphoristic passage, Deleuze claims there are only forces of desire and social forces.[32] Although Deleuze tends to regard desire as a creative force (in the sense that it produces rather than represses its object) and the social as a force which 'dams up, channels, and regulates' the flow of desire,[33] he does not mean to suggest that there are two distinct *kinds* of forces which differentially affect objects exterior to themselves. On the contrary, there is only a single, unitary force which manifests itself in particular 'assemblages.'[34] Each of these assemblages, in turn, contains within itself both desire and various 'bureaucratic or

fascist pieces' which seek to subjugate and annihilate that desire.[35] Neither force acts or works upon pre-existent objects; rather everything that exists is alternately created and/or destroyed in accordance with the particular assemblage which gives rise to it.

As May notes by way of summary, 'power does not suppress desire; rather it is implicated in every assemblage of desire.'[36] Existing things are constituted ('assembled') by forces that are immanent to them; 'concrete social fields' are therefore affects of complex movements and connections of forces which vary in intensity over time.[37] For Deleuze, forces are principally distinguished according to their affects, which in turn are distinguished according to whether they are *life-affirming* or *life-denying* at the level of *life itself*.[38] Unlike the concept of 'coercive power,' which has a kind of built-in normativity, the concepts of life-affirming/denying are, in the first instance at least, *purely descriptive*; that is, they describe the way forces produce reality and nothing else.

Given the ubiquitous and ontologically constitutive nature of force, it goes without saying that force *simpliciter* cannot be 'abolished' or even 'resisted.' As we shall see, this does not mean that *repressive* social forces cannot be opposed. It does imply, however, that for Deleuze (as for Spinoza), the question is not whether and how resistance is possible, but rather how and why desire comes to repress and ultimately destroy itself in the first place.[39] This requires, among other things, an analysis of the various assemblages that come into being over time (*vis a vis* their affects) as well as the experimental pursuit of alternative assemblages at the level of praxis.

According to Deleuze, repressive forces do not emanate from a unitary source but rather within multiple sites. The complex interconnection of these sites, moreover, is precisely what gives rise to the social world (this is what he means when he suggests that power is 'rhizomatic' as opposed to 'arboreal').This is not to say that power does not become concentrated within certain sites; indeed, much of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* is given over to an analysis of such concentrations as they manifest themselves in particular political and economic forms. What this analysis reveals is a constant conflict between (for example) the State-form, which seeks to 'overcode' and 'territorialize' desire, and various modes of desire itself, which seek to 'reterritorialize' themselves along 'lines of flight.' Similar analyses could no doubt be afforded of the 'Church-form,' the 'gender-form,' and countless other sites of concentrated power. In all such cases, however, one and the same force is simultaneously seeking to escape and re-conquer itself, and it is precisely this tension which allows ostensibly 'revolutionary' or 'liberatory' movements (e.g., Bolshevism) to occasionally metamorphose into totalitarian regimes (e.g., Stalinist Russia).

To a certain important extent, classical anarchism shares Deleuze's emphasis on the multifarious and rhizomatic nature of power.[40] Unlike Marxism and other 'strategic' political philosophies which identify a unitary locus of repressive power, the 'tactical' political philosophies of Deleuze and his anarchist predecessors 'perform [their] analyses within a milieu characterized … by the tension between irreducible and mutually intersecting practices of power.'[41] As David Wieck notes, '[classical] anarchism is more than anti-statism, even if government (the state) is, appropriately, the central focus of anarchist critique.'[42] As 'the generic social and political idea that expresses negation of all [repressive] power'[43] anarchism rejects all forms of coercive authority, including, but not limited to, the 'sombre trinity' – state, capital and the church.[44] This analysis was later extended by thinkers like Deleuze, Foucault and Derrida to power relations at the level of discursive practices (e.g., the production of theories of truth and knowledge) as well as economies of desire.

This is what leads May to conclude – rightly, I think – that there is a strong affinity between classical anarchism and Deleuzean philosophy. At the same time, however, much of *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* is devoted to showing that there are irreconcilable differences between the two. For example, he alleges that classical anarchism depends upon an essentialistic conception of human nature which Deleuze and other poststructuralists have systematically dismantled.[45] Likewise, he insists that the classical anarchists regard *all* power as repressive even though they also acknowledge that power emerges from multiple sources.[46] As we have just seen, this is exactly what Deleuze's analysis of power seeks to disprove.

I shall not speak to the first charge concerning human nature, as this has already been addressed masterfully by my colleague Jesse Cohn.[47] Instead I will briefly respond to the second charge before turning to what I see as the *crucial* difference between classical anarchism and Deleuzean anarchism – viz., the former's reliance on normativity. According to May, 'Power constitutes for the anarchists a suppressive force. The image of power with which anarchism operates is that of a weight pressing down – and at times destroying – the actions, events, and desires with which it comes in contact.'[48] In fact, power for the classical anarchists (as for many of the classical liberals) is in fact neither 'productive' nor 'repressive' *in and of itself*. Put another way, it is not as though there are two *types* of power – one 'productive' and one 'repressive' – which exist alongside and compete with one another.

On the contrary, manifestations of power are distinguished according to their *effects*. These effects, in turn, are distinguished according to their relative *justifiability* within a universalizable normative scheme that is both prior and exterior to power itself. Repressive power is only a species

of 'power to,' which is at least analogous if not identical to Deleuze's all-encompassing 'force.' The only real difference is that 'repressive power' in the classical paradigm involves the forcible or even violent compulsion of bodies (what Foucault calls 'biopower') whereas repressive forces in the Deleuze scheme principally work to subjugate *desires*.[49] Here the classical anarchists' oversight has more to do with being historically antecedent to the powerful forces of mass media and state-controlled propaganda outlets than with simple ignorance. To this extent, May's insistence that all power is repressive for the classical anarchists and that *this* is an important way to distinguish them from Deleuze is quite misguided.

Equally misguided is May's attempt to found Deleuzean anarchism on a pair of normative principles which, though intimated below the surface of Deleuze's writings, are nonetheless mere variations on the 'principle of anti-authoritarianism' in classical anarchism (i.e., the principle that oppressive power ought to be opposed). Although he is correct to point out that Deleuze 'promotes' ways of thinking and acting that affirm life, this promotion need not – indeed, cannot – be cashed out in terms of normativity. In the next and last section, we will explore May's argument in a bit more detail and try to identify exactly where it goes wrong. In so doing, we will present an alternative reading of Deleuzean anarchism which provides a much better illustration of its differences with classical anarchism.

III.

In the final chapter of *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*, May rehearses the oft-repeated accusation that poststructuralism engenders a kind of moral nihilism.[50] Such an accusation is a product, May thinks, of the poststructuralists' general unwillingness to 'refer existence to transcendent values,' which if nothing else is the dominant strategy of much traditional moral philosophy in the West.[51] Strangely, May goes to great and eminently accurate lengths to explain why Deleuze rejects classical 'ethics,' only to argue that certain of Deleuze's other commitments implicitly contradict this rejection. As he notes:

> [Deleuze] praises Spinoza's *Ethics*, for instance, because it 'replaces Morality …' For Deleuze, as for Nietzsche, the project of measuring life against external standards constitutes a betrayal rather than an affirmation of life. Alternatively, an ethics of the kind Spinoza has offered … seeks out the possibilities life offers rather than denigrating life by appeal to 'transcendent values.' Casting the matter in more purely Nietzschean terms, the project of evaluating a life by reference to external standards is one of allowing reactive forces to dominate active ones, where reactive forces are those which 'separate active force from what it can do.[52]

In the same breath, however, May argues that Deleuze provides no explicit means by which to distinguish active forces from reactive ones beyond a vague appeal to 'experimentation.'[53] Such a means, he thinks, can only be discovered by extracting 'several intertwined and not very controversial ethical principles' from the hidden nooks of the Deleuzean corpus.

The first such principle, which May terms the 'antirepresentationalist principle,' is that 'practices of representing others to themselves – either in who they are or in what they want – ought, as much as possible to be avoided.'[54] The second, which he calls the 'principle of difference,' holds that 'alternative practices, all things being equal, ought to be allowed to flourish and even to be promoted.'[55] In both cases, May provides ample textual evidence to demonstrate that Deleuze (*inter alia*) is implicitly committed to the values underlying these principles. I think his analysis in this regard is very astute, as it is very clear from the foregoing that (for example) 'Gilles Deleuze's commitment to promoting different ways of thinking and acting is a central aspect of his thought.'[56] What I take issue with is the idea that the avowal of such values, implicit or otherwise, is *a fortiori* an avowal of specific normative principles.

As May himself notes, the defining characteristics of normativity are precisely abstraction, universality, and exteriority to life, all of which Deleuze seeks to undermine in his analysis of power. Although he argues that Deleuze's unwillingness to prescribe universalizable norms is itself motivated by a commitment to the aforesaid principles, this amounts to claiming that Deleuze is self-referentially inconsistent; it does not lead, as May thinks, to a general absolution of the charge of moral nihilism. If it is true that Deleuze scorns representation and affirms difference – and I think it is – the operative values cannot be articulated and justified by means of representation or the suppression of difference except on pain of dire contradiction. This is precisely the opposite of what May wishes to argue.

May is correct to point out that classical anarchism relies on a normative principle, as we noted briefly in the previous section. But it is precisely through its radical rejection of normativity that Deleuze's anarchism is to be distinguished. Rather than attempt to refine the principle of antiauthoritarianism so as to make it conform with the commonplaces of post-Kantian moral philosophy, May should instead recognize and celebrate the radical alternative that is being proposed. That alternative, as he himself points out, is precisely a turn to *ethics* in the Spinozistic sense of the term. It is the ethical, after all, which underlies the Deleuzian concept of experimentation as well as related concepts like Foucault's 'care of the self.' The question, of course, is what such an ethics would entail.

We already know that ethics is to be distinguished from morality on the basis of its concreteness, particularity, and interiority to life itself. Rather

than posing universal codes of conduct grounded in abstract concepts like 'rationality,' ethics is instead concerned with the myriad ways in which lives can be led. To this extent, the traditional notion that ethics is concerned with *values* rather than *norms* is not entirely unfitting. Clearly values can be and often are universalized and rendered transcendent, as in the case of natural law theory. Even the Greeks, for whom value was a function of particular standards of excellence proper to particular things, believed that such standards were uniform for all human beings. One of Deleuze's great insights, however, is that every human being is the product of a unique and complicated multiplicity of forces, which means – among other things – that there are as many 'standards of excellence' as there are human persons. The value of 'difference' and disvalue of 'representation' are simply consequences of this fact; only *I* can discover, through the process of experimentation, what it means for me to be excellent – that is, what things are valuable in my life, what I ought to pursue and avoid, etc. Only through the process of pursuing alternative practices can I begin to discover the manifold possibility of value.

Deleuze's explicit rejection of the idea that there is any sort of 'natural' hierarchy of values among individuals is what grounds – indeed, necessitates – his anarchism. As he notes time and again in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, the authority of oppressive assemblages is always justified by assuming that certain peoples' values are, in some sense, *weightier* than those of others, and it is precisely the function of normativity to conceal the arbitrary and artifical nature of this assumption under the guise of universalizability and transcendence.

The process of creating value therefore requires an *eternal* revolution against the forces of repression wherever and however they arise. It lacks any kind of *telos* or end goal, since there is always a microfascism lurking at the heart of every system of personal value-construction which can, and often will, reterritorialize and overcode that system. Again, such a micro-fascism is every bit as instrumental in producing value as, say, the desire for freedom. It is not the case, therefore, that we *ought* to oppose authority, but rather that we *must* if we are to ever achieve value at all. The fact that the discovery of value is always provisional, tentative, and contingent is hardly a reason not to pursue it. In the end, there may be no ultimate means by which to distinguish one way of living from another, but it is precisely our inability to secure such a means which necessitates the perpetual pursuit of 'anarchy.'

IV.

Thus far I have provided a brief overview of the political and intellectual milieu within which Deleuze's and Derrida's thought evolved. I then

provided an analysis of Deleuze's own incredibly novel reconstruction of anarchist philosophy. For Deleuze – and, to a certain extent, the classical anarchists – power is both ubiquitous and constitutive. Both deny that power is *either* productive *or* repressive, focusing instead on power's complex vacillations between these two poles, and they argue that power emanates from multiple sites. The true difference between them, as I have argued, concerns not the operation of power but rather the nature and justi- fication of resistance. For the classical anarchists, this justification ultimately and ironically resides in an authoritarian structure – viz., normativity. For Deleuze, in contrast, it resides in the complete and total rejection of abstraction and the affirmation of personalized, particularized discoveries of value. It is precisely this emphasis on the ethical which renders Deleuzian anarchism both distinct from and superior to that of its forebears.

Derrida, as we intimated earlier, is in some sense a more difficult case. Bertrand Russell once noted that Spinoza, despite being 'the noblest and most lovable of the great philosophers,' was nonetheless viewed as a 'man of appalling wickedness during his lifetime and for a century after his death.'[57] One could make a similar claim about Derrida who, though universally regarded as one of the most prolific and influential philoso- phers of our time, is also one of the most controversial. Revered by some and despised by others, Derrida is simultaneously visionary and reactive, profound and sophistical, intrepid and nihilistic.[58] Such a reputation is doubly complicated given the widespread tendency on both sides to completely misunderstand Derrida and/or manipulate him for their own ends. Consider, for example, the scores of anti-Derrida polemics that were produced throughout the 1980s and 90s by everyone from literary/critical theorists[59] to analytic philosophers[60] to conservative cultural warriors.[61]

Of particular relevance to the present essay are those polemics which specifically accuse deconstruction of being apolitical,[62] counterrevolu- tionary,[63] or simply useless as a political praxis.[64] Though I am hardly alone in suggesting that such polemics are misguided,[65] few who would defend the radical implications of deconstruction have framed their defence in terms of anarchism.[66] As I shall argue, Derrida's inability or unwillingness to 'reconcile' deconstruction with Marxism is not the result of a philosophical failure[67] so much as a successful rejection of strategic political philosophy. Far from being a concession to the status quo, this rejection instead places deconstruction within the diverse family of theo- ries broadly known as 'post-Marxist' and, with increasing frequency, 'poststructuralist anarchist.'

The aforesaid polemics are typically directed against certain ideas and concepts which, when taken together, form the basis of deconstructive theory. Although the 'meanings' of said ideas/concepts remain fundamen-

tally consistent throughout the entire Derridean corpus, Derrida nonethe-
less adopts a variety of different terms to describe them. (For example, the
'foundational' Derridean concept of the transcendental signified is vari-
ously described as 'logocentrism,' 'phallogocentrism,' and 'the
metaphysics of presence.' The same is true of other concepts such as trace,
metaphoricity, the supplement, and so on.) As an exhaustive discussion of
all such terms would take us well beyond the scope of this paper, we will
instead focus our attention on the basic concepts underlying them – specif-
ically those concepts that are most crucial to understanding Derrida's
project.

One such concept is undecidability – that is, the impossibility, within
language, of achieving any sort of fixed/static/transcendent meaning.
Derrida articulates this concept in part through a critique of Saussurian
linguistics. Broadly construed, Saussure's theory involves the differenti-
ation of words (phonetic sounds which signify concepts), concepts
(ideas which are signified by words), and referents (objects in the 'real
world' which are signified by both ideas and words).[68] Saussure is
frequently regarded as the first thinker to affirm the arbitrary relation-
ship between words and the concepts they represent,[69] but his true
accomplishment is the discovery that words actually derive their
meaning from their differential relationships to other words, rather than
correspondence to an arbitrary concept.[70] Derrida goes a step further by
arguing that there are no concepts behind the signifiers – in other words,
that the notion of a 'transcendent signifier' existing outside the play of
linguistic differences is illusory.

Midway through his essay *Differance*, Derrida uses Saussure to develop
a distinction between the absent and the present: 'We ordinarily say that a
sign is put in place of the thing itself, the present thing – 'thing' holding
here for the sense as well as the referent. Signs represent the present in its
absence; they take the place of the present.'[71] Thus the sign is a kind of
intermediary between the sensible and the intelligible; we think we are
aware of presence even though it is absent to perception *vis-a-vis* the sign.
The problem, Derrida says, is that 'the sign is conceivable only on the
basis of the presence that it defers and in view of the deferred presence one
intends to reappropriate.'[72] Because we cannot perceive presence except
through the mediation of signs, presence can no longer be regarded as 'the
absolutely matrical form of being'; rather, it becomes merely an effect of
language.[73]

A word, therefore, never corresponds to a presence and so is always
'playing' off other words.[74] And because all words are necessarily trapped
within this state of play (which Derrida terms '*difference*'), language as a
whole cannot have a fixed, static, determinate – in a word, *transcendent*
meaning; rather, *differance* 'extends the domain and the play of significa-

tion infinitely.'[75] Furthermore, if it is impossible for presence to have meaning apart from language, and if (linguistic) meaning is always in a state of play, it follows that presence itself will be indeterminate – which is, of course, precisely what it *cannot* be.[76] Without an 'absolute matrical form of being,' meaning becomes dislodged, fragmented, groundless, and elusive.

One immediate consequence of this critique is a disruption of the binary logic upon which much of Western thought is based. There are many reasons for this, but one is that binary logic derives difference from absolute metaphysical identity (read: presence) and not the other way around. (i.e., the law of identity: A = A, not just A = ~B, ~C, ~D …; and the law of non-contradiction: A cannot be ~A at the same time and in the same respect). As we have just seen, however, nothing is what it is independently of the play of differences; there is no signified that transcends its relationship to the 'differential network' of signifiers.

Derrida articulates and expands upon this general criticism of the 'metaphysics of presence' in various texts and applies it to a wide range of binary concepts. In *Of Grammatology*, for example, he attacks the idea that writing is a 'supplement' to speech in the sense that the former (which is marked by absence) 'stands in' for the latter (which is marked by presence).[77] Elsewhere he discusses truth and falsity,[78] logic and illogic,[79] etc. All such discussions attempt to unearth *aporias* (i.e., impassable logical contradictions) within binary structures with a mind to undermining the logico-metaphysical groundwork upon which they are founded.

In the place of this groundwork Derrida offers a different model which he calls the 'logic of supplementarity.' As M.J. Devaney points out:

> This 'other' logic has been repressed and excluded by the history of philosophy. Whereas binary logic operates within the limits of an exclusive disjunction ('either … or …'), Derrida's undecidable logic of supplementarity is a logic of 'both … and …' that resists and disorganizes classical binary thinking.[80]

While binary logic is constructed on fundamental axioms such as the law of identity (A=A) and the law of noncontradiction (~[A ? ~A]), 'undecidable' logic is derived from the conjunction both A and not-A.[81] Derrida provides many examples of this logic, most notably the *pharmakon* – a substance which is both a poison and a remedy (hence something that is both A and ~A simultaneously).[82] Because the *pharmakon* is both A and ~A, he says, it does not have any *absolute* identity or *essential* meaning; therefore, binary logic does not apply to it.[83] (I will say more about this below.)

Given this deconstructive framework, what political implications, if any, can we draw from it? Here we ought first to consider some of Derrida's own words. In his early essay 'Structure, Sign and Play,' Derrida articulates a decidedly tactical position, one which spurns all longing for presence (read: unitary sources of oppression as well as predetermined liberartory *teloi* and utopias) and urges the deconstructive radical to 'play the game without security' and to affirm 'a world of signs' that 'determines the non-center otherwise than as the loss of center.'[84] In 'Différance,' moreover, he argues that:

> In the delineation of deconstruction everything is strategic and adventurous. Strategic because no transcendent truth present outside the field of writing can govern theologically the totality of the field. Adventurous because this strategy is not a simple strategy in the sense that strategy orients tactics according to a final goal, a *telos* or theme of domination, a mastery and ultimate reappropriation of the field.[85]

The 'adversary' of deconstruction, against which it wages its strategic and adventurous battle, is not a unitary source of oppressive power but rather the multiplicity of totalized binary oppositions which are constantly and variously manifesting themselves within multiple sites of oppression.[86] It does so, moreover, by 'overturning,' 'displacing,' 'resisting,' 'disorganizing,' and 'transgressing' these oppositions wherever they arise.[87]

Like Foucault, for whom power is always and only known through its affects, or Deleuze, for whom bodies without organs are always and only known through the desiring machines which attach to them, Derrida insists that binary oppositions are always and only known through their manifestations as relations of power. They are not, in other words, merely linguistic phenomena that can be known and analyzed independently of the political strategies and institutions within which they are encoded. As Barbara Foley notes:

> A political act of exclusion or subordination masks itself as a feature neutrally present in language (and representation) itself. Deconstruction seeks to counter this hegemony not by 'constituting a third term' or 'abolishing' the opposition, but by exposing its internal contradictions.[88]

To do otherwise, Derrida thinks, is to risk 'resurrecting' the very oppressive structure which radical political praxis seeks to destroy, as such techniques merely substitute one authority for another.[89] For Derrida, tactical political praxis is instead a 'technique of trouble'[90] whose only goal is to 'undermine the epistemological grounds upon which any authority presumes to rest.'[91]

Along with Foucault and Deleuze, Derrida insists that the principal vehicles through which binary opposition is manifested in multiple sites of oppressive power are representation and the suppression of difference. The two are related, as we have seen, because any act of representation is by definition an attempt to fix the identity of the other, to relegate it to the same. For Derrida, however, representation specifically involves the imposition of structures upon the play of differences – structures which involve both naming and logical deductions founded upon naming.[92] This process inevitably involves privileging certain referents ('names') as originary, as the very sources or foundations of thought, identifying them as the 'absolutely central form[s] of Being' and presuming them to be transparently 'present' to and constitutive of language.[93] What deconstruction demonstrates is that the act of representation is always and already generated through a prior (and ultimately foundationless) process of textualization which is always and already political. Thus 'presence' is merely a '[political] determination and … an effect.'[94]

Logocentrism, which for Derrida is the reactionary 'ideology' *par excellence*, is marked not just by its *complicity* with oppressive power relations but the role it plays in *producing* them. Derrida is careful to note, however, that even 'revolutionary discourses' can be and often are logocentric insofar as they represent themselves via problematic binary oppositions – e.g., bourgeois versus proletariat, oppression versus liberation, etc. Moreover, whereas such discourses tend to operate by way of reacting against (and, by extension, negating) whatever binary component they seek to oppose, deconstruction proceeds instead by way of '*différance*,' calling attention to the unstable, aporetic nature of all binary structures rather than defining itself against oppressive structures. This makes sense, after all, since all structures are in some sense oppressive, or at least capable of generating oppression when they become fixed, static, and totalized.

As we noted earlier, many have argued that Derrida's work prior to *Spectres of Marx* lacks any specific political content or else mystifies political discourse by avoiding concrete political situations. Although the examples we have looked at thus far are indeed fairly abstract, this is not true across the board. In 'The Ends of Man' (written during the Paris Spring), for example, Derrida attempts to analyze the West's imperialistic 'ethnological, economic, political, [and] military relationship' to the so-called Third World in terms of the strategy of binary opposition. On his view, anti-imperialism can only emerge 'on the ground' *within* the oppressed Third World; the task of radicals *outside* the Third World, in contrast, is 'to engage in the dual deconstructive activity of overturning and transgressing.'[95] Elsewhere in 'The White Mythology' he notes:

> Metaphysics – the white mythology which reassembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own logos, that is, the *mythos* of his idiom, for the universal form of thought he must still wish to call Reason … White mythology-meta-physics has erased within itself the fabulous scene that has produced it, the scene that nevertheless remains active and stirring, inscribed in white ink, an invisible design covered over in the palimpsest.[96]

Here Derrida shows how metaphysics (and the underlying mechanisms of metaphysics, e.g. 'reason') operates beneath the surface as an ideological justification for racism and colonialism. One cannot help but detect a passionate opposition here to the forces which metaphysics seeks to mystify and conceal. (This is hardly surprising given Derrida's own status as a French Algerian Jew.)

Similar examples from Derrida's pre-1994 *oeuvre* could no doubt be afforded,[97] but for our purposes it is sufficient to note that for Derrida deconstruction has never been a mere academic enterprise divorced from concrete political situations. On the contrary, as Barbara Foley notes, it is 'an epistemological practice possessing the capacity to expose and disrupt the ideological stratagems by which advanced capitalist society legiti-mates itself.'[98] Not surprisingly, Derrida has often attacked certain American students of deconstruction – most notably the members of the so-called 'Yale School' – who have attempted (whether consciously or unconsciously, explicitly or implicitly) to divest deconstruction of its radical political implications.[99] For Derrida, again, deconstruction oper-ates as a radical praxis by 'overturning,' 'displacing,' and 'transgressing' the binary oppositions of metaphysics.[100]

As we saw earlier, the salient features of tactical political philosophy – which we have, with Todd May, identified as a kind of anarchism – are four-fold. First, tactical political philosophy denies any *substantial* distinc-tion between liberatory and oppressive power structures; power is capable of giving rise to either liberation or oppression depending upon a complex array of conditions. Second, tactical political philosophy denies that power as such (whether understood as the Derridean play of differences or as the Deleuzean flow of desire) can in some sense be 'abolished' as a condition of political emancipation. Third, tactical political philosophy denies, contra Marxism and certain forms of feminism, that oppressive power emanates from a unitary source. Instead, it argues that such power emerges at multiple local sites and must be resisted at those sites accordingly. Fourth, and finally, tactical political philosophy avoids teleological or utopian discourses as foundations for political praxis.

The question, of course, is whether Derrida's work prior to 1994 may be understood in this vein, and I think we have already provided ample

evidence that it can. To begin with, Derrida repeatedly insists that oppressive binary structures are an *effect* of linguistic play – they are not arbitrarily imposed (though he often speaks of them as being imposed). Political liberation, for Derrida, is indeed a consequence of the collapse and dissolution of these structures, but any such liberation is produced by the very same forces which gave rise to oppression in the first place. Put another way, *différance* undoes the same oppressive binary oppositions to which it occasionally gives rise. In this sense Derrida is very much of a piece with Deleuze, for whom desire always contains both revolutionary and fascist inclinations which manifest themselves variously.

Derrida further insists that *différance*, like Deleuzean desire, is not a thing in the world so much as a 'process' or 'event' which gives rise to or produces things in the world. To this extent it is both ubiquitous and constitutive; it cannot be 'done away with' in favor of something else. This is not to say, however, that oppression is inevitable or that it cannot be resisted when it occurs. Though he is by no means clear on this score, Derrida does seem to think that the transgressive, liberatory operation of *différance* can in some sense be 'channeled' at the level of practice – in Deleuzean terms, deterritorialization or escape along lines of flight *is* a possibility, and the actualization of this possibility is not necessarily a product of mere chance or coincidence.

As we saw earlier, moreover, Derrida repeatedly denies that oppressive binary oppositions emerge at a unitary locus (e.g., capitalism, patriarchy, etc) that can be identified and combated. There is no 'macrofascism' to which all 'microfascisms' can be reduced; rather, oppressive structures are identified solely in terms of their attempts to instantiate presence, to impose stasis upon the play of language, and this can and does happen within multiple sites. As with Deleuze, this necessitates a praxis which is always and already *local* in orientation; the emancipatory collapse of an oppressive structure at one site quickly gives rise to the generation of a new structure at another site. Thus political praxis must be dynamic, fluid, and eternally vigilant.

Lastly, Derrida's political philosophy consistently spurns teleological or utopian discourses as a foundation for praxis, as any such discourses inevitably reproduce the structures they aim to oppose. It is this insight, more so than any other, which underlies later works such as *Spectres of Marx* – specifically the all-important concept of the 'to come' (*la venir*) articulated therein.[101] For Derrida, as for Deleuze and Foucault, the revolution necessarily lacks a *telos* or *eschaton* and so must be in some sense *eternal*. In the place of justice and democracy Derrida emphasizes justice and democracy 'to come.' Freedom is not a goal so much as a practice or process that is immanent to the struggle against un-freedom. Anarchism emerges as the condition of possibility for engaging in this open-ended

and free-floating 'practice of freedom' which does not, and need not, culminate in a utopian 'end of history.'

All of this is by way of saying that Derrida's earlier deconstructive works do evince a meaningful political content – one that is decidedly anarchistic in orientation. One could argue, as I in fact do, that the works that emerged during his so-called 'political turn' are mere elaborations on themes which are present throughout his career. But does Derrida's political philosophy entail a conception of normativity? This is an important question, as we saw in the case of Deleuze. For without some motivating ground for political praxis, there is no reason in principle to reject oppressive structures in favor of liberatory structures, and the oft-repeated accusation of moral nihilism is vindicated.

Before we can answer this question, it behooves us to make certain distinctions which were overlooked in the previous section on Deleuze. Modern philosophy is accustomed to conflating normativity as such with a specific *brand* of normativity which is associated mostly with Kant. That brand of normativity, which I call *nomological normativity*, emphasizes rational and universalizable laws (read: 'norms') which are taken to govern (or be governable over) human behavior. This is the kind of normativity which Todd May attributes, mistakenly I think, to Deleuze. I would argue that Derrida rejects this conception of normativity for similar albeit distinct reasons. In the first place, there is no such thing as a fixed, timeless, and ahistorical conception of human rationality for Derrida. Such a conception is merely one of a host of totalizing binary structures which deconstruction disrupts. Furthermore, the nomological conception of universalizability necessarily presupposes a static and self-transparent subject (often referred to as the 'Cartesio-Kantian' subject) which in turn presupposes a virulent form of the metaphysics of presence. Derrida specifically denies that such subjects exist, thus he denies that there are universal categories which apply absolutely and unequivocally to all of them.

At the same time, however, there is perhaps *another* conception of normativity which we might term *ontological normativity*. The best example of this form of normativity is arguably Levinas' notion of infinite ethical responsibility. According to this notion, ethical obligation *precedes* being and so is not defined in terms of the modal properties of beings; it is, in other words, a 'thou must' which takes no account of a 'thou can'.[102] For Deleuze, of course, ethics is immanent to ontology so whatever ontological normativity exists at the level of reality is coextensive with reality. (Paul Patton argues that ontological normativity for Deleuze involves the drive to 'absolute deterritorialization,' a concept that is similar to Spinoza's *conatus*, but I shall not pursue this here.[103]) In the case of Derrida, however, no specific ontology is provided, thus it is difficult to say what

the relationship between ethics and ontology is supposed to be for him.

This is not to say, however, that there isn't *something* like ontological normativity in Derrida. One could argue, as I have elsewhere, that the operation of *différance* is itself guided by a kind of normativity, in the sense that *différance* must always and already overcome the linguistic and conceptual structures which emerge around it. Though it is true that *différance* is a process or event within *language*, language manifests (as we saw earlier) at the level of a praxis – hence, at the level of being. Moreover, the relationship between language and the structures within which language manifests itself is immanent and reciprocal. For this reason, it seems right to say that *différance* operates within the field of praxis *as well*, and to this extent can be construed as a kind of ontological normativity. The same operations of *différance* which alternately produce and dismantle linguistic and conceptual structures also produce and dismantle the political practices and institutions which embody them. In this sense, *différance* is something like a dialectic without *Aufhebung* – a movement of spirit which lacks any sort of teleological destiny.

This is, I readily admit, a somewhat questionable point given Derrida's persistent refusal to regard *différance* as an ontological category. As such I will let it stand as an open hypothesis. But the question remains: in lieu of nomological normativity, in what does the practical foundation of Derridean anarchism consist? Regrettably it is next to impossible to find an answer to this question in Derrida's earlier work. Prior to *Spectres of Marx* Derrida did not produce anything comparable to Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (volumes 2 and 3) or Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, so the issue of self-self/self-other relations is seldom discussed, if it is discussed at all. For this one would have to look to Derrida's later works, but these fall beyond the scope of this paper.[104]

It is worth noting, however, that the ethical framework of the later works is much more indebted to Levinas than to Nietzsche and the Greeks. To this extent, it does not rely in any obvious way upon aretaic concepts such as 'excellence' or 'care of the self' but on normative concepts such as obligation, responsibility, and hospitality. (This is also owing, of course, to the perpetually ambiguous status of the individual subject in Derrida's work. Absent a clear conception of what it means to be a subject, it is obviously difficult for Derrida to articulate anything comparable to 'becoming minor' in Deleuze or 'care of the self' in Foucault.)

As we have seen, Derrida, like Deleuze, jettisons nomological normativity in his early works, and we have every reason to believe he maintains this stance in the later, Levinas-inspired ethical works. But this doesn't mean that works like *Of Hospitality* adopt a thoroughgoing ontological normativity which places the ethical prior to the metaphysical. In point of fact, the normative status of concepts such as 'hospitality' remains a

subject of fierce debate within Derrida scholarship, and I shall not discuss it here.

In sum, it is clear that Derrida's work on deconstruction affirms the tactical orientation which May associates with poststructuralist anarchism. Though the role which normativity plays in this work is perhaps somewhat more nebulous than in Deleuze, the groundwork has at least been laid for future analyses. In the meantime, there can certainly be no doubt that Derrida is a philosopher of radical liberation. Deconstructive philosophy, like Deleuzean philosophy, is one which seeks to avoid closure, entrapment, and structure; it seeks to open up rather than foreclose possibilities, to liberate rather than interrupt the flows and movements which produce life. To this extent, it is rightfully called an anarchism – not the utopian anarchism of the nineteenth century, perhaps, but the provisional and preconditional anarchism which is, and will continue to be, the foundation of postmodern politics.

NOTES

1. For an exhaustive study of early French anarchist movements, see J. Maitron, *Histoire du movement anarchiste en France (1880-1914),* 2nd ed (Paris: Société universitaire d'éditions et de librairie, 1955) ; and *Le Mouvement Anarchiste en France,* Vols. 1-2 (Paris: Maspero, 1975). See also D. Berry, *History of the French Anarchist Movement, 1917-1945* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002).

2. On the influence of anarchism within the student movement, see K.J. Heinemann, *Put Your Body Against the Wheels: Student Revolt in the 1960s* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dees, 2001).

3. See T. Nairn, 'Why it Happened,' in A. Quattrochi & T. Nairn, *The Beginning of the End: France, May 1968* (London: Panther Books, 1969).

4. This is confirmed by one of the best-known members of the French Anarchist Federation, Maurice Joyeux, in an interview in *Le fait public* 14 (January 1970), p.40.

5. Though some scholars have noted the tacit or subterranean influence of earlier movements such as Proudhonism and anarcho-syndicalism. See for example, J. Julliard 'Syndicalisme revolutionnaire et revolution etudiante', *Esprit* 6-7 (June-July 1968); G. Adam, 'Mai, ou les lecons de l'histoire ouvriere,' *France-Forum* 90-91 (October-November 1963); M. Reberioux, 'Tout ca n'empeche pas, Nicholas, que la Commune n'est pas morte,' *Politique aujourd'hui* 5 (May 1969); A. Kriegel, 'Le syndicalisme revolutionnaire et Proudhon,' in *L'actualite de Proudhon* (Brussels: l'Institut de Sociologie Libre de Bruxelles, 1967).

6. The Situationist International was a collective of radical artists whose art and

propaganda did much to shape the overall spirit of the uprisings. The two prin-
cipal texts of situationism, both originally published in 1967, are G. Debord,
The Society of the Spectacle (Detroit: Black and Red, 1983) & R. Vaneigem,
The Revolution of Everyday Life (London: Left Bank Books, 1994). For more
on the situationists and the *Enragés* more generally, see R.Viénet, *Enragés and
Situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68* (New York &
London: Autonomedia/Rebel Press, 1992).

7. Qtd. in A. Hirsch, *The French New Left: An intellectual history from Sartre to
Gorz* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), p. 143.

8. Interview with D. Cohn-Bendit in *Magazine Litteraire* 8 (May 1968).

9. For some of the situationists' criticisms of classical anarchism, see Vienet,
pp.260-61.

10. D. Guerin, 'Mai, une continuitie, un reaouveau,' in *Le Fait public* 6 (May
1969); J. Maitron, 'Anarchisme,' in *La mouvment social* 69 (October-
December 1969).

11. For more on the history of May 1968 and its influence, see D. Caute, *Sixty-
Eight: The Year of the Barricades* (London: Paladin, 1988); R. Fraser, et al.,
1968:A Student Generation in Revolt (London: Chatto & Windus, 1988).

12. H. Hamon, '*68 – The rise and fall of a generation?*' in D.L. Hanley & A.P.
Kerr, eds., *May'68* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1989), p. 20.

13. Hamon, p. 17.

14. J.E. Decker, 'Direct democracy and revolutionary organization in the 1968
French student-worker revolt,' in *Proc. of AMWSFH* 5 (1977), pp. 406-414

15. Decker, p. 407.

16. Hamon, p. 17.

17. P. Patton, *Deleuze and the Political* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 4; cf. G.
Deleuze & F. Guattari, 'Deleuze et Guattari s'expliquent…,' *La Quinzaine
Littéraire* 143:16-30 (June 1972), p. 15; cf. A. Feenberg & J. Freedman, *When
Poetry Ruled the Streets: The French May Events of 1968* (Albany: SUNY
Press, 2001), p. xviii.

18. Patton, p. 4.

19. G. Deleuze & F. Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* [1972],
trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, & H.R. Lame (New York: Viking Press, 1977).
Though we ought not to underestimate Guattari's contributions to this and later
works in political philosophy, I will only refer to Deleuze in the present essay
for purposes of clarity and convenience.

20. G. Deleuze & F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* [1980], trans. B. Massumi
(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

21. See, for example, *Spectres of Marx*, trans. P. Kamuf (London: Routledge,
1994); *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (London: Routledge, 2001).

22. B. Foley, 'The Politics of Deconstruction,' *Genre* 17 (Spring-Summer 1984),
pp. 113-133.

23. G. Spivak & M. Ryan, 'Anarchism Revisited: A New Philosophy,' *Diacritics*
(June 1978), pp. 66-79.

24. In addition to the works cited in notes 23-25 below, see, e.g., R. Amster,
'Anarchism as Moral Theory: Praxis, Property, and the Postmodern,' *Anarchist*

Studies 6:2 (October 1998), pp. 97-112; J. Carter & D. Morland, 'Anti-Capitalism: Are We All Anarchists Now?' in *Anti-capitalist Britain*, ed. J. Carter & D. Morland (Gretton, Cheltenham: New Clarion Press, 2004); J. Dempsey & J. Rowe (2004), 'Why Poststructuralism is a Live Wire for the Left,' *Radical Theory/Critical Praxis: Making a Difference Beyond the Academy?*, ed. D. Fuller & R. Kitchin (Praxis, 2004); D. Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004); A. Koch, 'Poststructuralism and the Epistemological Basis of Anarchism,' in *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 23:3 (September 1993), pp. 327-351; S. Sheehan, *Anarchism* (London: Reaktion Books, 2003);

25. S. Newman, *From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-Authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2001).

26. L. Call, *Postmodern Anarchism* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2002).

27. T. May, 'Is Post-structuralist Political Theory Anarchist?' *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 15:2 (1989), pp. 167-182; *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

28. See Spivak & Ryan, for example. See also note no. 67 below.

29. G. Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. S. Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

30. G. Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. H. Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

31. May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*, p. 71.

32. *Anti-Oedipus,* p. 29.

33. *Ibid*., p. 33.

34. *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 33.

35. G. Deleuze & F. Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. D. Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 60; cf. G. Deleuze & C. Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. H. Tomlinson & B. Haberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p, 133.

36. May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism,* p. 71.

37. *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 135.

38. G. Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy*: *Spinoza,* trans. M. Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1990), pp. 102, 218.

39. *Anti-Oedipus*, p. xiii.

40. May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*, pp. 11, 47-66.

41. May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*, p. 11.

42. D. Weick, 'Anarchist Justice,' in H. Ehrlich, et al., eds., *Reinventing Anarchy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 139.

43. *Ibid*; cf. Kropotkin, p. 150.

44. B. Morris, 'Anthropology and Anarchism,' in *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* 45, pp. 35-41; cf. Rocker, p. 20; cf Proudhon: 'The economic idea of capitalism, the politics of government or of authority, and the theological idea of the Church are three distinct ideas, linked in various ways, yet to attack one of them is equivalent to attacking all of them.' (*What is Property: an inquiry into the principle of right and of government*, London, William Reeves, 1969,

p. 43); cf. Malatesta, who claims that in fighting the 'exploitation and oppression of man by man,' the anarchists likewise seek 'the abolition of private property [i.e. capitalism] and government' (E. Malatesta, 'Towards Anarchism,' in *Man!*: *An Anthology of Anarchist Ideas, Essays, Poetry and Commentaries*, ed. M. Graham, London: Cienfuegos Press, 1974, p. 75).

45. May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*, pp. 63-64.

46. *Ibid*., p. 61.

47. J. Cohn & S. Wilbur: 'What's Wrong With Postanarchism?' *Theory & Practice* (August 31, 2003).

48. May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*, p. 61.

49. This is not to suggest, again, that 'repressive forces' are somehow external to desires. Rather, 'repressive force' for Deleuze refers to the extent to which desire desires its own repression. In other words, repression is always and already part of every assemblage of desire (or at least has the potential to be).

50. May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*, pp. 121-7.

51. *Ibid*., p. 127.

52. May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*, pp. 127.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

54. *Ibid*., p. 130.

55. *Ibid*., p. 133.

56. *Ibid*., p. 134.

57. B. Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976), p. 569.

58. Ironically, of course, it is precisely these sorts of oppositions that Derrida seeks to elucidate and ultimately destroy. To this extent, his reputation as a thinker can itself be read as a deconstructive idiom.

59. Jurgen Habermas is arguably the most notable figure in this milieu. See for example *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. F. Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987) & *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 1, trans. T. McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984). See also M.H. Abrams, 'How to Do Things with Texts,' *Partisan Review* 44 (1979), pp. 566-88; K. Appel, 'The *a Priori* of the Communication Community and the Foundations of Ethics: The Problem of a Rational Foundation of Ethics in the Scientific Age,' in *Towards a Transformation of Philosophy*, trans. G. Adey & D. Frisby (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); W.J. Bate, 'The Crisis in English Studies,' *Harvard Magazine* 85:12 (1982), pp. 46-53; M.J. Devaney, *Since at least Plato … and other Postmodern Myths* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997); P. Dews, *Logics of Disintegration: Post-Structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory* (London: Verso, 1987); John Ellis, *Against Deconstruction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); E.D. Hirsch, *Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); René Wellek, *The Attack on Literature and Other Essays* (Brighton: Harvester, 1981);

60. In my opinion very few analytic philosophers have engaged Derrida in a serious and fair-minded way. (The same is true of certain scientists, most notably Alan Sokal). As a result, much of their hostility toward him has been expressed in a tacit and uncritical manner (as, for example, when twenty

analytic philosophers actively opposed Derrida's receiving an honorary doctorate in philosophy from Cambridge in 1992). A notable exception is John Searle, whose famous exchange with Derrida is recorded in *Limited, Inc.* (Northwestern University Press, 1988). See also for example D. Novitz, 'The Rage for Deconstruction,' *Monist* 69:1 (January 1986), pp. 54-76; 69(1):54 n22.

61. See for example D. D'Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* (New York: Free Press, 1991); R. Kimball, *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Higher Education* (Harper & Row, 1990).

62. T. Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin, or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism* (London: NLB, 1981), p. 109.

63. F. Lentricchia, *After the New Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p. 186.

64. G. Graff, *Literature Against Itself: Literary Ideas in Modem Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); cf. E. Said, 'Reflections on Recent American 'Left' Criticism,' in *The Question of Textuality Strategies of Reading in Contemporary American Criticism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 24.

65. See for example, G. Spivak. 'Revolutions That As Yet Have No Model: Derrida's *Limited INC*', *Diacritics*, 10 (Winter. 1980), pp. 46-49; M. Ryan, *Marxism and Deconstruction. A Critical Articulation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University. Press, 1982); S. Aronowitz, *The Crisis in Historical Materialism. Class. Politics and Culture in Marxist Theory* (South Hadley: J. F. Bergin, 1981); G. Hartman, 'Criticism, Indeterminacy, Irony,' in *Criticism in the Wilderness: The Study of Literature Today* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 270, 271-72.

66. Two notable exceptions are John Caputo, 'Beyond Aestheticism: Derrida's Responsible Anarchy' in *Research in Phenomenology* 19 (1988), pp. 59-73; and Saul Newman, 'Derrida and the Deconstruction of Authority' in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 27:3 (May 2001), pp. 1-20.

67. As Barbara Foley and other critics from the 1980s repeatedly suggest.

68. Ferdinand de Saussure, 'Course in General Linguistics,' in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, ed. J. Rivkin and M. Ryan (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 77-8.

69. A false attribution, incidentally, as even Plato was aware of this relationship before Saussure. The structuralist emphasis on this point is part of a larger argument that language does not reflect the world and experience. See Alan Bass, '"Literature"/Literature,' in *Velocities of Change*, ed. Richard Macksey (Baltimore and London: Methuen, 1974).

70. Saussure 81-88; cf. Ellis, pp. 63-64.

71. J. Derrida, 'Differance,' in *Literary Theory*, 390.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 391.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 397.

74. J. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 289; *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, 1976), p. 50.

75. *Writing and Difference*, p. 280.

76. J. Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 119-20.

77. *Of Grammatology*, pp. 141-60.

78. See for example J. Derrida, *Aporias: Dying – Awaiting (One Another at) the 'Limits of Truth,'* trans. T. Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).

79. See for example J. Derrida, 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,' in *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, ed. R. Macksey and E. Donato (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1970), pp. 247-72. (Reprinted in *Writing and Difference*.)

80. Devaney, p. 17.

81. Devaney, p. 17.

82. J. Derrida, 'Plato's Pharmacy' in *Dissemination*, trans. B. Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 125.

83. *Ibid*., p. 99.

84. 'Structure, Sign, and Play,' p. 264.

85. 'Differance,' p. 7; cf. 'Living On: Border Lines,' in *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York Continuum Books, 1979), pp. 104-5. Derrida's use of the term 'strategic' here should not be confused with Todd May's 'strategic polit-ical philosophy.' In context, it is clear that Derrida's description of deconstruction is of a piece with May's 'tactical political philosophy.'

86. Derrida, *Positions*, pp. 41-45.

87. *Ibid*.

88. Foley, pp. 119-20.

89. Lentricchia, p. 172.

90. *Ibid*.

91. Foley, p. 120.

92. Foley, p. 121.

93. Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, pp. 2-4, 16.

94. *Ibid*.

95. Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, pp. 134-35.

96. *Ibid*., p. 213.

97. For example, Derrida discusses 'an-archic' thought and action in *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). See also his 'Choreographies' (*Diacritics* 12:2, 1982, pp. 66-76), which offers an analysis of the institution of patriarchy, and 'The Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority' (*Cardozo Law Review*, 11:5-6, 1990, pp. 920-1045), which offers a trenchant critique of the concept of political legitimacy.

98. Foley, p. 121.

99. 'The Yale School' refers to a group of literary theorists and philosophers at literature centered at Yale University who were highly influenced by Derrida's early (pre-1985) writings on deconstruction. The group included Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, Geoffrey Hartman and Harold Bloom. See H. Bloom, et al., eds., *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 1979). See also J. Arac, et al., eds., *The Yale Critics: Deconstruction in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

100. Derrida, *Positions,* pp. 41, 66.

101. J. Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, trans. P. Kamuf (London: Routledge, 1994).

102. E. Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, trans. R. Cohen (Detroit: Duquesne University Press, 1985), pp. 8-9.

103. See Patton, p. 9.

104. In addition to *Spectres of Marx* see, for example, *The Gift of Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); *Of Hospitality* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000); and *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005).