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God and Derrida's Politics: At the Edge of Exemplarity

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O my friends—is there a friend?

This essay seeks to explicate Derrida's emphasis on the importance of exemplarity as a feature of philosophical thought, primarily through an understanding of *The Politics of Friendship*. Exemplarity, on Derrida's view, has been central to the philosophical conception of friendship from Aristotle onward. The metaphysical understanding of examples as supplementary to our thought has led to a determinate politics of friendship, a politics that regulates friendship and excludes both God and women from being friends with man. By deconstructing this understanding of exemplarity, Derrida opens the possibility of a different thought of examples, and thereby a different politics. As figured in the possibility of friendship with God or women through the modality of testimony or confession, deconstruction opens this thought of politics at the precise point at which the thought of politics, friendship and responsibility has been restricted by philosophy.

3. Let us begin with examples of friendship. While considering the relationship between friendship and self-love, in book nine of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle undertakes a sort of phenomenological reduction by inquiring as to the substance of friendship. In response to the question, "What is friendship?" Aristotle lists five constitutive qualities: wishing good for the friend's own sake, wishing the friend to exist, living with another, having the same taste, and grieving and rejoicing together. Yet while seemingly in search of the pure concept of friendship, Aristotle does not simply list qualities of friendship; he gives examples as well. A friend is "one who wishes his friend to exist and live, for his sake; which *mothers* do to their children, and friends do who have come into conflict."¹ The first friend encountered in this chapter is a mother. Likewise, mothers exemplify another quality of friendship: a friend is "one who grieves and rejoices with his friend; and this too is found in mothers most of all." Only these two qualities are associated with the example of the mother. Coincidence? I think not. Both qualities mentioned involve the *activity* of friendship—loving rather than being-loved. In *Politics of Friendship*, Derrida addresses the disproportionate asymmetry between loving and being-loved found here at the heart of Greek friendship. Without the asymmetry exemplified in a mother's love for her children, friendship between equals could not get started; without the initial activity of loving, the potential for friendship could not be reduced to act.

5. Yet the mother—this first example of a friend—is not a friend. The mother is excluded from friendship because she loves without being loved in return. She is *already* a friend—in her asymmetrical love of the other—and *not-yet* a friend, since her love is not reciprocated. The temporality of her friendship cannot appear within the phenomenological field. Friendship does not appear presently or *as such* until the self or subject arrives on the scene: "Now each of these (the qualities of friendship) is true of the good man's relation to himself." In having all five qualities of friendship, self-love is treated as the exemplary form of friendship, but it comes onto the scene only after the mother. Let us study this movement closely: the mother is called up as a figure of absolute friendship, loving without being loved in a purely asymmetrical relation. She is then suppressed and removed from friendship proper, replaced by the exemplary presence-to-self of self-love. The reduction of friendship to self-love is brought about through a conjuration of the

¹Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ix.4, trans. Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 227. Next two quotes, same page.

mother—calling her up so as to suppress her. The essence of friendship appears, it would seem, through the “hauntology” discussed by Derrida in *Specters of Marx*, both calling and suppressing the pure loving of a mother in this act of conjuration.²

7. Self-love exemplifies friendship proper in its presence-to-self, since one loves oneself and is thereby loved simultaneously. One is strictly equal (i.e., identical) to oneself, and one’s love is immediately reciprocated; self-love is thus the best example of friendship. By establishing self-love as the pinnacle of reciprocity and equality, philosophy has inscribed friendship within its self-present temporality even as the mother haunts this whole discussion. This best example of friendship, however, is not friendship as a concept, or in the universal sense, since it is still a particular case. In fact, self-love—the best example of friendship—is *not* friendship since there is no friend here at all. In self-love, the best example of friendship, there is no friend. The best example of friendship as such already contains within itself its own ruin. Self-love is really only an example of friendship if one is virtuous and open to another. As Aristotle notes, only by such openness to the other in justice and virtue can one differentiate self-love in the positive sense from the worst egoism.³ The best friendship must double itself to be friendship. Thus, an alternative thought of friendship arises from within Aristotle’s account of friendship. Friendship, *to be friendship*, must be with more than one. My friends, as Derrida seeks to show, there is never a single friend.

9. Here we can see what Derrida means by the *exemplarity* of friendship and how canonical friendship demonstrates the exemplary logic of metaphysics and ontology.⁴ The best example becomes exemplary by excluding other examples—which allows it to forget that it is just an example, one among others. The best example manifests the general rule. The features that constitute the universal concept of friendship are visible in the example of self-love. The concept, however, cannot appear *as such* without moving beyond the example, negating its concreteness and freeing itself from the singularity of this case. Friendship cannot be friendship without reducing the example in which it first comes to consciousness. On the one hand, there is no essence of friendship without a reduction or negation of the friend. On the other hand, without the example the concept would be unknowable; only in the friend (or self-love) is friendship conceivable. The exemplary reduction of friendship is not an absolute negation of the particular, but rather a determinate negation that conserves the example even in surpassing it.⁵

11. Examples, then, serve a supplementary function in the self-presentation of universal concepts, exhibiting a concreteness that must be called up and then suppressed. For Derrida, however, this supplementary function is irreducible; making the thought of the universal possible, concrete examples likewise make its presence impossible. Undecidably between the singular and universal, exemplarity defers metaphysics and makes its presence impossible, even while giving rise to its thought. This rethinking of examples indicates the depth of Bataille’s influence on Derrida. By deferring the concepts they represent, examples open onto a general rather than

²See *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New international*, trans. Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), esp. pp. 47-8.

³NE ix.8 (pp. 234-8, Ross translation).

⁴Derrida has discussed exemplarity in a number of texts; one of his most concise formulations of its double logic is found in *Aporias*, trans. Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993) p. 22, in the context of “my death” as the best example of singularity: “If death names the very irreplaceability of absolute singularity, then all the examples in the world can precisely illustrate this singularity. Everyone’s death, the death of all those who can say ‘my death,’ is irreplaceable...Every other is completely other. Whence comes a first exemplary complication of exemplarity: nothing is more substitutable and yet nothing is less so than the syntagm ‘my death.’”

⁵Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship* (PF), trans. Collins (New York: Verso, 1997), p. 164. While in this passage, Derrida is dealing with the exemplarity of fraternity, Aristotle’s passage regarding self-love (which shares the same logic) seems pertinent to me for the purposes of this essay insofar as it brings together a) the determination of friendship as present, and b) the accompanying neutralization of sexual difference and reduction of alterity to an alter ego.

a restricted economy. Precisely where examples would seem to be useful in demonstrating universals, they *refuse* to be useful in this manner, since their play denies the appearance to consciousness of universals as such. The exemplarity of thought that metaphysics so often seeks to retain for its own purposes is in fact without purpose. When one recognizes that the best example is still an example, one case among many, rather than suppressing them exemplarity allows one to substitute other examples for the best: any other can be wholly other. Representative of what Bataille would call the nonutilitarian aspect of our subjectivity, examples open a play of meaning in which humanity, art, and responsibility can be called forth.⁶

12. If canonical friendship consists of present reciprocity and equality such that friendship is at home with itself, then it is no surprise that its figure is that of the brother. Fraternity, in establishing equality and shared origin between two or more, allows one to think of a friend as *another* self. As brothers share the same origin, they are equal to one another, and can have contemporaneous reciprocity. In the Greek system, friendship is fraternity, not only in Aristotle, where friendship and fraternity are linked to democracy, but throughout canonical discourses on friendship—Cicero, Montaigne, and Carl Schmitt as well. Now, “fraternity” is not always limited to biological brotherhood: this term has played an essential part in the extension of friendship and democracy, as is manifest in the French Revolution’s slogan “liberty, equality, and fraternity.” There is a sense in which the effort to think beyond concrete political distinctions towards a universal friendship of humanity—in terms of the extension of civil rights or the transcendence of ethnocentrism and nationalism—depends rhetorically upon fraternity even while surpassing biological, national, or other empirical formulations of brotherhood.
13. Through his reading of Carl Schmitt’s *The Concept of the Political*, Derrida questions and displaces friendship’s connection with fraternity throughout *Politics of Friendship*. For Schmitt, humanity’s essence as political animal is actualized through the opposition of friends and enemies. Whom one loves or values is defined in opposition to whom one will kill, and humanity would disappear if this opposition broke down. Schmitt sees the state as the preeminent vehicle of politics, but this status is only guaranteed by a rigid distinction between civil war and war in the proper sense. As Derrida notes, Schmitt can only make this distinction through reference to fraternity: one can hate or be at civil war with those within one’s family or state, but those whom one hates (*hostis*) in such disputes are not the enemy (*inimicus*). The enemy proper is outside the state. This distinction must be “effective” or “actual” and therefore present; such presence, as the limit of politics, can only be ensured so long as fraternity guards the border or maintains the opposition between civil war and war between states.⁷
14. The most “effective” politics treats fraternity as natural or factual rather than simply symbolic. While the rhetoric of fraternity is useful as a critique, only once actual, biological fraternity or shared origin is established do canonical friendship and politics become possible. Derrida writes: “This kinship nurtures a constant and homophilial friendship not only in words but in fact, in deeds. In other words, the effectivity/actuality of the tie of friendship, that which assures constancy beyond discourses, is indeed real kinship, the reality of the tie of birth.”⁸

⁶See esp. Derrida, “From Restricted to General Economy: Hegelianism Without Reserve,” in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Bass (Chicago: U. Chicago Press, 1978). Also, George Bataille, *Theory of Religion*, trans. Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1992).

⁷Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, pp. 75-137.

⁸PF, p. 92.

Legal equality is most effective when based upon natural equality. By determining fraternity as a natural, essential property that one can discover equality and friendship in a scientific manner and maintain a rigorous friend/enemy distinction as the essence of politics.

15. Fraternity, then, would seem to figure the limit of friendship *and* the limit of politics. By exposing the symbolic process underlying fraternity's appearance as a natural phenomenon, Derrida calls this limit into question. On Derrida's view, natural fraternity is only thinkable *via* the legal and rhetorical equality of politics; "natural," original fraternity appears through such inscription and repetition of fraternity. Derrida writes:

What we are calling here 'fraternization', is what produces symbolically, conventionally, through authorized engagement, a *determined politics*, which, be it left- or right-wing, alleges a real fraternity or regulates spiritual fraternity, fraternity in the figurative sense, *on the symbolic projection of a real or natural fraternity*.⁹

22. The equality of biology only appears as real within the repetition and differing of the symbolic from itself. Fraternity only appears to be natural fraternity because it always already exceeds itself; friendship and enmity are opposed by Schmitt because both friendship and enmity are already determined as fraternal. Biological fraternity is called up as a memory to legitimate the political order and give it a necessity its symbolic process cannot give itself. Natural brotherhood becomes the limit of the history of friendship, equality, and fraternity; it is a "necessary fiction," constituting the order in its apparent necessity and forgetting its fictive beginnings. To treat friendship as natural rather than symbolic forgets the possibility of questioning the political order founded on the opposition between friend and enemy. Within this opposition, friendship is always in danger of being inverted into enmity and hatred. To live in memory of natural brotherhood forgets the friendship figured by the mother, a friendship undetermined by fraternity that may hold the possibility of a politics beyond the friend/enemy opposition. Could there be friendship without fraternity, love and friendship beyond war and enemies?
23. In this discussion of friendship and politics in the proper sense, the sister and the feminine is nowhere to be found. This does not mean that women are excluded from friendship and the political. Rather, what Derrida sees at work is a *neutralization* of sexual difference in canonical politics, fraternity or friendship. Sexual difference remains unthought within this horizon. To return briefly to Aristotle, insofar as a woman has her own virtue she can be a true friend of her husband, but to that extent she is virile and not specifically female (PF, 158). A woman cannot appear *as such* within fraternal politics or friendship; sexual difference, then, must be kept outside the borders of fraternity. As we have already seen in passing from the mother to self-love, the determination of friendship as present through the privilege of the example of self-love suppresses the temporality of the mother's friendship. To remember the mother's friendship displaces fraternity and questions its limitation of friendship. By deconstructing fraternity, a more radical friendship can perhaps be thought.¹⁰
24. To this end, Derrida retranslates the oft-quoted phrase of Aristotle: rather than, "O my friends, there is no friend," Derrida translates it as follows: "He who has too many friends has no friend." While the first translation seems to address friends given its apostrophic

⁹Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁰Generally, this can be related to Derrida's remarks on sexual and ontological difference. See "*Geschlecht: difference sexuelle, difference ontologique*," in *Psyché: Invention de l'autre* (Galilée, 1987), 395-414.

form, Derrida's constative translation is in fact a more open form of address. This constative sentence still rests upon a trust or performative oath, and this performative pledge founds a radically open address. One *may* be speaking to someone as a friend who is not a brother. Insofar as the address remains undetermined, it represents the thought of a singular address across sexual difference or beyond the limits of fraternity. This messianic address exists in the mode of the "perhaps" (*peut-être*). In this mode, it can be neither certain nor a fact. For Derrida, this irreducibility of the perhaps to presence, of what can-be to what is, keeps open the messianic possibility of a real future, a future-to-come not fixed by the present. He writes: "This (perhaps) is a moment when the disjunction between thinking and knowing becomes crucial...This does not amount to conceding a hypothetical or conditional dimension but to marking a difference between 'there is' and 'is' or exists'—that is to say, the words of presence."¹¹

25. This possibility presented by the perhaps, which remains open, to-come and futural, is at the heart of Derrida's politics. In the address of the perhaps, a more radical and absolute democracy can be thought in which all are equal and not just brothers. Derrida's politics can be summarized as a politics of attention. I use attention for its double sense: on the one hand, listening, consciousness, and concentration focused on that in front of oneself; but also waiting, anticipation, and openness beyond that which one faces. This real future can be conceived only by attending to the one in front of you as wholly other, while recognizing that *all* others are wholly other and attending or waiting for the other other to come. Responsibility and singularity are thus found in the repetition and differing from itself of alterity; friendship is always friendship with more than one. In seeking to treat others as others and to treat all others equally, deconstruction—so often conceived as nihilistic, apolitical, or even antidemocratic—may instead call democracy beyond the limited and oppositional democracy of the liberal state, fraternity, and parties. Deconstruction, the thought of every other as wholly other, is the thought of a radical democracy.¹²
26. It may be difficult to imagine what a "radical democracy" would mean, but perhaps it could best be approached in the form of a question. Consider the following question. Can we, in our culture, distinguish between liberal democracy and what one could term, in an admittedly provocative manner, Multinational Socialism? What to make of certain features of fascism that not only appear within, but also seem to be protected by, the organization of nation-states promoting the spread of liberal democracy? Are liberal states and the United Nations able to protect the rights and interests of their citizens in the face of corporate activity that transcends national borders and leads to an ever-increasing concentration of wealth? Are we able to distinguish between "economic health" and shareholder earnings—or is the secret of liberal democracy plutocracy? What of a system that through trade agreements plays labor in one country off against itself in another, increasing shareholder wealth and corporate growth while restraining the earnings of the workers precisely *through* the differences in wages between "first" and "third" world workers? All of these questions may simply appear to be *posed*, as a substitute for real political action, and admittedly, they do not suffice as political action themselves. However, without such questions, without dislocating the limits

¹¹Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, p. 39.

¹²Ibid., p. 38: "Shall we say that this responsibility which inspires (in Nietzsche) a discourse of hostility towards 'democratic taste' and 'modern ideas' is exercised against democracy in general, modernity in general; or that, *on the contrary*, it responds in the name of a hyperbole of democracy or modernity to come before it, prior to its coming—a hyperbole for which the 'taste' and 'ideas' would be, in this Europe and this America there named by Nietzsche, but the mediocre caricatures, the talkative good conscience, the perversion and the prejudice—the 'misuse of the term' *democracy*?"

of political discourse, the political process can easily turn into a mindless programme in which responsibility and singularity can no longer be found.

27. The messianic character of Derrida's emphasis on the "perhaps" brings us to the question of the theological import of such a nonfraternal friendship. Classically, for example in Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, one cannot be friends with God so long as one is human.¹³ For Aristotle, this is one of the crucial aporias regarding friendship; by wishing a friend to be a god, one would be wishing the friend no longer to be a human friend. Friendship with God is thus related to human friendship in two ways. First, the thought of God is *internal* to the economy of fraternal friendship. As the limit or exterior of fraternal friendship, God must be kept outside for human friendship to be possible. The idea of God would thereby ground with greater certainty the fraternal friendship of the present. Yet even as friendship with God seems to secure the fraternal, is it not likewise a thought of friendship that exceeds reciprocity, without economic exchange or presence, precisely because God is so distant from oneself? Insofar as one thinks of friendship with God, God might call friendship beyond itself, maintaining the idea of an impossible community even within the restricted present of fraternal friendship. Could not a friendship with God "share the solitude of the event,"¹⁴ in Blanchot's words, rupturing the symmetry of friendship from within?
28. Perhaps. This possibility, however, would only seem to arise when one *names* God. Insofar as God's name is not God, to name God contains at least two gestures at once. First, to name God is to predicate, speak of and thematize God. As Derrida has noted many times, this thematization and violence occurs even in the most apophatic moments of negative theology. On the other hand, if there is this difference between God and the name, then to give to the name may disrupt thematic, restricted, and fraternal friendship. By giving to the name, that which God gives to us does not return to God; the name thus opens the (impossible) possibility of a gift without return. By naming, one gives to God the absolute singularity of giving without return; one lets God be safe beyond thematization. Such a singular address is only possible if God and the name are different. This difference cannot present itself within discourse; God without the name is only thinkable in prayer, testimony, and the mode of the "perhaps."¹⁵
29. For Derrida, Augustine's *Confessions* exemplify this testimonial modality of discourse.¹⁶ Without reference to "doing" the truth, a doing that exceeds knowing in its enactment, Augustine's confession makes no sense. As discussed in *Sauf le nom*, confession and testimony to God are

¹³Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* viii.7 (Ross translation, p. 204). For Thomas, I am referring to our inability to be equal to God solely on the basis of human nature; charity is friendship with God precisely insofar as it elevates us.

¹⁴Maurice Blanchot, "The Negative Community," in *The Unavowable Community*, trans. Joris (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1988), p. 9.

¹⁵Such prayer and testimony, while thinkable as separate from praise (what Derrida calls the "encomium" in "How Not to Speak: Denials") always appears conjoined with praise, dissimulating itself in the predicative form of theological discourse. Prayer, in order to be prayer, cannot be reduced to praise. John D. Caputo's reading of "How Not to Speak," which basically equates the two, misses the secretive relation between prayer and praise that Derrida seeks to capture there. This is not a minor point, since it seems to me to lead to his view of "religion without religion" as attempting to abstract itself from theological discourse and tradition, when it seems to me to make more sense to read deconstruction as an *internal* contestation of theology. See Derrida, "How Not to Speak: Denials," in *Derrida and Negative Theology*, ed. Coward and Foshay (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), pp. 99, 110-112; John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion Without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 38-9.

¹⁶Derrida, "Sauf le nom (Post-scriptum)," in *On the Name*, trans. Leavey, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 38-9. See also *Given Time I. Counterfeit Money*, trans. Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) p. 169. Often overlooked in discussions of the gift is the fact that the gift—if there is any—is an event of friendship.

inseparable from an act of charity towards other humans. Augustine writes the *Confessions* so that they are to other Christians even as they are addressed to God; charity addresses itself to any other. Love, as ecstatic, calls us out of ourselves to friendship in drawing us towards the beloved, but also calls us beyond that relationship as well. This movement nonetheless remains restricted within theological discourse. The *Confessions* are written to other Christians as Christian *brothers*; charity is determined as *fraternal* love.

30. On the one hand, then, God's name displaces the limitations of fraternal friendship in the performative address of confession; yet, on the other hand, it reinscribes fraternity as the limit of human friendship. This friendship to which friendship with God testifies would only be possible in light of the impossibility of its presence. God's name opens the thought of this possibility, but also guards against its actuality; messianic friendship is only thought *as* possibility or "perhaps." Because such an act of naming holds the possibility of further community, one can read Derrida as affirming its discourse. Not for the limited friendship of Christian fraternity, but rather for the way it may testify to the messianic, futural possibility of friendship. This testimony is only possible through a deconstruction of fraternal friendship that opens the thought of an address *to* another, undetermined by the thematic, restricted friendship of which one speaks.
31. Where metaphysics tries to get beyond examples to a pure concept of friendship, Derrida's thought of friendship affirms the exemplarity of our discourse and turns it in a new direction. Precisely insofar as our thought depends on examples, so that the universal concept never appears as such in its purity, exemplarity may testify to the future as an open event irreducible to cognition. This different thought of examples opens a thought of singular responsibility exceeding the order of knowledge. The general economy of our subjectivity, in which the appearance as such of universals is lost, permits the thought of a friendship, responsibility or decision irreducible to any program, technique or knowledge of the subject. In this an-archival responsibility, we encounter Derrida's deep affinity with the work of Emmanuel Levinas. Insofar as exemplarity resists the pure presence of conceptuality, the thought of a subjectivity beyond being, cognition and the ego becomes possible. It is within the deconstruction of metaphysics, its undoing by its dependence upon examples, that Derrida sees the Levinasian emphasis on responsibility, singularity, and alterity as possible.
32. It is important to note that the possibility of testimony as a relation irreducible to knowledge arises at the border of religion. Politics and responsibility, for Derrida, consist precisely in the opening of the same to the other through the deconstruction of the limit-law, nature, or fraternity. More exactly, it is the deconstruction of the limit as an unimpeachable given. Through this deconstruction, which demands that one recognize that the limit is undecidably both *within* cognition and *beyond* cognition, the undecidability of the limit can present itself to us. This undecidability is starkly illuminated in *Politics of Friendship*, in which fraternity opens both the possibility of friendship and the possibility of hostility. Because deconstruction gives rise to this undecidability, in which the responsibility of real decision is found, Derrida finds it to be ultimately affirmative and to hold the messianic possibility of a goodness of humanity.
33. Derrida's deconstruction of exemplarity thus opens the thought of the future and of an alternative politics. The messianic, radically heterogeneous to any concrete order, opens a space in which politics can occur. By not calling for a specific act, it opens the space of decision and responsibility and thereby gives politics a chance. Thus, the thought of a messianic, futural friendship or a friendship to come is not the thought of an eschatological event unavailable to

us here and now, but rather a condition for decision, event, and singularity, and thereby for the experience of responsibility and love today. The other before you is wholly other, and this other needs your attention, but also attend to the fact that there are other others; remember that the one before you is an example. This double responsibility gives rise to the thought of a radical singularity and democracy. For this thought, Derrida is deeply indebted to Bataille; by ruining the self-certain and restricted meaning of concepts from the outset, examples open a play of meaning and a possibility of humanity that transcends economic formulation. Yet by reading Bataille politically, Derrida places his work in the service of a Levinasian concern for alterity.

34. Within this different thought of exemplarity, a different thought of theology arises as well. If friendship with more than one is the condition for the possibility of any politics, and this testimonial structure is exemplified in friendship with God, theology might open the very possibility of friendship beyond fraternity even as it defers it. Much as self-love may be justice to the other or pure egoism, friendship with God may open the possibility of messianic friendship even as it can neutralize differences. Theology may lead to “globalatinization” or to the neutralization of sexual difference, but in its own internal possibility of testimony, it may have contested its own totalizing gesture and opened itself to the other.¹⁷ While risking the collapse of the event and decision into the structures of ontology and metaphysics, theology likewise maintains the thought of the event as testimony, confession, and prayer. In this possibility, which can only be thought rather than known, it may hold out the possibility of a messianic, singular friendship and the politics of a love without enmity.

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¹⁷Two recent works deserve far more consideration than I can give them here. First, Derrida’s recent piece on religion and its criticism of the spread of religion as a “globalatinization” demonstrates the danger Derrida sees in religion. See “Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone,” in *Religion*, ed. Derrida and Vattimo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) pp. 1-78. Second, his work in memory of Levinas points to another possibility, particularly with regard to the undecidability of paternity and fecundity. Levinas’s writing on this topic may be the worst androcentrism or the thought of sexual difference beyond ontological determination. Derrida leaves this question suspended without a response. See “Le mot d’accueil,” in *Adieu à Emmanuel Levinas* (Paris: Galilée, 1997), especially pp. 49-84.

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Notes