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## The philosophical grounds of pragmatics (and vice versa?)\*

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This paper has a major and a minor theme running concurrently. The major theme is a rethinking of the grounds of the discipline of pragmatics. So far, it seems to me, pragmatics has been grounded in various kinds of Lebensphilosophie, ordinary language philosophy, pre-transcendental phenomenology, speechactism, positivism, and so on. All of these begin by simply asserting the factual character of the world and denying any possibility of the transcendental (the domain of prior general conditions). Paradoxically, this denial has meant a reliance on the pragmatic as a pure presence, as a pure facticity, as a pragmaticity in general whose condition (for pragmatic inquiry itself) may or may not be a transcendental condition. Pragmatics itself could never make that decision, precisely because of its radical (and perhaps violent) exclusion of all transcendental investigations. For this reason, the transcendental has always to be kept at bay - for it always threatens to reinvade any naively empiricist pragmatics. Hence my major theme involves a passage through the transcendental; one which I believe must be taken in order to see more clearly where the domain of the pragmatic lies in relation to its other. My minor theme - whose outline I am barely capable of thinking, so sluggish is my philosophical competence - is to suggest to non-empiricist philosophy that there may be virtue in the empirical, the particular and the factual, and that, according to at least one of its recent practitioners, there may be some good reasons for revisiting and reconstructing the traditional empiricist idea that the very conceptualisation which philosophy is has prior pragmatic grounds.

1. Since at least Kant, the European speculative philosophical project<sup>1</sup> has identified itself with metaphysics and against anthropology (in Kant's sense of these terms). That is, its self-understanding has been constructed in terms of a search for the general metaphysical grounds of being, knowledge, ethics and so on, as opposed to an understanding or analysis of concrete human affairs.<sup>2</sup> To put this another way: philosophy-as-metaphysics always involves the search for transcendental grounds, where these are construed as more general and more valuable than the merely empirical, the merely sensible. For all this, the empirical has not gone completely undetected by the philosophical radar screen which one imagines as a curtain across the English Channel and the North Sea - and this may be due to the purely logical consideration that the European valorisation of the transcendental requires (if only for purposes of contrast and opposition) that a position be taken vis-à-vis the empirical. In order to be metaphysics, philosophy has to, as it were, dirty its hands with considerations of daily life, the empirical, the sensible, the anthropological, the pragmatic.

1.1. Even in Kant's work itself, the problem of the merely sensible will not go away. If the transcendental-real (as opposed to the empirical-actual) is pure noumenality, then it is, according to the Kantian phenomenal-noumenal distinction, unavailable in its purity to human understanding. The path to the transcendental-real is always blocked by man's nature as a sensible and finite being. Nevertheless, that is the path of philosophy: the overcoming of man's empirical nature, of his fall from purity, and his (always incomplete) guidance towards pure transcendence. As Ian Hunter (1995a) has recently pointed out, for Kant, man always has a necessarily double nature. He is the empirico-

transcendental doublet announced by Foucault, at the end of The Order of Things (1970) as the "Man" of modernity. To this extent, while Kant would prefer man's transcendental condition to be available to him, he also knows full well that this can never actually pertain in any specific case. The sensible is always with us - albeit as a form of corruption of our natural state - and so philosophy must always be incomplete; it must always be in fact a form of practical spiritual training towards the possibility of transcendence, necessarily held back by the specificity of the material and the sensible. This is perhaps why Kant, later in his life, actually turned his attention to the pragmatico-anthropological domain and away from questions of pure transcendental morality (Kant 1978). At that time, he even went so far as to consider two possible versions of the good: the physical and the moral. What he has to say on the question of this doublet is revealing: "The two kinds of good, the physical and the moral, cannot be mixed together, because they would then neutralize each other and have no effect on the purpose of true bliss. Rather, inclination to pleasurable living and inclination to virtue are in conflict with each other, and the restriction of the principle of physical good by the principle of moral good constitute through their very conflict the whole purpose of a well-bred, partly sensuous and partly ethicointellectual human being" (Kant 1978: 185, my emphasis). This being the case, philosophy may, in its purely ideal self-understanding, wish to strive for transcendentality, yet - as this passage from Kant shows - it must necessarily end up being a balancing act, a pragmatically guided discipline or regimen for managing the essential duality of man as a "partly sensuous and partly ethicointellectual" being. (Cf. Hunter (1995b).)

2. Philosophy since Kant, then, can be reconstructed in terms of its acknowledgement of the unattainability of its goals; in terms of the sheer unavailability of philosophy as pure metaphysics. In the contemporary field, there are a number of important instances of philosophies which can be read as such forms of practical management of the empirico-transcendental double. Below I will confine myself to the Heideggerian "line" flowing through the work of Heidegger himself and into the "political" philosophies of Irigaray and Foucault. Following this, I will pick up on Derrida's deconstructive-grammatological version of the empirical-transcendental. Then, having identified certain problems with this version as a ground for pragmatics, I will offer some modifications of it which will bring us closer to a more ostensibly empiricist terrain as charted by Gilles Deleuze.

2.1 We could read Heidegger's work as a continual insistence that philosophy has taken a wrong turn in even beginning to ask its own question in terms of what it is that persons can know about their own transcendental conditions. This turn of philosophy to the subject, marked most clearly in the work of Descartes, is, for Heidegger, philosophy's downfall; its fall from the pre-Socratic question of Being (as revealing) via its uptake of the question of beings-as-subjects. Against Descartes's cogito, he insists that: "This proposition has the peculiarity of first positing that about which it makes an assertion, the subjectum. What it posits in this case is the 'I.' The I is the subjectum of the very first principle. The I is, therefore, a special something which underlies (Zugrundeliegendes) - hypokeimenon, subjectum - the subjectum of the positing as such. Hence it came about that ever since then the 'I' has especially been called the subjectum, 'subject.' ...

That the 'I' comes to be defined as that which is already present for representation (the 'objective' in today's sense) is not because of any I-viewpoint or any subjectivistic doubt, but because of the essential predominance and the definitely directed radicalization of the mathematical and the axiomatic" (Heidegger 1967: 104-5).<sup>3</sup> In the face of this mistaken turn (the radical positing of the subject as the locus of the philosophical path - and remembering that, for Kant, the path to transcendence is blocked by the fact that specific subjects cannot know the noumenal realm), Heidegger argues for a return to Being as the proper ground of philosophy and hence of metaphysics - such that any question we might raise about the transcendental-empirical antinomy would always be able to be tempered by that elementary return. Heidegger's position, then, is radical: it is not that the empirical has contaminated the possibility of the transcendental; rather the whole of the empirical-transcendental is itself, as one instance of a metaphysics predicated on the subject, in fact (and in principle), an historically located contamination of the proper ground of metaphysics: Being - where Being is to be construed not in terms of a cogito which is present to itself as object, but rather in terms of "the multiple presencing in which things present emerge from absence" (Schürmann 1987: 13). The extent to which this very Being is or is not a transcendental category, and hence the extent to which it must, then, necessarily, have an empirical and sensible dimension, need not concern us here.<sup>4</sup> Suffice to say that the Kantian question survives as a problem for Heidegger - albeit as one which can be overcome by thinking the return to Being (as presencing) as the ground of the transcendental-empirical itself.

2.2 Taking up the Heideggerian problematic, Irigaray shows instead that this solution to the problem is more of a dissolution. In dissolving it, it ignores another a crucial dimension of any philosophical thought: the sheer fact that it must take place in a quite sensible, empirical and material medium of representation. Claire Colebrook (1995: 7) puts this succinctly: "Irigaray's feminist critique ... does not merely associate Heidegger's notion of metaphysics as presence with masculine values. That is, notions such as objectivity, reason, visibility, representation, the 'a priori' and identity are part of a specific relation to Being, a relation which, insofar as it is specular or representational, is also masculinist. The phallic logic of metaphysics can be read in its refusal to deal with the empirical or sensible. If metaphysics has proceeded by determining being in terms of representation, then it has done so by forgetting the medium of representation. In presenting thought as transparent representation, philosophy has to forget the means by which it represents itself. Thinking can only co-incide with itself if it takes a detour through representation, but that detour or medium remains (must remain) unrepresented.... For Irigaray this medium of representation is the maternal body. The unrepresentable ground is, for Irigaray, the formless, non-ideal chaos of the corporeality of being".<sup>5</sup> On this version, then, if the double empirical-transcendental nature of man is but a version of representational thinking predicated on a subject-ideal, what that forgets - even though half of itself as a concept appears to involve "the empirical" - is something more radically empirical and sensible; in fact it is so radically empirical and sensible that it cannot even begin to enter into the representational schemas that generate man as doubly transcendental and "empirical". This then suggests a turn away from philosophy-as-metaphysics altogether in an overtly political-moral

struggle to find a (non-representational) relation to the unrepresentable: corporeality in its actual, empirically-encountered, chaotic and perhaps even pre-conceptual state.

2.3 As we noted above, Foucault has paid particular attention to the empirico-transcendental doublet - and indeed his thinking in these sections of The Order of Things (1970: 303-387) owes much to his early readings of Heidegger (albeit that these are unacknowledged, by and large, in his text). Foucault's argument, picking up from Heidegger's history of philosophy in the Nietzsche volumes (1991), is that the transcendental/empirical distinction itself only exists in a specific historical moment - that of representationalism and, hence, of modernity (1970: 46-77). That is, this idea of Man - the idea of an empirical object as a transcendental subject which knows itself as object and (ideally) overcomes it - is but one idea. It has a historical beginning and, Foucault speculates, an end when "one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea" (1970: 387). The solution, in this case, is perhaps the opposite of Irigaray's. Instead of posing a completely radical empiricity anterior to the empirico-transcendental doublet, in the form of the corporeal body, Foucault argues that the doublet is, itself, but an idea which can therefore be historicised like any other. Then, however, his position comes to sound much more like Irigaray when he argues - via Nietzsche - that history itself (as discursively constituted) is an empirical medium which can be inspected for its positivity, where that notion of positivity might be thought as a radical form of empiricity, as a medium made up, essentially, of particular cases and which cannot exceed them (Foucault 1977, 1981). In this case, the idea of the empirico-transcendental doublet is not



merely an idea; it is also an ideal which has radical empirical-historical grounds, and which can never realise itself since it is always drawn back to those grounds, to its ineluctably historico-pragmatic conditions.

3. These then are three relatively recent, and inter-connected, schemes of thought (and schemes of thought about schemes of thought) which show that the essential contamination of any supposedly pure metaphysics by an ultimately resilient and pragmatic empiricity is perhaps, today, philosophy's greatest problem. In this section, I want to deal with yet another case, that of Derrida's grammatology, and to inspect it for its potential insights into the domain of contingency which has traditionally been the proper object of the anthropological disciplines (in Kant's sense of "anthropology"): sociology, psychology, politics, economics, law, medicine, history, linguistics, philology and, above all for us, pragmatics.

3.1 Derrida is notorious for his supposed "critique of metaphysics". But this "critique" is, itself, often misunderstood. It is often thought of as the emergence of an idea which goes beyond or overcomes metaphysics, which puts it to one side, finally and forever. Nothing could be further from the "truth" about the grammatological project. In fact, that project may have, as its outcome, the view that there is no escape from metaphysics. At the colloquium on "The Linguistics of Writing", one of Derrida's interlocutors asks a question about "transgressing" the metaphysics of presence. Derrida answers in a way which, for many, is strange in terms of the assumptions that are often made about him: "The question is difficult. Just a word. I've never said nor thought that the metaphysics of presence was an 'evil', 'the evil'.

I'm inclined to think exactly the contrary, that it's good. There is no 'good' outside the metaphysics of presence, which defines 'the best'" (Derrida 1987: 257).

3.2 Instead of thinking Derrida's "critique" in the sense of overcoming an 'evil', then, we might see it as an acceptance of a necessary arrangement of things which will always define, for us, the 'good', the 'best' and, indeed, pretty much anything we care to name. Then, what is problematic, for Derrida, in philosophy, is that it does not always see this arrangement clearly - in terms of the necessity of the metaphysics of presence and, equally, of its violent (but necessarily impossible) exclusion of everyday contingencies. In that way, the grammatological project can be construed as an almost Wittgensteinian therapy for philosophy: as a set of assembled reminders for returning philosophy (or indeed any body of ideas) to its necessary imbrication in a metaphysics contaminated by mundanity. But even a brief inspection of Derrida's work will show that this is by no means straightforward. Unlike Kant, that is, Derrida does not construct metaphysics as the opposite of anthropology - as the possibility of the suppression of the contingent, the factual, the empirical, the accidental, the happenstance, the everyday, the merely sensible, from the proper path of moral and spiritual development. On the contrary, for Derrida, this metaphysics - the metaphysics of ideal purity - is not, and has not ever been, possible. It remains what he often refers to in the Grammatology (1974) as a "dream". Pure metaphysics is an oneiric fantasy.

3.3 In place of this view, as we have noted, Derrida wants to argue that we are always inside the space of an essentially contaminated

metaphysics: a metaphysics contaminated by the empirically contingent. It is in this sense that we cannot easily transgress the borders of metaphysics, and it is in this sense that there are always two possible mistakes, each stemming from an illusory idea of purity or propriety/properness. The first mistake is, as we have seen, to think that there can be a pure metaphysics-as-transcendence such as that which we find in certain versions of Kant. This supposes a set of purely general conditions which apply universally and which are free from accident, the contingencies of the moment, the specificities of the particular case. For Derrida, these can never be entirely deleted. In the case of textual interpretation, for example, we can never find an ultimate metaphysical ground to which the text always and essentially attaches itself. It is always subject to the determinations which are made, the decisions it must go through, in specific contexts (Colebrook and McHoul, in press). Again, this does not mean, as some have thought, that Derrida allows any text to mean anything, that contextual meaning is "an open, hermeneutic vortex" (Coulter 1994: 690) or anything of this sort. Rather, in being detached from any idea of a "proper" and "essential" meaning, texts must always pass through a moment of decision which will be determinate, but determinate only in the sense of actual and possible contingencies. Hence, in his "Tympan" (1982), for example, he reminds Hegel that his speculations about a pure, universal and utterly totalising law of history are contingent upon such things as the material motions and "forms" of the printing press and, what's more, that Hegel's own text displays this, not least in the typographical metaphors which it uses and returns to in its explication of a transcendent history.

3.4 The second mistake - equally grounded on a "dream" of purity and propriety - is to think that any analyst can adduce purely empirical meanings, meanings which are tied solely to the contingencies of the moment in some completely innocent state, free of all generality, dislodged from any metaphysical assumptions. Writing itself, for example, is always and necessarily "violent" (as in, not innocent, not simply the "representation" of the pure presence of the event-moment or of the writer/speaker as the ground and guarantee of its meaning). So when Lévi-Strauss proposes the existence of an ahistorical society, innocent by virtue of its severance from any idea of writing, Derrida simply cannot tolerate such a proposition, and he accordingly gives over a chapter of his Grammatology to a deconstruction of that particular notion of purity: a purity based on the innocence of a people outside history, outside writing, living inside a purely present moment (Derrida 1974: 101-140). Likewise, against Foucault's early conception of madness, Derrida argues that there can be no pure and single event. Just as the violence of philosophy, then, stems from its attempt to erase its own historical specificity, so the violence of anthropology (or any empirical social science) involves an equal and opposite attempt to erase its complicity with general metaphysical conditions.

3.5 Hence a revision of the idea of what our "metaphysical" condition might be; and one which runs along the following lines. If by "metaphysics" we mean pure metaphysics, unattached to empiricity of any kind, we are mistaken. If by "empiricity" we mean pure empiricity, unattached to transcendentality or generality of any kind, we are equally mistaken. Our actual condition is one in which every event, every moment (including every "person"), no matter how

fleeting, is always both finite and conditioned by generality. This is the metaphysics of accident, of necessary contamination, of essential hybridity, of the non-concept which always precedes the supposedly pure conception; or of the non-percept which always precedes the supposedly pure perception. This prior condition has many names in Derrida's work: différance, trace, pharmakon, prosthesis, supplement, Writing-in-general and so on. Accordingly, we could find a reasonably simple understanding of what Derrida might mean by the term "pragmatology", a term which (as far as I know) he uses in only two passages of his work and, even then, somewhat tantalisingly. The first, and fullest reference is as follows, from a description of the relations between literature and psychoanalysis: "Not that all fiction and all inscriptions of proper names have had a literary dimension or a relation to the work of art as such; rather, they arise in the place where, between the movement of science - notably when it is concerned with random structures - and that of philosophy, of the arts - literary or not - the limits cannot be actual and static or solid but rather only the effects of contextual circumscription. Neither linear nor indivisible, they would arise instead from an analysis that I will call (with some circumspection) pragmatological, at the intersection of a pragmatics and a grammatology. Open to a different sense of the dispatch (envoi) and of dispatches (envois), pragmatology should always take the situation of the marks into account; in particular that of utterances, the place of senders and addressees, of framing and of the sociohistorical circumscription, and so forth. It should therefore take account of the problematics of randomness in all fields where it evolves: physics, biology, game theory, and the like" (Derrida 1984: 27-28).

3.6 Hence a reasonably simplistic unpacking of the idea of a programmatology would be to read it as being but one side of the already constituted grammatical coin: that side which locates the accidental, the contingent within any textual claim to purely transcendental meanings. In this case, Derrida's "reminder" to Hegel of the sociohistorical contingency of his supposedly totalising historical law would be a case of programmatology in action. And we could go on from there to find many similar instances in Derrida, including his treatment of Freud in the "My Chances" paper just quoted. This would be a programmatology which isolated the "effects of contextual circumscription" in their specificity and determinacy in particular instances. It would focus on the textual "dispatch" (envois) not in terms of finding its essential grounds in a double différance which pointed to the two necessary contaminations residing in every event (the double contamination of empiricity and transcendentality); rather the focus would be on only one side of that double contamination: the empirical points at which "the problematics of randomness" asserts itself, contingently, immanently to actual events, rather than in a way which proceeds from any general law or from any generalisation (or rule) in excess of the particular case.<sup>6</sup>

3.7 This would be a perfectly possible way of addressing the question: what is programmatology? And it would be perfectly in line with Derrida's assertion, in his second reference to this nascent discipline, that "Grammatology has always been a sort of pragmatics" (1988: 159). But it would thereby ignore Derrida's own (immediately ensuing) indications of a more radical possibility when he writes that "the discipline which bears this name ["pragmatics"] today involve[s] too many presuppositions requiring deconstruction, very much like

speech act theory, to be simply homogeneous with that which is announced in De la grammatologie. A programmatology (to come) would articulate in a more fruitful and more rigorous manner these two discourses" (1988:159).

3.8 One way to begin, then, would be to "deconstruct" all hitherto-existing pragmatics! The necessary modesty which flows from incompetence forbids me from attempting this, or anything approximating to it. Instead I will turn briefly to the grammatological "parent" to see if its body can yield any possibilities. In this regard I want to mount a single and very tentative argument: that grammatology, as we have seen, does not preclude a certain version of metaphysics, that it is mounted in and as, specifically, a philosophy. To this extent, then, it will always carry a refusal of the kind of radical empiricity which we discovered, very briefly and at second hand, in the work of Irigaray (and, perhaps to a lesser extent, in the work of Foucault).<sup>7</sup> To find a programmatology in its more radical sense, then, we will need to ask about the limits of philosophy as such, including grammatology. We will need to see what it is that lies outside those limits, what it is that - after Irigaray's example - philosophy excludes: not (as in the case of Irigaray) what it excludes for feminist politics and action, but what it excludes for pragmatics. For, if my argument about grammatology is right, what it (and any philosophy) excludes is the possibility of a radical insistence on facticity, even as (as with grammatology) it must allow for some element of facticity, construed as a "contamination" of pure philosophy, as an impassable obstacle along the road which leads to the philosopher's dream of pure enlightenment. Allowing for such an element (as with Kant), even insisting on its necessity (as with

Derrida), is quite different from beginning (as does Nietzsche, perhaps) with a world which is construed as contingent and factual in the first place, prior to any conceptualisation (transcendental or otherwise). This would be an empiricism predicated on radical immanence. Is there such a possibility in any part of Derrida? For we must ask this question before we move on to a more obviously fertile terrain.

3.9 Plainly, there is no easy means of escape, for deconstruction has, itself, begun to chart the limits of, and hence the possibility of a liberation from, philosophy. In an important interview with Peter Brunette and David Wills on the spatial arts - a piece which is crucial for anyone wanting to read Derrida's reflection on his "own" methods rather than simply reading another instance of them at work - Derrida announces this possibility almost from the start: "Even if, within the field of philosophy, I have worked to elaborate deconstructive questions concerning it, that deconstruction of philosophy carries with it a certain number of questions that can be asked in different fields. Moreover, each time I was trying to discover what in a determined field liberates it from philosophical authority. That is to say, I have learned from philosophy that it is a hegemonic discourse, structurally hegemonic, considering all discursive regions to be dependent upon it. And by means of a deconstruction of this hegemonic gesture we can begin to see in each field, whether it be what we call psychology, logic, politics, or the arts, the possibility of emancipation from the hegemony and authority of philosophical discourse" (Derrida 1994: 10).<sup>8</sup> What this faintly suggests then - via Derrida himself - is that there is a domain (perhaps several domains) of facticity potentially outside the controlling space of philosophy: an



utterly resilient facticity which remains immanent unto itself and which at least struggles to refuse incorporation into the body of transcendental conceptualisation which is philosophy's supposedly "proper" terrain.

3.10 Let me propose one possible way - albeit at one remove from Derrida - in which to pose the question of such a pragmaticity. It would run as follows: how is it possible to create, to make things, make them happen, in a space of pure facticity, prior to any conceptualisation or "capture" by philosophy (Maras 1993)? Here I want to point to a moment in the making of anything, any "cultural production" if you will. This is the moment marked by the movement of the créons ("let us create", first person plural imperative of créer, to make or create) - then, also perhaps, of the movement of the crayon ("pencil"). This particular double comes close to the double verb-object or injunction-thing that I want to try to think as pragmaticity. Then a radical programmatology might be that discipline which turned to that moment, as a completely localised instance or instant, in the creation of an utterance, a text, a work, a person, an object ... and so on. And here we would have to say that there is no creation ex nihilo. All creating of this sort would be a technology (techné) and therefore subject to the fact that technologies only arise as the grafting of one technique on to another, through a process of continual supplementation or essential prosthesis. (Cf. Wills, (1995).) In this case, any créons, any bringing to facticity would always be impure, would always contain more than a single element, would always be, in whatever counts as the first instance, already hybrid. In this case, since it has elements, it will always be subject to analysis (in the strict sense).

3.11 Now, having made this slight move away from Derrida, we can begin to see how any pragmaticity involves contamination: but not in the strictly grammatological sense. It involves the contamination of one factual element by at least one other, not of the factual by the transcendental.<sup>9</sup> The créons, that is, is as much an injunction to "let there not be nothing" as it is to "create". It does not come from nothingness but - again, perhaps, following the later Heidegger - from a positive non-presence, a willed non-presence; and Peter Brunette in the aforementioned interview asks Derrida, precisely, if this moment can in fact be named. Firstly he quotes Derrida: "The baseless ground [le sans-fond] of a 'deconstructive' and affirmative architecture can cause vertigo, but it is not the void [le vide], it is not the gaping and chaotic remainder, the hiatus of destruction" (Derrida 1989: 69). Brunette's question then is: "You point to this affirmative place in your work, but you never name it. Can this place be named?" Derrida: "It's not a place; it's not a place that really exists. It's a 'come' [viens]; it is what I call an affirmation that is not positive. It doesn't exist, it isn't present. I always distinguish affirmation from the position of positivity. Thus it is an affirmation that is very risky, uncertain, improbable; it entirely escapes the space of certainty" (Derrida 1994: 26).

3.12 And not being a positivity, this affirmation rejoins the "philosophical", as that which insists on the primacy of the conceptual. As viens, it risks precisely that nothing will come, nothing will be made, no architecture, for example. It is an invitation or imperative which, by its tense, we can see is issued from one subject to another. By changing the tense to a mutual plural, and the verb from venir to

créer, we achieve the effect of rethinking this moment as a positivity, as a place, as an event, as something which exists, is given, and is present (at least, as facticity).<sup>10</sup> Such a bastardisation would partly realign Derrida's viens with Foucault's notion of positivity, his insistence on the always-already factuality of historical events. But this does not mean that everything is assured. The créons is just as risky as the viens - not because there is a transcendental condition which blocks its possibility of fruition: rather because the accidental co-occurrence of two factual systems required for any technology (techné) to work, to make anything, may always lead to nothing. Hence, the co-occurrence of the wine press and certain forms of metalcraft in the mid-15th century happened (inter alia) to generate the printing press but, as Foucault would remind us, it need not have. It only appears necessary after the event. After the event, we can say very easily how it came about - we can even turn its antecedents into causes if we wish. But things could always have been otherwise. Derrida writes: "If I knew, nothing would ever happen.... If the foundations are assured, there is no construction; neither is there any invention" (1994: 27). But the condition of his not-knowing, the condition which makes it possible, for him, for anything to come about, namely the fact that it might not, is a necessary condition. For Foucault, the foundations are equally dubitable: history does not have any, neither does technology, nor any of its "products". But, for Foucault, this is a factual condition.

3.13 Here we can see how the crucial Derridean concept of undecidability can be freed from its generalist, universalising possibilities and re-thought as a radically empirical condition of production (in its broadest sense). When Derrida writes that

"Invention assumes undecidability" (1994: 27), we can, therefore, agree with him completely. But we can also re-configure that undecidability in such a way that it does not lead us back to a philosophy of quasi-transcendence, but rather "forward" to an understanding of the conditions of pragmaticity, itself, as immanence (to prefigure our still-to-come discussion of Deleuze).

3.14 Furthermore, Derrida seems to work with a somewhat similar version of things when, in the "Spatial Arts" interview, he speaks of his relation to his own writing productions in terms of "tone".<sup>11</sup> This tone seems to "come", but it also seems to be created, to have movements, specific empirical movements, which can be plotted and analysed as a completely pragmatic matter. He says of this tone (or rather of "an economy that consists in always pluralising the tone"): "I think in the end that what interests me most in the texts I read and in the texts I write is precisely that. All of this merits further analysis, but that's it, how it shifts, moves from one phrase to another, from one tone to another. Such analyses are rarely performed - I haven't read a lot of work on the subject - but it remains an important question. And it would be an analysis of the pragmatic type, one that doesn't consist of what something means, what its thesis, theme, or theorem is, for that is not so interesting nor so essential; what is more important is the tone, and to know to whom it is addressed in order to produce that effect" (1994: 22, my emphasis). Programmatology, then, may best be construed as the discipline (or the form of analysis) which finds, empirically, the means of the production of that - or indeed of any - effect. It is specifically interested not in what something "means", but in how it comes, accidentally, historically, to be given, to get its effect,

how it comes to be wirkliche or action-able - which is to say what is at work in the always plural moment of its créons, its pragmativity.<sup>12</sup>

4. It can be objected to the foregoing account that it does not move far enough away from Derrida; that it is nothing more than a modification of his general grammatology; that the slight "tweaking" of Derrida's position which I have sketched simply asserts that "undecidability" is itself historical and contingent rather than, as for Derrida, a necessary condition for any "construction" and "invention". Furthermore, it might also be said that it flirts with the transcendental so much that it can't be clearly distinguished from it. Such are the risks, then, of walking such a narrow track. But what if we were to take these criticisms on board - that is, admit to a certain version of transcendentalism? For after all, isn't one of the lessons from Derrida, that, as we saw earlier, the purely empirical is not available, uncontaminated, under any circumstances? Then: isn't there a solution to this problem which lies in the fact that there is, after all, a definite and long-standing empiricist tradition inside philosophy itself? One recent uptake of that tradition which could have been mentioned earlier in our discussions of the Heidegger-Irigaray-Foucault reactions to Kant is that of Deleuze. In a recent paper, Bruce Baugh (1993) has very meticulously documented Deleuze's relation to, and modifications of, British empiricism.<sup>13</sup>

4.1 What Baugh shows is that, in terms of the preceding discussion, Deleuze has a very significant response to the Kantian irony of the cruciality-but-unattainability of the transcendental. His response involves deploying the idea of repetition (of the same, via local differences) as a replacement for the transcendental-empirical

distinction, as conceived in the Kantian tradition. This means that, via discrete, concrete and locally specific repetitions, difference ceases to be anything like a general condition and is, instead, situated and particular. As Baugh puts it, in one of several definitions of Deleuze's version of "the empirical": "The empirical is the here and now actuality that differentiates between performances and which makes repetition of the same possible" (1993: 16).<sup>14</sup> He goes on: "Empirical actuality, then, is not to be explained through possibility, however 'concretely' determined, but through actual causes.... The empirical is the effect of causes which contain no more and no less reality than it does, causes which are immanent and wholly manifest in the effect through which they are experienced" (1993:16). By contrast with Derrida, who finds, to put it crudely, a principle or possibility of difference behind every actual case, Deleuze holds that "the empirical is the reason for the non-conceptual differences between one instance of a representation and another" (1993: 17). In this version of things, then, empiricity precedes every possible conceptualisation, including a conceptualisation predicated on an ineluctable difference. Its priority might, then, be rethought as a transcendental condition in its own right. But this would be a very peculiar transcendental condition: one which has no force as a law or rule, one which offers no generalisations which can overtake the case-by-case (or clinical) inspection of local details; one which gives over the field of thinking, necessarily, to the priority of contingent historical events; one which, in short, meets all the conditions demanded by the discipline of pragmatics. This incredibly "weak" transcendental condition means that "The conditions of experience are themselves actual, not possible, contingent, not necessary, and particular rather than universal: 'the

real [the actual?] precedes the possible' and conditions it" (Baugh 1993: 22; Deleuze 1991: 120).

4.2 This, then, is the position which Deleuze calls "transcendental empiricism" and there is no reason why the most austere sub-versions of pragmatics should not be grounded in its (non-)principles. Finally, then, one of the reasons why I think the Deleuzian position (at least via Baugh's exegesis) might form a critical basis for any pragmatics is that it inverts the usual hierarchy in which we start with syntax, move to semantics and only thence to pragmatics. That is, it is a logical consequence of Deleuze's prioritisation of the sociohistorically contingent that: "a statement has a horizontal relation to other statements that determines its meaning and allows it to function as a concept (for example, a statement of definition), and a vertical relation that allows it to designate particulars as instances of a universal, but it also has a diagonal or transversal relation to other conceptual systems, a purely 'virtual' relation that becomes actual only when that statement in fact, due to contingent circumstances, enters into one of those systems (for example, when a language adopts a locution from another language). The first type of relations is syntactic or grammatical, the second is semantic or referential and the third is pragmatic and historical, since it concerns the actual historical and pragmatic reasons for a statement's becoming part of a new system of statements, or language. The actual functioning of a statement as a concept, then, is determined 'in the last instance' by pragmatics" (Baugh 1993: 23; Deleuze and Parnel 1987: 116-117). So: three relations between statements and others of their kind - where the third is in fact the primary relation; one which involves an essential borrowing, hybridity, contamination. And this is the sociohistorical, hence

pragmatic, dimension of discourse. Then what may be the surprising and ultimately anti-Cartesian conclusion for all pragmaticists: the syntactic and the semantic are utterly dependent upon it. So that might be at least one good reason to take the idea of a philosophically grounded pragmatics seriously.

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## Notes

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1. In what follows - for brevity - and in accord with particularly the French philosophical idiom - I will gloss the expression "the European speculative philosophical project" as simply "philosophy".

2. This is certainly the case with respect to Kant's ethical and religious writings. However, it should be noted that, in the critical works, Kant is against dogmatic metaphysics. If the world cannot be known in itself, then it is the task of the critical metaphysician to target any dogmatic metaphysics that holds otherwise.

3. I would like to thank Claire Colebrook for drawing my attention to this passage and for her many useful comments on this paper generally.

4. In Being and Time, Heidegger (1962: 62) writes: "Being and the structure of being lie beyond every [being] and every possible character which [a being] may possess. Being is the transcendens pure and simple. And the transcendence of Dasein's Being is distinctive in that it implies the possibility and the necessity of the most radical individuation. Every disclosure of Being as the transcendens is transcendental knowledge. Phenomenological truth (the disclosedness of Being) is veritas transcendentalis".

5. The point here is not that Irigaray is offering a "critique" of Heidegger so much as that she is extending and altering his general insight into what philosophy has forgotten. Insofar as Heidegger gestures towards a forgetting of corporeality - for example in his insistence on "earth" as a replacement for "world" (1993) - Irigaray can be said to be relying on Heideggerian thought. However her unique

and additional insight is that this actual corporeality is sexual, opening a path to political and moral matters beyond Heidegger's own thought. See Colebrook (1995).

6. There is also a sense in which the assertion of "the problematics of randomness" is an essential condition for Derrida, returning the gesture, then, to being another quasi-aprioristic procedure - albeit one which is quite different in character from assertions of presence as a grounding condition (which is what Derrida finds, by and large, in his reading of the Western metaphysical tradition).

7. While Foucault's and Irigaray's positions are linked in this sense, it is also the case, as we have seen, that there are differences and distinctions. For Foucault, empiricity is a question of what is given, simpliciter. For Irigaray, the empirical is both anterior and specific.

8. Again we might ask whether or not "a deconstruction of [philosophy's] hegemonic gesture" is itself anything other than a move which places philosophy first.

9. For Derrida, I guess, my very citing of the factual as factual would run the risk of returning us to ideality. I don't know whether this argument would hold water - but it may be a serious obstacle to any theory of pragmatics which wishes to avoid philosophical naivety.

10. We need to be clear here that this is not a proposal for a return to a neo-existentialist celebration of creation from chaos. Rather, it is much more like Heidegger's "multiple presencing in which things present emerge from absence" (Schürmann 1987: 13). At another remove, it is nothing more than an empirical attention to (as opposed to a statement of a general condition about) Derrida's insistence that there is nothing without the passage through a decision or determination from a state of undecidability or indeterminacy.

11. I am grateful to the anonymous Journal of Pragmatics reviewer who found antecedents to the philosophical analysis of tone in the works of both K.E. Loegstrup (whose work I do not know) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962).
12. The term "wirkliche" is from Nietzsche's Use and Abuse of History (1949). It receives more detailed treatment in my Semiotic Investigations (in press).
13. There may be a problem here concerning the extent to which this is "Deleuze" or the "Deleuze-Hume" that comes about via Deleuze's method of inhabitation of other philosophers.
14. One problem here may be that Hume's rejection of a straightforward inductivist account of experience confutes Deleuze's reading. However, in a recent article, Patrick Hayden (1993) has shown how Deleuze and Hume are on all fours in terms of an empiricism pertaining to relations between terms rather than to the terms themselves. It is also possible that even Baugh has missed the radicality of Deleuze's empiricism: for there is a distinct possibility in Difference and Repetition (1994) that, contra Derrida for example, difference is always an effect of an utterly primary and empirical repetition. In this case, repetition would be a "firstness" and would need no criteria in the Wittgensteinian sense. To use Wittgenstein's own phrase, it would be a standard which has no ground.