



Leonard Lawlor

A new possibility of life

The experience of powerlessness as a solution to the problem of the worst

In their efforts of marketing and conversion, both globalization and the religious are forms of total war disguised as peace. The total or global nature of this disguised war leads to what Leonard Lawlor calls "the problem of the worst".

Perhaps it is cliché to speak of signs. But it is a sign that, today, there are people who kill themselves in order to kill others, leaving no one behind. We are compelled to ask this question: what is a suicide bomber? Without much reflection we can start to find an answer. A suicide bomber is a martyr who opposes himself or herself to the technologization of the world. This sign called the suicide bomber indicates that we are witnessing today a return of the religious (the martyr) and the englobing of globalization (technologization). The religious and globalization complement one another, forming a mirror image of one another. Both the englobing of globalization and the return of the religious know no limits. In their efforts of marketing and conversion, in other words, in their efforts, of *conquest*, both globalization and the religious are forms of war; indeed they are forms of total war, and even worse they are forms of total war disguised as peace. Our "today" is defined by this formula: "war without war". The total or global nature of this disguised war leads to what I am calling the problem of the worst. The problem of the worst is *the* problem of our "today".¹ In the simplest terms, the problem of the worst is apocalypse, total violence or total suicide. If our "today" is defined by a disguised total war, then the problem of the worst is so bad *today* that it requires that we make every effort to find a solution. It may already be too late.

Now, what I am going to present constructs the beginnings of a solution to the problem of the worst. Here is how I shall proceed. The first section will start with the idea that what essentially defines a limit is divisibility. By means of the essential divisibility, we will be able to present the formal structure of the problem. As we shall see, the problem can be presented in two reversible versions. What is important to see in this first section is that the problem of the worst, being a superlative, is a hyperbolic problem. But the essential divisibility of the limit leads to an obvious question. What is the foundation for essential divisibility? The second section will attempt to answer this question. It will explain why the limit is fundamentally divisible. Here we shall rely on phenomenology and Bergsonism. Both phenomenology and Bergsonism have discovered, in their own way, a fundamental or transcendental experience. The basic experience each philosophical movement has discovered is the experience of powerlessness, or, even more precisely, the experience of blindness. The abyss of blindness grounds the essential divisibility of the limit, and therefore it grounds both the problem of the worst and, as we shall see, its

solution. The third section will attempt to construct a solution to the problem of the worst. It will return to our "today," which, as we have already pointed out, is defined by globalization and the religious. If our "today" is defined by "war without war," then the solution would lie in the direction of "peace without peace". The mechanism of the solution lies in reversal. And if the problem is hyperbolic, then the solution must also be hyperbolic. But there is more, and this is where we shall conclude. If the suicide bomber is the persona essentially connected to the problem of the worst, then we must look for another persona connected to the solution. We must look for a new mode of existence, *a new possibility of life*.² If the persona of the problem of the worst is someone who treats everyone, the whole world, including himself, as the enemy, then the solution of peace without peace must imply a mode of existence that treats the whole world as the friend. This friendship would not be the friendship among brothers (not fraternity), it would not be the friendship of philosophy (the philosopher-king as the friend of the idea); it would not even be the universal love of all humanity. No, the persona that I am trying to envision — as in a prophetic dream — is a friend of the outside.

Although I have referred to the movements of phenomenology and Bergsonism, you can probably see already that all the thinking in which I am engaged derives from the "generation of the incorruptible" (as Hélène Cixous has called them), that is, from the thinking of Derrida, Deleuze, Guattari and Foucault. We are able to group these diverse thinkers under one title because, it seems to me, their thought diffracts like a spectrum from one point. The point of diffraction is this: the attempt to think together the force of organic, living singularity (the event) and the force of inorganic, dead universality (mechanical repetition).³ An incorruptible connection necessarily brings these two forces together around *a minuscule, indeed infinitesimal hiatus* that forbids any gathering together into a unity or into a one and that forbids that the two forces separate from one another.⁴ This connection is so powerful that all of us are powerless before it. The force of the event and the force of repetition communicate in a moment of weakness or powerlessness. We must start with this moment of impotence. To speak like Heidegger, there lies the danger as well as the saving.⁵ There, in the experience of powerlessness, lies the problem of the worst as well as its solution. Let us now turn to the formalization of this problem.

The formalization of the problem of the worst

While the worst alludes to the old problem of the theodicy (the best possible world as in Leibniz), we must say that the problem of the worst does *not* consist in the worst possible world. It consists rather in the *loss* of the world itself. Here we could quote Deleuze and Guattari, from their 1991 *What is Philosophy* (and when we hear the word "loss" in their works we should always make the association to Proust: in search of *lost* time); speaking of us today, Deleuze and Guattari: "*We have lost the world, which is worse than losing a fiancée, a son, or a God*" (QP 72–73/75, my emphasis).⁶ Or, we could quote Derrida writing about Paul Celan in his 2003 *Rams*, "the world is gone, I must carry you".⁷ Both of these quotes allude to the event, in western metaphysics, of Platonism being overcome. The world, the second world, the world in itself or essential world is gone, lost, leaving only *this* world.⁸ Before losing the essential world, we would have called this world the "world of appearance." Yet, without an essential world behind it or above it, we see that *this* world is no longer unified; it is cracked, fragmented, with borders everywhere. The problem of the worst arises then because what defines a crack, a fragment, a border, or a limit is *essential divisibility*.⁹ Divisibility

means that the limit is porous, allowing things to mix that should not mix. The mixing together of things that are impossible cannot be stopped. The divisibility of the limit therefore exceeds everyone's *power*: I am *unable* to hold the limit closed and stop *entrance* and I am *unable* to hold the border closed and stop *exiting*.¹⁰ This formula gives us two reversible versions of the powerlessness in the face of the essential divisibility of the limit. The two versions arise respectively from the thought of Derrida and from the thought of Deleuze and Guattari. If we follow Derrida, we see the inability to stop entrance (the door opens and intrusion occurs); if we follow Deleuze and Guattari, we see the inability to stop exiting (the door opens and escape occurs).

The worst is a problem insofar as it is a reaction to the powerlessness that comes with the porous limit. In order to see how the problem of the worst comes about, let us look at the inability to stop entrance *first*. The worst occurs when I cannot keep all the others from entering *in*, when I am too weak to protect myself from all of those who might *contaminate* me, and then I react — this immediate reaction is precisely the worst one — by sending all of them *outside* to such a degree that I kill them and myself, all of us. The worst is the suicide of all, of everyone and everything, the whole world ("tout le monde", to use the common French idiom).¹¹ Here we can provide a second meaning to the loss of the world: pure self-destruction.¹² As in Derrida whose terms ("contamination," for instance) we were just using to formulate the problem, the worst in Deleuze and Guattari arises from the essential divisibility of the limit. But here in Deleuze and Guattari, in contrast to Derrida, but *not* in opposition to him, the worst occurs when I cannot keep all the others from getting *out*. Now, with Deleuze and Guattari we turn to the other version of the formula of the powerlessness in the face of the essential divisibility of the limit: the inability to stop escape. The worst, in this case, occurs when I cannot keep all the others from getting out, when I am too weak to protect myself from all those who might *flee*, and then I react — this immediate reaction is precisely the worst one — by pushing all the others toward the *inside* to such a degree that I kill them and myself. The worst occurs when there is total capture or no way out.¹³ But in either case, with either Derrida or Deleuze, the problem of the worst consists in the reaction to the experience of powerlessness; it is a super-reaction that unconditionally arrests passage: don't let them in; don't let them out — with no elsewhere and no future. Simply the problem of the worst is *unconditional im-passage*.

Before we turn to the fundamental experience that grounds the problem, let us anticipate the *solution* to the problem of the worst. The *solution* to the problem of the worst, which would be either the least bad (Derrida) or the best (Deleuze), would also arise from the essential divisibility of the limit. The worst and the best are inseparable.¹⁴ The best is not transcendent; the worst is not a fall from some sort of perfect state.¹⁵ Therefore, whenever we approach the best, we are also very close to the worst.¹⁶ So, given the essential inseparability of the best and the worst, let us start with a *reversal* of the worst in order to understand the least bad or the best. And indeed let us start with Derrida's terminology. If the worst consists in the reaction of not letting all the others *in*, if we can define it, in other words, as unconditional inhospitality, then the least bad would be the reaction of letting all the others in unconditionally, that is, the least bad as *unconditional hospitality*. In contrast to Derrida, but *not* opposed to him, Deleuze and Guattari would say that the best consists in "following a line of flight". But here too we would have to be hyperbolic in our reversal. We would have to up the ante on flight and make the line unconditional.¹⁷ So, if the worst consists in the reaction of not letting

all the others *out*, in other words, as unconditional capture, then the best would be the reaction of letting all the others out unconditionally, that is, the best as *unconditional flight*. But, as we shall see, it does not matter whether we adopt Derrida's conception or that of Deleuze and Guattari, whether we speak of unconditional hospitality or unconditional flight. What is at issue is to let everyone no matter what or whom *in*; what is at issue is to let everyone no matter what or whom *out*. What must be thought is *unconditional passage*.

The fundamental experience of powerlessness

As we can now see, both the formalization of the problem of the worst and its solution depend on the idea of passage. A limit is essentially divisible because it lets pass. As the word "passage" suggests, with its connection to the word "past", the divisibility of the limit is grounded on the experience of time. Here we must return to philosophical discoveries made at the beginning of the twentieth century; these discoveries are irreversible. We must return to phenomenology and Bergsonism. We know that Husserl placed time at the very foundation of consciousness; he had given it a transcendental status, a status that, we know, Heidegger would take up and radicalize. But like Husserl and Heidegger, Bergson placed time, through his concept of the duration, at a foundational level. What we are seeking is the fundamental experience, even the intuition, which grounds the essential divisibility of the limit. Let us turn first to Husserl.

In his 1913 *Ideas I*, Husserl presented a basic description of time consciousness.¹⁸ There, Husserl alluded to a level of consciousness that is more fundamental than what the reduction had transcendently opened up: "the primal source that is ultimately and truly absolute". This small paragraph in *Ideas I* (paragraph 81) was based on lectures Husserl had given at Göttingen from 1905. In these lectures, we find a short description of absolute time consciousness (in paragraphs 35 and 36).¹⁹ There, Husserl describes the flux of absolute time consciousness in terms of continuity and alteration; this combination of continuity or sameness and alteration or otherness, for Husserl, makes absolute consciousness "enigmatic".²⁰ But the enigma of the temporal flow of absolute consciousness refers back to earlier discussions in the lectures, to paragraphs 16 and 17. After having described time-consciousness in terms of three phases, the now phase, the phase of retention or primary memory, and the phase of protention or anticipation, Husserl focuses on the relation between the retentional phase and the now phase. Throughout the lectures, Husserl had described time-consciousness in terms of the present perception, the living present, in a word, in terms of presence; the now-phase is, so to speak, the "centre" of the living present, its "eye". When he turns to retention, Husserl reinforces the demand of presence. In paragraph 17, he says that "primary memory is perception". *But*, just previously in paragraph 16, he had described primary memory in terms of the "contradiction of perception".²¹ This contradiction of perception, in which primary memory consists, implies that the eye of present perception closes; this non-presence, so to speak, gouges out the eye, leaving behind a hole, a kind of blindness. And, it is precisely this contradictory relation between past and present, memory and perception, and correlatively, between future and present, expectation and perception, that results in the enigma of absolute consciousness, an enigma for which Husserl himself says "all names are lacking".

I am following here of course Derrida's analysis of phenomenological time consciousness found in his 1967 *Voice and Phenomenon*.²² But we can simplify the analysis and description in the following way in order to see what

is at stake in it. If we reflect on experience in general, what we cannot deny is that experience is conditioned by time. Every experience, necessarily, takes place in the present. In the present experience, there is the kernel or point of the now; Husserl had alerted us to this kernel, the "eye" of present perception. What is happening right now, however, must be described as an event, different from every other now ever experienced; there is alteration. Yet, also in the present, the recent past is remembered and what is about to happen is anticipated. The memory and the anticipation consist in repeatability, which results in continuity. Because the present being experienced right now can be immediately recalled, it is repeatable and that repeatability therefore motivates the anticipation that the same thing will happen again. Therefore, what is happening right now is also not different from every other now ever experienced. *At the same time*, the present experience is an event and it is not an event because it is repeatable; *at the same time*, the present experience is alteration and it is not alteration because there is continuity. This "at the same time", this simultaneity, is the crux of the matter. The conclusion that we must draw is that we can have no experience that does not essentially contain these two forces of event and repeatability in a relation of disunity *and* inseparability. They necessarily pass into one another with the result that we can say that the absolute is passage.

Clearly when we engage in a description like this, we are being, as Derrida says in his 2004 *Rogues*, "responsible guardians of the heritage of transcendental idealism".²³ Yet, we can also be like Deleuze and be responsible guardians of the heritage of Bergsonism. In his 1896 *Matter and Memory* — the book that most inspires Deleuze — Bergson defined the philosophical endeavor as seeking the source of experience up above the turn where experience becomes human. Instead of investigating experience as it is relative to human life, Bergson is seeking an absolute experience.²⁴ Then in his 1903 *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Bergson laid out his absolute in the idea of the duration (*la durée*). There, he says that the duration is "a multiplicity like no other"; the duration is a temporal multiplicity, which means that the flow of duration has no spatial separations — it is temporal — *and yet* the flow is heterogeneous.²⁵ Therefore, in order to understand the duration and the intuition of duration, we must push to the side any type of multiplicity that is spatial and homogeneous (that is, a multiplicity of the same sort of things, like sheep, juxtaposed to one another). Having set this standard kind of multiplicity aside, let us follow Bergson from his first book, the 1889 *Time and Free Will*, when he presents for the first time the idea of the duration. Here, Bergson describes the evolution of the feeling of sympathy.²⁶ This is a brilliant description. Bergson says that the experience of sympathy begins with us putting ourselves in the place of others, in feeling their pain. But, he continues, if sympathy consisted only in feeling the pain of others, sympathy would inspire in us abhorrence of others, and we would want to avoid them, not help them. The feeling of horror is at the root of sympathy. But then, one realizes that, if one does not help this "poor wretch", as Bergson says, it is going to turn out that, when I need help, no one will come to my aide. There is a "need" to help the suffering. Bergson claims that, so far, we have described only "the inferior forms of pity", since they are based only on horror and then need. Bergson however says that this "inferior form" becomes "true or superior pity." Superior pity is not so much fearing pain as desiring it. It is as if nature had committed a great injustice and what we want is not to be seen as complicitous with it. What Bergson is now describing in this desire to experience pain is a downward aspiration. But, this downward aspiration into pain develops upward into a sense of being superior. One realizes that one can do without certain sensuous goods. In the end, one feels humility, humble, since one is

now stripped of these sensuous goods. This emotion consists in a qualitative progress: a transition from repugnance to fear, from fear to sympathy, and from sympathy itself to humility.

This is the conclusion we must draw from the description. On the one hand, there is an heterogeneity of feelings in sympathy, and yet, on the other hand, no one would be able to juxtapose them. The feelings are continuous with one another and heterogeneous with one another to the point of making an opposition between inferior and superior. Importing some of the wording from the phenomenological argument, we could say that *at the same time*, the present experience is an event (heterogeneous) and it is not an event because it is repeatable (continuous). This "at the same time" is a point of indiscernability or undecidability. The point of indiscernability occurs when the multiplicity passes over into duality. In the description of sympathy, this point would be the point at which repugnance passes over into humility. This anomalous point would not be able to have, necessarily, the form of either side of the duality, the form neither of repugnance nor of humility, neither of superiority nor of inferiority, neither of memory nor of matter; sympathy would never appear as such. Lacking a form, the anomalous point could not be seen or remembered or anticipated. The fundamental experience being described both here in Bergsonism and in phenomenology is the experience of blindness, the intuition of a blind spot. Lacking a form, the blind spot would make passage possible for things that are contradictory or impossible. The spot would constitute a limit that is essentially divisible between repugnance and humility, between past and present. Through this blind spot, what is outside would be able to force its way in, and through this point, what is inside would be able to force its way out. No one would have the power to stop this passage.

War without war

The secret of the descriptions that we have just seen lies in the idea that any medium of sameness heterogenizes. Earlier we had seen that the problem of the worst consisted in a reaction to the inability to stop others from entering and in a reaction to the inability to stop others from exiting. Now we are able to explain why these two inability exist. No one is able to stop entrance because the medium between self and others is temporal. The medium is temporal because experience is fundamentally or transcendently temporal, and that means that experience always consists in a potentially universal and repeatable trait, which can be distributed to all the others. The repeatability or iterability of the trait allows for continuity between me and others, and it forbids the separation that would protect me from others from getting in. *And*, no one is able to stop exit because, once again, the medium between self and others is temporal. The medium is temporal because experience is fundamentally or transcendently temporal, and that means that experience always consists in a potentially singular and non-repeatable trait, the event. The singularity or event-character of the trait allows for variation between me and others, and forbids the homogenization that would protect me from the others getting out. The limit or threshold or border or crack or hiatus between me and others divides in order to include and it divides in order to exclude. There is an inseparable doubleness, a doubleness in which the event or heterogeneity violates repetition or continuity *and* the repetition or continuity violates event or heterogeneity. This radical violence takes place in a zone of imperceptibility. When I intuit this zone, my eyes are too weak to discern and separate. We are so weak therefore that we cannot stop continuity from turning into heterogeneity and we cannot stop heterogeneity from turning into continuity. We are so weak that we cannot stop others from entering and we

cannot stop others from fleeing. With this violence at the root, this fundamental violence, we have not however encountered the worst. The worst, we recall, is a hyperbolic reaction, a super-reaction to this inability. To the point of total suicide, it unconditionally excludes and it unconditionally includes. The worst is not radical violence; the worst is total violence. The suicide bomber says, "Don't let the others, none of them, not even me, enter in; don't let the other, none of them, not even me, exit out!"

Now, let us make the problem of the worst more concrete by returning to our "today". As at the beginning and just now, we raised the question of the suicide bomber. We defined the suicide bomber as a martyr who kills himself in order to kill others in order to oppose technologization. This definition led us to two aspects of our "today". On the one hand, our "today" is defined by englobing of globalization and, on the other hand, it is defined by return of the religious. Now, in relation to these two aspects, let us appropriate some ideas presented by Derrida, and by Deleuze and Guattari. In his 1994 essay, "Faith and Knowledge," Derrida notes that after the end of the Cold War, the religious returns.²⁷ Derrida stresses that the return of the religious is not a simple return of the *religious*. The return involves in fact a "radical destruction" of the religious. Derrida provides two reasons for this destruction. *First* the religious is being destroyed due to the war that fundamentalism wages against the Roman and state or organized churches. But then, *second*, the religious is being destroyed due to a pacifist movement of universal fraternization, the reconciliation of "men, sons of the same God," these brothers basically all belonging to the monotheistic tradition of Abrahamic religions. With this reconciliation, there would no longer be a need for religions in the plural. Yet, the movement of peace, according to Derrida, involves a double horizon. I am going to abbreviate the first horizon since it is not so relevant to our concerns. Derrida claims that, *on the one hand*, the movement of peace involves a horizon of the death of God and thus an anthropological re-immanentization. The idea is that Christianity values human life so much that it no longer values God.²⁸ *On the other hand* — the second horizon of the peace movement — the declaration of peace among the Abrahamic religions can also be a pacifying gesture, but, *and this point is important*, it is pacifying in the sense of subjugating. Referring to Rome, Derrida speaks of a kind of religious colonization, the imposition "surreptitiously [of] a discourse, a culture, a politics, and a right, to impose them on all the other monotheistic religions, including the non-Catholic Christian religions". Beyond Europe, the aim would be to impose, in the name of peace, "a globalatinization [*mondialatinasation*]"²⁹ Clearly, Derrida here is aligning the return of the religious with the very movement of globalization. Although the pacifying movement has peace (pacification) as its explicit objective, its implicit aim is subjugation (pacification again), and we must recognize that this aim is a negative war-like aim. For Derrida, the movement of peace in the return of the religious is "war by other means"; he says, "The field of this war or this pacification is without limit".³⁰

¹ Jacques Derrida, *L'Animal que donc je suis* (Paris: Galilée, 2006), pp. 46–47; English translations of Chapter One by David Will as "The Animal that Therefore I am (More to Follow)," in *Critical Inquiry* 28 (winter 2002), pp. 394–395 (total pages: 369–418).

² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (Paris: Minuit, 1991), pp. 70–71; English translation by Graham Burchell as *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 72–73. See also Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, tr. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), p. 122.

³ Derrida says, "Will this be possible for us? Will we one day be able to, and in a single gesture, to join the thinking of the event to the thinking of the machine? Will we be able to

think, what is called thinking, at one and the same time, both what is happening (we call that an event) and the calculable programming of an automatic repetition (we call that a machine). For that, it would be necessary in the future (but there will be no future except on this condition) to think both the event and the machine as two compatible or even in-dissociable concepts. Today they appear to us to be antinomic." These two concepts appear to us to be antinomic because we conceive an event as something singular and non-repeatable. Moreover, as we have seen, Derrida associates this singularity to the living. The living being undergoes an affection and this affection gets inscribed in organic material. The idea of an inscription leads Derrida to the other pole. The machine that inscribes is based in repetition; "It is destined, that is, to reproduce impassively, imperceptibly, without organ or organicity, the received commands. In a state of anaesthesia, it would obey or command a calculable program without affect or auto-affection, like an indifferent automaton". The automaticity of the inorganic machine is not the spontaneity attributed to organic life. It is easy to see the incompatibility of the two concepts: organic, living singularity (the event) and inorganic, dead, universality (mechanical repetition). Derrida says that, if we can make these two concepts compatible, "you can bet not only (and I insist on not only) will one have produced a new logic, an unheard of conceptual form. In truth, against the background and at the horizon of our present possibilities, this new figure would resemble a monster". The monstrosity of this paradox between event and repetition announces, perhaps, another kind of thinking, an impossible thinking: the impossible event (there must be resemblance to the past which cancels the singularity of the event) and the only possible event (since any event to be so must be singular and non-resembling). Derrida concludes this discussion by saying: "To give up neither the event nor the machine, to subordinate neither one to the other, neither to reduce one to the other: this is perhaps a concern of thinking that has kept a certain number of 'us' working for the last few decades." This "us" refers to Derrida's generation of thinkers: "the incorruptibles". All the quotes come from "Le ruban de machine à écrire", in *Papier Machine* (Paris: Galilée, 2001), pp. 33–104. English translation by Peggy Kamuf as "Typewriter Ribbon", in *Without Alibi*, edited, translated, and with an Introduction by Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 71–160.

- ⁴ For more on "a minuscule hiatus" (*un écart infime*), see Leonard Lawlor, *The Implication of Immanence* (Bronx: Fordham University Press, 2006).
- ⁵ Quoting Hölderlin, Heidegger says, "Where the danger is, grows the saving power too." See Martin Heidegger, "Die Frage nach dem Technik", in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1954, Zehnte Auflage, 2004), p. 39; English translation by William Lovett as "The Question Concerning Technology", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1977), p. 34.
- ⁶ This passage is cited in François Zourabichvili, *Deleuze, une philosophie de l'événement*, p. 68.
- ⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Béliers* (Paris: Galilée, 2003), p. 67; English translation by Thomas Dutoit and Phillippe Romanski as "Rams", in *Sovereignities in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), p. 158.
- ⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: Quadrige, Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), p. 137; English translation by Richard Howard as *Proust and Signs* (New York: Braziller, 1972), p. 101. Hereafter cited as P, with reference first to the French, then to the English translation.
- ⁹ For more on the concept of the limit with which we are working here, see Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), p. 55; English translation by Paul Patton as *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 37. Deleuze says, "Here, limit, *peras*, no longer refers to what maintains the thing under a law, nor to what sets an end to it [*termine*] or separates it; but, on the contrary, it the limit is that on the basis of which the thing is unfolded [*se déploie*] and unfolds all its potency [*puissance*]. *Hybris* stops being simply something that can be condemned, and *the smallest becomes the equal of the greatest* as soon as it is not separated from what it is able to do" (Deleuze's emphasis, translation modified). Or one should see Jacques Derrida, *Aporias* (Paris: Galilée, 1996, p. 44; English translation by Thomas Dutoit as *Aporias* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 20. Here Derrida says, "The non-passage, the impasse or aporia, stems from the fact that there is no limit. There is not yet or there is no longer a border to cross, no opposition between two sides: the limit is too porous, permeable, and indeterminate."
- ¹⁰ The use of the verb "to hold" here refers to the hand. The solution to the problem of the worst implies, as Deleuze and Guattari would say, a "deterritorialization of the hand"; it also requires a deterritorialization of the mouth.
- ¹¹ Here we could raise the exemplary problem of what defines a person who takes his or her own life in order to take the lives of others: suicide bomber or martyr? But the worst is worse than a suicide bomber.

- 12 "Pure self–destruction" is a phrase I am borrowing from Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*. See MP 201/162.
- 13 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka, Pour une littérature mineure* (Paris: Minuit, 1975), p. 19; English translation by Dana Polan as *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 10, my emphasis. Hereafter cited as K with reference first to the French, then to the English translation.
- 14 As Deleuze and Guattari say, "there is the best and the worst in the rhizome" (MP 13/7).
- 15 On the specific kind of fall in Deleuze, see Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation* (Paris: Editions de la différence, 1996 (1981), pp. 54; English translation by Daniel Smith as *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), pp. 67.
- 16 With this inseparability of the best and the worst in mind, we should recall the famous statement from Heidegger (quoting Hölderlin): "Where the danger is, grows the saving power too." See Martin Heidegger, "Die Frage nach dem Technik," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Stuttgart: Klett–Cotta, 1954, Zehnte Auflage, 2004), p. 39; English translation by William Lovett as "The Question Concerning Technology", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1977), p. 34.
- 17 Deleuze and Guattari say that the line of flight is absolute and yet local (MP 474/382).
- 18 Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book*. Tr. Fred Kersten (The Hague: Maritnus Joffhoff Publishers, 1983). See paragraph 83, and especially note 26. See also Paul Ricoeur's French translation as *Idees directrices pour une phénoménologie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1950).
- 19 Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time–Consciousness*, tr., James Churchill (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1964). I have also consulted: Henri Dussort's translation, *Leçons pour une phénoménologie de la conscience intime du temps* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964). The Churchill English translation and the Dussort French translation are based on Edmund Husserl, *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins*, ed., Martin Heidegger (Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1928). The Husserliana volume of these lectures appeared in 1966; *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtsein, 1893–1977*, Husserliana X, edited by Rudolf Boehm (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1966). I have also consulted John Brough's more recent English translation of Husserliana X: *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991).
- 20 Husserl uses the terms "Kontinuität" and "Veränderung" in paragraph 35.
- 21 Husserl uses the term "Gegensatz," which Churchill and Brough render as "antithesis", and Dussort as "l'opposé".
- 22 Jacques Derrida, *La voix et le phénomène* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967). I am in the process of preparing a new translation of this book for Northwestern University Press.
- 23 Jacques Derrida, *Voyous* (Paris: Galilée, 2003), p. 188; English translation by Pascale–Anne Brault and Michael Naas as *Rogues*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 134.
- 24 Henri Bergson, *Matière et mémoire*, in *Oeuvres*, Edition du Centenaire (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), p. 321; English translation by tr., N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer as *Matter and Memory* (New York: Zone Books, 1994), p. 184.
- 25 Henri Bergson, "Introduction à la métaphysique," in *Oeuvres*, Edition du Centenaire (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), p. 1402; English translation by T. E. Hulme as *Introduction to Metaphysics* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), p. 14.
- 26 This example comes from Bergson. See Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, in *Oeuvres*, Edition du Centenaire (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), pp. 16–17; *Time and Free Will*, pp. 18–19.
- 27 Jacques Derrida, "Foi et savoir," in *La Religion*, Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo, editors (Paris: Seuil, 1996), pp. 57–58; English translation by Samuel Weber as "Faith and Knowledge," in *Religion*, Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo, editors (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 42–43, paragraph 37.
- 28 Derrida is suggesting that the Pope's encyclicals (that is, Pope John Paul II) imply that, after the death of the Christ, the first death of God, there will be a second death of God; the movement of peace would result in there being only man. No longer, in other words, would God be valued but only man would be valued. In "Faith and Knowledge", Derrida does not cite any writing by John Paul II. But perhaps Derrida has in mind the Pope's 1993 Encyclical, "Veritatis Splendor": "All around us we encounter contempt for human life after conception and before birth; the ongoing violation of basic rights of the person; the unjust destruction of goods minimally necessary for a human life. Indeed, something more serious has happened: man is no longer convinced that only in the truth can he find

salvation. The saving power of the truth is contested, and freedom alone, uprooted from any objectivity, is left to decide by itself what is good and what is evil." See the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: www.usccb.org/pope/writings.htm.

²⁹ FS 58/43, paragraph 37.

³⁰ See Deleuze, *Negotiations*, pp. 177–182. In a control society, the barriers of confinement and discipline have come down; yet one is still enclosed insofar as one's movements are always under surveillance and therefore controlled. Therefore, as we see today with the so-called "war on terror", everyone is potentially under surveillance, everyone is being controlled.

³¹ MP 589/471

³² (MP 525/421, MP 583/467) Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), p. 197; English translation by Alan Sheridan as *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage, 1977), p. 168.

³³ I am borrowing the idea of a weak force from Derrida. In the Preface to his 2002 *Rogues* (called "Veni"), and this is the place where he says this as far as I know, Derrida defines a weak force as "this vulnerable force, this force without power [*sans pouvoir*] [that] opens up [*expose*] unconditionally to what or who comes and comes to affect it". See Jacques Derrida, *Voyous* (Paris: Galilée, 2003), p. 13; English translation by Michael Naas and Pascale–Anne Brault as *Rogues* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. xiv. And while Deleuze or Deleuze and Guattari never speak of a weak force, we must recognize however that, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, they attribute the creation of a new regime of signs to the Jewish prophets who were able to turn their passivity into a passion, who were able to turn God's word that orders death, they were able to turn that death sentence into a password (MP 155–157/124–125). They were able to turn a lack of power into force. In this privation of power — the "sans pouvoir" that we saw in the Derrida quote - there is something positive. Derrida seems to appropriate here Benjamin's idea of "a weak messianic power," found in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History." See Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, tr., Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 254.

³⁴ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 170; *Difference and Repetition*, p. 130. See also Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, p. 61; *What is Philosophy?*, pp. 62–63.

³⁵ See MP 244/199.

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