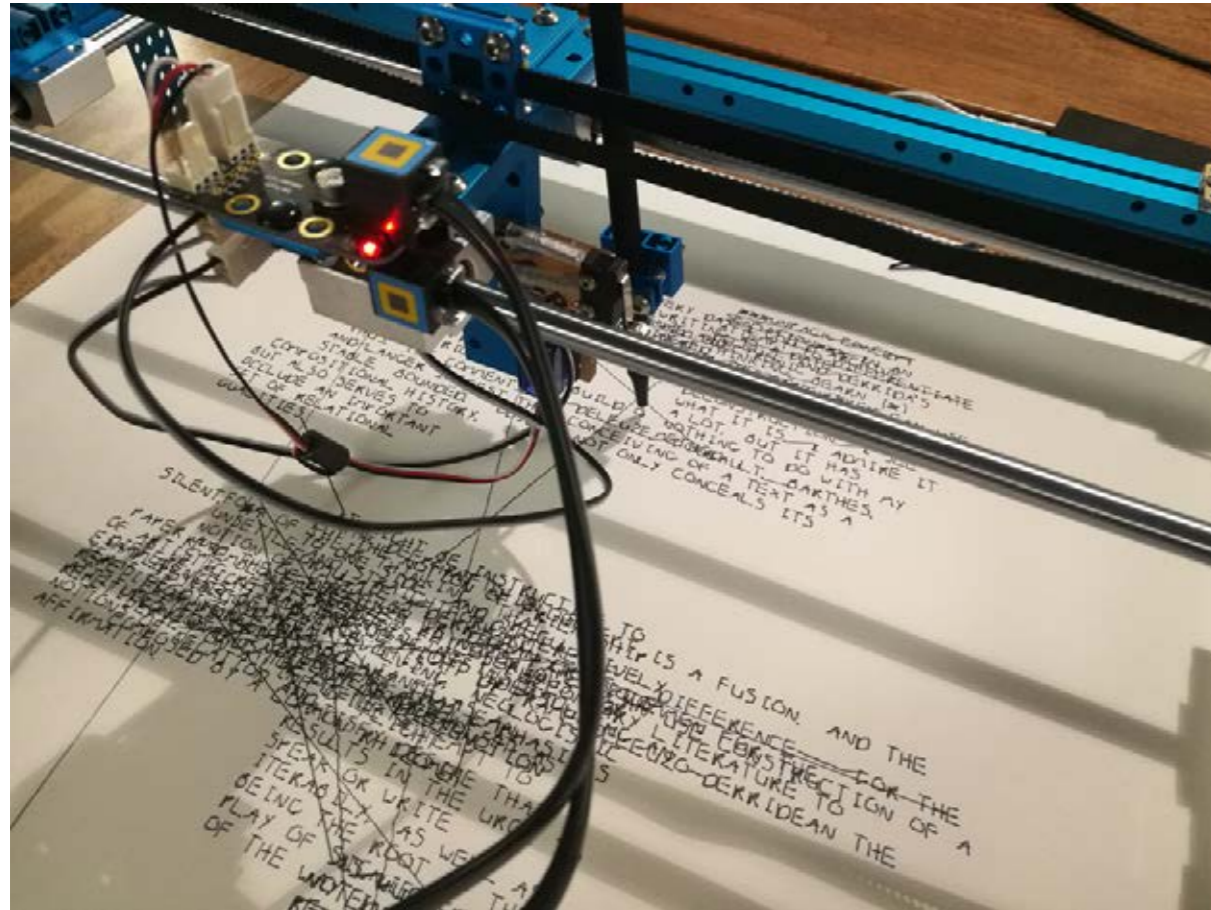


Deleuze * Derrida
Dr Spencer Roberts

Deleuze * Derrida

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Project Description



For the duration of the 2017 Deleuze and Artistic Research conference, I instantiated a machinic writing event. A pair of computer-controlled writing machines (x-y pen-plotters) perpetually 'hand-wrote' extracts from the multiple drafts of an academic text that was presented as a part of the conference itself. Prior to the conference, I had archived the draft materials for the paper-in-progress on a daily basis, providing a series of documents that could then serve as a data source for the writing machines. Through a process of writing and over-writing, the plotters dwelled upon randomly selected passages of text and explored their development over time. In this sense, the machines revealed the emergence and development of ideas, as well as deletions, redactions and changes of mind. A series of contact microphones attached to the plotting mechanism, provided a percussive accompaniment to the development of each palimpsest – emphasising the contingency and materiality of the writing process. The plotters were 'tuned' respectively to the philosophical lexicons of Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze - and this served to influence their selections of text. The paper being performed, later went on to form a book chapter in *Aberrant Nuptials: Deleuze and Artistic Research*, an edited, peer reviewed, paper selection published by Leuven University Press (2019).

Research Aims & Objectives

Project Duration:

The machines were constructed over the course of the first semester of 2016/17 and were used pragmatically as a means of teaching students how to approach the 'special study' (technical study) component of the final year theory module on the University of Huddersfield's Graphic Design and Animation course. The machines were later refined along with the software which I developed in order to drive them. This was conducted in parallel with the writing of the paper, and the production of its multiple drafts (April and May 2017). The development of the writing machines and their driver software continued up until they were exhibited in November 20th-22nd, 2017.

Funder:

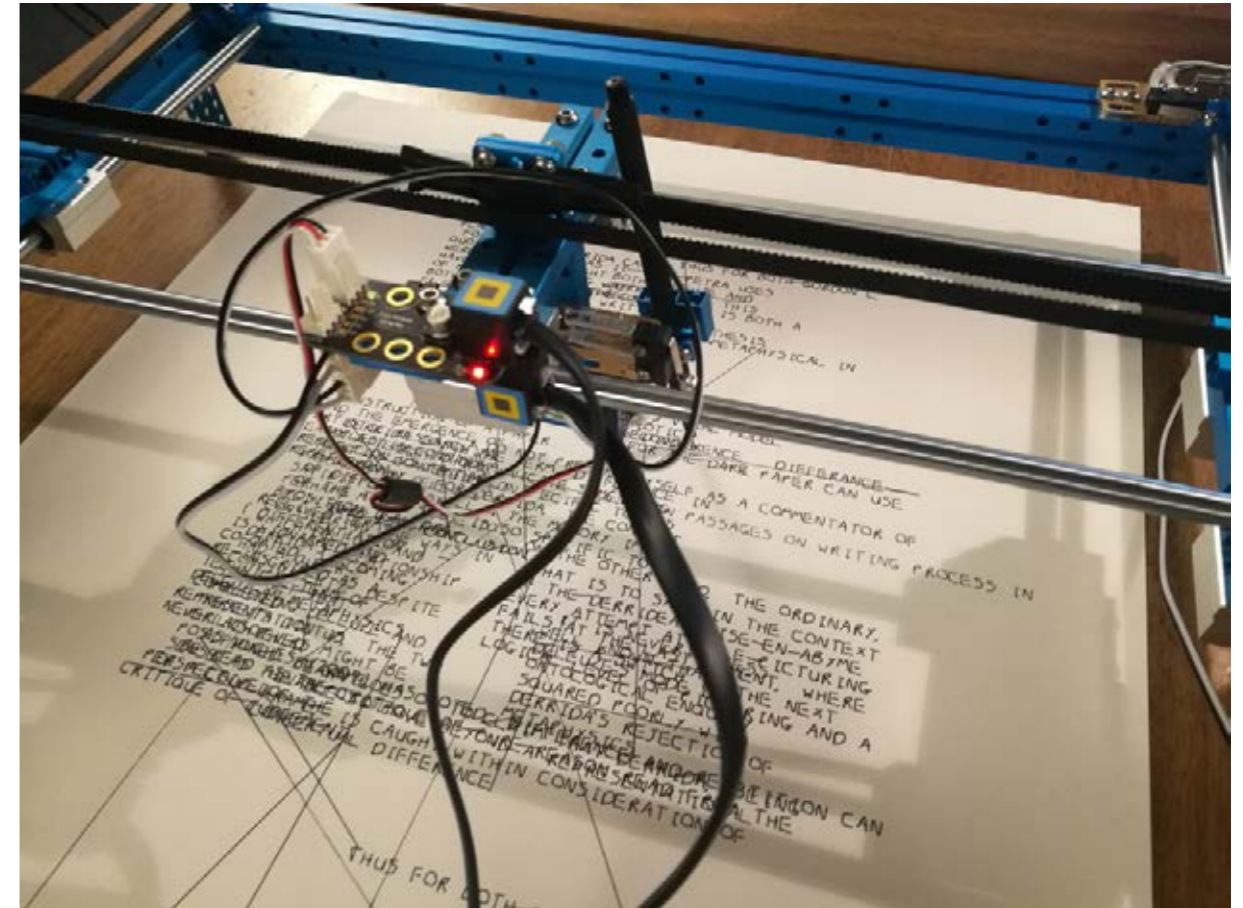
I was awarded School Research Funds for the purchase of X-Y plotter kits, as well as for travel and subsistence in Ghent (£1500). I was also twice awarded School Research Funds to travel to Canada to deliver a series of papers and to conduct primary research with Deleuzian and Derridean philosophical audiences (£2600 in total), exposing these communities to the overlaps and tensions between their ideas.

Research Aims & Objectives:

Primarily, the research was aimed at reconciling the role of sensation, textuality, performativity and affect in the context of artistic research. It attempted to explore the processual dimension of academic writing as a creative practice, foregrounding the corporeal and affective dimension of textual production. The emphasis upon sensation and affect that can be derived from Deleuzian philosophy was interfaced with the emphasis upon corporeal textuality that can be derived from Derridean thought. An attempt was made, firstly to construct a Deleuzo-Derridean framework that might be applied in the context of artistic research, and secondly to expose the affective, creative and emergent aspects of the production of an academic text in order to demonstrate an important affinity between creative practice and more traditional modes of research.

Research Context

The originality and significance of the project arises out of the way in which it utilises the platform of the technological writing machine in order to explore a set of philosophical tensions between Deleuzian and Derridean thought, whilst simultaneously foregrounding the methodological importance of artefact in the context of artistic research. The project employs a pair of automated writing machines to 'perform' the long durational production of an academic text, and to explore the strange temporality that accompanied its longitudinal development. The text and its multiple drafts, which were utilised as content for the performance, attempted to synthesise the thought of a philosopher of sensation (Deleuze), with a philosopher of textuality (Derrida), and to signpost the value of an equally original Deleuzo-Derridean position in the theorisation of artistic research. The project also attempted to draw the processes of artistic production and more traditional forms of writing closer together, emphasising the role of emergence, relationality, and becoming with respect to both artistic practice and academic textual production. The rigour of the work lies not only in the careful research and argumentation that underpins the academic text, but also in the close, self-referential alignment of form and content with respect to the artefact. The work plays out the processual, onto-genetic construction of texts, and the non-linear temporality of the process of writing that is discussed in the academic paper. In a similar fashion, through the machinic performance of overwriting, the text becomes at once more abundant, and less legible over time. The increasingly overwritten canvas slowly darkens with ink, and ultimately instantiates a void. This strange affinity between the concepts of void and abundance, is one of the central insights that is utilised within the written paper, in order to bring the philosophies of Deleuze in Derrida into productive relation. Collectively the work reveals how Deleuze's emphasis upon performativity, emergence, and onto-genetic construction nevertheless serves to extend and supplement the Derridean account of textuality by exposing its neglect of the process of writing. In so doing it foregrounds the potential for a Deleuzo-Derridean philosophy to instantiate a genuinely aesthetico-conceptual image of thought.



Software and Hardware Construction
Deleuze and Artistic Research conference, 2017.

Research Methods & Process

The research required a number of inter-related methods, and can be considered a hybrid of comparative philosophy, software production, and artistic practice. In methodological terms, the production of the source material for the performance (the final text of an academic paper, along with the archive of its daily drafts) employed comparative philosophical analysis – a method routinely employed in the context of much philosophical writing, and thus corresponding to Frayling’s notion of ‘research into’ (Frayling, 1993, p.5). Whilst the comparative philosophical method can be considered a mode of analysis, it can also be considered constructively, in so far as the staging of an encounter between two philosophical voices often results in a ‘virtual’ third position (Smid, 2009). In the context of this body of research, this third position might be considered the formulation of a Deleuzo-Derridean philosophical stance, or as the production of the writing machines themselves, which were intended to simultaneously constitute a propositional ‘saying’ and affective ‘showing’ of the problem.

The construction of the writing machines and the authoring of the software which drove them can be considered a kind of materials research, and thus corresponds to Frayling’s notion of ‘research through’ (Frayling, 1993, p.5). The writing machines needed to be constructed, and interfaced with a programming language in order to develop the software that would enable the scanning and retrieval of passages of text, and the rendering of ‘handwritten’ letter forms.

There was much aesthetic experimentation required to produce the appropriate visual and performative outputs. It was intended that the machines would produce a series of canvases which were unique artefacts, but which would nevertheless form a family. To this end, many random factors were introduced into the software (concerning placement, spacing, line length etc.) – such factors were sensitively balanced in order to produce a contingent compositional field, out of which an aesthetically interesting textual composition might emerge. Ultimately a form of writing was produced that was both deconstructive and rhizomatic in character, expressing affinities with both Deleuzian and Derridean philosophical thought.



Figure 1. Work in Situ
(Orpheus Institute, Ghent).

It is common for writings on artistic research to stress both the importance of methodological invention and the embrace of contingency. Indeed, artistic research projects might be considered less as attempts to deploy extant methodologies, but rather as attempts to construct singular, bespoke methods for interrogating or activating a problem. The writing machines themselves thus constitute methodological devices for introducing moments of what C.S. Peirce (1998) described as ‘abductive inference’ – a mode of reasoning lauded in more recent times by Mieke Bal (2010, p.6). Abductive inference arises out of an experience which in some way jars with expectation, and which results in a search for, or the construction of, the best available alternative hypothesis. Bal stresses the way in which abductive inference makes creative leaps from a singular, experiential starting point, and reasons from consequence to possible cause. Importantly, Bal draws attention to the creativity inherent in the process of hypothesis formation in the context of more traditional modes of research. The machines were intended to provoke an abductive moment that could reframe a body of writing, revealing the process or practice of writing as an at once complex and conflicted corporeal activity and resisting the notion of the self-enclosed or self-sufficient text (thus corresponding to Frayling’s category of ‘research for’). The writing machines were also intended to provide an associative space in which the same text could be mined simultaneously from a Deleuzian and Derridean perspective.

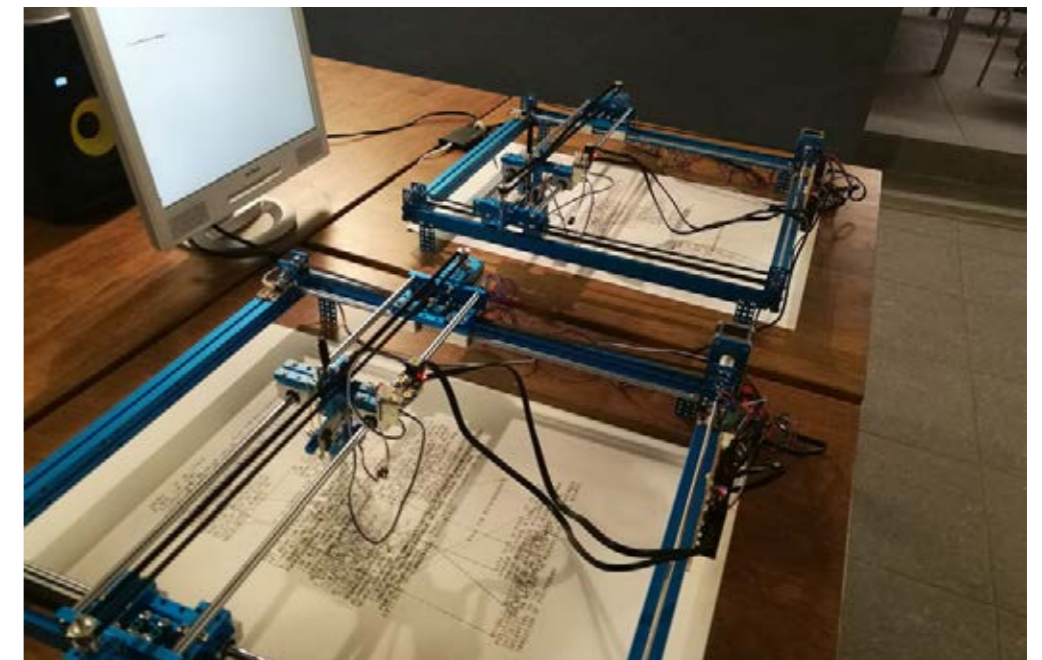


Figure 2. Work in Situ
(Orpheus Institute, Ghent).

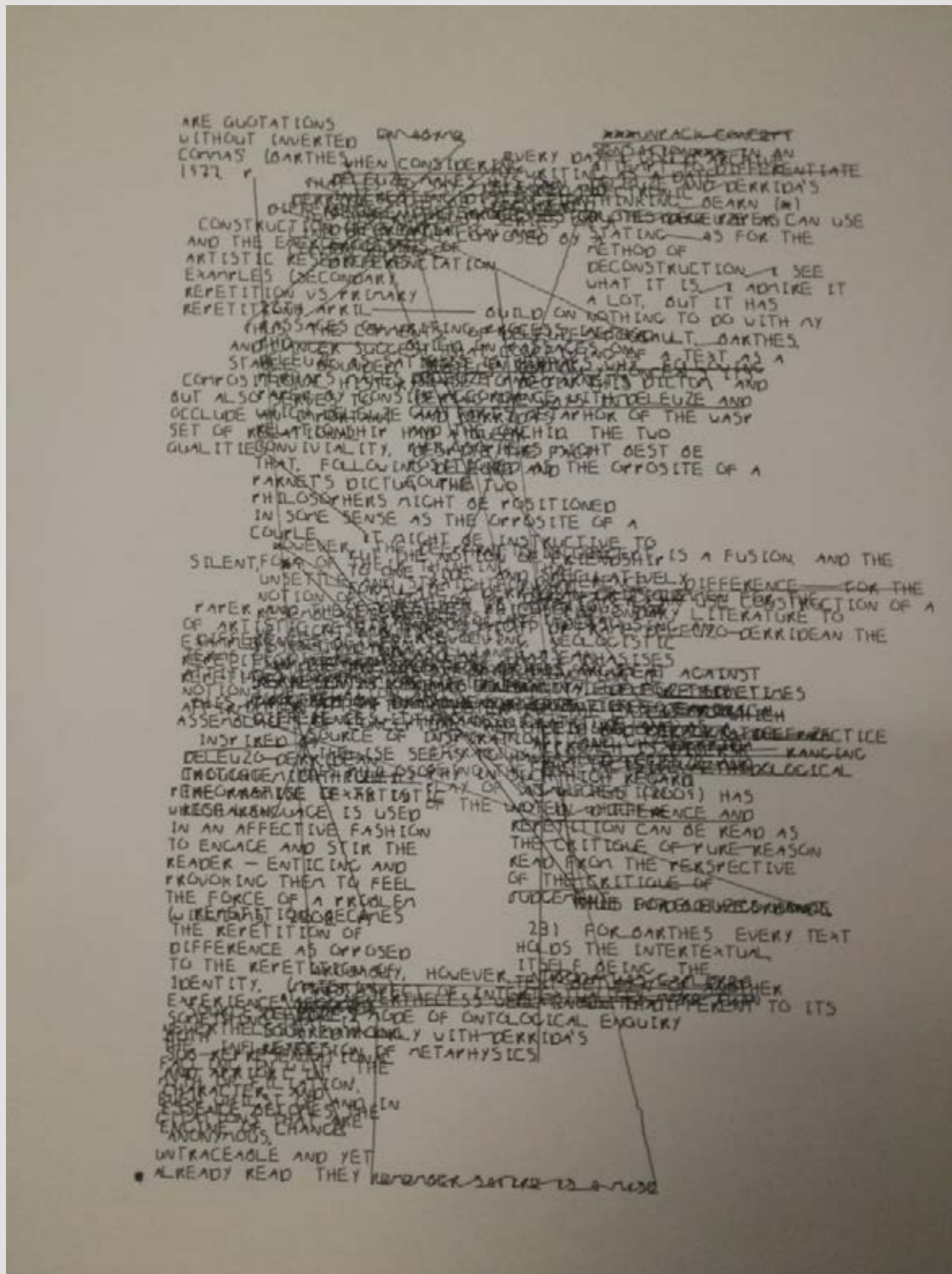


Figure 3. Rhizomatic Deconstructed Image.

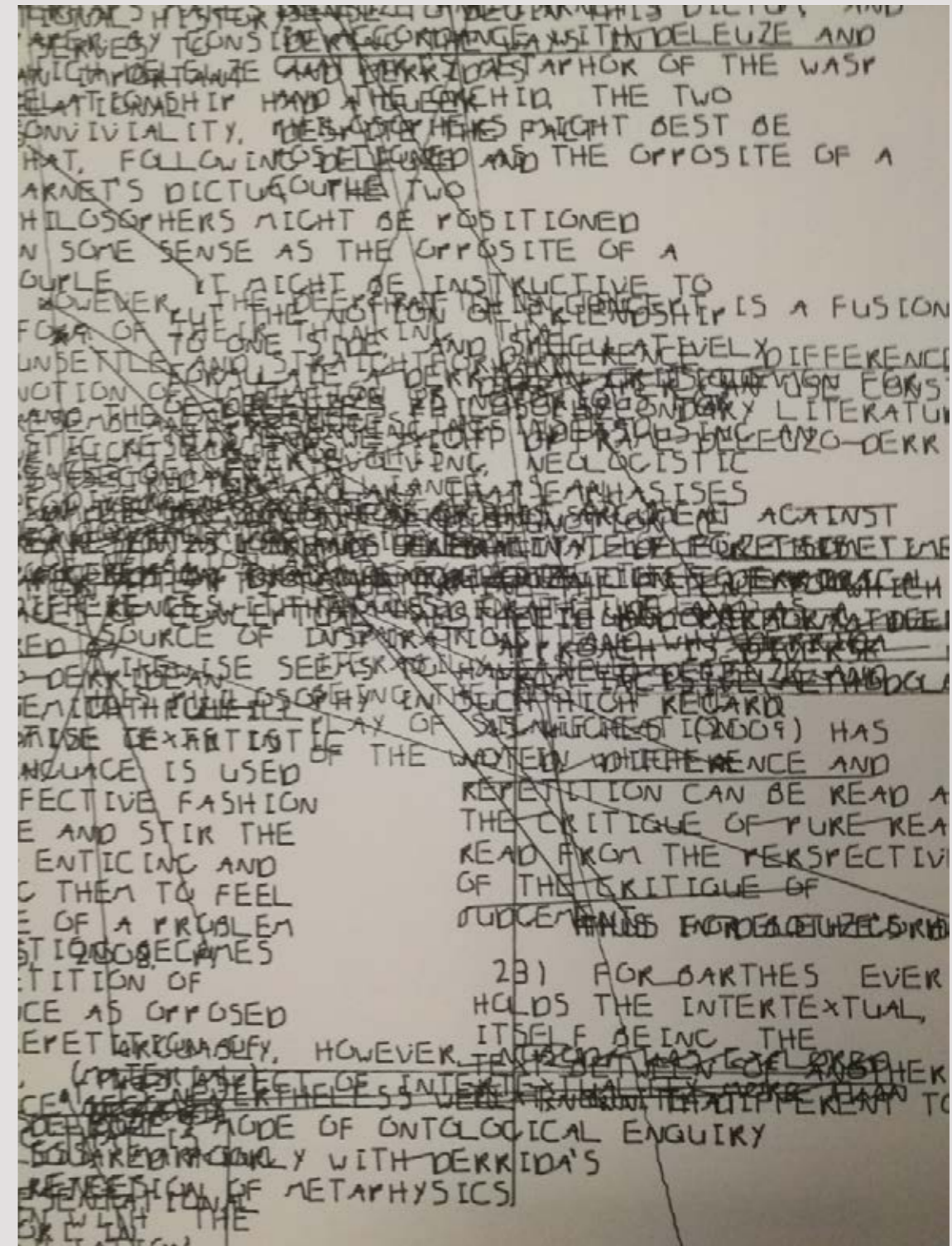


Figure 4. Rhizomatic Deconstructed Detail.

Research Outcomes & Dissemination

The output of the writing machines provided an important insight in formulating an approach to the synthesis of Deleuzian and Derridean philosophies, namely that spaces of text which had been saturated through over-writing on a palimpsest served simultaneously to establish both a void and an abundant form.

Thus, the writing machines helped to reconcile the Derridean notion of the creative power of absence, with the Deleuzian notion of abundant, virtual potentiality and to bring these notions together in a performative fashion. Developing this insight further, it was possible to position Deleuzian and Derridean philosophies as operating together, but in a peculiarly gestalt configuration - much as when unstable ambiguous figures, give rise to seemingly incommensurable forms. Perceptually, such forms may oscillate, but they can never be simultaneously present to the viewer.

In the context of artistic research, the eclectic nature of the body of work as a whole resonated well with Deleuze's operatic conception of style in philosophy as involving percept, concept and affect - and his suggestion that we need all three to 'get things moving' (Deleuze, 1995, p.164). However, the gestalt framing of the Deleuzo-Derridean position also enabled a tracing of the power of negativity/resistance in Derridean thought, which served as a contrast to the emphasis upon affirmation that is often embraced in the context of Deleuzian inspired artistic research projects, paving the way for creative, non-propositional forms of contestation.

The project resulted in five outcomes. There were three international conference presentations, one artefact, and one book chapter. Formative papers developing the project context were presented at: the 10th International Deleuze Studies conference (The 519 LGBTQ Community Centre, Toronto, Canada), the 2nd Deleuze and Artistic Research conference (Orpheus Institute, Ghent, Belgium) and the 6th Derrida Today conference (Concordia University, Montreal, Canada) conferences. The writing machines were exhibited as an artefact alongside the delivery of the paper at the 2nd Deleuze and Artistic Research conference (Orpheus Institute, Ghent, Belgium).

Finally, the paper that was delivered at the Deleuze and Artistic Research conference formed a part of an edited, peer reviewed selection, published by Leuven University Press (2019).

The outline for an 80000 word monograph entitled Deleuze and Derrida for Artistic Research, was accepted by Paulo de Assis, the editor of Roman and Littlefield International's Artistic Research series, in May 2020.

The outputs of the writing machines were gifted on request to a number of conference attendees.

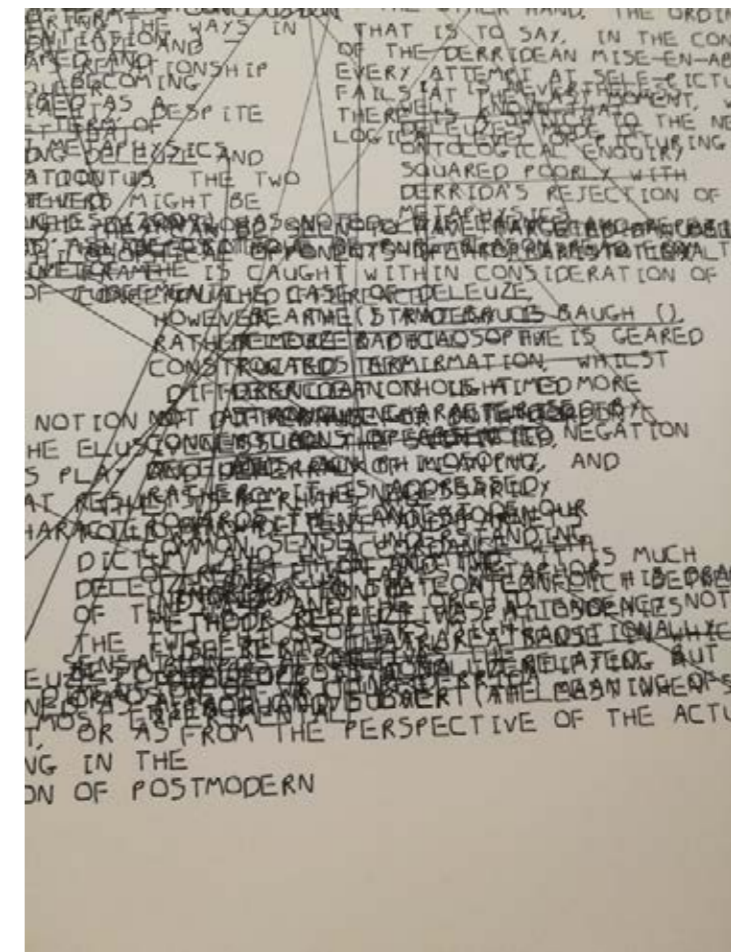


Figure 5. Rhizomatic Deconstructed Detail.

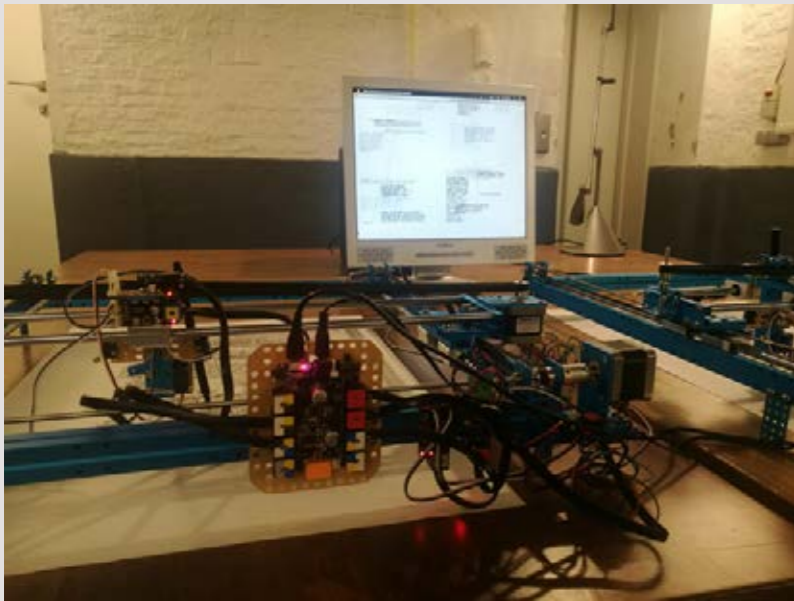


Figure 6. Software and Hardware Construction 2.

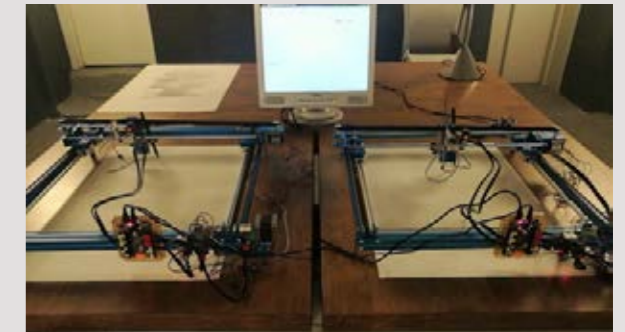


Figure 8. Video

Watch here: <https://vimeo.com/user128632298>

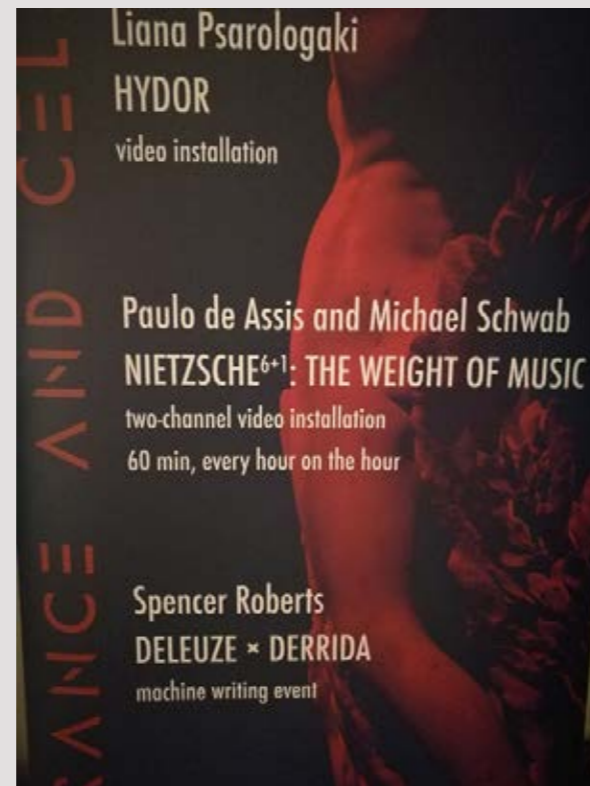


Figure 7. Exhibition Poster.

Mining the Aesthetico-Conceptual

Deleuze, Derrida, and Artistic Research

Spencer Roberts

University of Huddersfield, UK

It has often been noted that the spider web implies that there are sequences of the fly's own code in the spider's code; it is as though the spider had a fly in its head.

—Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987, 314)

Despite some rather pronounced philosophical differences, Deleuze and Derrida's relationship would seem to have been broadly convivial in character. On the occasion of Deleuze's death, Derrida suggested that there had been "a near total affinity" between their philosophies, and that he had never felt the "slightest objection" to any of Deleuze's works (Derrida 1998, 3). Neither was this appreciation one-sided—when Deleuze cited Derrida it was for the most part with thanks and gratitude, and as a source of philosophical inspiration (Beam 2000, 442).

DELEUZE AND DERRIDA'S PHILOSOPHICAL ALLEGIANCE

Deleuze and Derrida were allied in their hostility towards conceptual stasis, overly linear approaches to temporality, and excessively centred notions of subjectivity. Accordingly, they can be seen to have targeted a number of common philosophical opponents—most notably, they contested the conceptual generality of Plato and Aristotle, while also being influenced by what Bruce Baugh (1997, 127), citing Deleuze himself, refers to as the "generalized anti-Hegelianism" of their time. Baugh claims that it is only with the philosophy of identity standing as a common enemy and as a force of mediation that we can see the two philosophers to have been united in their affirmation of difference. Indeed, as we shall see shortly, much of the secondary literature on this topic draws attention to the differences between these philosophers—contrasting the prominence of the concept of lack in Derrida's philosophy with what is taken to be the more positive and fundamentally expressive mode of production that can be found in Deleuze's thought. Accordingly, despite their mutual claims to affiliation with Nietzschean affirmation, ultimately it is Deleuze who

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is positioned by many commentators as Nietzsche's rightful heir (Baugh 1997, 136–37; Bearn 2000, 454; Dickmann 2016, 69–70).

With these problematics in mind, Deleuze and Derrida's philosophical friendship must be seen very much as a post-structural alliance. That is, while there is a genuine resonance between their philosophical aims, it is important from the outset that we do not lose sight of the persistent tensions that accompany what might, on the surface, appear to be a set of predominately harmonious or compatible relations. Accordingly, we begin this paper by asking how a Derridean critique of Deleuze's philosophical enterprise might proceed, with the aim of utilising any points of contention that might arise as an opportunity to discuss some subtle methodological differences between each philosopher's approach. We will pay particular attention to some telling stylistic differences in their use of philosophical neologisms, in a bid to shed further light upon the somewhat tenuous relationship between their philosophies. Finally, in an attempt to find a way out of any seeming philosophical impasse, we will apply what has been learned to a discussion of the process of writing and the question of argumentation in the context of artistic research.

DECONSTRUCTING DELEUZE

Perhaps the sharpest division between Deleuze's and Derrida's philosophical approaches can be found in their somewhat antithetical attitudes towards metaphysical enquiry. It is well known that Derridean thought is broadly opposed to the construction of metaphysical systems—Derrida notoriously castigated metaphysical thinking, aligning it closely with foundationalist, logocentric thought (Derrida 1997, 10–12). In stark contrast, Deleuze openly embraced metaphysical enquiry, ultimately going so far as to position himself as a "pure metaphysician" (Lawler 2000, 72). For Deleuze, while there was a sense in which the dynamism of our internal psychological lives—the rise and fall of emotions and the transitional character of experiential qualities—might have a resonance with the form of intensive transformations occurring at a deeper ontological level, it was ultimately only through metaphysical enquiry that he believed we might arrive at a genuinely transcendently empirical conception of difference, and a properly impersonal conception of sensation (Williams 2003, 8–17). Placing any notion of philosophical alliance aside for a moment, we might draw on John Mullarkey's (2006) actualist criticisms of Deleuzian philosophy in an attempt to speculatively formulate a Derridean critique of the Deleuzian project.

While expounding his own Deleuzo-Bergsonian thought, Mullarkey exposes aspects of Deleuze's philosophy to criticism through a quasi-Derridean, deconstructive lens (ibid, 13). That is, in accordance with Derrida's deconstructive enterprise, Mullarkey identifies a series of binaries that are overtly present in Deleuze's philosophical thinking—namely those of immanence/transcendence, molecular/molar, virtual/actual, past/present, infinite/finite, and difference/repetition. Just as Derrida suggests that in any logocentric system, a set of fundamental binary oppositions are instituted, along with the valorisation of

one of the terms in each pair, Mullarkey notes the denigration of the actual that takes place in Deleuzian philosophy, and takes issue with what he takes to be the foundational aspects of Deleuze's philosophical position. Mullarkey goes on to stress the affinity between Deleuze's foundationalism and the philosophy of judgement (the philosophy that both Deleuze and Derrida attack) in a fashion that is also strongly resonant with deconstructive critique (Mullarkey 2004, 470; 2006, 36). Thus, in the context of Deleuzian ethics, we are counselled to forget our actuality—to forget our molar identities, and to tend toward the imperceptible. Which is to say that we are exhorted to leave behind object-centric, representational concerns, and to allow the virtual to work through us.

DERRIDA AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF JUDGEMENT

If a Derridean critique might position Deleuze—the anti-essentialist post-structural philosopher—as a foundationalist or as the producer of a totalising metaphysical system, then the Deleuzian critique of Derridean philosophy could be said to invert this context, while ultimately laying a very similar charge. For Deleuzian critics of Derrida's project, such as Bearn, Baugh, and Dickmann, Derrida's concern with alterity is ultimately compromised by his very insistence that we must stay within the frame of representation and confine our discussion of difference to a set of actual concerns (Bearn 2000, 456–59; Dickmann 2016, 76–77). Consequently, they suggest that Derrida remains caught within logocentric discourse, the philosophy of identity, and the considerations of the purely conceptual difference that Deleuze associates with the philosophy of judgement. Thus, they are united in their verdict that Derrida is unable to properly address the operation of difference in itself (Baugh 1997, 136–37; Bearn 2000, 446–47; Dickmann 2016, 72).

According to Bearn (2000, 446–47), Deleuze's primary notion of repetition—the swarming differences that stand as the condition of the actual—provides a fundamentally positive, productive sense of affirmation that is ultimately absent in the thought of Derrida. He suggests that Derridean philosophy attempts to institute, as its guiding kinetic principle, the notions of perpetually thwarted desire, forever-deferred meaning, and the inherent incompleteness of signification (ibid., 454). Accordingly, for Derrida, it is an unrelenting short-circuit of meaning and desire that results not only in the urge to inscribe but also in the inherently iterable character of inscription. The situation is further complicated because Derrida ([1973] 2004, 285–99), radicalising Saussure's at once differential and relational linguistics, claims that our every utterance is always already other than itself—a negative space, participating in a vast semantic network of grafted, viral signification.

Following a similar logic, Dickmann has developed Derrida's notion of productive absence and perpetually frustrated representation through the figure of the *mise en abyme* (Dickmann 2015, 2016). Dickmann claims that Deleuze and Derrida both explore the operation of difference and iteration through this peculiar narratological device—in which a segment of a literary work aporetically and recursively reflects, reproduces, or pictures the whole in which it

is embedded. For Dickmann, when its poetics are fully embraced, the *mise en abyme* provides a performative principle of refractive and imperfect duplication—a seam that holds both the totalising text and its internal contestational other, resulting in an at once generative and retroactive form of narrative transformation, which is frequently performed by characters within the fictional text itself (Dickmann 2016, 65). Developing the line of secondary commentary that stresses the contrast between plenitude and lack in Deleuzian and Derridean thought, Dickmann suggests that it is only Deleuze who stays true to this genetic conception of the *mise en abyme*, while Derrida is depicted as operating with a diminished, “lacunal” form of failed self-picturing, which must be considered in some sense “degenerate,” and which is positioned as ultimately falling back into the philosophy of identity (ibid., 71).

Dickmann and Bearn’s collective point seems to be that while it is the case that in the context of Derridean philosophy any given term is parasitic upon and reciprocally determined by others, it is still nevertheless parasitic upon and reciprocally determined by other terms. Thus, Dickmann suggests that Derrida’s conception of *mise en abyme* depends upon “discrete circuits” of repetition that must nevertheless perpetually fail. That is, in the context of the Derridean *mise en abyme*, every attempt at self-picturing is ultimately frustrated, as the institution of each successive level of representation results in yet another failure and yet another deferral. For Dickmann (2016, 78), Derrida’s reliance on these discrete, iterative circuits alongside the failure of repetition ultimately results in an embrace of the philosophy of identity, and it is this that consequently serves to thwart his “heterological” aims.

DIFFER(E/A)NCE, DIFFEREN(T/C)IATION, AND METHODOLOGICAL DIVERGENCE

In an attempt to complicate questions of Deleuzo-Derridean resemblance, while exploring the power of the concept of the *mise en abyme* as an at once performative and comparative tool, we turn now to a question of philosophical method. More specifically, we turn to the role of neologisms in Deleuze’s and Derrida’s thought. A consideration of Derrida’s distinction between *différence* and *différance* (a neologistic, technical term coined by Derrida himself), alongside Deleuze’s own neologistic distinction between differentiation and differenciation, will serve to simultaneously identify and unsettle any straightforward notion of resemblance between their philosophies, while enabling an altogether different kind of comparative principle in the form of the at once productive and performative principle of the *mise en abyme*.

DERRIDA AND DIFFER(E/A)NCE

Derrida’s notion of *différance* in its conjunction of the concepts of difference and deferral was created to emphasize the elusiveness of the signified and to contest any overly centred notion of semantic foundations or any unduly stable conception of meaning as something that might be immediately pres-

ent to consciousness (this is the substance of Derrida’s critique of Husserl). Importantly, for Derrida, the idea of semantic foundation is problematised by the way in which concepts are implicated, not only with a set of related terms but also with their polar opposites. Complicating things further, the endless deferral of meaning that results from the necessarily iterable character of written (and by implication, spoken) inscription further contests any notion of origin, singular meaning, or presence. Thus, for Derrida, the at once allusive and vertiginous networked character of language, along with the contingent malleability of context that accompanies each re-inscription or re-presentation of any linguistic fragment, serves to problematise any naive notion of semantic purity or linguistic signification (Derrida 1997, 280–81).

Both Deleuze and Derrida engage in more affective, playful, and performative kinds of writing. A brief consideration of Deleuze’s mode of philosophical dramatisation reveals a methodological use of word play and a neologistic construction of concepts that has an affinity with a number of Derridean strategies. Indeed, Deleuze tells us that he “admires” the method of deconstruction, while at the same time distancing it from his own approach in a way that foregrounds a certain material-linguistic schism between his own philosophy and Derrida’s: “I do not present myself as a commentator of texts. A text, for me, is nothing but a little cog in an extra-textual machine” (as quoted in Bearn 2000, 461n6). Differences in material and linguistic affinity spread throughout Deleuze’s and Derrida’s philosophies—ambiently conditioning their works, and serving to inflect their philosophical methods. These differences become particularly apparent when we examine their respective approaches to some of their core neologistic constructions.

DELEUZE AND DIFFEREN(T/C)IATION

When considering questions of identity, repetition, and difference, Deleuze makes an interesting distinction between what he terms processes of differentiation and processes of differenciation (Deleuze 1994, 207). For Deleuze, the former (differentiation with a *t*) addresses the operation of virtual difference, while the latter (differenciation with a *c*) is oriented towards a discussion of our perception of actual, phenomenal things.

In attempting to problematise the concept of representation, Deleuze typically proceeds by first drawing our attention to everyday empirical differences. He begins by stating that “there is no individual absolutely identical to another individual” (Deleuze 1990, 266) before asking us to consider the distinctive qualities of individual calves, shellfish, grains of wheat, particles of dust, hands, typewriters, and revolvers (Deleuze, 1994, 26).

Deleuze’s discussions of identities that are phenomenally given, however, serve only to pave the way for a radicalised version of this argument, which will stress the role of material differences that are both sub-representational and pre-empirical in character. Importantly, Deleuze claims that such pre-empirical differences cannot be directly experienced—that the conceptually mediated identities encountered in the phenomenally given, presuppose or are con-

ditioned by "a pluralism of free, wild or untamed differences" (Deleuze 1994, 50). For Deleuze, then, actual identities are the products of richer, more fundamental, virtual processes of differentiation.

THE EXTENSION AND CONTESTATION OF RECEIVED USAGES OF LANGUAGE

While Deleuze and Derrida each resort to the construction of novel terms in the presentation of their arguments (différance in the case of Derrida and differentiation in the case of Deleuze), they go about this in different ways. In particular, there is an interesting, and somewhat telling disparity in the alignment or contestation of their respective strategies of lexical or terminological construction with existing, received usage of language.

When Derrida coins his term *différance* it is in an attempt to construct a concept that is specific to his philosophy—for Derrida, *différance* will address his own notion of the aporetic play of networked inscription that is both temporally and situationally adrift (Derrida 1997, 68). With respect to the construction of a new philosophical vocabulary, Derrida's methodological strategy is perhaps most obviously inspired by the work of Heidegger (Macquarrie and Robinson 1962, 13–14). That is, it begins from the premise that received language—the language of *doxa*—is inadequate to express what needs to be stated, and that as a consequence a new term must be created that is simultaneously haunted by the concepts of difference and of deferral and that famously incorporates a difference that can only be discerned when written—the silent, unpronounceable *a* (Derrida [1973] 2004, 281).

In the case of Deleuze, however, the strategy is taken to further extremes through a more direct contestation and re-inscription of the received usage. That is, it addresses the more trivial, everyday forms of difference that can be located within actual, phenomenal experience, which Deleuze introduces in his own neologistic construction (that of differentiation). Deleuze's constructed term is aimed not, as we might expect, at any metaphysical process or at anything particularly esoteric or conceptually specific to his own philosophy. Rather, it is directed at our more pedestrian understanding of actual, phenomenal repetition and our day-to-day perception of ordinary things. In contrast, what might be considered the more ordinary, everyday employment of the term (differentiation) is kidnapped and co-opted, becoming re-inscribed as a technical term in Deleuze's metaphysics. This linguistic coup is not limited to the discussion of the subject of differentiation. Indeed, in the context of his dramatic method, Deleuze has a tendency not only to fuse terms that are traditionally considered opposites but also to hijack and subvert the meaning of existing concepts (Mullarkey 2006, 17). Thus, in Deleuze's hands, repetition becomes the repetition of difference as opposed to the repetition of identity, and experience becomes a transcendental, material condition—something that is both sub-representational and, ironically, *a priori* in character—while essence is similarly repositioned as the engine of change.

We have already seen how Derrida attempts to loosen a series of entrenched concepts through a form of temporal, semantic, and situational play. With this in mind, there is a way in which Derrida might be positioned as also problematising the terms of received usage, notably through his strategy of implicating terms with their opposites—*pharmakon* becomes both cure and poison; the ghost or spectre is both present and absent; the hymen is between the inside and the outside of a body (Derrida 1981, 220–22).

Deleuze is sometimes accused by his critics of proffering the most *laissez-faire* of philosophies—a philosophy that diffuses any notion of opposition or argumentation. It seems curious then that it is Deleuze's philosophy that is the more urgent and insistent of the two—instituting the more severe linguistic recodings, and making the more grandiose philosophical claims. While Derrida conjures a picture of groundless, equivocal, and unstable semantics, Deleuze proffers a vision of entrenched, univocal, material difference and a close affinity between matter and sensation. This contrast between the semantic orientation of Derridean philosophy and the material orientation of Deleuzian thought perhaps goes some way to explaining the rather reductive depiction of Derrida as an idealist, as well as the charge of foundationalism that is sometimes brought against Deleuze.

OF VOID, ABUNDANCE, AND ARTISTIC RESEARCH

As we have seen, the difference between Derrida and Deleuze concerns, first, a dispute over the value of metaphysical enquiry and, second, a dispute over the power of abundance and lack. Interestingly, however, once we properly factor in Deleuze's distinction between virtual and actual, Derridean absence and Deleuzian affirmation are drawn much closer together and consequently such distinctions have less critical force. While it is true that Deleuze goes to great lengths to stress the fecundity of the virtual, he nevertheless states quite bluntly that, given its ontological status, virtual differentiation is indeed "nothing" with respect to the actual (Deleuze 1994, 47). With this in mind, it becomes harder to state a genuine conflict between Deleuze and Derrida's respective positions. That is, while it is the case that from the perspective of the virtual Deleuze would seem to proffer a philosophy of unlimited creative abundance, it is also the case that when seen from the perspective of the actual, he could be said to proffer a philosophy of productive lack.

In recent years, the emergence of artistic research has opened a space for enquiry, analysis, and critique that is arguably at once aesthetic and conceptual in character, while also being closely tied to material practice. Artistic research processes are distinctive in so far as they often involve a symbiotic relationship between textual and aesthetic enquiry or intervention, and this is often undertaken in the service of alterity and difference. Given that Deleuze and Derrida both reject the philosophy of identity and that they contest notions of contradiction and the law of the excluded middle, it should come as no surprise to find them withdrawing from narrowly conventional analytic forms of

argumentation, blurring distinctions between the conceptual and the aesthetic, and in some sense prefiguring or anticipating the concerns of artistic research.

Notwithstanding the association of Derrida with written inscription and Deleuze with material sensation, there is an inherent complexity to their performative practice that frequently serves to confound expectations. Thus, despite Deleuze's preoccupation with sensation and affect, it is important to remember that he was predominately a writer—albeit a writer with an at once affective, performative, and corporeal agenda. Indeed, of the two philosophers, it was Derrida—the idealist deconstructor of texts—who most fully explored the aesthetic potentials of experimental writing in the typographic play of *Glas* (Derrida 1986). With this in mind, it seems reasonable to suggest that a Deleuzo-Derridean approach might go some way towards fulfilling the promise of artistic research. Accordingly, we will bring this paper to a close by considering some ways in which Deleuze's and Derrida's positions might ally or collude—not in any purely reflective or straightforwardly harmonious fashion, but refractively in the spirit of a *mise en abyme*.

Turning initially to the question of writing and text, we have already seen how Derridean philosophy introduces the notion of a text as a complex, layered, differential construction, and how this position emerges out of a radicalisation of Saussure's differential conception of language. Derrida's comments on supplement and deferral serve, first, to problematise the concepts of beginnings and expression and, second, to subordinate phenomena to a broadly linguistic frame. This no doubt also informs the charge of idealism that is sometimes brought to Derrida's door—despite the co-presence in his philosophy of a number of clearly materialist concerns (e.g., the materiality of inscription, and the employment of the virus as a metaphor).

Corporeal concerns with vital matter and material sensation are nevertheless rather more prominent in Deleuzian thought. This arises partly out of Deleuze's embrace of (a kind of) empiricism, and partly out of his affinity with a set of at once vital and systemic process-philosophical concerns. Long before the poststructural turn, process philosophers had addressed the emergent, developmental, and relational qualities of phenomena. In the opening to *Art as Experience*, Dewey ([1934] 1980) explicitly addressed the book as a processual artefact, noting how it "somehow becomes isolated from the . . . conditions under which it was brought into being" (1), drawing attention to the way in which "a wall is built around [it]" (2), while claiming that "to understand the flowering of plants," we must examine "the interactions of soil, air, water and sunlight that condition [their] growth" (2).

Similar observations occur later in the twentieth century with the turn to poststructuralism. Thus, for Foucault ([1972] 2002, 25–26) the book would become "a node within a network" that had no clear frontiers; while for Barthes (1977, 160) the text would hold the intertextual—"the text-between"—of another text, quite different to its "sources." Poststructural critique did however further radicalise questions of relationality—problematizing the bounded status not only of the text but also of the author and the reader. Thus, for Deleuze, a

book would become a "collection of bifurcating, divergent and muddled lines" that are "unattributable to individuals" (Deleuze 2007, ix–x) which had "only itself, in connection with other assemblages" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 4). Elaborating on this, Dickmann (2015, 22) draws attention to the way in which the semiotic and the pragmatic are fused together in Deleuze and Guattari's account of the perpetually transcoding rhizomatic book, which becomes pluralised through the material inscription of multiple processes of reading.

While few others have explored the relational aspects of intertextuality more than Derrida, by taking into account Deleuze's emphasis upon performativity, emergence, and onto-genetic construction, we are nevertheless able to supplement Derrida's account of textuality by addressing its neglect of the ontogenetic process of writing that focuses upon the emergence of a text. That is, in contesting the conception of a text as a static object or as a stable propositional structure, process philosophy draws attention to a complex productive history in the form of substitutions, redevelopments, and the emergence of ideas that take place over the course of its composition—reminding us that a text embodies a developmental complexity of a logical, aesthetic, and semantic order.

If Deleuze can offer Derrida a reminder of the importance of ontogenetic construction and the corporeal nature of a text, then perhaps Derrida can offer Deleuze—or at least Derrida might offer some Deleuzians—the gift of contestation and refusal that is all too often lost in the context of artistic research. That is, while many projects inspired by Deleuzian thought seek out new relations or incorporate experiments in living, the tendency towards imperceptibility can nevertheless serve to neuter any critical or political force. It is important to note that this criticism cannot so easily be directed at Deleuze himself. We have seen how Deleuze's inscription of creativity into the very essence of the world has been positioned as both foundationalist and fundamentalist by many of his commentators (Hallward 2006; May 1997; Mullarkey 2006)—and bearing in mind that Deleuze, like Heidegger before him, attempts to take the entire history of representational thinking to task, he can hardly be positioned as being in any sense critically or politically demure.

How then can contestation and dissent be thought in the context of artistic research? Refracting refusal through a Deleuzo-Derridean *mise en abyme*, we arrive at a rich mode of contestation that is nevertheless thoroughly creative in character. In *What Is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari (1994) develop an operative conception of the discipline in which they stress the need for the philosophical trinity of concept, percept, and affect, which Deleuze (1995, 165) goes on to describe as "the philosophical trinity" that is required "to get things moving."

In a closely related passage from *A Thousand Plateaus*—which is perhaps the nearest thing we have to a statement of method—we are counselled by Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 161) to "lodge [ourselves] on a stratum," and "experiment with the opportunities it offers" in order to find "potential movements of deterritorialization." Importantly for our purposes here, this passage ends with the assertion that it is only through "a meticulous relation with the strata," that we might ultimately succeed "in freeing lines of flight."

We have seen how Derridean deconstruction attunes us to the composition of a stratum precisely through its identification of potential movements and points of sensitivity—albeit Derrida primarily addresses movements appertaining to a somewhat molar and conceptual order—with only some relatively minor concessions to affect. It is important to recognise, however, that what Derrida takes from us with one hand, he gives back to us with the other: the loss of Deleuzian molecularity is in some sense recouped first through deconstruction's distinctively molar contestation of molarity itself, and second through its creation of footholds for Deleuzo-Derridean lines of flight, that neither bind us nor blind us to negation and refusal.

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