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The Ethical Possibilities of the Subject as Play: 
In Nietzsche and Derrida

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I
n “The Ends of Man,” when talking about a deconstructive process of writing, Jacques Derrida says that “what we need, perhaps, as Nietzsche said, is a change of “style,” and if there is style, Nietzsche reminds us, it must be plural” (in Margins: Of Philosophy, 135). On his debt to Nietzsche, Derrida remains elusive, although it is obvious that there are many manifestations of Nietzsche’s presence throughout Derrida’s writings. As this quote suggests, if there is not a similarity in style between Nietzsche and Derrida, there are some definite similarities of approach and intent. While their arguments are far more intricate than the similarities on which this article will focus can communicate, I will argue that Nietzsche’s concept of ‘perspectivism’ could perhaps be seen as a paradigm for Derrida’s concept of ‘différance.’

The aim of this article, then, will be to argue that in ‘perspectivism’ and ‘différance,’ a notion of “play” problematizes the traditional concept of the subject, but in doing so it allows for ethical possibilities. These issues will be explored in two parts. The first section, “The Subject as Play,” argues that in Nietzsche’s ‘perspectivism’ and Derrida’s ‘différance’ there is a refusal to hypostasise the subject, and this refusal is evidenced in both Nietzsche’s and Derrida’s playing with the “proper name.” In the second section, “Ethical Possibilities,” in contradistinction to critical readings of Nietzsche and Derrida that label their writings—because of their switching of styles and their manipulation of the subject—irresponsible and nihilistic, I will argue that it is precisely because of their subversive techniques that ethical possibilities are generated.

THE SUBJECT AS PLAY

I shall start by quoting a passage from Beyond Good and Evil that I believe epitomizes Nietzsche’s view of metaphysics, and as I will go on to discuss, it also sets the scene for an understanding of his concept of the subject. He argues

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that metaphysicians “concern themselves” with a knowledge that they believe, or have at least “baptized,” “the truth.” However, Nietzsche challenges this concept of “truth,” defined by metaphysicians, as “the faith in anti-thetical values.” He says that “it may be doubted, firstly whether there exists any antithesis at all, and secondly whether these popular evaluations and value anti-thesis, on which the metaphysicians have set their seal, are not perhaps foreground valuations, merely provisional perspectives . . .” (*BGE* I 2). This is fighting talk! We have not only a challenge to antithesis constituting metaphysical knowledge, but Nietzsche then says that the faith in antithetical values is simply one of many interpretations and evaluations. That is, he is arguing against “the truth” as interpretable from only the viewpoint of antithetical knowledge, and instead, puts forth his idea of the plurality of meaning, which is generated by multiple interpretations—what he calls “perspectivism.”

In this challenge to metaphysical language, Nietzsche problematizes the concept of the humanist subject. For Nietzsche, the subject perpetuated by metaphysics is a subject that is constructed by antithetical language. Even the title of his book, *Beyond Good and Evil*, hints at the dichotomous structure of Western metaphysics, but the title also suggests that the concept of the humanist subject, *itself* structured by “antithetical values,” is a subject that evaluates and acts prescriptively and normatively. Implicitly then, Nietzsche attacks the prescriptive ethical evaluations perpetuated by this antithesis. In the second section, I will develop this in more detail.

Meanwhile, in *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche declares that the “world with which we are concerned . . . is not a fact . . . it is ‘in flux,’ as something in a state of becoming, as a falsehood always changing but never getting near the truth: for—there is ‘no truth’” (616). If there is no absolute truth but only interpretation and evaluation, then his idea of multiple interpretations—through which the subject as a state of becoming appears—permeates his writings. Nietzsche is claiming that the subject is not “fixed” but in its changing, its shifting, its fleetingness, is perpetually becoming. In this sense, content cannot be separated from Nietzsche’s style, which in his writings are actually many styles, because “style in itself,” he says, is “a piece of pure folly” (*EH*, “Why I Write Such Good Books,” 4). Hence, if there is no absolute truth, only interpretation and evaluation, then this concept of multiplicity cannot be separated from his concept of the subject. Referring to himself in *Ecce Homo*, he says, “the multiplicity of inner states is in my case extraordinary, there exists in my case the possibility of many styles” (ibid). In considering himself extraordinary, is Nietzsche here setting himself up as the Overman over and against the herd or the norm, and/or is he extrapolating on subjectivity overall? I would argue that for Nietzsche subjectivity more generally is constituted in and through multiple interpretations and evaluations. This is evident when, through his style(s), Nietzsche radicalizes “interpretation” and “evaluation” to the point where his writings themselves do not
manifest one single unified “meaning.” There is, then, no absolute truth; no foundation or origin behind interpretation and therefore no true essence underlying the subject, because as Nietzsche declares: “the assumption of one single subject is perhaps unnecessary; perhaps it is just as permissible to assume a multiplicity of subjects, whose interaction and struggle is the basis of our thought and our consciousness in general? . . . My hypothesis: the subject as multiplicity. . . . The continual transitoriness and fleetingness of the subject. ‘Mortal Soul’” (WP, 490). The multiplicity of the subject is an effect of the movement from one interpretation to another, and this is, in other words, the play of ever-changing surface. So by saying in Ecce Homo that “consciousness is surface” (“Why I Am So Clever,” 9), Nietzsche is claiming that there is nothing more than appearance as a state of becoming.

Furthermore, Nietzsche is saying that the subject is not only the “play” of multiple interpretations but also the difference that this generates. I would argue, then, that this subject as the “play” of multiplicity is a result of a movement away from a single interpretation and evaluation that is not unlike Derrida’s concept of différance as a “play of differences” (Speech and Phenomena, 130), to which I will return in a moment. In fact, Nietzsche’s subject as a “play” of multiplicity “contributed,” Derrida argues, to the “liberation of the signifier from its dependence or derivation with respect to the logos and the related concept of truth or the primary signified” (Of Grammatology, 19).

In The Ear of the Other, when discussing the notion of “play,” Derrida says that the concept of play as we have typically conceived it is a result of philosophy turning it into an “activity” where a subject “manipulates” an “object” (69). Play conceived in this way not only sets up a metaphysical dichotomy (or antithesis as Nietzsche would say) between being and nonbeing, subject and object, subject and other, but the space of play is “dominated by meaning” and by its “finality.” Yet because the metaphysical concept of play is that which is enacted in a contained and “present” space, a concept of the humanist subject as unified and autonomous, that exists within and by this space, is privileged as the presence of the present and as the present of presence (69). Derrida explains that “in order to make apparent a play that is not comprehended in this philosophical or scientific space, one must think of play in another way. Indeed, this is what I am trying to do within what is already a tradition—that of Nietzsche . . . the concept of play, understood as the play of the world, is no longer play in the world. That is, it is no longer determined and contained by something, by the space that would comprehend it” (69). One of the ways in which Derrida thinks of “play” away from a philosophical and scientific space is through the deconstructive process he terms ‘différance,’ and in doing so, opens up a concept of the subject that is not only contained by this traditional space.
Différance disrupts the privilege given to the presence in the sign. However, différance is what makes the “presentation of being-present possible” (Speech and Phenomena, 134). That is, the presence of the present is manifested and exposed, it exists, only because of différance that produces differences through an endless movement of differing and deferral from one signifier to another. In “La Différance,” Derrida says that “[w]hat we note as différance will thus be the movement of play that “produces” (and not by something that is simply an activity) . . . these differences, these effects of difference . . . Since language . . . has not fallen from the sky, it is clear that the differences have been produced; they are the effects produced, but effects that do not have as their cause a subject or substance, a thing in general, or a being that is somewhere present and itself escapes the play of difference” (in Speech and Phenomena, 141). The “subject as play,” then, is one that is produced by the differences in language. (Re)temporalizing the subject as a movement disrupts the traditional concept of cause and effect, where the subject has come to be experienced as fixed (and therefore unified) in time and space, in other words, as the subject of the presence of the present. This becomes clearer when relating it to Derrida’s discussion of deconstruction in general. He says, in “Signature Event Context,” that deconstruction is not about “passing from one concept to another,” and it does not just practice an “overturning” of classical oppositions; rather “an opposition of metaphysical concepts (for example, speech/writing, presence/absence, etc) is never the face-to-face of two terms, but a hierarchy and an order of subordination. Deconstruction cannot limit itself or proceed immediately to a neutralization: it must, by means of a double gesture, a double science, a double writing, practice an overturning of the classical opposition and a general displacement of the system” (in Margins: Of Philosophy, 329). In this way, différance as a deconstructive process resists all oppositions such as the sensible and the intelligible; speech and writing. Instead, I would describe différance as taking place in the between of oppositions. Yet, while différance disrupts the privilege of unity and totality given to the sign, différance does not necessarily disregard unity altogether, nor does it simply favor multiplicity. Différance is neither pure unity nor pure multiplicity but is both and neither simultaneously. In this sense, Derrida disrupts the unity and autonomy of the subject, but because the subject as presence is produced through the play of differences, he does not therefore abandon, as some critics have suggested, the subject altogether.3

The “proper name” has come to be exemplified in metaphysics as the “presence of the present,” that is, as unified by a particular scientific and philosophical notion of time and space, cause and effect. The proper name as a noun, is a result of ascribing characteristics such as unity and constancy, and thereby “fixing” the subject through this type of representation. However, this traditional concept of the proper name (and as a corollary the subject as presence) is destabilized by Derrida’s concept of différance, and yet, para-
doxically, the proper name only arises because of the system of differences with which it is "inscribed." In *The Ear of the Other*, Derrida claims that "if an idiom effect or an effect of absolute properness can arise within a system of relations and differences with something else that is either near or far, then the secret proper name is right away inscribed—structurally and a priori—in a network where it is contaminated by common names" (107). Referring to Nietzsche, Derrida argues that through his play with proper names Nietzsche attempted "something which . . . was, precisely, of a 'deconstructive' type" (85), and it is evident that in many of Nietzsche's writings he alludes to himself, not as a single "proper name" with particular unchanging characteristics, but rather as multiple names.

In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche says, for instance, that he is his mother, his father (8), a Pole and a German (11), Julius Caesar and Alexander (12). He is Zarathustra and Wagner, Dionysus and the Crucified (104). Furthermore, he says that "setting aside the fact that I am a decadent, I am also its antithesis" ("Why I Am So Wise," 2). So what do these names signify? They do not "signify" anything (if signifying is conceived in terms of presence) because these names come and go in and out of his texts. And the fact that he is also the "antithesis" of all the names of history, points to Nietzsche's name as being none of these multiple names at the same time. Rather, the name of Nietzsche exists in the beyond of all oppositions. What I would argue is significant—that this dissemination of the proper name in Nietzsche's writings brings into question a metaphysics of absolute truth; Being as pure essence; of a single unified meaning behind interpretation, behind the subject as "proper name" and hence as presence.

The deconstructive process of difference, I have argued, is evident in Nietzsche's play with his proper name. But Derrida also plays with his proper name. In fact he says that playing "with one's own name, putting it in play is, in effect what is always going on and what I have tried to do in a somewhat more explicit or systematic manner for some time now and in certain texts" (*The Ear of the Other*, 85). However, one may ask, if playing with the proper name is something the subject "does," then this poses the problem for a critique of a traditional conception of cause and effect. Yet Derrida argues that the "playing" with the proper name is a process that is not dominated by, but is the dissemination of, meaning. Play as a movement that produces differences "do not," he says, "have as their cause a subject or substance" (*Speech and Phenomena*, 141). It is obvious, then, that, like Nietzsche, this suspicion of the meaning of truth underlying the proper name, hence the subject, is shared by Derrida (*The Ear of the Other*, 76).

An example of where the play with the proper name occurs, elliptically, is in *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*. Derrida says that "the English spur, the eperon, is the "same word" as the German Spur: or, in other words, trace, wake, indication, mark" (41), and that "style might be compared to that rocky point,
also called eperon” (39). In putting forth his idea of a spurring style, Derrida points out that the heterogeneity of Nietzsche’s styles “seem[s] to advance in the manner of a spur of sorts (eperon). Like the prow, for example, of a sailing vessel, its rostrum, the projection of the ship that surges ahead to meet the sea’s attack and cleave its hostile surface” (39). Nietzsche’s heterogeneous, spurring style(s) put into question the idea that there may be an underlying truth in his writings. We could perhaps conclude from this that there is no such thing as Nietzsche’s proper name.

Both Nietzsche’s and Derrida’s arguments are far more complex than the similarities on which I choose to focus can convey. However, if the spur as Derrida describes it is something that “might be used in a vicious attack against what philosophy appeals to . . . an attack whose thrust could not but leave its mark” (37), then could it not be said that Derrida’s ‘différance’ and Nietzsche’s ‘perspectivism,’ and their subversions of the sign, and of the subject as logos through the proper name, are for both a spurring style? That is, what is played or “spurred” with is the idea that there is a single meaning or truth behind interpretation. In talking about Nietzsche’s writings, as well as his own, Derrida in Spurs playfully comments that “the text will remain, if it is really cryptic and parodying (and I tell you that it is so through and through. I might as well tell you since it won’t be of any help to you. Even my admission can very well be a lie because there is dissimulation only if one tells the truth, only if one tells that one is telling the truth), still the text will remain indefinitely open, cryptic and parodying” (137). Is Derrida’s text Spurs a parody, is it cryptic or not? He tells us it is so, but here, like Nietzsche, Derrida plays with interpretation, and in this playing with the truth and lie of the text, Derrida is breaking out of the enclosure of interpretation, of the proper name. By switching the reader’s perspective between Nietzsche’s style(s) and his own, conflating and confusing these styles, the proper name behind a single interpretation is thwarted and instead left open for questioning. In other words, Derrida’s text “folds” and “unfolds” (like an “umbrella”) into the name of Nietzsche, so that both the names of Derrida and Nietzsche “veil” and “unveil” each other’s texts. Who is Nietzsche? He is all, but also none, of the names he refers to in his writings. But then who is Derrida in this veiling and unveiling in the text of Spurs? Is he and/or is he not perhaps Nietzsche?

ETHICAL POSSIBILITIES

Based on this radicalization of the subject as multiplicity or as a “play of differences,” it is easy to see how both Nietzsche and Derrida have been used to justify, on one side of the critical field, various types of readings that have
reduced both their writings to an “anything goes” philosophy exemplified by one aspect of postmodernism. This aspect narrowly interprets Derrida’s arguments, in particular, as the need to abandon metaphysics; to justify a “freeplay” of textual interpretation; and to dispense with the subject altogether. On the other side of the critical field, more orthodox critics have unfairly labeled both Nietzsche’s and Derrida’s writings as perpetuating irresponsibility, immorality, and nihilism. There are many ethical dilemma’s produced by a concept of the subject as the “play of differences,” and this is something I will discuss further on. However, in contradistinction to these accusations of irresponsibility and nihilism, I will also discuss the ethical possibilities that could perhaps be “unveiled” in Nietzsche’s and Derrida’s concepts of subjectivity.

At the start of the previous section, a quote from *Beyond Good and Evil* introduced Nietzsche’s view of metaphysics as constructed on antithesis, and Nietzsche’s challenge to this antithetical structure of language on which the humanist subject is formulated was discussed. I want to develop this, pointing out that further on in the same passage Nietzsche also attacks certain modes of evaluation, and the mode attacked is precisely an ethical one. He says that “it is no more than a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than appearance; it is even the worst-proved assumption that exists. . . . Indeed, what compels us to assume there exists any essential antithesis between ‘true’ and ‘false’” ([BGE], 34). Here “true” and “false” is an example of Nietzsche’s general criticism of an antithetical language structure, which perpetuates particular value interpretations and moral prejudices. In challenging antithesis in general, Nietzsche undermines a form of ethical evaluation that supports prescriptive and normative ethics. In other words, through the oppositional hierarchy of Western language, a normative grammar is produced, which by its antithetical structure, delineates ethical interpretation and evaluation to prescriptive and normative responses of either good and evil, right or wrong, true or false. Therefore the subject’s capacity for ethical response is recuperated within these binary oppositions, hence creating a normative subject. Nietzsche’s attack on the antithetical structure of language is not only an attack, as I see it, on a normative and prescriptive ethics, but a rejection of the formation of the ethical subject along these dichotomous lines.

Furthermore, Nietzsche also challenges the ethical autonomy of the subject. He declares “that things possess a constitution in themselves quite apart from interpretation and subjectivity is quite an idle hypothesis: it presupposes that interpretation and subjectivity are not essential, that a thing freed from all relationships would still be a thing” ([WP], 560). Given this quote, I would argue that for Nietzsche the subject is also formed by its relationship to the social semiotic. In this sense, the ethical subject is formulated in and through relations with the other. (I am aware that the term “other” is a highly contentious issue. However, in the context of Nietzsche, I am using the term to
convey the subject as a process of its social relations). I would venture to suggest, then, that a normative ethics plays down the importance of the other. Moreover, when Nietzsche says that morality should be “something questionable, as worthy of question marks” (BGE, 228), he is challenging the restricting aspects of normative, prescriptive ethics. Following this argument, any possibility of responsive differences developing from ethical dilemmas and conflicts, I would argue, are restricted by a language of antithesis. To put it another way, in a language of antithesis there is little room for a difference generated by, and encountered in, the ethical dilemmas and conflicts arising from the subject’s relation to others.

So Nietzsche believes that ethical evaluations or interpretations are “no more than moral prejudices” that compel us to think that there is an antithesis “between true and false” (BGE, 34), good and evil, and which constructs the subject’s responses along this normative criteria. According to Nietzsche, in order to subvert this type of ethical evaluation, what needs to be overcome, what we need to be liberated from, are those “old valuations that dishonour us in the best and strongest things we have achieved” (WP, 1007). This liberation requires that the subject rise above the values associated with the antithetical structure of language. In other words, “above the belief in grammar” (WP, 34). Moreover, this entails what he calls a “courageous becoming” where the subject is not “fixed” by, but is able to move beyond, this dichotomous rubric of good and evil. What is ultimately needed, Nietzsche says, is a revaluation of all values (WP, 1007), because the “values we have had hitherto thus draw their final consequences, because nihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals . . . we require, sometime, new values” (“Preface,” 4). Far from endorsing nihilism, Nietzsche, rather, attempts to overcome the nihilism that he sees inherent in the normative and prescriptive ethical evaluations produced by the antithesis of language.

As the title of his book suggests, Nietzsche attempts to go beyond good and evil. Yet what does this going beyond good and evil, beyond antithesis actually entail for him? Does this beyond simply mean for Nietzsche a (re)construction of values through an inverting of oppositions, or is he attempting a transgression beyond dichotomous language, and therefore language itself? Either way, Nietzsche falls into a metaphysical system, that is, dichotomous language structure, which he attempts to subvert. Moreover, is Nietzsche, in his transgression beyond language, perpetuating a concept of the transcendental subject? If so, then this would contradict his notion of the subject as a “play of multiplicity” and “becoming” as appearance. But then Nietzsche’s style(s), is it not, deliberately contradictory?

It seems that Nietzsche, while being able to rise above the belief in grammar, cannot actually rise above grammar itself! This is a criticism often leveled at Derrida. However, I would argue that he does not believe there is a “beyond” grammar, and does not attempt a going “beyond” in the way that
Nietzsche does. Rather, Derrida is well aware of the problems that this type of attempted transgression involves. In “La Difference” he says, “to prepare ourselves for venturing beyond our own logos, that is, for a différance so violent that it refuses to be stopped and examined as the epochality of Being and ontological difference, is neither to give up this passage through the truth of Being, nor is it in anyway to ‘criticise,’ ‘contest,’ or fail to recognize the incessant necessity for it” (in *Speech and Phenomena*, 154). The concept of différance, and, I would add, any deconstructive process of Derrida’s, is not about destroying metaphysics, or reconstructing it for that matter, because a reconstruction cannot take place outside the system one attempts to subvert. Instead, deconstruction attempts to displace or dismantle metaphysics, not simply to invert one opposition for another, but in order to expose, through this inversion, the privileging of presence in the sign. This is a subversion that once again has attracted criticism that Derrida’s ideas are unethical or anti-ethical. However, I think it is this aspect of différance that allows for ethical possibilities.

Derrida, while aware of the problems of going “beyond” language, does attempt, through his concept of différance, to convey not the beyond (as a pure transcendentalism) but as the *between* of oppositions. (However, this word “between” is not to be thought of as a synthesis of opposites.) It is différance as the between, not the beyond, these oppositions that allows for ethical possibility, and I will come back to this shortly. In arguing, though, that différance is not unethical, I am not attempting to reduce the concept of différance, or any other concept of Derrida’s, into oppositional terms of either anti-ethical or ethical. To think of his writings as either one or other of these opposites is to do exactly what différance—and deconstruction in general—does not do, and that is simply, or only, to invert one opposition in the hierarchy for another. Rather, I would argue that différance is neither anti-ethical nor ethical, but both anti-ethical and ethical at the same time. In *Speech and Phenomena*, Derrida makes it clear that différance “can therefore no longer be conceived within the opposition of finiteness and infinity, absence and presence, negation and affirmation” (102–3). It is in this *between* state of either/or and neither/and that there arises “ambiguity.” That is, ‘différance,’ in opening up possible responses away from prescriptive ones, produces potential uncertainty and moral dilemma, endemic to ambiguity. Moreover, this ambiguity, generated by différance and that exists in the “between” of all oppositions, transgresses (without transcending) by its very *non*-structure, the reduction of ethical response to prescriptive and normative choices.

Différance allows for a subjectivity that is not fixed and unified by a certain concept of time and space, and in doing so, not only challenges the idea of the subject as an “originary source” but, in conjunction, as ethically autonomous. It is to miss the point of the deconstructive process of différance to argue that Derrida abandons metaphysics, and hence the subject. In fact
Derrida says that “the speaking or signifying subject would not be self-present, insofar as he speaks or signifies, except for the play of linguistic or semiological difference” (Speech and Phenomena, 146). Without rejecting a notion of the subject altogether, the challenge Derrida faces, and that he also acknowledges, is to think of the subject away from one that has been, in the history of metaphysics, privileged as “presence.” However, from this problem myriad questions unfold. For example, how does one, in not abandoning the subject altogether, avoid perpetuating a concept of a transcendental and liberal humanist subject? If there is no transcendental subject, who decides, or how are decisions made? Furthermore, how does one conceptualize ethics apart from “presence” without simply falling into the negativity of its opposite? While there are not necessarily answers to these questions (because différance precludes answers), the posing of these questions nevertheless is, in my view, vital to an understanding of how a subject of différance may, perhaps, inform ethical possibilities.

I suggested that différance generates ambiguity. I would further argue that it is precisely this ambiguity that is ethical. This is because différance does not reduce the subject’s responses to a prescriptive and normative ethics. Rather, différance opens the way for ethical possibilities, which allows for a free response within a system of differences. In other words, ethical possibilities can be defined as those free responses, questions, and choices that the situation of ambiguity creates. That is, for which différance in general allows. This free response, though, is not the same as the liberal humanist concept of freedom that assumes the subject’s ethical choices are absolutely autonomous. This is because différance, at the same time that it allows for “free” response within a system of differences, is constrained by this very system. Response is constrained within and by language. And this is the paradox of différance! Furthermore, because “presence” is constituted by a system of differences, and if there is, as Derrida says, “no outside the text,” then it is impossible to abandon the subject. Any criticism arguing that différance is a license for “textual freeplay,” and an “anything goes” philosophy, fails to see the circumscribing effects that the “presence” in language has on “free response” and the subject in general. Such criticism ignores the paradox of différance! Despite the dilemmas and questions raised by this paradox, the concept of différance allows for the possibility of the reconceptualizing of subjectivity that is not, or is not only, founded on a liberal humanist philosophy.

**CONCLUSION**

Nietzsche’s ‘perspectivism’ and Derrida’s ‘différance’ critique the construction of the humanist subject. But as we have seen, Derrida argues that any
attempt to overcome metaphysics fails as one is inevitably bound to remain within these binary oppositions, and Nietzsche, in his attempt to go beyond these very oppositions, was faced precisely with this problem. Yet whether or not one would consider his attempt successful, Nietzsche in this respect indicated, or pointed the way to, something other than opposition, and Derrida takes this up. The manifestation of Nietzsche in Derrida’s writings is evident, and as a result may indicate that Nietzsche has value for rethinking subjectivity away from the logos. In this movement away from logocentrism, both Nietzsche and Derrida have also attempted to deal with the dilemma of thinking about the subject in terms of ethics and the questions that this generates. These questions are acknowledged, for instance, when Nietzsche claims that subjectivity does not exist in isolation but in relation to interpretation and evaluation (WP, 560). Here he prefigures Derrida’s concept of a reconceptualizing of the subject as a “play of differences.”

This rethinking of the subject as a “play of differences,” I have argued, is in itself an ethical relation, and in this way both Nietzsche and Derrida have significantly contributed to a rethinking of subjectivity and ethics in contemporary philosophy.

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NOTES

1. In The Will to Power, Nietzsche also says that “insofar as the word ‘knowledge’ has any meaning, the world is knowable, but it is interpretable otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings—‘Perspectivism’” (481).

2. I am aware, of course, that this problematizes my own attempt at the interpretation of Nietzsche’s writings!


5. In terms of acknowledging this difficulty, Derrida says: “How can we conceive of différence as a systematic detour which, within the element of the same, always aims at either finding again the pleasure or the presence that had been deferred by (conscious or unconscious) calculation, and, at the same time, how can we, on the other hand, conceive of différence as the relation to an impossible presence” (Speech and Phenomena, 150).

6. Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, particularly 219, 234; see also 206, 243–46, 266, 296.
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