NOTES & COMMENTS for J-F Lyotard Seminar, EGS  
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(Sources range, in an olio, from JFL himself and my readings of and publications on his works, but also from such commentators as Bill Readings, David Carroll, Geoffrey Bennington, Roger Mckeon, Julian Pefanis, Keith Crome and James Williams, Avital Ronell, et al.)

In the Syllabus for this seminar I promised the following: We will read—through an economy of hesitations—three major works of Lyotard:

• Just Gaming (with J-L Thebaud), for JRL's development of speech act theory into hesitations, or rather, deformatives, to oppose performatives, which allow Lyotard to rethink-reconfigure contemporary philosophy in terms of paganisms. He actually calls Aristotle a Sophist!

• Libidinal Economy, for Lyotard's radical reconfiguration of Marx (through the perverse topological figure of a Mobius strip), creating a libidinal economic reading of Marx as a hesitant, sophistic hermaphroditic thinker (raising the question of political action becoming stalled), and

• The Differend: Phrases in Dispute, for Lyotard's notion of the "differend," which I see as an Event of Hesitation itself within "a case of conflict, between two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgment applicable to both arguments. One side's legitimacy does not imply the other's lack of legitimacy." In our hesitations, we will bear witness to new idioms.

There will be additional brief works in .pdf files. E.g., Wolfgang Schirmacher's "Homo Generator in Artificial Life: From a Conversation with Jean-Francois Lyotard," from Lyotard's Peregrinations (ch. 2 on "Touches"), from Lyotard's Postmodern Fables ("A Postmodern Fable" and "Unbeknowst"), from Lyotard's Political Writings ("The Wall, the Gulf, the Sun: A Fable"). It would help immensely to reread Lyotard's The Postmodern Condition (concerning grand vs. little narratives, with a focus on paralogy), which is what people commonly have already read.

We will also study Laura Kipnis's Marx: A Video, sections from Werner Herzog's Where the Green Ants Dream, and from John Hancock's Bang the Drum Slowly.


Caveat: Most of what I'm going to say will circle, perpetually recircle, around JFL's major untranslated dissertation-book Discours, figure (1971). In other words, this will be my point of orientation (as manifested in the "discourse" of the title) so that we can get to dis-orientations (as latent in the term "figure" of the title). It is important to notice that there is a comma "," (an interruption), in the title, separating the two words. It's not a hyphen "-" nor a virgule "/", but the comma "," that
functions as a caesura. Having determined, non-determined, this take on Lyotard's *hesitant thinking* via his dissertation-book, we can perform this seminar from other possible radicals of presentation.

But … some notes on …

1. First Issues: An expropriation of two common charges against, or *critiques* of, Lyotard. Normally, I would skip these charges, but for some people they are serious charges, for they want to believe them to be true. Namely, that Lyotard is derivative and that he contradicts himself.

a. *That he is derivative of others.* When confronted with this *critique* of Lyotard, I think in the following way: that JFL is an original thinker in as much as there is such a thinker yesterday/today (cf. Jacques Ranciere). Given the grand narrative of *the* history of philosophy, there is the notion of …

→ **Conversation** (K. Burke, *Philosophy of Literary Form*, 95-96): That, it is true, JFL *derives* his thinking from others *in conversation* is normal to begin with. He was friends with many and in conversation with them (Deleuze, Nancy, Lacoue-Labarthe, Derrida, etc.). Everyone in the conversation learns from each other—separating out their various different takes on an issue. One claim, consequentially, given his friendships, is that his work, e.g., on libidinal economy, was *derived* from Deleuze, specifically, *Anti-Oedipus* (1972). Which is a really odd statement, for Deleuze and Guattari discuss in detail Lyotard's work *Discours, figure* on pp. 243-44 and take issue by separating their thinking from Lyotard's thinking about the negative: they say specifically that Lyotard "reintroduces lack and absence [back] into desire," etc. (cf. 295). Which in fact Lyotard does. Lyotard never felt it possible to detach oneself from the negative in a total way, as D&G attempt to achieve in *Anti-Oedipus*. (There's a great deal more that can and has been said about this particular difference. For an excellent discussion, see James Williams' *Lyotard: Towards a Postmodern Philosophy*, 129-45.) But the issue is that Lyotard in *Discours, figure*, as well as in works prior to the dissertation-book, dealt with the problem of negativity and libidinal economies and in terms of Marx's thinking. It's perhaps impossible to say who preceded whom, for these friends of philosophy openly discussed the problem of libidinal economies together at the same time and along with others. Crome and Williams, in *The Lyotard Reader and Guide*, tell us: "Lyotard shares historical, political and philosophical concerns with many other post-structuralist thinkers. Deleuze taught with and held joint seminars with Lyotard. His metaphysics bears a strong resemblance to Lyotard's work in *Discours, figure* and *Libidinal Economy*" [12-13]). Here we have the suggestion that Deleuze's thinking is derived from Lyotard's work! But having in part considered this exchange, we have to consider that, while similar in conceptual starting places with Deleuze, Lyotard has always put his own twist on the *conversation*. And we might likewise say that while similar in conceptual starting places with Lyotard, Deleuze has always put his own twist on the *conversation*. (Their "twists" are
tropological/topological and, as such, figural: recall that it is figures that disfigure discourse! Which is a play on words that tells us something about the dissertation/book Discours, figure, 1971). Discours = negativity; figure = non-positive affirmations.

So where are we? Who influenced whom?

Who gives a fuck! Who or What is an influenza on which! Perhaps we are all subject to the virus that passes through the common cell, dropping off some information while leaving some! Given other hysteries of philosophies, there are, according to both Lyotard and Deleuze, in a manner of speaking,…

➔ Labyrinths/Encounters (JFL, Libidinal Economy 32ff): This point, a brief one, is a possible side trip. Lyotard does not engage, really, in conversations, but dis/engages in encounters. The issue of the anxiety of influence, here, therefore, should not be based on the notion of a conversation, when, in fact, Lyotard thinks in terms of a labyrinth and encounters (that are indeterminate). We will later read this section of LE, when we get to the book. Basically, The section on encounters is reminiscent of Leibniz's thinking of monads and Borges's thinking of labyrinths, which are part of co-extensive incompossible worlds, each entity being a singularity in relation to other singularities.

[Note: The economies between conversation and labyrinth (encounters) are spectacularly different! With one negative, while the other, affirmative. Apparently, Deleuze and his commentator James Williams do not take this difference into consideration when they say that Lyotard is heavily invested in negativity. He is invested, but not that heavily. This point of negativity and the impossibility of removing oneself from it, I'm talked about at length in Negation, Subjectivity, and The History of Rhetoric (Suny 1997). Cf. Agamben, Language and Death.]

➔ Derivation as Derive // Dérive: But let us return to the word and notion of derivation, or to derive, which is informed by the regimen of reasoning analytically, genealogically. And yet, in returning, I want to pause: If there is derivation taking place in this group of thinkers (Lyotard, Deleuze, Derrida, Nancy, et al.), it is from Heidegger. And Heidegger from Nietzsche. And Nietzsche from his reading of Heraclitus, etc. Or if there is derivation taking place in this convergence, or finality, of thinkers (JFL [← Kant-Freud], ← Deleuze, ← FGuattari, ← Judge Schreber, ← God), it's from the Logos/God! (After all, according to Schreber, God impregnated him anally with light rays!) Do you see How the idea of derivation can be? So again, Why think exclusively in terms of derivations? Why, analytically? Why not, as the Logos says to Heidegger: Unthink in dis/order to approach, unthought (or untruth, unconcealedness, alethea), not through deriving but through dériving, drifting. The word "derive" in French (nominative form) can mean derivation and drift, as in a continental drift. So JFL calls on the continentals to dis/enage in Just drifting! Which is what JFL does from the rebeginnings. Driftworks are "the new sophistics" (Roger McKeon). It's the exploration of the undeide-able, the indeterminate, of hesitation in thought itself.
Lyotard is seized by hesitation (thinking) and rebeginnings (rethinkings), or rather by events in the text. (Cf. Heidegger, -not a work but on the way-, *Parmenides*.)

[→ JFL writes: "Critique must be drifted out of. Better still: *Drifting is in itself the end of all critique* (Driftworks 13). And the taking place of events, which are going to take place anyway. They are inevitable. The pointless, however, is to improve the conditions for the possibilities of these events (cf. Heidegger, "Ereignis"). What should be obvious here is that critique is the home of negativity, while event are the homeless of non-positive affirmations.]

[Note: Drifting: a work for Lyotard is an unworking of reason's principles, an unweaving of the narrative to avoid the suitors, a negation of negation, a denegation. Weaving(Discourse), Unweavin(figure). Cf. Nancy (inoperative), Blanchot (unavowable), and the radical Italian thinking of P.Virno, A.Negri, Agamben, etc.]

[As an aside: What is at stake here, then, is productive-unproductive loss of identification, non-contradiction, and the, heretofore, excluded middle. What is set aside, drifted out of, is critique, not exclusively, but inclusively. Consequently, what takes place is excluded middles, or rather events, as rude disruptions-eruptions, causing destabilizations and undecided-ables.]

→ As I've said, the word *dérive* (in French, nominative form) can mean both to derive as in a derivative, or as in a by-product, and to drift as in continental drift. (Cf. délire or delirium, Lecercle, *Through the Looking Glass*, "the other side of language.") More specifically, however, let us understand that to drift, for JFL, is to be pulled, propelled, by affective-impulsive currents outside of reason. … To derive, then, is to follow the basic principles of reason as they might determine logos, while to drift is not necessarily to follow these principles but to dis/engage, to unmoor, yet without any anchor, by way of indeterminate paralogies. [logos (Parmenides-Plato-Aristotle) vs. paralogos (Heraclitus)] What in part we are talking about is grounding (Grund) and ungrounding, abyss (Abgrund). The latter is without ground to stand on. In *Discours, figure*, JFL writes: "under the ground … there is, not a system, but forces, an energetics, which disrupts the ordering of the system. When you make a verb a noun, there is event: the system of rules of the language not only cannot account for this new usage, but is opposed to it, resists it, and between it and the statement the relationships which is established is that of conflict."

… Therefore, To judge, or to critique, JFL as being derivative is to judge/assess him only in terms of Enlightenment regimens or an economy of discourse, when, in fact, he makes very clear that he’s working, or rather, unworking, out of a different regimen or economy of figures. To judge him by the former, therefore, is to create a differend (which is a notion that we will get to in due time), or to commit a performative contradiction (which we will get to now and then again later).

b. Another charge: that Lyotard engages in contradictions in his thinking, namely, in his work *The Postmodern Condition*. Etc. The primary charge against JFL is that in using critique against critique, in attacking grand narratives, he creates yet
another grand narrative. This charge in itself, however, can be seen as partially self-contradictory since JFL speaks not solely from the vocabulary of strict rationality (logos) but jointly from non-rationality (paralogy, that which is left alongside, or is besides, or exstatic, to reason). The primary charge, then, is problematic, at least, in terms of an equivocation and, therefore, there is no possible common place to stand (as in stasis theory) that would allow for agreement to disagree. In other words, the two alleged grand narratives, if that, are not equally based on a similar grounding, or do not achieve a moment of stasis. There is simply no issue. The critique of JFL is at cross-purposes with what JFL is attempting. What JFL is attempting is a disengagement, through drifting, from a grand narrative that legitimizes the growth of knowledge through consensus, when JFL says, in fact, knowledge in science grows through dissensus, through paralogy, or paralogies, becoming little narratives—none of which is part of the standard game of the grand narrative of legitimation (cf. PFeyerabend, Against Method [1st-3rd eds] and Conquest of Abundance). He attacks this grand narrative of the rational growth of knowledge additionally because he sees it as underwriting economic efficiency and performance in the great universities of the world. Like, yet unlike, Habermas, he notes the crisis of legitimation in thinking. (While Habermas is a defender of the Enlightenment as informing education, JFL thinks outside that ontology/epistemology for education. [See more of what I have to say in "Three Countertheses" in Contending With Words].)

[Note: The genre that JFL writes in, Postmodern Condition (1979), is a "Report." JFL writes: "The text that follows is an occasional one. It is a report on knowledge in the most highly developed societies and was presented to the Conseil des Universités of the government of Quebec at the request of its president. I would like to thank him for his kindness in allowing its publication" (Postmodern xxv). Because of the demands of this genre of the report, there can be nothing but an exposition of differences and arguments, which can lead, at times, to performative contradictions. While the appendix to the book—"Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?"—is added and not part of the original work given to the Conseil, it nonetheless takes up the "demand" or the "impos[ition] on the intellectuals [to engage in] a common way of speaking, that of the historians" (71). JFL refuses the demand and imposition and writes in dis/order to bear witness to new idioms for the purposes of justice and education in a world that is becoming quite different from the ones "the historians" lived in and wrote about. This writing shifts quickly, at times, from exposition through argumentation to an experimental writing that self-reflects on the lies of both exposition (clarity) and argumentation (consensus, reason). Which requires that he and we dis-engage at times in contradictions and wild savage styles. Additionally, JFL's thinking is toward a libidinal education as also fostered by Deleuze, Derrida, Cixous, Kristeva, et al.]

[Cf. Bill Readings, The University in Ruins; Dhillon and Standish, ed. Lyotard: Just Education]

2. Books, publications (selected)

a. first book is La Phenomenologie (1954; trans. Brian Beakley. SUNY, 1991). Rethinks and extends Merleau-Ponty. The problem eventually for JFL is that phenomenology is the work of knowledge. Fixedness. Which he resists. Phenomenology, he eventually will say, is discours not figure. And as we will see, it's the latter that most interests him, and for ethical-political reasons.
b. His interest in phenomenology is slightly displaced, or disfigured, by his political interests/writings during the period of time he was with *Socialism or Babarism* and then *Worker's Power* (1955-63). (See *Political Writings*, individually trans. By Bill Readings and Kevin Paul Geiman. 1993.)

c. JFL begins (in the mid-'60s) to attend Lacan's seminars. He takes issue with Lacan in "The Dreamwork Does Not Think" (1968, trans., in ABenjamin's *The Lyotard Reader* [cf. Popper's "Epistemology without a Knowing Subject" in *Objective Knowledge*]). He argues against the early structuralist/semiotic views of Lacan, namely, that the dream is not the discourse of desire, but is its work (effects, affects). Hence, dreamwork! And as a work, it is both *discourse* and *figure*, with the latter compressing (as in "condensation") and disfiguring ("dis-placement," "representation," and "secondary revision" [a rationalization]). What JFL comes to see is that it is the *figural* that provides, on its own, ethical-political resistances to the dominant discourse. It dis-figures, refigures it! This article becomes a part of his next publication. (When I say "ethical," I mean *ethea*, the wildness in each person before it is shaped, through custom, to be *ethos.*)


[Notice, again, the title: *Discours* is in a cap letter and in the privileged position, whereas *figure* is in lower case and in the supplementary position. This title is in great part the division that JFL uses throughout the book and well into subsequent books that we will examine and discuss.]

D, f returns, initially, to the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty (*The Visible and Unvisible*), in terms of the experiences of "reading" and "seeing," but eventually—performatively—drifts away, as JFL announces in the Introduction—from that language game that is a knowledge game. The title of the Introduction is "Taking the Side of the Figural." In his opening paragraphs, JFL protests:

"That 'the eye listens,' as Claudel said, signifies that the visible is readable, audible, intelligible. The 'second logic' that he opposed to classical logic, which determined the nature and the function of words, 'teaches the art of assembling them'; it is 'practiced before our eyes by nature herself,' 'there is knowledge, there is an obligation of one [party] to the other, and thus a bond between the different parts of the world, just as there is one between the elements of discourse for it to be possible to form a readable phrase'.

This book *protests*: the given is not a text, there is a density to it, or rather a difference, a constitutive difference, which is not to be read, but to be
seen; this difference, and the immobile mobility which reveals it, is what is continually forgotten in signifying it...."

What's at stake here, according to Bennington, is the sameness or difference between

**READING** (text, "linguistic unities") and **SEEING** (sensible world, "plastic, libidinal events"), or the space of a text and the space of seeing, or signifier and signified but even more so

- flatness and depth
- opposition and instability
- systematicity and the body
- concept and desire
- legality and transgression
- discourse and figure....

We can easily add to this list **literacy** (disembodied, like a text in print) and **gesture** (embodiment, like a "body" in silent movie, or a mime, or a body expressing itself through a Tourette syndrome (see Agamben, "Notes on Gesture" in Means without Ends, 49-62).

For JFL, each twosome (above) is different in fundamental ways, with the supplement (e.g., transgression) of the signified disrupting, disfiguring, the so-called privilege (legality) of the signifier. The principle of literacy, however, is that words should be dominant and rule over images: signifiers over signified. We can see in the calligramme to the left, however, that the signified (the image, or "referent") itself controls the flow of the signifiers (words, calligraphy), and we might want to insist that "they" do this knowingly and desirously to express collectively their own image. There's obviously a political lesson in this example. JFL, in D, f, playfully, yet seriously, demonstrates another reversal of power when he writes: "Fiscourse, Digure" (see Readings, Introducing Lyotard 7). There's a chiasmus at work: Ask not what your signifier can do for your signified, but what your signified can do for your signifier.

JFL is saying that while texts are meant to be flat in that the emphasis is on concepts, not images, there is something- about or within logos (reason, law) that disfigures texts terribly, over-turning concepts and making them submit to the in-determinate and undecided-ables. We already fully understand the reverse, with the domination of the word over the image, and the reverse of image, word; but we pause, hesitate, before the image above trying our best to see it. Fully. Simply put: There's no separating tropes, sophistic spaces, from the topoi, in other words, the conceptual starting places. But this is only the initial
stepping off point in JFL’s *Discours, figure*. It’s not that simple a matter as zig-zagging, nor is it about a mere negative deconstruction, which can only at best be a shift in power relations and, consequently, domination. Rather, it’s about bearing witness possibly to affirmative deconstructions or, otherwise put, bearing witness to *events* for more radical forms of coming events.

I, too, will say that it’s impossible to summarize JFL’s *Discours, figure* with its overall arguments and performances, but it is possible to summarize a few aspects in terms of political interests. The book, as JFL says himself, is “for browsing.” The book is as much a set of argumentative protests, as libidinal installments, tagged, i.e., “written,” on walls and trains in a city without citizens as a book without readers. Bennington says: “*Discours, figure* is itself something of a collection of events and disruptions, and this is part of its difficulty” (*Lyotard: Writing the Event* 75). In fact, JFL himself caustically directs a protest …

**To the reader:** In *Discours* [linguistic signification], *figure* [the gesture], JFL addresses the reader, telling him/her/it that they are going to have problems reading the illegible book: “A word after the fact: there is an evident decadence [!] in the course of this string of sections [JFL is referring to previous as well as forthcoming "strings" of discourse in the Introduction and the book]. The reader will have become aware of it. He will protest that my thought is uncertain [hesitant].” As an explanation for these problems that the reader might have, JFL says, “the gesture,” gesturing itself, is in the writing-reading process of taking over "linguistic signification." In other words: *There is in the text itself a specter of autonomous language coming into being.* Strings of events. The illegible styles— unlike the style in the *Postmodern Condition*, but in anticipation of the styles of *Libidinal Economy*—perform reflexively, what they, the styles themselves, speak of. But in passing, JFL says that D, f is "still attached to signification…. Is still a book of philosophy." …

**The rogue, illegible styles of the disfiguration** against the text—that are perpetually on the verge of free flowing—acknowledge (again: the styles acknowledge), in *Discours, figure*, that

"the point of transition [i.e., connection, coherence, established conceptually] is the point of deception par excellence; this is the category of continuity.

If it is true that the gesture is meaning or sense, it must be so in opposition to linguistic signification. The latter constitutes itself only as a network of discontinuities, it gives rise to an immobile dialectic where who is thinking and what is thought [thinker/thought, subject/object] never merge, and where the elements of thought itself never encroach upon each other. The gesture, on the contrary, such as Merleau-Ponty understood it, is the experience of a sense where the sensing and the sensed are constituted in a common rhythm, like the two edges of one furrow; and where the constituents of the sensible form an organic and diachronic totality. Only the gesture comes back, if not to a subject, then at least to a type of subjectivity that would be anonymous…. It is felt, experienced, or in any case it structures experience….
At first sight the meaning of which the psychoanalyst speaks equally is presented as continuity; it is legitimate to oppose to it linguistic signification just as the plastic extension of displacements, condensations and distortions are opposed to the discrete and transparent space where significations are formed by ordered differentiation. By together standing against linguistic signification, libidinal meaning and sensible meaning seem to overlap. It is this overlapping which finds itself, in the end, undone in this book, the phenomenological mask sliding upon not the face of the unconscious that one has seen or will see, but upon the mask of desire. The decline is that of phenomenology."

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Note: D, f can be associated, in rhetorics, with topoi, tropes, which are highly problematic for traditional philosophy in as much as tropes appear to be non-conceptual, but potentially punctual. Hence, the historic attempt to control the tropes in terms of the four "master" tropes: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony. (See KBurke, "four master tropes" in Grammar of Motives; HWhite, Tropics of Discourse.)

Note: Bill Readings writes: "clarity in speech consists in banishing the interference of rhetorical figures which give rise to ambiguities, yet 'clarity' is itself a rhetorical figure, a metaphor for the absence of metaphor" (Introducing Lyotard 30.).

Note: D, f can also be associated with the terminology of Bataille – Freud – Lacan/JFL/Deleuze and in terms of two desires, which I take from Crome and Williams (Lyotard: Reader and Guide 29-30) but modify, through various disfigurements, for my own interests:

→ Desire 1
Discourse reading // -- restricted economy → wish-desire (lack, negativity, lost [sublime] object of desire) → fantasy scene projected into surrogate objects (e.g., the game of Fort/Da, object petit a);

→ Desire 2 (within 1)
Figure seeing // -- general economy → libido-desire (excess, affirmations) → flows of libidinal intensities (polymorphous perversities)

The differences between Desire 1 and Desire 2 may be seen as (1) One with Many-in-a-Unified-One / or a subtraction of One with a remaining setless of radical multiplicities; (2) Logos / polylogo; (3) Possibilities / incompossibilities.

Let us recall the notion of drifting (as dérive and déli) in radical terms of Desire 2, which is a free, non-channeled flow. Prime paradigms often are from HMiller and Deleuze&Guattari. Miller in Tropics of Cancer writes:

"'I love everything that flows,' said the great blind Milton of our times.... Yes, I said to myself, I too love everything that flows: rivers, sewers, lava, semen, blood, bile, words, sentences. I love the amniotic fluid when it spills out of the bag. I love the kidney with its painful gall-stones, its gravel and what-not; I love the urine that pours out scalding and the clap that runs endlessly; I love the words of hysterics and the sentences that flow on like dysentery and mirror all the sick images of the soul.... I love everything that flows, even the menstrual flow that carries away the seed unfecund. I love scripts that flow, be they hieratic, esoteric, perverse, polymorph, or unilateral.... I love everything that flows...the violence of the prophets, the obscenity that is ecstasy, the wisdom of the fanatic, the priest with his rubber litany, the foul words of the whore, the spittle that floats away in the gutter, the milk of the breast and the bitter honey that pours from the womb, all that is fluid, melting, dissolute and dissolvent, all the pus and dirt that in flowing is purified, that loses its sense of origin, that makes the great circuit toward death and dissolution" (257-58).

D&G in Anti-Oedipus pick up this reference and write:
“a schizophrenic flow moves, irresistibly; sperm, river, drainage, inflamed genital mucus, or a stream of words that do not let themselves be coded, a libido that is too fluid, too viscous: a violence against syntax, a concerted destruction of the signifier, non-sense erected as a flow, polyvocity that returns to haunt all relations” (133).

It's Imperial Roman rhetoric (of controlling the flow of logos as plumbers would control the flow of water and waste) versus Hysterical and Schizophrenic rhe(ro)torics that flow and recombine where they will!

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**Event, Events, Ereignis (ex-propropriation):** We are, perhaps, at a point now to say that for JFL *figure* (the mathematical sublime) backs up, so to speak, like a septic tank, into *Discours* (the beautiful). The libidinal flow, energetics, of *figure* is so great that it takes on both *discours*, or textual space, and the *figural*, or perceptual, space as well. So in JFL's thinking, *figure* does double duty (equivocally, if you wish) in as much as, e.g., master tropes, ordered and grounded by *discours* (desire 1), become disordered eventually by *figure* (desire 2). This relation between "Discours, figure," however, is really not, as most commentators warn, a simple oppositional relation, nor is it simply *figure*1 (e.g., as in analogy with desire1 above), which can in part be repressed and attempt to act in a reactionary way against *figure*2, which still, nonetheless, imposes itself with a radical sense of difference, an uncanniness, on discourse. For JFL, the *figural* desires to abandon the principles of reason and ex-propropriates, or makes ex-static, any reading or viewing experience.

In a phrase, what the figural desires is events, events, events. To understand event (*Ereignis*), as in achieving stasis (which we cannot), we could, nonetheless, in a counter-perversity, turn to D, f, to see what JFL says about events. Which we will do with one of JFL's paradigms (or that which lies alongside). But we will find little that, perhaps, will be shocking.

[Reminder: When I write that we cannot "understand" event, I mean, as JFL et al. mean, that it refuses signification. Or perhaps even designation. (Like the Lacanian/Zizekean "Real" it refuses representation.) Hence, its incipient value in a political struggle against the metaphysics of representation! But we would be foolish to think we could design a lighting rod to capture the force of an event for any use, for it refuses appropriation-incorporation. In other words, it is not an easy thing, nor should we think it possible, to precipitate an event. It might be more accurate to say, events happen and are for the most part by us unacknowledged, yet ever return to us as a feeling, as affective, as an emotion, as the uncanny, from the future anterior. Once they occur, nothing is ever (quite) the same again.]

To help us, Bennington takes from JFL an ex-ample. (Remember: Para-digm is alongside, as ex-ample [ety: without + sufficiency !?] is alongside the system, ex-static, ex-stasis, finally, outside of dialectical, analytical thinking: species-genus-differentiae. And yet, it overlaps with the system, as *figure*1 above does. While *figure*2 ex-propropriates, discourse can reappropriate, reinscribe, back into the system *figure*1. The system of discourse, discursive, dialectical thinking is insidious and invidious.) The example, appropriately so, comes out of Lyotard reading Marx reading Hegel and then Lyotard reading Freud. The topic is sex. I'm going to quote Lyotard from *D, f*:
"the sexes [JFL is referring to Hegel's repression of "the event and the violence of castration"] are not complementary. The truth of sex does not reside in Freud's often-repeated remark that there is basically only one, masculine, sexuality: even if it is true that the girl discovers her sexuality only late and by comparison, and that boys and girls perceive the female sex as absence, such a position is not yet that of sexuality, i.e., that of a system in which one passes from masculine to feminine by negation, it is not the position in the order proper to desire. This order is marked in that the noting of this absence greatly exceeds the noting of an absence, but gives rise to the strangest, wildest representations, at the same time as it gives rise to the most unexpected effects. When, supplied with the North Pole, one discovers the South Pole, one is not seized by the violence of an irreparable event which requires all the force of the imaginary to fill by representations, and all the disorder of affect to displace onto other representers; rather the opposite: such a discovery is that of a complement, it is a recognition; but the entry of the subject into desire via castration is always something like its death. The No of the non-human, inhuman (unmenschlich) sex indicates difference, another position (scene) which deposes that of consciousness, of discourse and reality."

The reported event (above in bold) says that beginning with the concept of One sex cannot stand (stasis)—the grounds will eventually shake (ex-stasis)—until One becomes ex-posed as a violent repression of, not opposition (male/female, or female/male), but of every entity is a different sex or each entity "are" radically different sexes.

The position, as Lyotard will monstrate in *Libidinal Economy*, is not one—subtract One—but a radical multiplicity that cannot be reduced to a systematic many, or set, of one. For there to be One sex requires, as JFL says, the violence of castration in another sense. It's not just that women are castrated men, but that sex itself, in all its multiplicities, is cast under the sign of castration. Or negativity.

Once One is two and a hermaphrodite is no longer "read" as a monstrous two in One that should be de-monstered, but "seen" as third, then, there are, as Anne Fausto-Sterling, the geneticist, says, other figures in the good form of merm, ferm, etc., limitless sexes ("The Five Sexes"; "The Five Sexes, Revisted"). To each its own.

What is at stake in these figures is the ethical-political overthrow of the metaphysics of representation. Who is human and who is not human or inhuman! This would be an event that would—is—spilling over into other events, for it resists the status quo.

At this point, I want to turn to the three works by JFL that were assigned. I will do less in terms of detailed examinations—as started here with *D, f*—and simply type-jot down my areas of interest in the books. Reminder: That *D, f* is being called upon to follow the connections among *Just Gaming* (1979), *Libidinal Economy* (1974), and *The Differend* (1983). Obviously we are not taking the books, here on, in chronological order. Why not? Why *Just Gaming* first?
e. Just Gaming (with Jean-Loup Thébaud, 1979; trans. Wlad Godzich, 1985), a dialogue. … Questions/concerns follow:

FIRST DAY (3-18) "The Impossible Consensus"
→ (p.3) The dialogue begins with Libidinal Economy. Why? What are the various implications about reading a text such as LE? What does it mean "books produce effects"?

→ (p.4) JFL says: "This book has been written in scandalous fashion. What is scandalous about it is that it is all rhetoric." ?

Obviously, the opening question is How to begin in the light of LE? That is, How do we find a point of stasis? To agree or disagree?

But What does JFL say about the difference between the rhetorician and what Plato is doing in the Dialogues? Why does, very early in the exchange (pp. 4-5), JFL associate himself with the Sophists?

→ (p.5) "a great violence" ? (sophistic rhetorics and poetics?) Difference between theory and fiction? (discuss WStevens, supreme fiction.)
→ (p.6) Not truth but new effects? supposing a mastery? (vous/tu) pragmatic conditions. A different language game.

→ (p.8) orality (responsible) vs. literacy (irresponsible). Writer and reader? example of Montaigne. Depending on what writing is for a writer, at a given point in time and place, and why s/he's writing, will determine addressing the readers(audience)

Pragmatics: Writer → Audience → referent (determined by proper writing code, i.e., language, vocabulary, etc.). But some writers find it necessary to dis/engage from this antiquated, obsolete protocol (e.g., Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Deleuze, Derrida, Cixous, Ronell, etc. Why dis/engage? There is no audience, nor taste for wants to be said; for there is no commonly held point of stasis, or ground, from which to begin. Writers, instead, speak to an audience "for the benefit of a time to come." All is "untimely" now for thinking (see Nietzsche, Untimely Meditations, trans. Hollingsdale, 60.)

[Note: Cf. D&G, "postulates of Linguistics" in1000 Plateaus 75-110.]

→ (p. 9) No audience, addressee as in addresor-addressee. Modernity (Postmodernity), What, or How, is it? // JFL: "I believe that it is important that there be no addressee. When you casting bottles to the wave, you don't know to whom they are going, and that is all to the good. That must be part of modernity [i.e., postmodernity]." (Cf. John Barth, Lost in the Funhouse.) ... "The majority of people who write interesting things, write without knowing to whom they are speaking. That is part of the workings of this society, and it is very good."
(p. 15) A New Third Critique?
JLT asks JFL: "Don't you have the feeling that you are writing a book after book, a new Critique of Judgment?" JFL answers: "I would not say so. I would not let myself say so. Anyway, what does a 'new Critique of Judgment' mean?" Etc. (Read what is said about a "feeling.")

(p. 16) Modernity (i.e., Postmodernity) "is pagan"?

[Note: To get to what remains unthought, the writer may not address an audience at all. And yet, all is greatly made problematic in the discussion of Just Gaming by the category of Modernity, for which, JFL says, there is no public sphere and no audience (no universal audience). [At this point it is necessary, given confusion, to clarify, as the translator does, that Modernity → Postmodernity (which is without periodization), while Romanticism → Modernity, and Classicism → Realism (see note on p. 16). Hence, there is a difference here between the terms in Just Gaming and the terms in "What is Postmodernism?" (appendix in The Postmodern Condition.)] → See pp. 12-16 in JG on this issue.

SECOND DAY (19-43) "The Three Pragmatic Positions"

(p. 20) While JFL begins with a discussion of Plato, the entire day for the most part is devoted to Aristotle (as Sophist). At issue is the question of justice, which from a Platonic p/v, "refers back to an initial discourse that is descriptive, or denotive, or theoretical, … and this discourse must be held by someone who, for some reason or other, believes that she or he is stating the very being of justice." This is NOT pagan!

(p. 23) Description/prescription:
To think politics is to think prescription: to think that something needs to be done. JFL says, however, "Among [many] thinkers, not only Plato but Marx as well, there is the deep conviction that there is a true being of society, and that society will be just if it is brought into conformity with this true being, and therefore one can draw just prescriptions from a description that is true, in the sense of 'correct.' The passage from the true to the just is [based on an If, then proposition]." This is NOT pagan!

(pp. 25-26) Prescription/description:
JFL: "I think that the thinker that I am closest to in this regard is Aristotle, in so far as he recognizes—and he does explicitly in the Rhetoric, as well as in the Nichomachean Ethics, that a judge worthy of the name has no true model to guide his judgments, and that the true nature of the judge is to pronounce judgments, and therefore prescriptions, just so, without criteria. This is, after all, what Aristotle calls prudence. It consists in dispensing justice without models. It is not possible to produce a learned discourse upon what justice is. … This is tantamount to stating once again
that prescriptions are not of the order of knowledge." (Cf. top of p. 28.) Subtract the true description. This is the partial way to Paganism!

→ (p. 31) No autonomy: IOW, No Addressor. But Addressees
But "it is not enough" to subtract "the true from the just to get paganism." There is something else that must be disassociated with, and that is the notion of autonomy. The origin, in terms of pragmatics, of justice is not from the addresser, but from the addressee, having been spoken to.

[Possible confusion: Earlier JFL said there's no audience, i.e., addressee, for postmodernism. And yet, now he is saying there are no addressors, but addresses. The difference is that the addressor of justice as pagani, in experimental terms, has no audience ready to hear what is being said. Moreover, that addressor speaks/writes as an addressee by way of intuitions. What JFL is working on, at this point in the discussion, is the first of the three pragmatic positions.]

Intuition:
"In paganism, there is the intuition, the idea—in the almost Kantian sense of the term …—that is, the idea that no maker of statements, no utterer, is ever autonomous. On the contrary, an utterer is always someone who is first of all an addressee, and I would even say one destined. By this I mean that he is someone who, before he is the utterer of a prescription, has been the recipient of a prescription, and that he is merely a relay; he has also been the object of a prescription. To determine paganism then, one needs not only to oppose it to the theory of the model, to give this name to the theory that one finds in Plato, but one must also oppose it to the theory of autonomy." Intuition is prescription.

[Note: The addressee is a recipient of a prescription, not a description. What he receives is not received truth, nor knowledge. The example given is the "Cashinahua, Indians from the upper Amazon" (32). JFL explains: "whenever a story is told in this ethnic group, the teller always begins by saying: 'I am going to tell you the story of X (here he inserts the name of the hero) as I have always heard it.' And then he adds: 'Listen to it!' In other words, he presents himself without giving his own name; he only relays the story. He presents himself as having first been the addressee of a story of which is he now the teller." He is narrated reflexively as "someone who has been narrated by the social body" (32). … The speaker is now in the position of listener. JFL insists: "This is an essential feature of paganism" (33). What is additionally the case is that the utterer—"the one who speaks as spoken—casuistically stretches the story, or bears witness to new idioms. "The narratives are repeated but are never identical" (33).

As we will reader later, in The Differend, "the people" of the story "are not sovereign"; rather, they are "the defender of the differend against the sovereign" 144, or # 208]

[Note: This tradition of the pagani, in the Cashinahua, should not be seen primarily as an oral but as an aural tradition. While oral and literate traditions can produce an autonomous person, so-called individual, the aural can produce heteronomous people. This "implies that, ultimately, it is not true that a people can ever give itself its own institutions" (35). But still, Who is the author of the story? Anonymous (35-36).]

There are two other pragmatic positions, but first a …
Summary: As JFL argues, *prescriptives*—as for a few Sophists, as for Aristotle, Kant, etc.—*cannot be derived from descriptives*. For Plato, justice is found in the genre of the true: From propositions to proportionality of thinking, in line with the proposition, and answering the ontological question What is justice? Instead of How is justice? JFL argues, however, that for Aristotle, justice is a genre of its own, which means it is not predicated on knowledge, but on doing, as in a practical critique such as Aristotle's ethics and Kant's second. This whole issue of prescriptives vs. descriptives are crucial, for they determine how we live in community. …

Jumping way ahead through the three books, especially through *The Differend*, we can glimpse at how this variously works in a hierarchy and a plane:

**Plato informing Western Thought:** *Description* of Ideal society
- political theory (society's true nature: for Plato, hierarchical; for Marxist, egalitarian)
- prescription
- social practice (silence opposition).

*In cognition*, determinate Judgment, we "know" by applying a pre-existing *concept or rule* to an object to determine its nature.

**Aristotle/JFL:** *Prescription* (not derived from description) → then, attempts to link phrase to phrase by bearing witness to new idioms (thereby, politics is the art [techne] of *differends*).

*Outside cognition*, in determinate judgment we cannot apply a pre-existing concept, when an "*Event*" occurs, when something happens that disrupts our pre-existing frame of reference, so that we don't know how to understand it. Hence, in-determinate or reflective judgment is required, in which the imagination experiments, inventing ways of understanding the *Event*. Indeterminate judgment deals with the 'it is happening' (or 'it will have happened') not with the 'what is happening,' with the *Event* rather than the constative content (meaning).

This experimentation, for JFL, is by ways of language games (Wittgenstein). These games are used in relation to the *Event*. The first presumption rebegins with the *prescription* that entities are not derived from *description*. Then, to attempt to link phrase to phrase by bearing witness to new idioms (therein politics is the *art of differends*). Tegwar!

Without going into great detail about the other two pragmatics, let's jump to a quick paracategorization with summaries:

→ The three pragmatics (38-39), with their emphases, are
• The *addressor* as in control of language, as its author(ity). (This pragmatic is grounded in the presuppositions of philosophical discourse; it is the "Parmenides Game.")

• The *addressee* as in obligation to listen and, therefore, not in control of language. (This pragmatic is grounded in the "theological" Judaic tradition and is the "Moses Game.")"The one who speaks," according to Levinas, "is the other" (39). What is said is not understandable, but a command to act without understanding.

And then, as we have been focusing on, there is …

• The *addressee* as in the *addressee-without-an-addressor* or a receiver without a sender. (This last pragmatic is situated in a postmodern countertradition, which is the "Pagan Game.")

A furthering of the pagan:

→ (pp. 42-43) **The gods do not Speak, nor are they Omniscient:** Before closing this day, JFL says: "The gods do not speak to me, even when I consult them. As they say, they signify, they do not speak. It cannot be said that the gods speak to me, certainly not in the Jewish sense." … The gods have no "metalinguistic position from which the whole could be dominated…. But they are not gods in that sense at all. They are not all-knowing. They just have their stories, that humans do not know. And humans have their own stories. And these two sets of stories are … not two blocks but two centers that send out their elements to negotiate, if one can call it that, on the boundaries [the zone of the pagus]. This is paganism. One does not know whom one is speaking to; one must be very prudent; one must negotiate; one must ruse; and one must be on the lookout when one has won" (43).

**No One knows!**

[Question: What is the relationship among religion, science, and "paganism," as JFL uses the term?]

[Note: The game of Tegwar, from the novel/film *Bang the Drum Slowly*.]

THIRD DAY (44-59) "A General Literature"

→ (p. 45) **Where do prescriptives come from?**
Immediately, in the exchange there is an excursion into the question, Where do prescriptives come from? "Why must one be just?" Who is the just man or woman or whatever? The question is at best an incipient question about ontology, or at worst the question is about a descriptive for the prescription Be just! and What is justice? In other words, the question
is, again, one of deriving from some proposition What something is? or Why it is? JFL responds to JLT and insists:

"It cannot be derived. The question you are asking is that of the relation between two language games: that of prescription and that of description (whether speculative or not). The description of the 'you must,' the prescription: 'you must.' This is a point for me that shines clearly: to establish a derivation between the two is to tie in which the tradition of the intellectual, with the tradition of a form of thought that is there to try to justify imperative whatever they may be. And the fact that they may be imperatives in keeping with dominant morality … or in keeping with the dominant political power, or, to the contrary, that they are oppositional imperatives, does not change on iota to the fact that this is the thinking of an intellectual, that is, of someone who is there to derive prescriptions. What seems to be so strong in Kant's position, of course, as well as in Levinas's, is that they reject in principle such a derivation or such a deduction."

Further (p. 47) JLT writes:

"One must admit a 'metaphysical' postulate: that the world constitutes a whole." JFL: "No. I think I will continue to disagree with this. It is not a 'metaphysical' postulate, and I now use the word 'postulate' in a broad sense, as I think you have been. It is not a postulate. To the question, What is it to be just? a supremely Kantian question, I answer: To be just is to act in such a way that (so dass, says the German) the maxim of the will may serve as a principle of universal legislation. But the so dass, the 'in such a way that,' what does it mean? It means that it is not a condition that defines justice…. I then ask myself the following: Granted that we have no content for justice, I mean that we have to judge case by case, is justice then to be produced nowhere but in jut judgments and never to the 'case by case,' the one who judges, that is, the subject, the Kantian agent (and also Aristotle's judge, since, after all, that is the fate that Aristotle reserves to his judge, not quite but there are enough finality? Such a finality is not at all a metaphysics, from my point of metaphysics if the finality were presented as a determinant concept."

Etc. Continue on your own, p. 47.

[Note: Cf. The whole question of Quintilian: What is a good man speaking? Quintilian as well as RLanham refuses the interrogation based on descriptives (What is good?), for it would require that they capitulate to the dominant thinking of the "good" as the "true." In great part the conflict between philosophy and rhetoric/poetics has been one based on the differences between descriptives and prescriptives. See Lanham, "The 'Q' Question" SAQ 87.4 (Fall 1988): 653-700.]

[Note: that when we were discussing earlier whether JFL is derivative (go to the top page), we were dealing with the same issue. To determine if a person is derivative requires descriptive thinking. JFL prefers, as he should, dérive as in to drift, or prefers to live by prescriptives. Why would someone insist on reading JFL in terms of derivatives-prescriptives?]

→ (pp. 50-51) The Game of Knowledge and the Game of Art // Games Play Us

[I'm not going to quote or summarize this part of the Day's discussions, but you might take a look at it. What is being added, however, to the discussions is more directly in relation to the game of art, " 'artistic' language … of an experimental sort." This theme continues through the next two books (in one it is performed, while in the other it's discussed. … In terms of games playing us, bring to mind computer and online games.]
FOURTH DAY (60-72) "A Casuistry of the Imagination"

[Note: Casuistry: literally means: concern with the individual cases. Casuistry is not descriptive-based, but prescriptive-based. Aristotle defines 'rhetoric' as the art (techne) of discovering the available means of persuasion in the given case. Additionally, there's the notion put forth by KBurke of "casuistic stretching" (in Attitudes Toward History), which is the taking of an idea or report and changing, even ever so lightly, the original meaning for whatever purpose. ESaid speaks of traveling theories. When we pick up someone's idea, there is a high probability that we will unwittingly or not change it, especially if placed into a different context for a different purpose no matter how slight. There are yet other understandings and stretchings of casuistry.]

→ (p. 60, 61) Paganism again

JFL: "First question: What makes paganism? It consists in the fact that each game is played (as such), which implies that it does not give itself as the game of all the other games or as the true one." // "What is pagan is the acceptance of the fact ah that one can play several games, and that each of these games is interesting in itself insofar as the interesting thing is to play moves. And to play moves means precisely to develop ruses, to set the imagination to work." [The latter phrase restates -a casuistry of the imagination-.] "It is this way that something like the imagination, or the will, I do not know, could develop. And when I say 'develop,' I do not mean it in the sense of a progress; I mean the fact that one can introduce into the pragmatics, into our relations with others, forms of language that are at the same time unexpected and unheard of, as forms of efficacy. Either because one has made up new moves in an old game or because one has made up a new game." [Remember: Tegwar!, which can be critiqued, and is, by way of the descriptives, finding it immoral and a con-game.]

→ (p. 62) Subtract a descriptive ONE: Discover a prescriptive for Radical Multiplicities of Games

JFL: "The point is … in each of the existing games, one effects new moves, one opens up the possibility of new efficacies in the games with their present rules. And, in addition, one changes the rules: one can play a given game with other rules, and when one changes the rules, one has changed the game, because a game is primarily defined by its rules. And here again it is a problem of inventiveness in language games. When Parmenides begins to reflect upon being [there must be something; there cannot be nothing!], he does introduce a new language game … that had not been played until then. … Same thing for Freud. We are getting back to proper names; each one of them is a name borne by a game, and it is the artists that always establish the rules of a language game that did not exist before. That is how there is paganism. A sign that people are not pagan as they should be is that they believe in the signified of what they are saying, that they stick to this signified, and that they think that they are in the true. This is where paganism stops and where something like doctrine … gets back in."

[Note: Though not stressed here by JFL, the maker of the game should constantly rework/replay the game just as those who play the Parmenidean game. Plato certainly
did. And readers of Plato certainly have down through the ages. It is claimed by some
readers that Freud was descriptive in his approach, but it can be shown that he was
prescriptive, open, in his thinking. There are descriptive readings and prescriptive
readings! Yes, everything can be read and seen in radically multiple ways if read and
seen by a pagan.]

[Note: The logic that JFL is drifting toward is filled with modals. It's paralogy that works
out of the ever-openly-growing prescriptives of "compossibility." (Cf. JLBorges, Deleuze.)]

→ (pp. 67-67) **Terrorism**

JLT: "It seems to me that this pragmatic analysis could be extended to a certain type of
'terrorism.' "

JFL: "What is being called 'terrorism' is something that actually includes two types of
operations. There is a type of violence that, at bottom, belongs to the game of war: I am
in front of an adversary, I make a breakthrough, an incursion; I destroy a part of his
forces. I do not see what is objectionable about that. When the group Red Army Fraction
makes an incursion and destroys the American computer in Heidelberg, that is war; the
group considers itself at war; it is waging war and it is actually destroying a part of the
forces of the adversary. Very good: that is part of the rather exact game that is a two-
sided war. But when the same group kidnaps [Martin] Schleyer and blackmails a third
party with Schleyer's death as the stake, then we are in an altogether different violence
that has no relation to the previous one and which alone, in my view, deserves the name
of 'terrorism.' It is of the same nature whether it is used by the State or by a minority
group. And in such a case, it falls within what I was just saying: It excludes the game of
the just ... because the Schleyer in question is obviously taken as a means here. He is
threatened with death, but this threat is addressed to a third party not to him. The same
Schleyer was at risk of being killed in an attack, but that is not the same thing at all. Then
he would have been treated like an adversary, and, in any case, he considered himself
as being indeed at war; he had himself surrounded by armed bodyguards. So he would
be taken as an adversary and destroyed as such. I am not necessarily in favor, mind you,
but I am saying that it is war. The taking of hostage is something else; it is the death of
another person, a threat of death, that is used as an argument. It is pedagogical politics
... that looks pedagogical but cannot really be. It is a politics in which the real aim is to
force the third party to yield. And the third party is not just the State, of which one makes
oneself the threatening teacher, it is public opinion to apply pressure on the State by
applying pressure on it through fear."

[Thought, reflection: This is an interesting series of arguments. What do you make of
them?]  

[Martin Schleyer? In order to consider the given case above, you will need to
know the details of the case, right? What do you know? And how does it affect
your reading of JFL's arguments above? Try: http://history.eserver.org/raf.txt or
any other sources of information.]

→ (pp. 71-72) "**Transcendence**" (language as a spoken game; language
as a listening game)

JFL: "When I say 'transcendence,' I take over a term used by Levinas, and also by Kant
when the latter says that that which obligates is something absolutely beyond our
intelligence. In terms of language games, it must be granted that to understand what a
prescription or an obligation is, the pole of the sender must be neutralized. Only if it is
neutralized, will one become sensitive, not to what it is, not to the reason why it says
what it says, ... but to the fact that it prescribes or obligates. It may seem paradoxical, but
there is nothing paradoxical about it. It is only in relation to our conception of language
games that it is paradoxical. **For us, a language is first and foremost someone talking. But there are language games in which the important thing is to listen, in which the rule deals with audition. Such a game is the game of the just. And in this game, one speaks only inasmuch as one listens, that is, one speaks as a listener, and not as an author. It is a game without an author. In the same way as the speculative game of the West is a game without a listener, because the only listener tolerated by the speculative philosopher is the disciple. Well, what is a disciple? Someone who can become an author, who will be able to take the master's place. This is the only person to whom the master speaks... Transcendence is immanent to the prescriptive game. This must be understood. What is being called the transcendence of the prescriptive is simply the fact that the position of the sender, as authority that obligates, is left vacant. That is, the prescriptive utterance comes from NOTHING [my caps]: its pragmatic virtue of obligation results from neither its content nor its utterer.**

[Negative transcendence]

[Note: The Sophist Gorgias is infamous for his trilemma: Nothing exists; If it does exist, it cannot be know; if it can be known, it cannot be communicated. ... This trilemma has been interpreted in numerous ways, of course. One, as a parody of Parmenides. Another, as a pastiche of modern and postmodern notion of the atopos, Out of the impossible comes the possible. Etc.]

FIFTH DAY (73-83) "A Politics of Judgment" ...

→ (pp. 73-74) **hesitation** ... JFL: "I am myself hesitant. To simplify I hesitate between two positions, while still hoping that my hesitation is vain and these are not two positions. To put it quickly, between a pagan position, in the sense of the Sophists, and a position that is, let us say, Kantian. I see quite well where their proximity lies: it is in the fact that there is no reason of history. I mean that no one can place himself or herself in the position of an utterer on the course of things. And therefore there is no court in which one can adjudicate the reason of history. This is a Kantian position if one thinks of the second Critique, or even of the third Critique. It is quite apparent what Kant is attempting to bring out in the second Critique: it is a language game that would be completely independent of that of knowledge. There is no knowledge in matters of ethics. And therefore there will be no knowledge in matters of politics. That is also the Sophists' positions. And also Aristotle's, who, in matters of ethics and politics, follows the Sophists' problematic completely. In other words, there is no knowledge of practice. One cannot put oneself in a position of holding a discourse on the society; there are contingencies; the social web is made up of a multitude of encounters between interlocutors caught up in different pragmatics. One must judge case by case. The position of the Sophists ... called 'conventionalism' [or custom as in nomos] asserts: It will be judged that it is just if it has been convened that that is what is just [iow, consensus].

This is an interesting group: Sophists/Aristotle/Kant! What is referred to as "conventionalism" can lead, and does, to conventional opinion (doxa). We understand this clearly in terms of elections and juries that can go wrong, since human beings are fallible. But this does not mean that epistemic/reason is more appropriate and called for. Or that it is even obtainable. As JFL says, "It is not true that a political decision can be derived from a reason of history. I believe that this is the point that is at stake for us today, in the intelligentsia, at least the European one" (74). But what makes JFL hesitate are two moments:
(a.) the idea that conventional opinion can be wrong, terroristic. He writes: "A rule by convention would require that one accept, let's get to the bottom of things right away, even Nazism. After all, since there was near unanimity upon it, from where could one judge that it was not just? This is obviously very troublesome. That is why it has been possible to call the Sophists opportunists, and to say that they were doing the ruling group's work. Personally, I don't think so, first, because there is a current of sophistic thought that does not go in this direction at all, and secondly, because it strikes as too hasty a reading, even of conventionalism. But let us accept it for the sake of our thought experiment (74). Conventional sense is that our response to the concern about convention and the Nazis should be that this was not a sophistic convention, or way, whatsoever, for the Jews, etc., were not part of the deliberations either expressed in concern for them, in their absence, in the argument, nor expressed by them in their actual presence. When the Germans capitulated to the one ruler, all was lost. It is generally accepted that the early Sophists (mostly non-Greek, foreigners) were of a liberal temper, open to mixing peoples together, were cosmopolitans, and examined arguments in a pro and con manner. Which in itself intelligent people find fault with!

(b.) the idea that conventional arguments are reversible. Such arguments, based on opinion (doxa), are prescriptive, not descriptive. So, yes, the Sophists engaged in dissoi-logoi, in an attempt to rhetorically anticipate both and all other sides to an argument. Their thinking was predicated on imminently reversible processes. They were early deconstructors, both negative and affirmative. They wanted to see the sites of various cultures and experience in-sights. They traveled and learned from a variety of customs (nomoi) and how they all differed but worked generally quite well together. They were not Athenians, nor did they display the prejudices of the Athenians. The primary example that JFL takes from Aristotle (and Corax) is predicated on the following exchange before a judge: a rhetor/sophist brings the charge of assault and battery against a strong man, saying that his size is proof enough, given the means and opportunity, of his ability to commit the act against his client who is a small, weak person. The other rhetor/sophist defends his client, saying that he did not touch the small man because he knew he would be accused of perpetrating such an act, given his size. As the story goes, the judge threw the case out of court. JFL: "Aristotle protests against this trick, this tekhnè. He says 'This is a tekhnè that is pure tekhnè; it does not have any rational power.' I am wondering if our whole business does not lie in this sort of turn, a turn upon nothing at all." ... Finally, though never definitively, working through Aristotle's thinking about the judge's actions, JFL can see that "common opinion ... requires that the stronger beat the weaker" (78). This is likely (verisimilar). And yet, there is in
Kant’s thinking "the idea: I am likely to be found guilty if opinion remains that it is, but if I maximize and if I use my imagination, if I anticipate what the judge will decide on the basis of common opinion, then I may be able to reverse the likelihood, the verisimilitude. In other words, it is the reasonable idea that produces what Aristotle calls the inverisimiliar, the unlikely. Of course, in saying this, one sides with the rhetorician against Aristotle’s judge; one judge. And conversely, one could say, if Aristotle is to be believed, that Kant, if he is the [reverser] of the case, is a Sophist" (78). Continuing along these lines, JFL admits that any "law, as is always the case both for Aristotle and the Sophists, is nothing but a custom [nomos, not physis]. It can be turned. It suffices to anticipate it" (79).

→ (p. 80) Dissoi-logoi [Two Discourses]  
JFL: "Corax conducts his argument in relation to a sort of idea of the use to which opinions will be put, especially by the judge. He tells himself: 'But careful now. In matters of opinion, precisely because one is in opinion, the reverse of what is believed and holds sway as law is nonetheless not refutable and can therefore be defended.' It is quite easy to see how Corax plays on the dialectical fact that from an opinion on ecan produce the opposite opinion, and that one can use this faculty in a situation that is agonistic. … One can demonstrate both the thesis and the antithesis of an antinomy. Well, isn't that the case with opinions? After all, the sophist in the Dissoi Logoi … does nothing else but demonstrate 'black' on one page and 'white' on the next. … This is where the political field opens up.

But it opens up in two ways, and that is where I get back to the subject of my hesitation. On the one hand, it opens up as a field of ruses, that is, of reverse argumentations, of which Corax's turn is but an example among many others. But, on the other and, in Kant, the political field necessarily opens up as the field of finality in the broadest sense. There prevails the Idea of something that is not yet here, that will never be here."

SIXTH DAY (84-92) "The Faculty of Political Ideas"  
→ (pp. 85-86) 2. Why Kant?  
I remember reading, for the first time, a chapter in Avital Ronell's Finitude's Score ("The Differends of Man"; cf. "On the Unrelenting Creepiness of Childhood: Lyotard, Kid-Tested" in Minima Memoria), in which she asks, Why go to Kant? (Hers was a critique of JFL.) The question, of course, is an interesting one. I've pondered it for some time now, until I, after numerous readings, found some compelling answers in JFL's Just Gaming. I referred earlier (above) to one possible answer. I turn now to JFL’s statement:

"We get back here to the distinction for which Kant has been irreplaceable, to me at least, that is, the distinction between prescriptives and denotatives. In its speculative use, reason determines because it proceeds by means of
denotations, that is, by syntheses determinant of referents. In its practical use, reason determines only a pragmatics; it does not determine a content. Reason issues a command that is not even valid by its content, but insofar as it elicits obligation. No law of nature obliges us. Only the law of reason in its practical use obligate us. Only the law of reason in its practical use obligates. [Cf. Hume, with reason being just one more emotion.] But this obligation is not a determination in Kant's sense of the term. And that means that Kant distinguishes perfectly well between statements that are denotative and that give (or do not give; but in the Transcendental Analytics, they do give) knowledge, and utterances that are prescriptive and determine nothing, because they have no relation to knowledge. It is not accurate then to say that reason is, in such a case, determinant in practical use. It situates a pragmatics, and the latter is different from the pragmatics of denotations" (86).

→ (p. 88) If
JFL: "If Kant had followed up the Critique of A Practical Reason with a "Critique of Political Reason," he would have been forced to adopt the viewpoint of an Aristotelian judge. In any case, whenever Kant had further occasion to discuss the Critique of Practical Reason, it has been casuistry. Such is the case with the right to lie, for example. It so happens that Aristotle’s judge, the political in general, are in casuistry, therefore in opinion."

SEVENTH DAY (93-100) "Majority Does Not Mean Great Number But Great Fear"
→ (p. 93) The regulator of One or disregulator of radical multiplicities?
"In Kant, the idea that will be used as the regulator of the decision of justice is that of a unity or of a totality. In morality, the totality of reasonable beings; in politics, the unity of humanity, at least humanity from a cosmopolitical point of view or, again, pacified humanity. I think this idea of Idea has to be gotten back to. Impossible to enter into the political area without having the question of justice raised. Here I see several things that differentiate us completely from the way in which [the] problem is set in Kant. First I see that, to pick up our terminology, if one has the viewpoint of a multiplicity of language games, if one has the hypothesis that the social bond is not made up of a single type of statement, or, if you will, of discourse, but that it is made up of several kinds of these games, of which a certain number is known, then it follows that, to put it quickly, social partners are caught up in pragmatics that are different from each other. And this multiple belonging, this belonging to several pragmatics, can manifest itself rather quickly; it is not a problem of empirical diachrony; in the same discussion on roles, one leaps, from one language game to another, from the interrogative to the prescriptive, and so on. Each of these language games operates a distribution of roles."

[Note: Virtually most thinkers along with JFL re-adopt the Sophists, in some way or other, to adapt their thinking to an open logic. The only one who continues to dismiss the Sophists and so-called modern-day Sophists (e.g., Wittgenstein, Lyotard, etc.) is ABadiou (see, e.g., Manifesto For Philosophy).]

→ (p. 94) Finality (Kant)
"For Kant, the idea of justice is associated with that of finality. But 'finality' means a kind of convergence, of organization, of a general congruence, on the part of a given
multic平ity moving toward its unity; even if it is in asymptotic and infinite fashion, without ever being able to tell: Here we are, the body is constituted and the unity accomplished.

[Note: A touch of Hegel! And yet, not necessarily so, for S/Zizek, Hegel is an hysteric! Just as at times, without using the term hysteric, Kant is for JFL.]

[Note: Finality is where we begin, in reading, Libidinal Economy ("The Great Ephemeral Skin"): The "so-called body" (1) that is being cut to flatten to all surface, is a body, given the influenza of negativity (the negative), in convergence, in totality, in unity. It is, given the paralogic of the cut, being flattened to make it all surface and then refigured into a Moebius strip (or Klein jar). It is being prepared so as to be disconstituted, that is, without conditions.

→ (p. 95) "Is the idea of justice the idea of a plurality?"
Let's "reintroduce the idea of opinion that comes to us from the Sophists, but not with its load of past, custom, and received authority that has been focused on until now, but with its other load, multiplicity. It is Aristotle when he is busy describing some hundred constitutions from around the Mediterranean. To undertake a census of all these forms of organization and a rejection of the notion of a congruence among them. Whatever he may have been in relation to the Macedonian empire, Aristotle did not posit a unity as the general horizon of these constitutions. He is satisfied to do here what, at first sight, appears to be an entomologist's job, but is actually more complicated. Aristotle knows very well that there is neither judge nor political justice without there being someone or something that decides, or has the capability of deciding, the capability of judging, and that one does not decide well without phronésis [understanding]. And he knows that the phronésis is spoken differently in each of these constitutions. Can there be then a plurality of justices? Or is the idea of justice the idea a plurality? That is not the same question. I truly believe that the question we face now is that of a plurality, the idea of a justice that would at the same time be that of a plurality, and it would be a plurality of language games…. It must be a politics of Ideas in which justice is not placed under a rule of convergence but rather a rule of divergence. I believe that this is the theme that one find constantly in present-day writing under the name of 'minority.' Basically, minorities are not social ensembles; they are territories of language. Every one of us belongs to several minorities, and what is very important, none of them prevails. It is only then that we can say that the society is just. Can there be justice without the domination of one game upon the others?"

[Note: One should not "prevail" over the others. Cf. Sam Weber's discussion of Nietzsche's "Homer's Contest" in the Afterword. Cf. D&G, 1000 Plateaus; Kafka.]

→ (pp. 98-100) "Majority does not mean large number, it means great fear"
JLT: "What does language want of me? Perhaps we could then specify further this idea of a multiple justice or at least of a justice that does not constitute a body."
JFL: "What does language want of me? And in my idiom, it means that there are forms of language that are not forms of statements, that are forms of language games, that is, ways of playing that language has, that positions the person who enters into the game. This person may enter here or there, he or she will be positioned by the game; in this sense, language is indeed not, and cannot be, mastered. … (The capital issue is terror not war, as Kant thinks). It is the fact that the social bond, understood as the multiplicity of games, very different among themselves, each with its own pragmatic efficacy and its capability of positioning people in precise places in order to have them play their parts, is traversed by terror, that is, by the fear of death. In a way that's always been the political problem. The question of the social bond, when it is put in political terms, has always been raised in the form of a possible interruption of the social bond, which is simply
called 'death' in all of its forms: imprisonment, unemployment, repression, hunger, anything you want. Those are all deaths. And that, that is something else than impurity. Here one would have to ask whether a language game that becomes excessive, that falls into what I was calling *pléonexia*, the 'wanting to have too much of it,' that is, precisely when such a language game begins to regulate language games that are not the same as itself, isn't such a language game always assisted by the sword?

To be more precise: if a language game owes its efficacy, I would not say only, but also to the fear of death, even if it is a minority game, it is unjust. Majority does not mean large number, it means great fear...."

JLT: "Here you are talking like the great prescriber himself ... (laughter)."

→ *Just Gaming* has been, in our paralogic of the cut a preamble to ...


Make your own notes.......... Here are my starting points:

→ The Glossary
→ ch1. "The Great Ephemeral Skin" (various sections, but will focus on "Opening the Libidinal Surface, "Pagan Theatrics," "The Labyrinth, the Cry")
→ ch2. "The Tensor" (various sections, but will focus on "Dissimulatio" and "Intensity, the Name")
→ ch3. "The Desire Named Marx" ("Libidnal Marx")
→ ch4. "Trade" ("Nicomachean Erotics")
→ ch6. "Economy of This Writing."


Make your own notes.......... 

→ Preface: "Reading Dossier"
→ (p. 3) "The Differend" (Gorgias Notice)
→ (p. 32, in passing) "The Referent, the Name"
→ (p. 59) Presentation (Gertrude Stein Notice)
→ (p. 86) Result (*Auschwitz*)
→ (p. 128) "Genre, Norm"
→ (p. 151) "The Sign of History"