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Where Is Richard Kearney Coming From? Hospitality, Anatheism, and Ana-deconstruction

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Abstract
After reviewing the recent publications of Richard Kearney, appearing between 2017 and 2021, including an anthology of his essential writings over his career, and covering topics such as hospitality, God, religion, anatheism, theopoetics, hermeneutics, and touch, there follows a critical engagement with Kearney's work, one that sets out in particular how, despite the very considerable overlap in our work, as fellow travelers in continental philosophy of religion and hermeneutics, our positions differ on what we mean by God and by welcoming the *tout autre*.

Keywords
Theopoetics, hermeneutics, anatheism, hospitality, deconstruction, Kearney, Ricoeur, Derrida

The wave of work on which I am reporting here is testimony to the place of Richard Kearney as one of the leading philosophers in the Anglophone world. These books, which amount to a guided tour of Kearney's intellectual journey, follow his work fresh from his studies in Paris with Paul Ricoeur in the 1980s to an internationally eminent philosopher recognized for his work on imagination, religion and hospitality. As can be seen in these pages, hospitality has more and more become a central philosophical question for Richard, and this is not an accident. Having grown up in Ireland at the height of the 'the Troubles', welcoming the other was a profound political challenge, not just a topic for an academic seminar. Upon returning from Paris to teach at University College Dublin, where he had been an undergraduate, Richard soon became a public intellectual playing a role in the peace and reconciliation efforts that eventually bore fruit in the Good Friday agreement of 1998. Shortly thereafter, wearied by the stress of his

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public role, he emigrated to the United States to teach at Boston College, where he has been a widely sought-after lecturer and a major impetus in American continentalist philosophy. In what follows, I have organized my discussion of these books around the two major foci of Richard's work, the mystery of God and the challenge of hospitality.

I The God after God: Anatheism

Imagination Now: A Richard Kearney Reader, which provides a helpful introduction and commentaries on the individual sections by editor M. E. Littlejohn, is divided into five sections. Section I, 'Rethinking Imagination: Poetics, Literature, Culture', contains Kearney's early work (1988–2002) on the imagination, where, taking his point of departure from Ricoeur's theory of narrative, Richard develops his own conception of the narratival imagination. This is set against postmodern theories of the image as *mis en abyme*, as bottomless images of images without end – emblematized by Andy Warhol – which undermine the authenticity of the image (chapter 1). Section II, 'Reading Life: Hermeneutics, Carnality, Psychoanalysis', turns to selections from Richard's work on hermeneutics (2011–2016), which he variously describes as diacritical or carnal. Once again starting out from Ricoeur, hermeneutics makes hidden meaning explicit, either negatively, by unmasking it (suspicion), or affirmatively, by coping with polysemy, the surplus of meaning. The 'critical' in diacritical (chapter 6) comes from modern projects of critique, ranging from Kant's critique to unmasking hidden interests in Critical Theory (Frankfurt school) and the masters of suspicion (Marx, Nietzsche, Freud), but it also means criteriological, coming up with criteria for judging competing claims. The exemplary paradigms by which Aristotelian *phronesis* is nourished allow us to establish criteria with which to measure right and wrong. But diacritical also means grammatological markings, which can be extended from strictly linguistic diacritical marks to reading body language, which leads finally to 'carnal' hermeneutics. There *phronesis* is incarnated judgment, inspired by the 'diacritical perception' of Merleau-Ponty, who seems to the source of Richard's use of the term. Perception is directed not at discrete objects but at gaps and intervals, a play of figure and ground, visible and invisible, like a phonetic system. This section concludes with two essays on the hermeneutics of wounded flesh. In more recent work, carnal hermeneutics has focused on the hermeneutics of touch (chapter 8), about which more below.

Section III, 'Reimagining God: Religion, Aesthetics, Sacramentality', is devoted to the question of God. The essays here (2001–2018) encapsulate Richard's two major contributions in this regard, *The God Who May Be* and *Anatheism: Returning to God after God*. These essays also sound the sacramental motif found in Richard – hence 'carnal' hermeneutics – reflecting not the biblical-Protestant hermeneutics of Ricoeur but Richard's Catholicism, which recurs numerous times throughout these volumes. Religion has always been on his mind, a point I will revisit below. In section IV, 'Thinking Action: Ethics, Politics, Peace' (1999–2019), we meet Richard the public intellectual. Here his hermeneutics of hospitality, of welcoming the other, and coping with the undecidability in the *hostis*, the enemy/guest, hits the streets. Hospitality, never only an abstract philosophical concept, spans all the way from negotiating the violent conflict between Catholics and Protestants in his native Ireland (chapter 19), up to his

recent visit to South Africa (chapter 20), which continues to be torn by its struggles with Apartheid and culminates in the present 'Guestbook' project.[1] The book concludes with an interview with the always engaging Richard looking back on his own intellectual career (section V).

Richard Kearney's Anatheistic Wager is a collection of papers organized around the notion of anatheism as a risk or wager, as a leap of faith. Faith is an affirmation that cuts deeper than a given conviction or confessional belief and is made without assurances. This faith occupies the uncomfortable position of being 'in between' a self-certain theism (dogmatism, triumphalism) and a self-certain atheism, like that of the 'new atheists' (Dawkins, Hitchens, Harris), between certainty and ignorance. But the between is meant precisely not as a dialectical synthesis but as a risk, which is left exposed in the middle, in between the two, making itself hospitable to both theism and atheism. The first part of the book is made up of conversations – the first two are interviews of Richard, the next Richard interviewing Julia Kristeva on the mysticism of Theresa of Avila, and the last an exchange between Richard and Emmanuel Falque on anatheism and what Falque calls the 'transformation of finitude', by which Falque means not a third thing before or after theism versus atheism but as a transformation of one by the other. Part two is devoted to studies of Richard's work on the theme of thinking 'at the limits of theology', one of which (Richard Colledge) explores the relation of anatheism's 'between' and that of William Desmond 'metaxology'. Another, by L. Callid Keefe-Perry, challenges the seriousness of the wager between theism and atheism, suggesting that, in anatheism, the dice are loaded in favour of God, that atheism does not get equal time and consideration, that the dealer is always winking at theist player at the table, helping him out. Perhaps, Keefe-Perry suggests, anatheism is not well conceived as a wager but as an education in 'weak theism' (184). What gets repeated (*ana*) and allowed a second innocence is always theism. Why not an ana-*a*theism, a post-critical Godless-ness after Godlessness? Section III, 'Poetics of the Sacred', explores the sacredness and sacramentality of what might otherwise be called the secular world. Keefe-Perry might ask, why not focus on a second secularity, on the no longer merely critical secularity of what is otherwise called the sacred? Contemporary atheistic physicists like Brian Greene and Carlo Rovelli continually express their awe at the *mysterium tremendum* of quantum mechanics! *Deus sive natura*?

The Art of Anatheism is a valuable volume of commentaries on the twists and turns of the anatheistic project which contains an initial selection of essays on anatheism and theopoetics by Richard, Catherine Keller, John Manoussakis and myself, after which there follows a collection of insightful pieces, many by younger scholars, on anatheism and painting, popular culture, liturgy, film and literature. This collection is helpful for getting into the inner workings of the logic of ana-theism.

Seeking 'After' God

Before moving on to the work on hospitality, I want to elaborate Richard's approach to the question of God, which is I think the first area in which his presence has been significantly felt in the Anglo-American continentalist literature. *The God Who May Be* (2001) can be viewed as carrying out what Heidegger would call 'overcoming onto-

theology', which has become something of the hashtag for continental philosophy of religion. Here the theology to be overcome is the God of pure being, of causality, of metaphysical theology, the God whose existence can be logically proven and whose essential predicates can be broadly, if analogically, determined. This is, in all, a very Hellenistic construction at some remove from what Heidegger called the God before whom we sing and dance. Overcoming means moving on to a hermeneutically rendered and phenomenologically given experience of God. For Heidegger himself, this meant moving on to the God of the Greco-German poets, of Hölderlin in particular, but for Richard it means moving on to the God of the Jewish and Christian scriptures and, beyond that, to an ecumenical selection of scriptures and poets, both eastern and western, both religious and not so much. This is carried out by Richard through a series of readings of paradigmatic texts – like Exodos 3:13 – which provide him with an opening for re-theorizing the notion of possibility, a project that goes back to his doctoral dissertation – *La poétique du possible* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1984). In classical metaphysical terms, actuality is higher than possibility as the perfect and complete is higher than the imperfect and incomplete. But in Kierkegaard and Heidegger, possibility is higher than actuality, and this because they are thinking in concrete, existential and phenomenological terms, where possibility means freedom, temporality and the open-endedness of the unfinished future. Accordingly, Richard proposes to rethink, or reimagine, God in terms of a poetics of possibility, not of the metaphysics of actuality, less in terms of Athens and more in terms of Jerusalem.

In this project, Richard draws upon the Catholic intellectual tradition but *not* by invoking the Thomism he was taught as an undergraduate student in Dublin, a decision which, Richard tells us, raised some ecclesiastical eyebrows. For Aquinas, the unchanging perfection of God means that while we are related to God, God is not related to us, an icy Hellenistic reflection that is a sheer scandal to biblical ears. So, instead of Aquinas, for whom the God of Exodus announces himself as *ipsum esse subsistens*, Richard invokes numerous mystical and Patristic sources and above all the prescient, revolutionary Renaissance theologian and cardinal, Nicholas of Cusa (who was also a Vatican ambassador to Islam). Cusa regarded God as *posse ipsum*, the sheer unlimited possibility or power – not omnipotence but omni-potentiality, as Catherine Keller puts it – to be anything and everything, in which a given actuality is a *contraction* to a particular state. *Posse ipsum* is more suggestive of a Leibnizean possible worlds God than a Thomistic God of pure being. But for Richard, the God beyond actuality is not ontological but *eschatological*, the God who may be, the Lord of history, the one who says, I will always be faithful and the faithful may always count on me. But whether and how this God may be, whether God may live again after the death of God, *depends upon us*, upon whether we make God welcome when God calls, which is what Richard is calling a 'wager'. Richard attaches paradigmatic importance in this regard to the Annunciation scene, when Mary welcomes the advent of God in the world, representing her *me voici, hinneni*, signalling a welcome that it is up to us to extend. Welcoming God into the world does not take place in a world-historical event but in micro-eschatological events, micro-epiphanies, particular transformations that take place in everyday life. This has invited a response from Patrick Masterson, one of Richard's professors at Dublin, who holds that while the God who may be does excellent service as a matter of

phenomenology, what supports this phenomenology is the God who is, the metaphysics of the God of Being (Aquinas).[2] The God who may be also invites a comparison with the 'possibility of the impossible' in Jacques Derrida, a poetics of the impossible, where the motif is 'messianic' not eschatological (more about that later).

In 2011, Richard published *Anatheism* – literally, God again, or back to (*ana*) God after the God of theism encounters the Godlessness of atheism. This itself may be seen as a formula of hospitality, given that theism must learn to welcome its other, atheism, if it wants to be faithful to itself. This work proceeds by way of a dialogue with a truly impressive diversity of voices in philosophy, literature and the arts, in contemporary politics and popular culture, all on full display in the *Reader*, but always anchored in the hermeneutic theories of Paul Ricoeur. As a diacritical hermeneutics, anatheism is a *tertia via*, a three-step movement in which classical theism, left to itself, is at best innocent and at worst dogmatic until it is put to the test of atheism, which itself is at best demystifying and at worst no less dogmatic (the new atheists). If theism is heartfelt, atheism can be no less so. Atheism can be deep (Ricoeur's masters of suspicion, Marx, Freud and Nietzsche), passionate (the search for truth of someone like Albert Camus), mystical (the atheism of the dark night of St. John of the Cross), tragic (the death of God at Auschwitz). The *ana-* in anatheism then emerges from an atheism that is deeply considered, suffered through, respected on its own terms. In anatheism, it is understood that no one wants to worship the God that the masters of suspicion criticized. As a passionate experience of limit, darkness, doubt and non-knowing, atheism is an experienced absence of God that is not the enemy of God but constitutive in any genuine sense of the presence of God, the *absconditus* ingredient in any *Deus revelatus*. Accordingly, *ana*theism, as a movement back to God, does not march home in victory after a debate with atheism, and neither does it present itself as a higher reconciling Concept in the manner of Hegel. Rather, it represents a wiser theism purged of its innocence, a second naivete (Ricoeur), a humbler faith cleansed of its dogmatism, robbed of its self-assurance and triumphalism. Anatheism is a theism that has made itself vulnerable to atheism, where doubt is not the opposite of faith but composite with it.

Richard's anatheistic pursuit provokes three observations, each of which turns on the 'after' in the God-after-God. First, the procedure in both *The God Who May Be* and *Anatheism* is to work through a series of illuminating readings both literary (Woolf, Joyce, Proust) and scriptural, like the Exodus, Abraham and the three strangers, and above all the Annunciation. The Annunciation is a scene staged by the author of Luke (1:26–38), unknown to anyone else in the New Testament, lacking secondary attestation, and largely considered by New Testament historians to be a later 'Christian reflection', a contribution to the enhancement of the status of the handyman (Mark 6:3: *tekton*) from Nazareth. We know nothing of Jesus prior to his emergence as a disciple of John, and a great deal less about Mary. When Richard wonders what Mary is reading in Botticelli's 'The Annunciation', historians would wonder what the chances are that Miriam, a first-century Galilean peasant girl, would know how to read at all, which also goes for her children, unless one has a rather high Christology. One could go on. There is no archaeological evidence of an Exodus or that Abraham ever existed, not to mention that the God of Exodus makes for a fairly bloody nationalistic warlord. So when it comes to the scriptures, both Jewish and Christian, Richard's diacritical hermeneutics is not at all

critical. The historical–critical questions about these scenes and indeed about the scriptures as a whole are simply ignored. One is left with the impression that these readings belong to the innocence and naivete of an untested, uncontested theism, immune to anatheistic criticism, that they are the issue of free-floating not critical imagination, hence not an *ana*-theopoetics. I am not saying that historical criticism has the final word, but I am saying that the relation of this scriptural theopoetics to historical criticism cannot be ignored. Otherwise, it invites the objection that these texts are being read in a state of first naivete, *without* rather than *after* submitting them to critical analysis.

Secondly, and this is not an unrelated point, why does the theopoetic project of 'reimagining God' by way of a return from atheism not come in the form of a God who is a literary or *imaginative figure*? I mean this not in the edifying sense of negative theology, in which we heap praise upon the God who exceeds the limits of our conceptual understanding and can only be figuratively imagined. I mean this in a more radically apophatic, *post-theistic* or *after-God* sense, which is, in my view, what a radical *theopoetics* requires. Why does ana-theism, the God who comes after our atheistic incredulity about the God of theism, result not in a reconstituted ana-*ens supremum* but rather in an *ens imaginarium*, a symbol, a *Vorstellung*, a theo-*poetics*? After the affirming the actuality of God (theism) and denying God actuality (atheism) comes the post-actual, where we are released from debates about actuality and enter the sphere of imaginative figuration, the possible God, the God whose being is may-being. I am thinking of the way that, for Tillich, the name of God is an imaginative formation, a 'symbol' of the unconditional. For him, it is only the needs of *piety* (edification) which compel us to *imagine* the ground of being as a *personal* and *supreme* being with whom we can communicate, which is, Tillich says, if taken in any strong or literal sense, 'mythological and half-blasphemous'. Or, as I myself would say, why not simply say that the ana-theistic name of God is the name of an 'event', of the 'insistence' of a 'call' which is imaginatively figured, theopoetically reconfigured, under the name (of) 'God'. 'God' is the name of the literary protagonist in a sacred story, whose ontological status is the same as the 'angels' and 'demons' who are also characters found in these stories – and the same as the 'Annunciation' scene staged in Luke, so inspiring to so many artists, sculptors and cathedral architects – and hence a name that enjoys strictly theo*poetic* not theo*logical* or ontological status?

My final observation is that there are signs of something like this more radical view actually stirring in Richard himself, although, if so, he is not saying so. I do not think he started out with this point of view, but my hypothesis is that he is moving in this direction. When his work is read from the start to the present, as is done in the *Reader*, one gets the sense that the direction of his thought, the *sens* in the French sense, his most constant concern, the *Sache* in the German sense, his deepest commitment, in plain English, is that living faithfully means to be *welcoming of the other*, of other ways to think and be, other ways to look and live, other ways to imagine the sacred. Alterity is a salutary shock which forces a reimagination of the self, of the world, of God. Everything happens, everything is set in motion, by the approach of the other. Thinking no less than acting is a hermeneutics of hospitality. My point is this. I had the growing sense that for Richard, at the end of the day, the question of God is gradually being assimilated by the question of hospitality, that the name of God is monitored by hospitality; hospitality is

not monitored by the name of God. Hospitality would stand, *with or without God*, and if the being of God does not demand or model hospitality, then so much the worse for God. But there is no condition under which Richard would ever say 'so much the worse for hospitality', which means the unconditional cannot be *identified* with *God*. If so, then the ultimate ana-theistic position is to say that, after theistic realism has been exposed to the death of God, to the atheistic denial of God's reality, the God that returns is a symbolic or imaginative configuration, where imagination is not some subjective fancy but a way we resonate with the unknown depths of reality. I would say, and I wonder if Richard would also say, that the name of God is not the name of a supreme being (theism) or of the ground of being (panentheism) or a being beyond being (mystical theology), but of a figure forged in the depth of the imagination. A figure of what? Of a *call*, of the *insistence* of a call – 'Come, Welcome'. *Tout court.* Is that not all the God we need, all that God means, all that is going on in the name (of) 'God'?[3]

That brings us to the texts on hospitality, one of which, interestingly, speaks of *radical* hospitality.

II Hospitality

Debating Otherness with Richard Kearney is a collection of papers by a distinguished group of South African theologians on the occasion of the South Africa trip in 2017 where his views of the wager of hospitality to the stranger are front and center. Sub-Saharan 'Africa' is a place of almost mythological strangeness for the European even as it is the scene of the slave trade and Apartheid. The brutal fate suffered by the indigenous black population at the hands of the colonizers is expressed in the image of the suffering servant of Isaiah, the biblical model of the other, of the excluded and despised among men. That is the biblical inspiration of the theorizing of the 'other' in Ricoeur and Kearney, and no less in Levinas (who influenced Derrida), where the mark of God is on the face of the widow, the orphan and the stranger. The opening essays turn on an interesting piece by Richard himself who, in response to the question Ricoeur used to ask at the beginning of his seminars, 'from where do you speak?' describes the intellectual journey that led him to embrace the hermeneutics of hospitality. If you are new to reading Richard Kearney, that is a good place to begin (along with the accompanying piece by Justin Sands). The several interviews in these books are extremely helpful. These essays are followed by explorations of anatheism, the heuristic strategy of adopting the 'middle' of a debate between polar opposites, and several chapters examining the discursive structure of Richard's language about God – its relation to prophetic discourse, to the Eucharist, the Trinity and the liturgy. The final chapters raise the question of the trauma suffered in and by South Africa, and in particular of how to be hospitable to one's sworn enemy. The papers are sophisticated and a helpful way to see Richard views put to work and put to the test.

In this connection it is worth noting the appearance of *Twinsome Minds* which examines another scene of terrible conflict, this time in his own homeland. Centered on the events of the Easter Rising in Dublin, 1916, the book explores how the commemoration of those awful days is not a simple recollection but a projection of the future,

how they are remembered by the opposing side, how we give a future to the past. For Richard, philosophy is never far from politics.

Radical Hospitality is a timely publication in the current age of mounting hostility in Europe and the United States to the refugees, the immigrant strangers driven from their homes by persecution, war and starvation. The book reflects Richard's focus on hospitality since the launch of what he calls the 'Guestbook Project' in 2009. This project started out as a series of interdisciplinary academic lectures and conferences, including a broad engagement with the arts (a concert and a poetry festival) and finally expanded into an international series of programs across five continents. Under the title 'Exchanging Stories Changing Histories', it explores the theme of 'narrative hospitality'. We get to know and welcome one another by exchanging our stories, on the premise that even the hostility between mortal enemies can be disarmed once each side hears the stories of the other, of where they came from and how they got to where they are. In the first half of the book, Richard contributes an analysis of four genres of hospitality. In addition to 'narrative hospitality', he discusses Ricoeur's notion of 'linguistic hospitality', which describes the hermeneutics of translation as making a home for the 'foreign' language without doing it injury by assimilating into the terms of the mother (home) language. 'Confessional hospitality' addresses the challenge of ecumenical or interfaith dialogue, given the role of an imperialist Christianity in colonialism and the current theocratic threat posed by Christian nationalism and its hostility to Islam; this contains an excellent critique of Habermas as posing a hospitality in which European secular rationality always plays the host, is always the authority to which religious bodies must present their papers if they wish to be invited to the table. Finally 'carnal hospitality', which is where textual hospitality becomes tactile, a double hospitality in which flesh welcomes flesh, the hermeneutic word becomes flesh, the open hand, the power of touch, like the disarming kiss that Jesus gave the Grand Inquisitor.

This point, of course, is made all the more poignant in a pandemic requiring 'social distancing', which Richard discusses in final pages of his recent *Touch* book, a lovely, lyrical exploration of the literal embodiment or incarnation of hospitality. Take the handshake, which is a token of radical hospitality, a gesture of unprotected vulnerability, originally, of a laying down of arms to signify that I mean no harm and will trust that you mean me none. Hand to hand combat (the hostile *hostis*) gives way to open hand to open hand hospitality (*hostis* as guest). To the famous modern-day handshakes of Mandela and de Klerk in South Africa, of Begin and Sadat in Jerusalem, of Hume and Trimble in Northern Ireland (*Touch*, 15), we add the everyday handshakes between neighbours or co-workers, which signify that peace has replaced strife, handshakes have replaced handguns (108). Touch is healing (104). Given Richard's analysis of the embodiment of reciprocal, intersubjective communication in touching, the final chapter is dedicated to 'excarnation', the uprooting of carnal touch that is taking place in the digital age with the virtualization of the actual (shopping, education, smart bombs, games, even sex). We touch screens, not one another; the mass media replace immediate contact. Here the question is, how touch can be reclaimed in a world in which tactile presence is replaced with digital absence? What happens to a religion of Incarnation in the age of cyborgs and excarnation? The book concludes with a timely 'Coda' on the Coronavirus, examining the extreme deprivation of touch in a time and space of untouchability, of 'social

distancing', which makes the presence of touch all the more intense by its absence and forces us to find a way to assure that social distancing does not end up translating into disconnecting (138).

I also want to point out that the second half of *Radical Hospitality*, written by co-author Melissa Fitzpatrick, a professor of ethics and business, contains an excellent comparison and Kant and Levinas. For Kant, the author of the canonical work on the hospitality of open borders, every rational being is intrinsically worthy of respect and welcome, where the globe as a whole belongs to humanity as whole. Levinas, by contrast, does not see symmetrical rational subjects but a self metaphysically subjected, host and hostage to the other who comes from on high. The concerns of both thinkers, Fitzpatrick proposes, are accommodated by Arendt's notion of 'natality'. Fitzpatrick supplies a strong, shall I say a welcome presentation of the *metaphysical ethics* (prior to being selfish or altruistic) of Levinas, an important point to which I will turn below. This is followed by a discussion of contemporary Aristotelian virtue ethics which is given something of a Levinasian twist by finding *eudaimonia* in forgetting oneself and putting the other first, an essay on education as the place to address the anxiety about achievement faced by young people today who feel they need to be perfect to make it, and a timely postscript extending hospitality to the animal, the non-human other, a topic seized upon today by affectivity studies.

When is radical too radical?

That Richard would speak of a 'radical' hospitality, as he does in this recent book, meaning a radical vulnerability to the other, is surprising because 'radical' sounds less like Paul Ricoeur and diacritics and more like the view of the *tout autre* in Levinas and Derrida, whom Richard regularly criticizes. Indeed, were we to cast Richard's project into this vocabulary of proper names, we would say that Richard is trying to make the radical alterity of Levinas and Derrida welcome in the house of Ricoeur's hermeneutics, *as far as this is possible* – '*comme si c'était possible*' – but this is always carried out *chez* Ricoeur, who gets to play the host (the one with the *potens* in hos*pitality*), who is the owner of the house. So 'radical' here is signalling a tension I want to address. This all goes back to a crucial point in Husserl, who was introduced to French philosophy by Levinas's translation of Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*. For Richard, diacritical thinking requires a hermeneutics of *imagination*, as opposed to the privilege of conceptual thinking in modernity. For him, the approach of the other is a salutary trauma which forces us to reimagine the same, to come back home like Ulysses, a new man, only after a long journey. This literary trope reflects a technical point in Husserl's famous fifth *Cartesian Mediation* (§54) on the 'appresentation' of the 'other', which turns on an *empathetic* imaginative act: were I there (in the shoes of the other), there would be 'here'. I must be able to imagine, empathetically, what it is like to walk in the other's shoes. That goes to the heart of Richard's project: I must listen to the other's story and imagine it were mine (and conversely). Narratival hospitality requires narratival imagination, and narratival imagination is a function of empathetic imagination.

That may seem incontrovertible, but Levinas objected that *empathy* cannot bear this weight. Empathy is too little and too late. Empathy *compromises* genuine alterity. The

other must be allowed to come on its *own* terms, not as an *alter ego*, as another or one more I. For Levinas, the other comes *first* as a visitation upon *me* in the accusative, *me voici*. The child becomes aware of itself under the gaze and the touch of the mother. The other is prior to the self, *metaphysically* (even if morally I am mean and narcissistic). The other is not *constituted* by the ego as an *alter ego*, as in the Cartesian–Husserlian *egological* model, but the other *constitutes* the self. The 'I' in the nominative is a product of a *later* genesis; it is a later arrival, formed from primordial (metaphysical) materials (as Sartre also argued in *The Transcendence of the Ego*). The accusative *me* is forged in a structural, constitutive ultra-passivity, which he calls the 'absolute past' which comes before the nominative I can gather itself together into the unity of an agent in the living present. Empathy is a secondary phenomenon which takes place between two *already constituted* and present selves. However considerable the differences between Heidegger and Levinas, they share this criticism of Husserl's Cartesianism and egology. Dasein's *mit-sein*, being-with the other, is a primordial ontological–existential structure which precedes and grounds the ontico-existentiell relationship of empathy; empathy is trying to build a bridge to cross over to the other with whom we always already are (*Being and Time*, §26).

So Levinas (with Heidegger) rejects the very idea of Richard's '*ana*', of the other as a *secondary* arrival from whom an already constituted I *returns*. For Levinas, the self is a function of the other from the start, and this is a 'metaphysical' matter, by which Levinas means that it is a structural and constitutive priority, not a matter of common experience, psychology or therapeutics, which is the visible order to which empathy belongs. Melissa Fitzpatrick's excellent essay on Levinas in *Radical Hospitality* (chapter 6) is helpful on this point. Empathy is a second-order imaginative transference made by an already constituted identity. We should remember that Levinas is criticizing not only Husserl but also Sartre. In claiming that the self arises primordially as response, as seen and touched by the other, that the face of the other is primordially *seeing*, Levinas was proposing a religious and Jewish contretemps to Sartre, for whom '*L'enfer, c'est les autres*'. For Levinas, this scene is not *hell*. This is *ethics* (which for him is also religion).

I pursue this point because Levinas's view is a better candidate for 'radical' hospitality than is 'narrative hospitality' which is a function of empathetic imaginative transference. But Levinas is a bridge too far for Ricoeur and Richard. Levinas's critique of empathy, I would say, is the *central problem* in any rigorous phenomenology of the *tout autre* and therefore of hospitality and it is simmering behind the polemics Richard directs at 'unconditional' hospitality in Derrida and Levinas, which is, he thinks, a bit *too radical*, which brings me to my final point.

Ana-deconstruction – a Combat Amoureux on the Tout Autre

Truth to tell, I cannot recommend the work of Richard Kearney strongly enough. In addition to judging that we are on almost every point on the same page, we have also been friends ever since we first met in 1988 in Warwick at a conference conducted by David Wood. Along with Mark Dooley, one of Richard's first Dublin students, I was house-sitting (and cat sitting) for him and his wife, Anne, in their home in Dublin on the day of the famous Good Friday agreement in 1998. When I launched the 'Religion and

Postmodernism' conferences at Villanova University, Richard was exactly the person I wanted to host the exchange between Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion in 1997. What follows, then, is the latest instalment on an ongoing lovers' quarrel, a *combat amoureux*, we have been conducting for many years.

I am so far in agreement with what Richard is saying that even where we differ, I wonder how much of this is a matter of vocabulary. When I speak of 'radical hermeneutics', I mean that in hermeneutics interpretation goes all the down, to the root, a point which Richard often makes himself. I mean a hermeneutics radically exposed and at risk, which is what Richard means by 'wager', a hermeneutics radically exposed to deconstruction, which is included by Richard in 'diacritical'. When I speak of a 'theology of perhaps', I mean a God who may be, a God who 'insists' and whose existence depends on us. When I speak of the weakness of God, I mean the event that is harboured in the name of God which comes *after* the Supreme Being of omnipotence-theism has been weakened, crucified, deconstructed. Like Richard, I have repeatedly described my view as a 'poetics', a 'theopoetics', of the possibility of the impossible. Much of this can be explained by our common roots in an orthodox Catholicism which led both of us away from the Neo-Scholasticism that held sway in Catholic universities at the time and to existentialism, phenomenology and hermeneutics, to a lifelong engagement with post-metaphysical philosophy and theology, with the God who comes after the death of that God. Indeed, I was entirely comfortable enlisting myself in the cause of ana-theism when I was invited to contributed to *The Art of Anatheism*. There I said that every theology and every God worthy of the name must come after the theology and the God that hitherto laid claim to those names. After strong theology, a weak one; after theo*logy*, theo*poetics*. 'Every theology worthy of the name is an after-theology', speaking after (*post*) the death of the old God and seeking after (*ad*) the advent, the event that is harboured in the name (of) 'God' (43).

When I start down this road of comparing the two of us, I see no difference at all. So how can we have so much in common and still manage to differ? What is the difference?

Well, the difference lies with difference itself, that is, with the way that Richard frames the notion of difference, with the way he criticizes postmodern difference. As I read through these volumes, I am reminded that he has maintained this criticism right from the start, from earliest readings in the 1980s collected in *Imagination Now* right on up to *Radical Hospitality* (2021). In these pages, postmodernism mostly means the *mis en abyme*, images of images without reality. When Richard reads Derrida's *khora* (which is a nickname for *différance*), he hears an invitation to leap into a dark abyss of nothingness, to live in an unlivable desert space, which he opposes to having faith in the loving care of God.[4] For him, the *tout autre* in Levinas and Derrida and its accompanying undecidability leave us defenseless against axe-murderers and the likes of Charles Manson and other creepy people (*Imagination Now*, 297). In what follows, then, I will propose, slightly tongue in cheek, an 'ana-deconstruction', what will have remained of deconstruction when we come back to it *after* we let it tremble in the wind of Richard's storm. I will also argue for an anastatic ana-Caputo, the chap who follows after Richard's Caputo and who returns to himself a better man for the encounter.

On my diagnosis, the *dia-* in 'diacritical' is one source of our difference. In this frame of mind, adapted from Ricoeur, the philosophy of being 'between' proceeds by posing

opposing extremes, constructing polar oppositions painfully in need of a *tertium quid*, a middle way, which, as fortune would have it, we just happen to have up our sleeve.[5] Accordingly, if you do a word search in these books for 'Caputo' or 'radical hermeneutics' or 'deconstruction', you will often find them posed as a polar opposite in urgent need of depolarization for having gone over to the dark side (the *tout autre*). I admire Richard's mastery of this method, the engaging way he makes it serve his purposes, but I have always kept my distance from it for fear of forcing things into a polarizing procrustean bed, not to mention unduly privileging oppositional difference, which is only one and, in my view, not the most interesting or important kind of difference.

But the '-*critical*' in diacritical is no less the source of our differences, not because I am against the critical component, far from it, but because for him the diacritical requires *criteriology*. Richard complains that we need criteria when confronted with the *tout autre*, and this because for him undecidability before the *tout autre* means indecision and paralysis before an abyss. Abraham, Jacob, Moses and Mary, all of us, require criteria. This is I where I can no longer keep my seat. I must speak up on behalf of Derrida and Caputo (in that order of importance). Undecidability is the *condition of possibility* of a decision. The opposite of undecidability is not decision or decisiveness but *decidability*, which means *programmability*, deducibility. Without undecidability, the decision would be contained in the premises and a computer could do it for us, and these stories would not be interesting at all. It was because of undecidability that Aristotle said that if you want sure and certain decisions, you have to consult the mathematics department. Back here in the ethics department, we deal with singular situations which call for judgment, *phronesis*. Richard and I agree about Aristotle, but I add that Aristotle said this in the context of the ancient Greek *polis*, where there was a stable and formative paradigm – a *phronimos* – of what constitutes *arete*. But in the postmodern metropolis, or cosmopolis, or global world, there is no such agreement. The problem faced by Aristotle was to know how to apply the paradigm; our problem is, we are not even sure which paradigm to apply. There are many paradigms, many ways to be wise or good or courageous (straight and gay, male and female, white and not so white, religious and secular, western and eastern, etc.) and so we are called upon to practice what I called a more radical 'meta-*phronesis*',[6] which is what I mean by radical hermeneutics. For us, *tout autre* (not just other persons) *est tout autre*, each and every other has an irreducible alterity without which it would not be other at all, and without which we would not be faced with a decision at all.[7] Richard and I learned first learned this French maxim in Latin, when long ago as young Catholics studying medieval philosophy, we came across the medieval transcendental *aliquid* and the *haecceitas* of Duns Scotus. This meta-*phronesis* is expertly articulated by Derrida in the three 'aporias of undecidability' in 'The Force of Law',[8] where the law is deconstructible just in virtue of the undeconstructibility of justice. (His legal thinking was not Anglo-Saxon, but Napoleonic, where there is no rule of precedent.) Or, as Lyotard put it, just judgment is not just making a new move in an old game but inventing a new game altogether.

Undecidability is why Richard thinks we need criteria, which, as I hope to show here, is a misplaced concern and even a counterproductive demand. Let us take up Richard's favourite way to put his objection, which takes the form of a critique of 'unconditional

hospitality' in Derrida (*Radical Hospitality*, 6). Let us say that the police have been issuing repeated and urgent warnings of a chainsaw murderer in the neighbourhood and that you are awakened in the middle of the night by a pounding on your door and you can very clearly hear the buzzing of a chainsaw being primed outside your door. On Richard's interpretation of *unconditional* hospitality, you are obliged to open the door. *That is the rule*, that's what 'unconditional' means, you *must always* obey the rule, no questions asked. Now if 'always obey the rule' does not exactly sound anything like deconstruction to you, you are on the right track. Rules, like laws, are deconstructible just in virtue of the undeconstructibility of what the rules desire. What is that? Derrida writes:

> *The openness of the future is worth more*; that is *the axiom* of deconstruction, that on the basis of which it has always set itself in motion and which links it, as with the future itself, to otherness, to *the priceless dignity of otherness*, that is to say, to justice. . . . One can imagine the objection. Someone . . .

If I may interject, let us say someone named Richard.

> . . . might say to you: 'Sometimes it is better for this or that not to arrive. Justice demands that one prevent certain events (certain "*arrivants*") from arriving. The event is not good in itself, and the future is not unconditionally preferable.' Certainly, but one can always show that what one is opposing, when one conditionally prefers that this or that not happen, is something one takes, rightly or wrongly, as blocking the horizon or simply forming the horizon (the word that means limit) for the absolute coming of the altogether other, for the future.[9]

Deconstruction is not a philosophy of the good; it is a philosophy of the event. In deconstruction, the *tout autre* is not the good; it is a risk, a promise/threat. So Derrida is not saying, it is always good to open the door or that every event is good (just think 'Donald Trump'). Derrida continues.

> The coming of the event is what cannot and should not be prevented; it is another name for the future itself. This does not mean that it is good – good in itself – for everything and anything to arrive; it is not that one should give up trying to prevent certain things from coming to pass (without which there would be no decision, no responsibility, ethics, or politics). But one should only ever oppose events that one thinks will block the future or that bring death with them: events that would put an end to the possibility of the event, to the affirmative opening to the coming of the other.[10]

The *axiom* of deconstruction – not a geometric but an axiological axiom, what it *values*, holds dear, what is always *worth* more – is openness to the future, to otherness, to justice. In a word, *viens*, come to the coming of what we cannot see coming (*tout autre*), to the unpredictable, the unprogrammable, which Derrida calls the 'absolute' future, the unforeseeable one. The *viens* is addressed to the event (*événement*), the future (*l'à-venir*), what is to come. So then *viens* must be a rule? No, it is a desire, a call for something we love and value (*axioma*). Derrida even says it is a *prayer*. But it is not

a *rule* because *sometimes* the best way to say *yes* to the future is to say *no*. When reactionary politicians propose a 'new' way of voting that will prevent poor and marginalized people from getting to the polls in the next election, then saying '*No*' to *this* future is the best way to say *yes*, to keep *the* future of the democracy-to-come open. Here *don't come* is the best way to say *come*. So if we ask Derrida what to do in the case of welcoming the coming of the chainsaw murderer knocking at our door, Derrida would say, there's no future in it!

Notice that Derrida adds, otherwise, there is no genuine responsibility, no ethics or politics. We do not *simply* respond, but we take *responsibility for* our response. To the extent you have rules, you have minimized responsibility. When someone says, 'I was only following the rules', they are not assuming responsibility; they are trying to evade responsibility. I must assume responsibility *for* what I say my responsibility is *to*, which is how I am *interpreting* what is calling upon me.

So how do we know what to do? I would say the whole point is in a genuine moment of decision we do *not*. If we did, there would be no problem or decision and no risk and no faith. If I were Botticelli (never fear), my Mary would have had a worried look on her face, secretly concerned that this angel might be Satan in disguise. It was Kant's desire for criteria that led him to say that Abraham should have asked this 'voice' a few more questions before saddling up for Moriah. The non-knowing is what makes these stories memorable because it is an irreducible and constitutive part of a genuine decision. I say a 'genuine' decision, because in the case of the chainsaw murderer, the jury is already in, the decision already written into the script, made in the very description of the scene. In a true decision, we proceed by way of what Lyotard calls a judgment without rules or of what in my reinvention of Aristotle I call meta-*phronesis*. The closest we come to this in Richard is what he calls *discernment*, which is a good word, and not a bad way to translate *krinein* (*Imagination Now*, 95–101). The word suggests the *subtilitas* – the tact, the light touch – in the classical definition of hermeneutics (*subtilitas explicandi*). In the same context, Derrida himself will speak of 'negotiations'. So now the question is, *what does discernment mean*? If discernment means a magic insight that dissolves the dilemma, I am against it. I understand by discernment dealing with the *event*, the 'give and take' required to make a singular judgement in a singular situation where the coming of the other will keep the future open – unless it does not. But that is why we need criteria, to tell the difference!

The problem is that in a genuine decision the criteria, the critical rules of judgment, go *limp*, which is what Kuhn says happens to scientific criteria whenever science faces a genuine anomaly, which occasions a paradigm shift. *Criteria follow upon discernment; discernment does not follow the criteria.*[11] Criteriologists are of no use when it comes to events. They can only report events, inventory and analyse them, *after the fact*, so that next year they can publish a revised, up to date edition of their criteriology, the way new translations become necessary as the language moves on and renders them obsolete. Criteriologists are like the first reporters on the scene who record some remarkable thing that happened which nobody saw coming. They then produce an account which, *after the fact*, makes it look almost inevitable – whereas on the ground, in the heat of the moment, nobody knew what to do, except the radical *phronimoi*, and even they did not know what to do *until they did it*. The decision was forged in the doing. Existence is worked out in the existing, *in actu exercitu*, not decisionistically, of course, but always as the decision

of the other in me, of the other who lays claim to me. In Richard's terms, it is made by way of a *creative* imagination up against an enigma, not a *re-creative* one which just applied the criteria. The existing criteria were composed to address all *previous* situations. Criteria are always aimed at where the rabbit *was*. In a truly *critical* situation, Kuhn says, we do not know which criteria to apply or how. Criteria are a product of *retrospective narratives* composed after the smoke has cleared. As long as and to the extent that the criteria are good, they minimize and tend toward eliminating the *risk* – the wager in the anatheistic wager – but they are only good *until the next event, the next genuinely new thing that happens*, when the criteria are once again thrown into confusion. Genuine decisions are made in the original confusion – ambiguity, undecidability – which at the time may even look foolish. When the establishment art critics first encountered Picasso, they said that's not art, and when the Newtonians first read Einstein, they said the man is mad, unless he is a genius, and we are not sure which. That is a good way to understand the postmodern: the modern, the *modo*, is the way we do things now; the post-modern occurs when we have never seen this before.

Then what is 'unconditional hospitality'? First of all, as Derrida insists, it is a *definition*. What hospitality *means* is the power (*potens*) of welcoming (hosting) the *hostis*, the *tout autre*, who is, as such, undecidably, friend or foe – *period*. That is a declarative sentence, a *predicative* assertion, *not a normative one*. It belongs to the order of *knowledge*; it is not an ethical or political *imperative* and not a rule of conduct. Of course there is an *imperative* of hospitality – 'Welcome' – but that belongs to different order, of lived experience, and we should not confuse the two. Just so, the *definition* of the pure gift is that it is given without return, where the *imperative* is 'Give'. Derrida's view is that, *knowing* what these things mean, we *live* in the distance *between* these imperatives (come and welcome, give and forgive) *and* the concrete conditions of life (the various 'economies'), which is what is to be 'negotiated'. We live in the space between the pure call and the concrete condition under which we respond to this call, which *includes* our *knowledge* of what hospitality, the gift, forgiveness and the event *mean*. The purity of the call, its simple unconditionality, keeps the present open, exposed. The purity is not the purity of a pure essence, of a Platonic or Kantian Ideal which is to be approached asymptotically, but the purity of an open-ended *call* – give, come, welcome – pure and simple. Hospitality, the gift, forgiveness, justice are not *ideals* but *injunctions*, and we need to negotiate a double injunction, of demands coming at us from both directions – from the impossible and the possible, from a thinking, naming, desiring of the impossible, on the one hand, and from what we know and experience of the possible, of the circle of economy, on the other.

The response we make does not represent a resolution or synthesis and it cannot get its bearings by taking the measure of two polar opposites and situating itself in the middle. The response to the aporia is to take a risk, unsure of your bearings, to expose oneself to the danger – by *giving*, by *going* where you *know* you cannot go, *facere veritatem*, doing the truth rather than knowing it, for the gift is not finally a matter of knowledge. So Derrida, speaking of the pure gift – we can just substitute 'hospitality' – writes:

> Know still what giving [or hospitality] wants to say, know how to give, know what you want
> and want to say when you give, know what you intend to give, know how the gift annuls

itself, commit yourself [*engage-toi*] even if commitment is the destruction of the gift by the gift, give economy its chance.[12]

Dare to give, or to welcome, *knowing* what the pure gift means, and *knowing* that the gift is already lodged in *economies* – where it prevents these economies from becoming monsters. Just so, in the university, dare to know, *sape aude*, reserve the unconditional right to ask any question, *knowing* that is what the university is, and *knowing* the conditions under which universities *exist* where they are 'on the take', funded by the state, the church or private donors. That is why Derrida can say that he is a very conservative person[13] and that we can think of deconstruction as a theory of economies – of institutions, universities, traditions – where the whole idea is to keep these institutions *open to the future* and 'to give economy a chance!' If economies are not interrupted with gifts, they become monsters, entrenched, irreformable. Gifts give economies the chance of a future. If the people in the institution only do what they contractually obliged to do, the whole thing will grind to a halt.

So there is a 'between' in deconstruction – we *live* in the *distance between* the unconditional (which does not exist) and the (existing) conditions, between the *insistence of the call* and the *existence of the response*, between the undeconstructible and the concrete constructions, which means our life is lived in a *regio dissimultudinis*, a land of restlessness and undecidability, for better or for worse. This between is what Derrida calls the 'gap' (*écart*) between the call and the response, *which cannot be closed by a rule or a criterion*. Standing in this gap means standing under both the force of the call *and* the force of circumstances where we must decide what the circumstances demand, what justice (or hospitality, etc.) calls for in the circumstances, here and now. So to the extent that this concrete judgment is domesticated by criteria, hospitality (or justice or the gift) is annulled, and the risk, the ana-theistic wager, is contained – we will always be welcoming the same, the foreseeable, the invited guest whose coming has been vetted in advance. Hospitality will be reduced to issuing *invitations* to those who meet the criteria while uninvited *visitations* will be blocked.

It is also important to remember that Derrida agrees with Levinas that this is a double bind, because in welcoming *this one* I have no room left in my house for all the 'other others' whose faces are pressed against the windows looking in. That is why (with Heidegger) all three say, there is no such thing as good conscience, meaning the ones with the most right to a good conscience are the least likely to claim one. We are all guilty, but I more than others. A genuine decision is more often choosing the lesser evil.

Radical and diacritical

My hypothesis is that the difference between my 'radical hermeneutics' and Richard's diacritical hermeneutics goes back to a difference in metaphorics between Derrida and Ricoeur (and Gadamer, too). It goes back to a different axiomatics, not of the 'return' but of the beyond, not of the between but of the hyperbolic – of the *super*, *epekeina*, *hyper*, *über*, *au-delà*,[14] of the unconditional expenditure, in short, of the possibility of the impossible. I take Derrida to be urging us to put our own interests and possessions, our own positions and presuppositions *at risk, as far as possible*, as far as 'the possibility of

the impossible', '*comme si c'était possible*'. Just as Levinas takes the (invisible) meta-physics of the *me voici* to cut more deeply than the (visible) and symmetric phenomen-ology of empathy, and just as Derrida thinks that the surplus *beyond* meaning in 'dissemination' is more radical than the surplus *of* meaning in Ricoeur's 'polysemy',[15] Derrida is describing a radical excess, a riskier wager of remaining open to the future where criteria fail us, but our hope and desire to remain open to the future do not, and he thinks this will always be at work to a greater or lesser extent in any decision. I also think that what is behind this is that in radical hermeneutics the non-knowing is more genu-inely *at a loss*, that the apophatic is not a matter of edification and respect for the unknowable, not a form of praise of the God beyond God, but a confession, a circum-fession of *really not knowing* what is going on, which belongs to what he and Levinas call an absolute past and an absolute future, but that is a matter for another day.[16]

That axiomatic is why, to go back to the crazy case of the chainsaw murderer, nothing would prevent *someone* of a *special* sort – don't try this at home – *knowing* the risk, from opening the door. The lives of the saints, also known as fools for God, are full of 'mad' and 'foolish' stories like this, a point made by Edith Wyschogrod in a lovely book entitled *Saints and Postmodernism*.[17] Saints are beings of excess, not of the middle ground, as are creative geniuses in the arts and sciences. Saints are impossible people, people of the impossible. Their only measure is love without measure. *Dilige, et quod vis fac*. Prudence dictated that John Lewis *not* lead his people across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama on 'Bloody Sunday' in 1965 – the criteria were against it, everyone thought it was mad. But justice said, 'Go, where you cannot go'.

As I have been arguing ever since 1988,[18] this 'madness' – Derrida was referring to the Kierkegaardian *kairos*, the 'moment of decision' – calls to mind the paradoxical character of the 'kingdom of God' in the New Testament. There we are asked not just to love the same, those who love us back, but to love the other, those who do *not* love us back, the enemy, to forgive those who offend us without striking back and to put the first last and the last first, all of which is mad and would have utterly perplexed the aristocratic Aristotle. The *logos* of the kingdom is not an Aristotelian prudential *logic* of the median state between extremes. Its *logos* is a message of the mad, *folie*, the folly of God (*moria theou*) which is wiser than the wisdom of the world (1 Cor 1:25). Without this madness, nothing makes sense, nothing really happens, no events, in heaven or on earth. The paradoxical folly, the excess, the I-would-have-you-hot-or-cold of what the Aramaic poet Yeshua calls the 'kingdom of God' is well described by Derrida's axiomatic of the hyperbolic. To this kingdom, whose coming Yeshua was sent to announce, we in turn are invited to say, to pray, come, *viens, oui, oui*, yes, I said, yes. *Viens* is the first and last word in deconstruction, what is always worth more (*axioma*), and it is also the last word, almost literally, in the New Testament – 'Amen, *erchou*, Lord Yeshua' (Rev 22:20)

* * *

In sum, I recommend the reading of Richard Kearney unconditionally – *tolle, lege*, start anywhere, read everything! But with one condition. Whenever you come across the word 'deconstruction', imagine, as if it were possible, he means my ana-deconstruction.

Richard Kearney, *Touch: Recovering Our Most Vital Sense* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

Richard Kearney and Melissa Fitzpatrick, *Radical Hospitality: From Thought to Action* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2021).

Imagination Now: A Richard Kearney Reader, ed. M.E. Littlejohn (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020).

Debating Otherness with Richard Kearney: Perspectives from South Africa, eds. Daniël P. Veldsman and Yolande Steenkamp (Cape Town, South Africa: AOSIS, 2018).

Richard Kearney's Anatheistic Wager, eds. Matthew Clemente and Chris Doude Van Troostwijk (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018).

The Art of Anatheism, eds. Richard Kearney and Matthew Clemente (London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018)

Twinsome Minds: An Act of Double Remembrance, with Sheila Gallagher (Cork University Press, 2017).

Notes

1. For more, visit http://guestbookproject.org.
2. Patrick Masterson, *In Reasonable Hope: Philosophical Reflections on Ultimate Meaning* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 62–81, 91, 112.
3. My question then is the opposite of Masterson's, who wants the God of Being to support the God who may be. My question is whether the God who may be might simply be a name for the 'call' that is harbored in the name (of) 'God', a call made all the more intensive because it comes *without* ontological support. Where Masterson would reinforce the God who may be, I would weaken it.
4. Richard Kearney, "God or *Khora*," in *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, ed. Richard Kearney (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 191–211; see my reply, "Abyssus Abyssum Invocat," in *A Passion for the Impossible: John D. Caputo in Focus*, ed. Mark Dooley (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003), 123–27.
5. See the excellent analysis by Yolande Steenkamp in *Debating Otherness*, chapter 6 on following this middle way.
6. John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 262.
7. I also think that *tout autre est tout autre* is in fact the phenomenological basis upon which Kearney's distinction between person and persona depends (*Imagination Now*, chapter 13).
8. Jacques Derrida, "The Force of Law: 'The Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" trans. Mary Quantaince, in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 237–58.
9. Jacques Derrida, *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews: 1971–2001*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 105; cf 182.
10. Derrida, *Negotiations*, 94.
11. My *Against Ethics*: Contributions to a Poetics of Obligation with Constant Reference to Deconstruction (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) was an extended defence of this approach to judgment; it could have been entitled *Against Criteria*.

12. Jacques Derrida, *Given Time, I: Counterfeit Money*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 30.
13. Jacques Derrida and John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, ed. with a new Introduction (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997, 2020), 8, 37.
14. Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, ed. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 64.
15. John D. Caputo, "Gadamer and the Postmodern Mind," in *The Gadamerian Mind*, ed. Theodore George and Gert-Jan van der Heidne (London and New York: Routledge, forthcoming).
16. I am presently working on a book entitled *An Anatomy of the Apophatic Imagination*.
17. Edith Wyschogrod, *Saints and Postmodernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
18. This first hit me in "Beyond Aestheticism: Derrida's Responsible Anarchy," *Research in Phenomenology* 18 (1988): 59–73, reprinted in *The Essential Caputo: Selected Writings*, ed. B. Keith Putt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018), 184–94, and in "Sacred Anarchy: Fragments of a Postmodern Ethics," a previously unpublished paper now published in *The Essential Caputo*, 287–304. See Keith Putt, "The Repetition of Sacred Anarchy," *The Essential Caputo*, 3–17.