No Kingdom of the Queer

_Calvin Thomas_

Queerness can never define an identity; it can only ever disturb one.
—Lee Edelman

_Queue, in its deconstructive sense, designates a kind of Derridean différance._
—Carla Freccero

It has been written somewhere that deconstruction in the United States was successful among feminists and homosexuals. And there is always something sexual at stake in the resistance to deconstruction.
—Jacques Derrida

Deconstruction, insofar as it insists on the necessary non-coincidence of the present with itself, is in fact in some senses the [queerest] of discourses imaginable.
—Geoff Bennington

At the heart of something seemingly natural, self-identical, and proper, enabling or prolonging its functionality, stands something that is unnatural, or other, or improper, with the result that the so-called opposition between natural and unnatural, self and other, proper and improper is called into doubt, and what, by rights, should only be on one side of the equation is found to be already on the other. Such instabilities, _Derrida argued_, are more common than it may be thought, and represent a grave and irreducible challenge to any concept of self-identity.
—Leslie Hill

As we know, as “it has been written,” and as I have emphasized in what you will have just (epigraphically) read, “Derrida argued.”

Or, if you prefer, as I do, to obey the still regnant rhetorical convention and employ the present tense when describing what “has been written” (and so, in a sense, bring the dead back to life), then, as we might argue:

Derrida (still) writes.

Without nostalgia (except perhaps for the phrase “without nostalgia” itself); without future (or perhaps with an unjustifiable embrace of No Future, refusing, heretical as the assertion may sound, any responsiveness to or responsibility for any future whatsoever); without “critical authority” or any desire to establish, inhabit, or exercise it, but also without much—it must be admitted—in the way of queer credibility, much less “Derridean” expertise (being only inexactively queer ourselves, Derrida and I, and my not having read anything like his every word), I (nonetheless) write, respond to an invitation to have written, that Derrida, though still, still writes, in a present tense that will of course have always already failed to be fully present or ever safely past or reassuringly future anterior, and so still sends trembles through “the heart” of anything “seemingly natural, self-identical, and proper,” through “any concept of self-identity,” through all the sedimented foundations of Western metaphysics, of course, but also through all the coagulated institutions of heteronormativity, and especially through any heteronormatively determined “I” (if I—“a heterosexual”—might venture to say so).

As much as any other, it was Derrida who helped to initiate and perpetuate these tremblings—helped, that is, to initiate and proliferate critical queerness, helped, in other words, to queer theory. By (still) writing. By (still) having written.

For example, that:

. . . différance is not. It is not a present being, however

excellent, unique, principal, or transcendent. It governs nothing, reigns over nothing, and nowhere exercises any authority. It is not announced by a capital letter. Not only is there no kingdom of différance, but différance instigates the subversion of every kingdom. Which makes it obviously threatening and infallibly dreaded by everything within us that desires a kingdom, the past or future presence of a kingdom. And it is always in the name of a kingdom that one may reproach différance for wanting to reign.\footnote{Jacques Derrida, “Différance,” in Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 21-22. Hereafter cited in the text as DM. For a variant translation, see ibid., “Différence,” in Speech and Phenomena, trans. David Allison (Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1973), 129-160. Hereafter cited as DSP.}

Obviously, the title of what I will have written here is drawn from this remarkable passage from “Différance.”\footnote{In this essay, I employ both the Alan Bass and the David Allison translations of “Différance” (from Margins of Philosophy and Speech and Phenomena, respectively), usually for the sake of sound alone (for example, “No Kingdom of the Queer” sounds better than “No Realm of the Queer”). In one case, marked as such, I have mixed and modified the translations, trading Bass’s “tyrant” for Allison’s “king.”} As you see, I have in my kingdomless title substituted the word “queer” for the non-word “différance”—just as, in the epigraph from Bennington above, I have inserted the outrageously wrong word (“queerest”) in the bracketed place where the proper words, the intended words, the authorized words (which were “most historical,” in case you were wondering) should appear. Such catachreses invite the question of what makes the fungibility (though not the marriage) that I have arranged between the wrong word, the disturbing word “queer” and the non-word, the non-concept “différance” possible (if not, from a certain perspective, all too easy), as well as the question of what might abrade or even (of who might desire to) prohibit this hardly matrimonial alliance. And perhaps the problem of the very distinction between the what and the who will assume a crucial importance here, whether I take the Freudian slogan Wo es war soll Ich werden seriously to heart (as I invariably must, if I am to become
anything of an “I” at all),

8. or whether I make a complete hash of it (as I also unavoidably must, since “I” remains an other, since, as Derrida remarks in *Glas*, “I—mark[s] the division”).

9. Or, as Derrida allows the questions to be posed in “Différance”: “What differs? Who differs? What is *différance*” (DSP 141)? Or again, as Donald E. Hall titles a chapter in *Queer Theories*, “Who and What is Queer?”

10. And yet:

If we answered these questions even before examining them as questions, even before going back over them and questioning their form (even what seems to be most natural and necessary about them), we would fall below the level we have no reached. For if we accepted the form of the question in its own sense and syntax (“What?” “What is?” “Who is?”), we would have to admit that *différance* is derived, supervenient, controlled, and ordered from the starting point of a being-present, once capable of being something, a force, a state, or power in the world, to which we could give all kinds of names: a *what*, or being-present as a *subject*, a *who*.

(Derrida DSP, 145)

We will therefore not answer these questions or accept them in their given form, but merge and deform them—“What and who (queers) differs? What is (queer) *différance*?”—so as to let them provoke an alternative interrogative series. To wit:

*What* can we—who profess to know a *thing* or two about this *who/what* division as *internal to* and *constitutive of* subjectivity, as a difference not *between* subject and object but *within* the subject


itself, we who claim to be conversant with the ins and outs of “deconstructive anti-identitarian critical and political practice” (Freccero QEM, 6)—what can we decisively say about “everything within us that desires a kingdom”? Can we confidently state that whatever this “everything within us” might end up being, it cannot possibly be queer? That there can be “no kingdom of the queer” in exactly the same way as there can be “no kingdom of différence” and for exactly (or roughly) the same reasons? Can we conflate this (perhaps) anything-but-queer desire for a kingdom with what Derrida, in “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” calls the desire for “coherence in contradiction,” for “a fundamental ground . . . a fundamental immobility and a reassuring certitude”?  

11. Can we relate the fundamental ground of this desired epistemological and ontological kingdom not only to “the privilege accorded to consciousness,” and thus to the “privilege accorded to the present,” but also to the privilege accorded to heterosex as the reassuringly normative coherence of erotic contradiction, and so assert that “this privilege [i.e., heterosexual privilege] is the ether of metaphysics, the very element of our thought insofar as it is caught up in the language of metaphysics” (DSP, 147), caught up in the language of heteronormativity, the pro-identitarian language of the desire (ours? theirs?) for a kingdom?  

12. Does Lee Edelman’s designation of queerness as that


12. Note the variations on the words coherence, contradiction, and consciousness that appear in the following description of “heteronormativity” in Berlant and Warner’s “Sex in Public”: “By heteronormativity we mean the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent—that is, organized as a sexuality—but also privileged. Its coherence is always provisional, and its privilege can take several (sometimes contradictory) forms: unmarked, as the basic idiom of the personal and the social; or marked as a natural state; or projected as an ideal or moral accomplishment. It consists less of norms that could be summarized as a body of doctrine than of a sense of the righteousness produced in contradictory manifestations—often unconscious, immanent to practice or to institutions.” See Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, “Sex in Public,” Critical Inquiry 24.2 (1998): 547. Hereafter cited as SIP.
which “can never define an identity but . . . only ever disturb one” allow us to assert that queerness is not “incompatible with the theme of différance” (DSP 146) as that theme is elaborated in the writing called “Différance”? Or that queerness and différance are “the same without being identical” in that both can be said to “instigate the subversion of every kingdom”—particularly the kingdom of self-identity (but is there any other kind?)? In other words, allowing (at least provisionally) an intimate correspondence between queer disturbance and desedimenting différance, and given what Derrida signals, in the following, as the regicidal proximity of the latter, can there be any such entity as “the queer who would be king”?

The a of différance . . . cannot be heard; it remains silent, secret, and discrete, like a tomb. It is a tomb that (provided one knows how to decipher its legend) is not far from signaling the death of the tyrant. (DSP 132; translation modified)

Of course, contemporary homophobic popular culture—to give one particularly vicious example of it—knows exactly how to answer that last question, even in its appeals to ancient legend. From the perspective of the 2007 film, The 300, there can indeed be such an entity, such a personage: it’s clear enough that this hyper-hetero-masculine (and so inadvertently self-queering) spectacle intends its antagonist—the marauding “Persian ‘God-king’ Xerxes”—to be deciphered as a gigantic, invasive, raging faggot. Perhaps, for a certain political imaginary, all “strange gods” are queer.

As for myself, I hope, in what I will have ended up writing here, to have arrived, if not at my letter’s destination, then at least “not far” from some very different, non-homophobic responses to the questions my title provokes. “On the other hand, I must be excused if I refer, at least implicitly, to one or another of the texts that I have ventured to publish” (DSP 131). Actually, no, I must not be excused, must refuse to be forgiven, for these impending textual self-references; indeed, for what little I have ventured to publish on Derrida (the worst chapter of Male Matters),13 I do not excuse

myself, while for what I (“a heterosexual”) have ventured to publish on queer theory (a longer but not much better list of texts), you yourself must never forgive me.\textsuperscript{14} Permit me, however, to point out that at some juncture in each of my inexcusably and unjustifiably “straight queer” texts, there does come that necessary moment of attempted authorial self-justification (in the form, kicking it old-school, of the “review of scholarship”), the moment at which I am compelled to round up the (un)usual suspects, to trundle out an enabling assemblage of proper names (Butler, Berlant, Warner, Halperin, Hall, Sedgwick, Bersani, Edelman, Dean) and critical articulations, a battery of established renegade theorists and statements,\textsuperscript{15} each brandishing its own properly queer \textit{bona fides}, its


own “critically queer” authority, but each providing in its own way the condition of possibility (if not exactly its author’s intentional justification or licensure) for the “straight queer” engagement I am attempting to perform or inscribe. I will not rehearse this necessary moment yet again here. I will submit, however, that each of these enabling articulations, if read closely, reveals itself to be a “deconstructive proposition” (are there queer theorists worthy of the name who have not, somewhere along the line, been readers of Derrida?). Conversely, it could be suggested that any deconstructive proposition, if read closely, will reveal itself to be queer. And if we follow this particular line of thought we come perilously close to the proposition (at once abyssal and flippant) that any proposition, if read closely, could turn out to be deconstructive—and hence queer.

I will not hold back at the edge of this insignificant abyss but rather allow the “necessary moment” of which I write above to collapse (catachrestically) into the “moment” or “event” or “rupture” to which Derrida alludes at the beginning of “Structure, Sign, and Play,” the moment that “presumably would have come about when the structurality of structure had to begin to be thought.” As Derrida (still) writes:

This was the moment in which language invaded the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of center or origin, everything became discourse [. . .] that is to say, a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely. (SSP 280)

In other words, given language’s so-called invasion of the universal problematic, given “the linguistic turn” of the universal screw, it is always already “a queer planet.” The world is always already “queerer than ever.””16 The wrong-word “queer,” like the non-word “différance,” signifies the disturbance of identity that corresponds to

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16. I allude here of course to Michael Warner’s claim that the project of queer theory is to make “the world queerer than ever.” See Michael Warner, “Introduction,” Fear of a Queer Planet, xxvii.
the absence of the transcendental signified that extends the domain and the interplay of signification *ad infinitum*.

But “where and how does this decentering”—this queering, this *différance*, this *queerance*—“this notion of the structurality of structure, occur” (SSP 280)? If we respond with the question “Where else and how else but *in the text*?” then we acknowledge that the answers to the questions of where and how, as well as those of who and what, are nowhere (foundationally) but everywhere (figuratively) to be found. Language having invaded the universal problematic, the text, like “sex” of any all-too-human variety, has “no natural site” (SSP 280) or locus, and no supernatural or transcendental guarantee. And if there is, as Derrida (still) writes, “no outside the text,”17 then human reality (the planet, the universal problematic, the world that must always be made to mean) is also always already queer.

Yes, to be sure, I am—totally and globally, abysmally and flippantly—conflating textuality, which never confirms but only ever disturbs identity, with human reality as such, while thoroughly saturating that reality with queerness, or *queerance*, “itself.” I am suggesting, again, here, what I have already submitted in one or another of the aforementioned texts engaged with “queer theory” that I have ventured to publish, that theory “itself” (but would there ever be any such endeavor as “theory” without Derrida’s having written?) is queering, that theory and/or Derrida and/or “the linguistic turn” turned or torqued or twisted me (“a heterosexual”) into the queer thing that/who “I” is/am today, and, more specifically, that *literary* theory (will there ever be any such thing as *literature* without Derrida’s having written?) is queer, that *literature*, which never ceases to conceal/reveal the absence of natural locus and transcendental signified, is in some senses the queerest of discourses imaginable.

The fact that others, recognizably queerer than I, have articulated similar arguments means, among other things, that something resembling the “necessary moment” of unjustifiable justification is about to be re-enacted after all. So: “Let us begin

again” (DSP 142). Or rather, “Let us begin with the problem of signs and writing—since we are already in the midst of it” (DSP 138). In the introductory chapter, called “Prolepses,” of her *Queer/Early/Modern*, Carla Freccero writes that “the queer of this collection of critical interventions [i.e., her own] is difficult to define in advance”:

Over the past decade and a half, this term, as taken up by political movements and by the academy, has undergone myriad transformations and has been the object of heated definitional as well as political debates. . . . It is a term that, here, does have something to do with a critique of literary critical and historical presumptions of sexual and gender (hetero)normativity, in cultural contexts and in textual subjectivities. It also has something to do with the sexual identities and positionalities, as well as the subjectivities, that have come to be called lesbian, gay, and transgender, but also perverse and narcissistic—that is, queer. At times, *queer* continues to exploit its productive indeterminacy as a word used to designate that which is odd, strange, aslant; in this respect, I argue that all textuality, when subjected to close reading, can be said to be queer. (QEM 5)

A bit further on, in a chapter called “Always Already Queer (French) Theory,” Freccero illuminates and explains that title by writing:

*Queer*, in its deconstructive sense, designates a kind of Derridean *différance*, occupying an interstitial space between binary oppositions. . . . This use of *queer* finds its energy from the way the term works to undo the binary between *straight* and *gay*, operating uncannily between but also elsewhere. *Queer*—precisely by marking out the space and time of *différance*—can thus show how the two, gay and straight, are inter-implicated and how they differ from themselves from within. . . . Meanwhile, *queer* can also be a grammatical perversion, a misplaced pronoun, the wrong proper name; it is what is strange, odd, funny, not quite right, improper. Queer is what is and is not there, what disaggregates the coherence of the norm from the very beginning and is ignored in the force to make sense out of the unintelligibilities of grammar and syntax. . . .
It is in this sense that queer theory seems French, that French-influenced poststructuralist theory is already queer in the U.S. context. . . . The “linguistic turn” in French theory . . . not only facilitates the rise of queer theory as a literary cultural practice in the United States, but also lends an “always already” quality to the activity of queering. French theory has, in other words, made possible the demonstration of how tropological dimensions of language subvert the very heteronormativity of Western logocentrism and thus, for example, how desire and identification may be unfixed from their sexually differentiated and opposed poles. Indeed, queer may be said to emerge spectrally in deconstructive critique. (QEM 18-19)

Conversely, of course, it might be said that deconstruction emerges spectrally in queer critique. Or, as Freccero’s commentary would seem to allow, both deconstruction and queering—deconstruction as queering, differing/deferring as queerance—emerge spectrally in and as literary critique, the radical critique of “normal” human reality that literature, arguably, always already enacts. Freccero insinuates as much when she suggests that “if one were being playfully adjectival . . . one might call English departments departments of queer studies” (QEM 18).  

18. And why wouldn’t one want to be playfully adjectival? Well, one might take a cautionary note from Judith Halberstam’s critique of Marjorie Garber’s excessive punning in Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety. Starting from Garber’s pun on the term “waterloo” in describing “the drama of bathroom surveillance,” Halberstam writes: “Although the pun is clever and even amusing, it is also troubling to see how often Garber turns to punning in her analyses. The constant use of puns throughout the book has the overall effect of making gender crossing sound like a game or at least trivializes the often life-or-death processes involved in cross-identification. This is not to say gender can never be a ‘laughing matter’ and must always be treated seriously but only to question the use of the pun here as a theoretical method.” See Judith Halberstam, Female Masculinity (Durham: Duke UP, 1998), 281. Here I’m tempted to rephrase the old Emma Goldman saw—if I can’t dance at your revolution I don’t want to come—to read: if I can’t drop a load of puns in your revolutionary bathroom, I don’t want to use it. Of course, I doubt very much Judith Halberstam cares where I stall myself.
renomination of the English department—other than the fact that it generously queers every member of said department simply by virtue of each member’s being studious, a close reader (while we all know that some of our most studious colleagues don’t read all that closely)—the funny thing is that it resembles (without being identical to) a certain half-serious comment I once tossed off in a text called “Moments of Productive Bafflement, or, Defamiliarizing Graduate Studies in English.” In that text (the first part of its title is owed to Gayatri Spivak), I somehow manage never to mention the word “queer” (and, even rarer for me, omit the word “fuck” altogether), but I do “playfully” suggest that “If I [as a Director of Graduate Studies in English] had my way, if I could institutionalize my slightest whims [if I were, perhaps, a king or a tyrant], I would . . . call the studies which I am supposed to direct ‘Graduate Studies in Defamiliarization’” (MPB 25).

Now, in noting this silly resemblance, am I suggesting that queering (English departments) and defamiliarizing (Graduate Studies in English) are “the same” or at least related activities, and so (given that literary formalism posits defamiliarization as defining the very “literariness” of literature itself) further attempting to lubricate the insertion of queerance into “the text” and textuality into “the queer”? “There is no simple answer to such a question” (DSP 153). I will say, however, that comparing Freccero’s adjectival play to my own institutional whimsy at least allows me to get the word “defamiliarization” on the table, and so keep the question of the queerness of literature and the literariness of the queer alive. But of course it isn’t as if “defamiliarization” wasn’t already on the table, at least in the sense that the word has a history of showing up in discussions of both deconstruction and “queering” (particularly when the verb indicates not “turning into a homosexual” but rather otherwise “making strange”). Moreover, since “defamiliarization” does in fact hold a formalist (albeit Russian) pedigree, the word tends to factor into charges of “apolitical formalism” routinely leveled against both deconstruction and queer theory.

My concern here is not to insist that defamiliarizing, deconstructing, queering, writing, and making art (not to mention “having sex”) are all “the same” activity, but to allow that all can be said to perform mutually supportive work in the ongoing “labor of ambiguating categories of identity” (Berlant and Warner SIP, 345).
To fully demonstrate that allowance, that performance, that hard (but anti-coagulating) collective labor, would require more temporalizing/spatializing (i.e., writing) than I can allow myself here. Were I to attempt such a demonstration, however, I might begin by revisiting the old question of why Derrida insists that “différance is neither a word nor a concept” (DSP 130). I might suggest that while today, for us, it is no longer quite accurate to say that différance is not a word (for we can locate it as such in multiple dictionaries, not excluding, say, Julian Woolfrey’s Critical Keywords in Literary and Cultural Theory), the claim that différance is not a concept still obtains, and for all the reasons Derrida gives (although, for the reasons he gives and in the sense that he means, even the claim that différance is not a word might still prove persuasive). And, were I actually demonstrating, I might point to the moment in “Différance” where Derrida explains himself in this regard, where he quotes Saussure to the effect that “in language there are only differences without positive terms,” and then adds:

The first consequence to be drawn from this is that the signified concept is never present to itself in an adequate presence that would refer only to itself. Every concept is necessarily and essentially inscribed in a chain or a system, within which it refers to another and to other concepts, by the systematic play of differences. Such a play, then—différance—is no longer simply a concept but the possibility of conceptuality, of the conceptual system and process in general. For the same reason, différance, which is not a concept, is not a mere word; that is, it is not what we represent to ourselves as the calm and present self-referential unity of a concept and sound. (DSP 140)

I would then reach further back into the history of the so-called “linguistic turn,” the history of the questioning of conceptuality’s possibility, to Nietzsche—but not without sneaking in Donald Hall’s description of Nietzsche as a “proto-postmodernist” and “proto-queer” philosopher, “who took up most intensely the late nineteenth century challenge to received notions of normality” (QT 56, 58)—and I would no doubt trot out the famous passage in “On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense” (which is also an extra-normal sense) in which Nietzsche happily deconstructs “the
formation of concepts.” I would then be compelled to visit, if only in a footnote, the aptly defamiliarizing, epistemologically devastating moment in Book Five of *The Gay Science*—the section called “The origin of our concept of ‘knowledge.’” —but not without alluding to Nietzsche’s influence on Victor Shklovsky (who of course developed the notion of defamiliarization) and to the manner in which Shklovsky’s essay, “Art as Technique,” is explicitly formulated as an anti-epistemological intervention. I would then probably make the gesture of linking Shklovsky’s emphasis on “the principle of phonetic ‘roughening’ of poetic language,” i.e., his claim that “the

19. Nietzsche reveals how concepts are formed through the forgetting or erasure or repression of differences, if not of *différance*: “Every word . . . becomes a concept precisely insofar as it is not supposed to serve as a reminder of the unique and entirely individual original experience to which it owes its origin; but rather, a word becomes a concept insofar as it simultaneously has to fit countless more or less similar cases—which means, purely and simply, cases which are never equal and altogether unequal. Every concept arises from the equation of unequal things. Just as it is certain that one leaf is never totally the same as another, so it is certain that the concept ‘leaf’ is formed by an arbitrarily discarding these individual differences by forgetting.” See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Nietzsche Reader*, ed. Keith Ansell Pearson and Duncan Large (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 117.

20. Here is the defamiliarizing passage from *The Gay Science*: “What is it that the common people take for knowledge? What do they want when they want ‘knowledge’? Nothing more than this: Something strange is to be reduced to something familiar. And we philosophers—have we really meant more than this when we have spoken of knowledge? What is familiar means what we are used to so that we no longer marvel at it, our everyday, some rule in which we are stuck, anything at all in which we feel at home. Look, isn’t our need for knowledge precisely this need for the familiar, the will to uncover under everything strange, unusual, and questionable something that no longer disturbs us? Is it not the *instinct of fear* that bids us to know? And is the jubilation of those who attain knowledge not the jubilation over the restoration of a sense of security?” See See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Nietzsche Reader*, 368.

language of poetry is . . . a difficult, roughened, impeded language” (AT 783; my emphasis) to Donald Hall’s reference to queer theory’s persistent “questionings and abrasions of normality” (QT 54; my emphasis). Then, having roughly traded defamiliarization for queering by virtue of nothing better than a linguistic similarity, I would more than likely bring the problem of conceptuality back into the mix by quoting Julian Woolfrey’s *Critical Keywords* to the effect that:

The mobility of “queer,” its resistance to definition and its affirmation of that which in identity is irreducible to any heteronormative domestication calls into question the efficacy of any categorization . . . . Moreover, such affirmation implies a critique of the limits of normative concepts, if not the act of conceptualization itself.  

And of course the mobile implications of this quotation would allow me to circle metaleptically back to Derrida and to suggest that there was, after all, something always already queer about his insistence that *différance* is neither a word nor a concept.

It’s really too bad that I can’t perform this demonstration, because it might very well have made the case that “Queer, in its deconstructive sense, designates a kind of Derridean *différance*” (Freccero QEM, 18), that defamiliarizing, deconstructing, queering, and making artful sentences can all be said to perform mutually supportive, identity-disturbing work, or play, the sort of work-play or word-play that troubles any calm and present self-referential unity.

What, then, about the aforementioned/unmentioned “having sex”? At the end of the day, shouldn’t “queer” pertain in some specific way to the practice of sex or the question of sexuality? Derrida specifies with sufficient vagueness that “there is always something sexual at stake in the resistance to deconstruction” (WIB 148). Although I would doubt the inverted form of this proposition, i.e., doubt that there is anything deconstructive in the resistance to having sex, I would say that there is everything deconstructive in the

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resistance to having a sex, having to have or be one sex, having to have one identifiable “sexual orientation,” having the “truth” of one’s sexual or erotic or corporeal being-in-the-world reduced to one specific identity category or another. And since categorization is the essential act of heteronormative conceptualization qua domestication qua naturalization, to the extent that deconstruction resists it, to that extent deconstruction plays its part in queerness as “resistance to regimes of the normal” (Warner FQP, xxvi), “which makes it obviously threatening and infallibly dreaded by everything within us that desires a kingdom,” and which, finally (but without finale), makes it obvious that there can be no kingdom of the queer, if only because there can be no queer without catachresis.

Or, as Derrida (still) (queerly) writes: “Let us begin again.”