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An Indefinite Consumer(s)

Introduction

The body of writing which forms the research literature in a subject area typically presents a world of unity as opposed to a world in flux—a world that is constantly changing with starts and stops, abrupt breaks, turns and reversals—a world that is one of multiple possibilities (differences, multiplicities). Consistent with this tradition, the literary style of the extant consumer research literature generally presents a narration of continuity, having a beginning and an end and a consistent body of text in between that identifies, categorises and represents consumers by offering an understanding of their view(s) (an act of totality). For example, consumer studies of identity and representation inherently assume continuity. Following this assumption, consumers' histories can be archeologically unearthed from beneath the sediments of time: a consistent self-concept/self-image can be identified; a set of coherent (cohesive, indivisible, intelligible) dispositions determine consumers' behaviours; and an orderly present (complete, intact, understandable, explainable) provides the stage upon which consumer behaviour takes place, where individuals can be gathered up and thought of in collective terms (e.g., categories, types, classes, strati, species). Implicit within this tradition is a tendency, a

current, in the direction of the familiar, to reduce "the uncommon to the common" which is fundamental to knowledge as a "condition of life."[1]

However, as Derrida poignantly illustrates through the concept of "differance," "there is a pure difference or trace" which allows for the possibility of a system (linguistically or otherwise) and, at the same time, "…renders impossible the successful completion of the system. Differance forever exceeds [the] system, or is the condition for [the] system that cannot be identified with [it]."[2] This suggests that knowledge as a system can never be complete. Neither what we know about consumers nor their behaviour can ever be "made complete" like some child's picture puzzle, where the picture is made complete only when all scrambled pieces from the puzzle box have been properly fitted and positioned relative to one another on the table-top. New knowledge is not simply that which is absent in a current representation. Pure difference, or the condition that allows for difference to occur perpetually, means that that which can be known about consumers and their behaviour will more closely resemble the ever-changing picture seen through the child's kaleidoscope, than the single view shown by completion of the child's picture puzzle.

Similarly, as noted by Deleuze, "difference is always more complex than mere opposition."[3] Despite restrictions imposed by the binary nature of language, verbally recognising the incomplete, fragmentary nature of consumers allows at least for a momentary glimpse into difference. But fundamentally, an indefinite view of consumers requires an understanding of difference. Through both its literary style and its content, this research offers a view of an indefinite consumer(s) predicated upon difference.

The literary style used is based upon Deleuze's principle of *difference:*

> fragments or parts whose sole relationship is sheer difference that are related to each other only in that each of them is different. "Dissociation" here ceases to be a negative trait [characteristic] of the schizophrenic and becomes a positive and productive principle of both Life and Literature.[4]

Our fragmentary literary style is intended to be consistent with a Nietzschean view of knowledge and truth, for "Nietzsche replaced the ideal of knowledge, the discovery of the truth, with *interpretation* and *evaluation*. Interpretation establishes the 'meaning' of a phenomenon, which is always fragmentary and incomplete …"[5]

Viewing consumers as being indefinite, being incomplete, allows them to be seen as involved in a fragmentary, inconstant, nomadic existence of difference. For an indefinite consumer(s), the world is constantly in flux (changing, pulsing, breaking apart and coming together again anew)—a world of difference. Such a world of interrelated, incomplete multiplicities strips away traditional notions of consumers with: a retrievable past (where forgetting is a part of the interplay of things to come); ownership and consistency of one's self-concept/self-image; the coherency of dispositions for developing multiplicities; a whole present that is knowable (understandable, demarcate-able); the spatial linearity of time; the ground (solidness, unchanging) for knowledge and truth; and the determinant view of consumers.

Within this fragmentary writing style, twenty-three questions and their responses are offered. Although implicitly the following presentation might suggest that the chosen questions, their number, and their ordering are offered as some kind of definitive approach to difference, they are not. Any other sequence and/or questioning (and responding) could have been offered as well, resulting in different vantage points of difference. Each questioner and each responder brings different interpretations and makes different evaluations. This is the *way* of difference.

1. *What do we know of difference?*

All things are of difference, through and through.

2. ***What is the essence of what consumers consume?***

Difference. Consumers not only consume difference and therefore seek it, but also are co-creators of difference. Their very existence is predicated upon difference. At the same time, the consumption of difference is transformative, creating something new in the process. In this sense, consumption is positive, simultaneously consuming and creating difference.

3. ***What is the nature of marketing?***

Marketing is about creating differences for consumption in a marketplace of difference. It is about the becoming-other (providing something meaningfully different than that offered by others) while at the same time resisting it (attempting to maintain a preferred meaningful position), both of which are of difference.

As marketers move toward a sensing and responding perspective,[6] they move toward the becoming (e.g., the becoming of consumers, emerging markets, learning organisations, developing countries) aspect of difference—the dynamic nature of difference.

4. ***Is what we know of difference only through that which is expressed (realised, actualised) as differences? Or, is there more to difference?***

If all things are of difference, as expressed differences, then they themselves are subject to difference, meaning that they came about through difference and will continue (persist, exist, repeat) as such, as difference continues.[7] The *more than* of difference is suggested by Derrida's

"differance" illuminating that by which difference continues, or the means by which expressed differences are continuously being realised.

5. ***What is knowable other than expressed differences?***

There must be a structure (or structuring) that is affecting the proliferation of differences. And this structure (or structuring) is other than the differences it is producing. While the structure (structuring) may not be directly knowable—since the proliferation of differences is at the same time a product of this structure (or structuring)—the characteristics of the proliferation of differences should imply something about the structure (or structuring) producing them. In other words, "one can come to an understanding of the soil by studying what grows in this soil."[8] Differences possess reflective characteristics (markings, traits, tendencies) of the structure (or structuring) producing them. One such characteristic, condition or manifestation of this proliferation of differences is the repetition of things (differences) or the appearance of repetition.

6. ***Is repetition the same as difference?***

Within differences there is no repetition *per se* because time and space are themselves of differences. Heraclitus captures this notion by explaining, "You can't step into the same river twice:"[9]

> A flowing river constantly changes its contents: the waters in front of us move on [while] others replenish them. Heraclitus says the cosmos functions in the same way: new things come into being, others die, and everything is transformed. We have only to look at what is happening all around us to see that this is true. New laws are enacted and others are no longer enforced. New social and political movements gain momentum while others become spent and irrelevant. New styles of behavior and expression become fashionable and others are relegated to the dust-heap.[10]

Difference[11] is that which repeats. Difference proliferates differences.

Nietzsche[12] offers a similar interpretation with his understanding of the "eternal recurrence" (the eternal return). Here Difference and repetition are integral: i.e., repetition is a condition[13] of Difference. An understanding of consumer behaviour requires an understanding of that which drives consumer behaviour—i.e., the repetition of Difference. In other words, behaviours are of changing compositions of differences (consumers) occurring through the repetition of Difference.

To emphasise this point, what appears as repetition within the world of differences is not repetition in terms of duplication (a reproduction or a replaying) of some prior experience, event, or thing. There is no "*same*" as in an identity and representation perspective. Each experience, each difference, is in itself different among the proliferation of differences, each and every time. To think of repetition otherwise would be to deny the essence of difference. However, this aspect of difference presents an opportunity to participate in Difference by re-examining those consumer concepts which do not take into account the repetition of Difference—its creating and re-creating nature.

For example, advertising frequently uses repetition as a strategy to achieve particular communication objectives. But perhaps a deeper understanding of what is happening is possible. Difference is a part of what results from exposures to the advertisement, leading to potential changes (differences, becomings) in consumers viewing them (e.g., interest, boredom, tedium, nostalgia) and different possible interpretations of what is communicated. Each exposure is different, creating differences along the way as consumers themselves are becoming different. Another example might involve the meaning of the degree of satisfaction expressed by consumers about some consumption experience. How long does an expressed degree of

consumer satisfaction last? The dissipation of satisfaction certainly involves changes in the composition of differences (consumers), again, stemming from the repetition of Difference. While the conditions for the occurrence of differences may certainly repeat, in consequence, different differences can, and are likely to, occur. In addition, recognition of repetition as characteristic of Difference implicitly suggests that others may contribute to the nature of the proliferation of differences.

7. *Is there a beginning and an end to Difference?*

No. Beginnings and ends are of differences, and differences are other than that which produces them. For Difference, there is no beginning or end. The proliferation of differences is not progressive in the sense that they are heading in some pre-determined direction. Any such direction would also be of difference (e.g., forward, backwards).

This is why those who seek a ground, some fundamental basis for knowledge and truth, within the world of differences will always be frustrated. Within the world of differences, nothing is finite. There is no one right answer to be found, putting an end to the need to search further. Beginnings and ends are always subject to the ways of Difference—creating new beginnings and new ends, new foundations and new paths of knowledge. Within Derrida's concept of "differance," whether in the case of knowledge or otherwise, there is no allowance for closure. Actually, the concepts of the "*same*" and closure originate out of an identity- and representation-view of the world, with its clean lines of demarcation and their replication across time.

In contrast, a world of differences remains forever open to the meandering way of Difference. From this perspective, to say that philosophy, science, art, or marketing can be best

understood through the search for some solid, unchanging foundation of unchanging facts is ill conceived. Instead of some pure degree of knowledge about any of these areas, what we really have is simply a "sense" [14] based upon some form of differences which are subject to change. Our literatures are simply collections of shifting and revolving perspectives, "senses," across time—across oceans of differences subject to changing conditions. Any overarching grand narrative, any single metaphysical all-encompassing narrative, is impossible. Even in this presentation all that we can reach for is a "sense," an elusive one at best, of what seems to be occurring in a world of consumer differences, never to be complete. Being of difference through and through, the indefinite consumer is always incomplete, fragmentary, and always in the moment of becoming through the repetition of Difference, where becoming is not about beginnings or ends.

8. ***If Difference is not characterised by a beginning or an end, what does this imply?***

One interpretation involves a paradoxical view of Difference where something could be open and closed at the same time, responsible and irresponsible (*wild*) at the same time, to not be of a beginning or an end, but to be producing what appear as beginnings and ends. This also implies that the something (Difference) is not a thing, but instead is producing things (differences). This paradoxical condition or event manifests itself time after time—being central to our existence.

We see this discussed in Anaximander's paradox, *The Riddle of Origin*, the oldest recorded paradox. Here Anaximander asks, "Does each thing have an origin? He answers no: there is an infinite being that sustains everything else but which is not grounded in any other thing…. There are some things that now exist but have not always existed. Anything which has a

beginning owes its existence to another thing that existed before it. Therefore, there is something that lacks an origin"[15]—which may not be a thing at all.

Additional references to paradox include: Einstein's Theory of Relativity, based on a *Relativity Paradox* in which time is relative; the *Progress Paradox*, whereby as life improves people feel worse;[16] and the *Paradox of Choice*, where more is less.[17] Thompson describes as a paradox the role marketplace mythologies play in affecting competition and market structures, for example:

> the world constitutes a complex system where physical and nonmaterial (e.g., spiritual) forces exert reciprocal influences on each other…. The conditions that generate and sustain this paradox are not solely due to market-driven appeals to the cultural creative core. To better understand this… attention needs to be given to the mythic constructions of nature, technology, and science that circulate in this marketplace and their relationships to key institutional and competitive forces.[18]

This paradoxical condition of the marketplace is further suggested by Thompson in describing Kozinets's[19] Burning Man Festival paradox in conjunction with Holt's[20] pessimistic paradox. Even subjectivity has been described as being paradoxical.[21] Each of these paradoxes alludes to the need for a more dynamic, complex understanding of consumers, markets, and the world we know, considering a more enveloping set of conditions involving Difference.

9. ***If the paradox is characteristic of our existence, what does it suggest about Difference?***

A paradoxical view is non-deterministic in a linear sense, suggesting that a kind of tension is behind the proliferation of differences, allowing for the possibility of multiple outcomes (i.e., and/or/both/neither). Furthermore, it suggests a kind of "reciprocal quasi-causal relation between the condition and the conditioned,"[22] leading to "the concept of a perplication or folding[23] of all things in all others… [Whereby] Deleuze does not accept that things can be distinct, only more

or less clear and more or less obscure."[24] These relational foldings explain the paradoxical conditions or events of being both open and closed; the possibility of the one and the many; of being responsible and irresponsible (*wild*) simultaneously, while alluding to the interconnectedness, the multiplicity of all things. They also can be thought of as being centres of indeterminacies within a mobile field.[25]

Placed in this context an indefinite consumer can be thought of as being one and of the many at the same time, paradoxically—in other words, an indefinite consumer(s). For example, to say that subjectivity is paradoxical is to think in terms of multiplicities rather than identities:

> To think of ourselves and one another as "multiple," or as "composed of multiplicities," is not to imagine that we have many distinct identities or selves (personalities, brain modules, etc.)… it is to get away from understanding ourselves in terms of identity and identification or as distinct persons or selves, however many or "dissociated." It means that we never wholly divide up into any "pure" species, races, even genders—that our lives in fact can never be reduced to the "individuation" of any such pure class or type. Before we are fit into distinct species or strata or classes, we thus compose a kind of indefinite mass or "multitude"….[26]

It is the self (subjectivity) that arises from this indefinite mass, multiplicity, in the form of a fluctuating intensity, a territorialising and deterritorialising, by way of a folding, unfolding, and refolding within the indefinite mass, within the multitude.[27] The self is of the multitude in its actualisation engendered by the multiplicities of its momentary composition. In this way, we are able to explain how the self is one and many, simultaneously—the self (subjectivity) is paradoxical—a paradoxical event. It also implies that the ownership, so to speak, of the self (subjectivity) is not of the individual *per se* but of the multitude, while at the same time removing the dualistic divide between interior and exterior (i.e., an ongoing folding of an indefinite mass or multitude—analogous to an origami[28]).[29]

This suggests that any of the traditional segmentation schemes using typologies and/or taxonomies (e.g., LOV, VALS 1, VALS 2) are fundamentally problematic in that they represent consumers as individuals—complete, separate entities—when they are a product or composition of the "multiple." Implicitly if not explicitly, the methodology involves an act of totality inherently static in representation, offering a sense of closure. The very premise of the segmentation logic is grounded in this understanding: to group is to submit to the directional tendency to move from "the uncommon to the common," or from the unfamiliar to the familiar, to knowledge as some finite body of fact, and ultimately, to closure (even if momentarily). As discussed in our introduction above, this is not to be thought of as a negative, or as a criticism, but simply recognised as a "condition of life." The paradoxical event of Difference contains within it a tension between resisting and advancing simultaneously.

10. ***Is a structure a thing?***

Yes and no. A structure is a thing. A thing is something already expressed (realised). It is of differences. Difference on the other hand is other than differences, and hence, it is not of a thing. Difference is structur*ing*[30] with an emphasis on the "*ing*," the active form of the word. The structur*ing* of Difference is a coming together. Once together, a structure has materialised, differences are produced, expressed and realised. But at the same time there is an ongoing tension which repeats the structur*ing*, leading to potentially new structures and differences. Hence, the paradoxical answer of yes and no.

Difference and repetition are one, they are integral to one another, by way of the repetition of the structur*ing*, the continuously (*ad infinitum*) coming together. Difference, the coming together, is that which "eternally returns;"[31] or, more appropriately, the eternal

recurrence (the return, the repetition) is a condition of Difference, reciprocally. The indefinite consumer(s) is a product of the continuous coming together of the paradoxical event of Difference and, therefore, is (are) never complete. These paradoxical events occur throughout the mass of the multitude—individually and collectively, reciprocally.

11. ***Once a structure comes into existence, is it self-sufficient?***

No. Turning to Deleuze's notions of multiplicity and rhizome, we can say that these immanent/transcendent structures are a multiplicity continuously making connections and dis-connections[32]—forming a plane of immanence. These structures can be thought of as possessing a root-like structur*ing* similar to that with synapses and dendrites in the brain, suggesting a type of commonality among all things that are constantly subjected to being reformed/transformed. There is nothing rigid (inflexible, unyielding, having the outer shape maintained by a fixed framework) about them; they are, contrary to traditional presentations, in fact, quite fragile (brittle, frail, transient). This view is also consistent with Derrida's understanding of "differance" involving the incompleteness of systems.

Epistemologically, knowledge as a body of concepts, theories and understandings can be thought of in a similar fashion. Concepts and theories are limited ways temporarily to tie multiplicities together, to provide a kind of momentary vortex. At the same time they can and will eventually break apart and be discarded, replaced by the next generation of concepts and theories to come. Each of these movements recasts the quest of the modernist and postmodernist in a particular light. In the modernist's quest for truth, each footing would be a temporary (momentary), incomplete truth. Similarly, for structuralists, their structures (e.g., linguistic structures) would also be viewed as temporary, incomplete understandings. The post-modernist's

questioning of the foundations of truth, and inclination toward the multiplicity of such foundations, would ultimately lead toward union with the post-structuralist's[33] position of emphasising the emergence of structures, leading to new, temporary and limited understandings (with relational multiple voices). This in turn would reinforce the post-modernist's[34] supposition of a groundless foundation for ultimate truths and universal laws, supporting a hegemony of the times in a world of changing multiplicities through Difference.

12. ***How are Difference and differences related to becoming and being?***

Becoming is of Difference from the standpoint of Being (beings, differences). Becoming involves the process of the coming together, of Difference resulting in realised differences (the new, the different). At the same time, for Being to be Being (what we know as realised differences), there must be a resistance to becoming,[35] a resistance to Difference. Our understanding of Being comes through an understanding of becoming, i.e., the coming together of Difference. Being would not be Being as we know it without the becoming of Being, and *vice versa*. They go hand in hand; they are inseparable, enveloping one another—a kind of ongoing enfolding of one another.

Bell suggests a double-bind in this regard: that there exists simultaneously a tension between becoming and resistance to becoming, and that all living beings experience "self-replicating resistance to becoming." [36] Accordingly, "A living being will subsequently become involved *both* in maintaining and producing its own identity, i.e., resisting becoming, *while* it will become other. It does this by *both* reproducing and maintaining its identity, *and* by producing itself through becoming other." [37]

Bell offers aging as one example of a living being's becoming-other which is understood through a Deleuzian comprehension of multiplicity:

> Aging is the becoming-other of the self that replicates itself as self, as distinct from replicating itself by way of an-other, the offspring. In the replication of self, a living being, as an *identifiable* being, is always already engaged in an indeterminate (although determinable) number of relationships with other beings—i.e., infinite multiplicity. This infinite multiplicity that allows for the possibility of this identifiable living being also assures the becoming-other of this being (becoming as condition of possibility/ impossibility).[38]

This infinite multiplicity, this becoming as condition of the possible, is an aspect of Difference. But for Being and becoming, as Bell suggests, there exists an indeterminate determinable relationship between the two. The condition is paradoxical, indeterminate and determinate, open and closed, becoming and Being at the same time. In this way it is similar to Bergson's[39] understanding of the virtual and actual. Both co-exist simultaneously, reciprocally.

A consumer is about both becoming and Being—an indefinite consumer(s) is (are) never complete (fully constituted, intact, whole, accomplished) as an individual or in relationships.[40] The indefinite consumer(s) can be thought of as "a product and part of the discourses and practices in which s/he is embedded. Being embedded should not be confused with being centered"[41] as in an individualistic sense. Instead, in the postmodernist view, this should be seen as being decentred. A decentring subject is always cast within the self-replicating double-bind between becoming and resistance to becoming.

Extrapolating to the cultural level, Arnould, Price, and Zinkhan make a similar point:

> To complicate matters, culture cannot be reduced to a list of norms, values, consumer goods, consumption patterns, or other cultural elements, although all of these are important in a culture. Our list of facts about Danes did not enable us to correctly predict the acceptability of baby joggers, for example. This is what leads us to state that consumption patterns and even cultural fields are **indeterminant**, or not fully predictable. Culture is indeterminant because the actions of firms and consumers, including their

> marketing and consumption behaviors, produce changes usually small, but sometime large in culture itself.[42]

The indeterminacy of consumer culture stems from its constituent multiplicities, originating from the paradoxical events of Difference being simultaneously both indeterminate and determinate.

13. ***Can Difference be thought of without reducing it to identity or representation?***

Yes and no. In the past Difference has really been thought of in terms of differences—identity and representation (e.g., understandings, meanings, categories, genres, species, things, practices), thus leading to the problem of infinite regression. There exists a long progression of differences-thinking, including the traditional dualist thinking of ephemeral/immutable (Parmenides, Heraclites, Plato), real substance/mental substance (Descartes), subject/object, mind/body (Kant), others/I (Sartre, Levinas), and beings(being-ness)/Being(the to be) (Heidegger). The problems associated with such approaches can be attributed to each being stuck in the what-ness frame-of-reference—as simply being things-among-things, or another way of thinking about things (differences).

Similarly, the study of consumer behaviour has involved attempts to understand the meaning(s) and/or changes pertaining to the differences being generated by those under study together with conjecture (another form of difference) offered by the researcher(s), thus creating a kind of difference on top of difference, a multiplicity overlaid upon a multiplicity, with gaps (breaks, interruptions, discontinuities, incompletenesses) in between (differences).[43]

Studies of acquisition patterns, advertising effects, affect states (attitudes, emotions, moods), brand loyalties, levels of consumer expertise, consumers' socialisation, context effects, decision-making (individuals, groups), forms of hedonic consumption, types of information processing, innovations and rates of diffusion, intentions, levels of involvement, types of

consumer learning, memories, motivations, changes in consumer physiology, (sub)cultures, and different research approaches and methodologies, etc., are all examples of attempts to understand consumer differences largely from an identity and representation perspective—to reduce the "uncommon to the common."

But the ongoing coming together of Difference presents instead an infinite (indeterminate) number of ways of coming together, of producing differences of identity and representation (the determinate). Using Bell's[44] language, Difference being a paradoxical event acts in an indeterminate determinable way. But the studies mentioned above have not considered this indeterminate reciprocal relationship between Being and becoming. Their exclusive focus on the Being (or beings) side of the relationship has caused them to become bogged down in the what-ness frame of reference, a static relationship within identity and representation. To step outside the what-ness frame of reference allows consideration of the possibility that that which we seek may not possess thing-like qualities, such as matter and form. Taking such a step presents an opportunity to see consumers in a different light, opening up new avenues for difference exploration.

14. ***Can a structure be formless? Or, how can a structure not have a form?***

Questions of this type again situate us in the what-ness frame of reference by focusing us on the structure, the thing. Instead it might be asked HOW a structur*ing* might not be of form. As discussed in Fragment 10 above, the answer may lie in the "*ing*," the active form of the word representing the concept, which instead of a concluded act, implies a constantly coming together. In the coming together, the structur*ing* occurs. In this sense, structur*ing* is not completed, not a thing having form. Structur*ing* reflects the motion, the state of becom*ing*—the constantly coming

together, a context in which, paradoxically, the "Returning is the being of that which becomes."[45] The becom*ing* condition of Difference is of the possible and impossible, of the virtual multiplicity.[46] As addressed in Fragment 12 above, this paradoxical event is producing consumers who, through the becom*ing* aspect of Difference, are indefinite, incomplete, eluding those who try to predict their behaviour—the new consumer differences to come.

15. ***Is change the outcome of becoming or is it the other way around? And, does it matter?***

The predictability of changes in consumer behaviour has been and continues to be of interest, as well as very problematic, for researchers and marketers. Perhaps an improved understanding of change in general would improve our ability to understand particular types of change, e.g. in consumer behaviour. As discussed in Fragment 13 above, inherent in the more traditional substance-view (what-ness, things) of living beings, is the problem of explaining the inevitability of change that is the becom*ing* of reality—consumer or otherwise. Change is a consequence of being in-process, something completely different from the resulting change itself.[47] The laws of the universe change because of becom*ing* (the becom*ing* of Difference), thus frustrating the search for universals in science and other disciplines. In like fashion, the infinite number of ways of com*ing* together affects the nature of the indefinite consumer(s).

According to Zubiri,

> Becoming is structures of activity which in and of themselves are capable of change. These structures of activity situate things—in and of themselves, respectively, referentially—creating differences… [and] becoming does not take place because of change, but change because of becoming.[48]

A living being is a part of the structur*ing* and as such, is also structur*ing*. Hence, a living being can be thought of as a structur*ing,* as opposed to as a substance (matter and form). An indefinite

consumer(s) is a structur*ing* of coming-together of the multitude, with more multiples always forthcoming. In other words, each consumer is of the multitude. As a part of the paradoxical event of Difference, each is a com*ing*-together him/herself (a structur*ing*), and at the same time is affecting the com*ings*-together of all others throughout, reciprocally.

16. ***How does this structuring relate to chance?***

The potential, the virtuality, of an indefinite consumer(s) is realised through the chance condition of Difference, in direct opposition to the premise for a determinant view of consumers. Chance is related to change (as discussed in Fragment 15) through the repetition of Difference, compounding the problems inherent in attempts to predict consumer behaviour. This further reveals the importance of the ever-enveloping set of conditions of Difference as integral to an indefinite consumer(s).

Chance is another condition of Difference. It results from the continuous com*ing* together (*ad infinitum*) of Difference, from the territorialising and deterritorialising of the foldings, unfoldings, and refoldings within the multitude, all of which are indeterminate-determinant, possessing a vagueness (incomplete, indistinct, uncertain). It is through the repetition and vagueness (indefiniteness) of Difference that chance is actualised:

> Our lives must be indefinite or vague enough to include such potential for other worlds or predications or individualizations, and so enter into complications with others that are never fully "explicated" [i.e., an indefinite consumer(s)]. The vagueness of "a life" is thus not a deficiency to be corrected, but rather a resource or reserve of other possibilities, our connections.[49]

Returning to Fragment 9, this is why Deleuze can say things are always simply "more or less obscure," not distinct, not definite, not complete. And, it is through the vagueness of chance that

the "decentring subject" phenomenon discussed in Fragment 12 is possible—all which occur through the paradoxical events of Difference.

17. ***What is it of the structuring that allows for the paradoxical condition of being open and closed at the same time?***

Heidegger defined being itself as a question:

> the question of being is the being of the question…. A genuine question is one whose answer we do not know; it is a question to which there is no response…. This lack of an answer is why a question, a question's openness, can account for the universality of Being…. Yet, a genuine question as well demands a response; a question must be a quest for an answer. This demand for an answer is why a question, the question's closure, can account for the determination of being. It is this conception of a question, as at once open and closed, at once irresponsible and responsible.[50]

Rilke's[51] advice to a young poet to honour, respect, appreciate, and live the questions, highlights this existential condition of questioning:

> *Where to begin?*
> I want to beseech you… to be patient
> toward all that is unsolved in your heart
> and try to love *the questions themselves*
> like locked rooms and like books
> that are written in a very foreign tongue.
> Do not now seek the answers,
> which cannot be given you
> because you would not be able to live them.
> And the point is, to live everything.
> *Live* the questions now.
> Perhaps you will then gradually,
> without noticing it,
> evolve some distant day
> into the answer.

Rilke's words of advice and consolation to the young poet also illuminate and suggest a kind of questioning existence, offering a caveat to be patient, and to appreciate the questions of today. Our questions are that through which we live. In accordance with this perspective, history can be

described as a chronicling of question*ing* eras, or the responses to such, while the movement from one era to the next involves the relinquishing of one form of question*ing* in order to take on another. Implicitly the insatiable characteristic inducing such movement is the repetition condition of Difference—"the eternal recurrence."

This question*ing* drive operates behind-the-scenes, but manifests itself in various forms. Differences are its main expression, and are prevalent throughout the extant literature. Any body of knowledge, any discipline, is predicated upon the driving questions which have served to generate them as outcomes, differences. In this way, question*ing* possesses a navigational quality, directing what is to be experienced, seen, and understood – the plane of immanence. Both Rilke and Heidegger suggest that perhaps the structur*ing* we seek to understand might be characterised as a question, or more appropriately, as a question*ing*.

This suggests that the plane of immanence experienced by consumers originates out of their question*ing*, interrelated with the changing multiplicities comprising the marketplace. And the differences in these planes of immanence across time originate out of different question*ing* eras through the repetition of Difference. What does consumer question*ing* look like today? How does it differ from that in the past? And, how is consumer question*ing* changing? What role does the marketer play in affecting the changes in consumer question*ing* and *vice versa*?

18. ***Could the structuring we are attempting to understand be in the form of a question which is formless in the sense that it is both open and closed at the same time, irresponsible (wild) and responsible, folding back upon itself?***

Yes and no. Each closure is a determination of being, though never satisfying the grand overarching question of Being through becom*ing*, which is open to infinity—an infinite

openness, a virtual multiplicity, an indeterminate determination. Difference (*wild* Difference) is the question*ing*-structur*ing* of differences—it is the dynamism of the plane of immanence. Again, to avoid falling into the what-ness frame of reference, this is not to say that the structur*ing* is in the form of a question. It simply acts in a question*ing way*, i.e., a question*ing*-structur*ing*. This question*ing*-structur*ing* is at once open yet closed, it is of Being and becom*ing* all at the same time—it is the dynamism behind both. It is always reach*ing* and yet never satisfied.

19. ***How does this questioning-structuring accommodate (or enable) the conditions of Difference?***

The question*ing*-structur*ing* possesses the sense of the possible while providing for the actualisation of the real. It is what relates the actual and the virtual (i.e., the chance of the actual to the virtual), sense to its nonsense background, Being to becom*ing*, the chance of the actual, the possible to the impossible, and ultimately, to the multitude. It also provides for the movement of Difference, its repetition, in that inherent in this structur*ing* is a sense of the *more than* which the question*ing* at hand cannot adequately satisfy and hence, continues:

> I come to understand my situatedness through the questioning, there is a sense of *more than* beyond which the questioning cannot hold (an inadequacy). This sense of the *more than* situates us as finite beings in comparison…. [I]n our attempts to comprehend the *more than*, we continue in our questioning.[52]

And, through this movement, the repetition of Difference, chance is conceived by way of the possibilities within the virtual along with the impossible.

The background of the sense—nonsense—is not to be thought of in a chaos-like way, meaning that there is no sense. Instead it should be viewed as an infinity of senses: "nonsense…

far from meaning 'absence of sense,'… is in fact just the opposite, incessantly producing an infinity of senses in the form of simulacra…."[53] It is through the question*ing*-structur*ing* that we know of the virtual, the possible, a sense of infinity—the *more than*. And, at the same time, it is through the question*ing*-structur*ing* that we are situated in a world of differences which are inadequate to the task of providing any final com*ing* together.

20. ***How is the actual vs. the virtual, the finite vs. the infinite structured through this questioning-structuring?***

The sense for the *more than*, through the question*ing*-structur*ing*, provides for an understanding that such exists, while simultaneously situating us as being, related but different from the *more than*. It is what compels us to continue in our question*ing* way creating differences along the way. Questions of why we are here (the purpose of life), the questions of religions, etc., along with the insatiable quest (thirst) for the new, all testify to this motivating force. Even our sense of desire stems from this aspect of Difference. This is what allows marketers to capitalise on promises of desired outcomes—differences—through their advertising imagery (e.g., the ideal versus the actual, youthfulness versus aging) in promoting their products and services.

At the same time, there is another aspect of the question*ing*-structur*ing* that facilitates the movement while structur*ing* the actual from the virtual, the finite from the infinite. That is the release required within the question*ing*-structur*ing*. The paradoxical condition of the question*ing*-structur*ing* provides not only for the com*ing* together (the actual, the real, multiplicities, differences) but also for the splitt*ing* apart (the return to the virtual, the possible/impossible)—both of which co-exist simultaneously, paradoxically. The release of

Difference requires forgett*ing*. This forgett*ing* occurs at all levels (e.g., metaphysically, psychologically), suggesting again a kind of structur*ing* commonality among all things.

It is through forgett*ing*, the splitt*ing* apart of Difference, the release, that we experience forgiveness, Otherness (transcendence), time, and a relinquished past:[54]

> Forgetting allows a separation between our selves and our former selves, as well as between ourselves and others…. The forgetting (undifferentiating) in our ongoing differentiating creates a divide, separating our selves from our former selves, that can never be crossed…. [S]ince there is no common memory *per se* [except perhaps the eternal return of Difference], forgetting causes a separation between individuals…. Each individual represents a different position in the world, and these differences in position inherently lead to different questioning, forming unique perspectives [centres of indeterminacies]. It is forgetting which promotes subjectivity and transcendence.[55]

It is through the paradoxical event of Difference via its question*ing*-structur*ing* that forgett*ing* (undifferentiating) and differentiating occur simultaneously, that the uniqueness of the consumer is manifest.

As described in Fragment 9, subjectivity stems from a folding, unfolding, and refolding within the indefinite mass, within the multitude. For this unfold*ing* to occur, a release is necessary—forgett*ing* is required. At the same time, forgett*ing* is also creating differences through the divides and across time, our former selves, among others, etc. Differences are not only created through the com*ing* together but also through the splitt*ing* apart of Difference paradoxically, simultaneously—which is inherent (intrinsic) in the coming together of the question*ing*-structur*ing* of Difference.

21. ***How else does this splitting apart of Difference affect our understandings of things?***

"All that moves or changes is in time, but time itself neither changes nor moves. This does not mean that time is eternity. If so, we would be caught in the tautology of defining time by time.

Rather it is 'the form of that which is not eternal, the immutable form of change and movement' (Kant's Critical Philosophy viii). Time is change: the fact that the universe never stops moving, changing, and evolving…. [W]hat does not change is change itself."[56] Accordingly, time is change, but not in a spatial sense.

Time is

> fundamentally paradoxical. Because time passes, and cannot do otherwise, the present will coexist with the past that it will be, and the past will be indiscernible from the present it has been [explaining the relativity paradox of time inferred from Einstein's Theory of Relativity]…. [T]ime continually divides into a present that is passing, a past that is preserved, and an indeterminate future… "since the past is constituted not after the present that it was but at the same time, time has to split itself in two at each moment as present and past, which differ from each other in nature, or, what amounts to the same thing, it has to split the present in two heterogeneous directions, one of which is launched towards the future while the other falls into the past. Time has to split at the same time as it sets itself out or unrolls itself: it splits in two dissymmetrical jets, one of which makes all the present pass on, while the other preserves all the past".[57]

For the splitting of time to occur, the release of forgetting is required. Again, as stipulated in Fragment 20, differences are not only created through the com*ing* together but also through the splitt*ing* apart of Difference paradoxically, simultaneously. Time is also characterised in this way, as time is another realisation (expression) of Difference. Time is change in the becom*ing* of Difference. And, "Returning is the being of that which becomes,"[58] paradoxically.

22. *What is being consumed by an indefinite consumer(s)?*

An indefinite consumer(s) is of Difference, question*ing*-structur*ing*s, structur*ing*s of com*ing* together and splitt*ing* apart—an incomplete fluctuating intensity (a folded multiplicity, a centre of indeterminacies) of and among the multitude. It is these structur*ing*s that create and consume differences from which an indefinite consumer(s) appears by the means of Difference.

This explains the alluring nature (the fascination, the attraction, the enticement) of the new, the different, and that which is sought. We seek out that which we know—Difference, from that which we are, expressed through differences. It is our nature—the *way* of Difference. This explains the continuous need for innovation and our always being on the prowl (a nomadic tendency) to be different in a marketplace of differences, seeking that which is different. At the same time it explains the attraction of the *new* and how the *new* can transform into the *old* (i.e., through the splitting of Difference), and then again into the *old-new* (e.g., via the coming together again through Difference as nostalgia) (*ad infinitum*).

The nomadic tendency of an indefinite consumer(s) is a characteristic of the question*ing*-structur*ing* of Difference resulting from the tendency to break from identity in favour of Difference, recurrently. It is an affirmation of that which is producing the identities and representations—it is the return to (of) Difference. As May[59] suggests, the question we ask is "How should I live my life today?" In asking the question (in one form or another), individually and collectively, we set the stage for lines of flight by way of Difference. And each and every time, a line of flight involves a break from identity. Each day is new and involves the potential for new lines of flight, new ways of living, predicated upon new differences originating out of our question*ing*-structur*ing(s)*, through and through the multitude.

What repeats (returns) is Difference. An indefinite consumer(s) is one way by which Difference is realised (expressed).

23. *???*

Difference continuously returns through us all…

[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vantage Books, 1974), sec. 110, 355.
[2] Jeffrey A. Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos: Gilles Deleuze and the Philosophy of Difference* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 29.
[3] Mark Currie, *Difference: The New Critical Idiom* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 70.
[4] Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), xxiii.
[5] Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 65.
[6] Stephen Haeckel, "Adaptive Business Designs: Designing a Business From the Customer Back," presentation at *Does Marketing Need Reform?* Symposium sponsored by Bentley College (Sheraton Hotel, Boston, MA, 9 August 2004).
[7] While this appears to be tautological, it merely implies the dynamic nature of difference and its proliferation of differences.
[8] Bell cites a Nietzsche example, 21.
[9] Roger Von Oech, *Expect The Unexpected (Or You Won't Find It): A Creativity Tool Based On The Ancient Wisdom Of Heraclitus* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 49.
[10] Ibid., 50.
[11] To further distinguish difference from the differences it produces, difference will be capitalised (Difference) forthwith.
[12] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Modern Library, 1992), 729.
[13] Condition refers to something essential to the appearance or occurrence of something else. In this case, the something else is the (re)appearance or (re)occurrence of differences.
[14] Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 36. A "sense is never a principle or an origin."
[15] Roy Sorensen, *A Brief History of the Paradox: Philosophy and the Labyrinths of the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 10.
[16] Gregg Easterbrook, *The Progress Paradox: How Life Gets Better While People Feel Worse* (New York: Random House, 2003).
[17] Barry Schwartz, *The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004).
[18] Craig J. Thompson, "Marketplace Mythology and Discourses of Power" (*Journal of Consumer Behavior* 31.4, 2004), 4.
[19] Robert V. Kozinets, "Can Consumers Escape the Market? Emancipatory Illuminations from Burning Man" (*Journal of Consumer Behavior* 29.4, 2002), 20-38.
[20] Douglas B. Holt, "Why Do Brands Cause Trouble? A Dialectical Theory of Consumer Culture and Branding" (*Journal of Consumer Research* 29.4, 2002), 70-90.
[21] David Carr, *The Paradox of Subjectivity: The Self in the Transcendental Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
[22] James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 176.
[23] Badiou cites a Deleuze example of a fold: "To think is to fold, to double the outside with a coextensive inside," 90.
[24] Ibid., 151-52.
[25] Cf. D. N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).
[26] John Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 81.
[27] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 254.
[28] The art or practice of Japanese paper-folding.

[29] Cf. Todd May, *Gilles Deleuze: An Introduction* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[30] Italic symbolises the active form of the word.
[31] Cf. Nietzsche, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*.
[32] Patrick Hayden, *Multiplicity and Becoming: The Pluralist Empiricism of Gilles Deleuze* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 37-78.
[33] Douglas B. Holt, "Poststructuralist Lifestyles Analysis: Conceptualizing the Social Patterning of Consumption in Postmodernity" (*Journal of Consumer Research* 23.4, 1997), 326-350.
[34] A. Fuat Firat and Alladi Venkatesh, "Liberatory Postmodernism and the Reenchantment of Consumption" (*Journal of Consumer Behavior* 22.3, 1995), 239-267.
[35] Jeffrey A. Bell, *Philosophia Paradoxa*, an unpublished manuscript (Southeastern Louisiana University, 2004), 15.
[36] Ibid., 18.
[37] Ibid., 19.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Cf. Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. W. S. Palmer and N. M. Paul (New York: Zone Books, 1988).
[40] Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*.
[41] Firat and Venkatesh, "Liberatory Postmodernism and the Reenchantment of Consumption," 254.
[42] Eric J. Arnould, Linda L. Price, and George M. Zinkhan, *Consumers*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2004), 78.
[43] It should be kept in mind that these multiplicities are indeterminate-determinant.
[44] Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos*, 134.
[45] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968).
[46] Cf. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*.
[47] Ibid., 197.
[48] Xavier Zubiri, *Dynamic Structure of Reality* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 80.
[49] Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections*, 84.
[50] Leonard Lawlor, *Thinking Through French Philosophy: The Being of the Question* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 77-78.
[51] Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters To A Young Poet*, trans. Joan M. Burnham (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2000), 35.
[52] Mark E. Hill and Jane Cromartie, "That Which Is 'Not:' Forgetting…." (*Consumption, Markets and Culture* 7.1, 2004), 69-98.
[53] Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, 38.
[54] Hill and Cromartie, "That Which Is 'Not:' Forgetting…," 86-90.
[55] Ibid., 88.
[56] D. N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*, 128.
[57] Ibid., 82.
[58] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 617.
[59] May, *Gilles Deleuze: An Introduction*, 172.